



# Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Redesign

Phase 1 Overview Report

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# Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Redesign

## Phase 1 Overview Report

Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner, Dr. Abigail Moore, Dr. Adon Neria, David McGrath  
Office of People Analytics

Clancy Murray, Hunter Peebles, Dr. Rachel Trump-Steele, Kim Hylton, Dr. Sela Harcey, Dr. Ron Vega, Dr. Rugile Tuskeviciute, Jessica Tercha, Amanda Barry, Brittany Owen, Kasmita Mirani  
Fors Marsh Group

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## OPA Research Team

OPA Research Leads	Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner, Dr. Abigail Moore, Ms. Kristin Williams, Mr. Dave McGrath
OPA Expert Consultation and Assistance	Dr. Rachel Breslin, Dr. Samantha Daniel, Dr. Adon Neria, Dr. Lindsay Rock, Dr. Zhiwei Zhang, Ms. Lisa Davis, Ms. Wendy Barboza, Dr. Katie Helland, Dr. Milianni Inman
Fors Marsh Group, LLC	Ms. Clancy Murray, Ms. Amanda Barry, Mr. Hunter Peebles, Dr. Rachel Trump-Steele, Ms. Kimberly Hylton, Dr. Sela Harcey, Dr. Ron Vega, Dr. Rugile Tuskeviciute, Ms. Jess Tercha, Ms. Brittany N. Owen, Ms. Kasmita Mirani, Ms. Ariel Hill, Mr. Brock Brothers, Mr. William X. Klauberg, Mr. Mark Petusky, Ms. Alycia White, Ms. Emma Gardiner, Ms. Kinsey Gimbel, Mr. Sam Evans, Mr. Eddie Pierce, Ms. Panne Burke, Ms. Natalie Namrow, Mr. Scott Vanderbilt, Ms. Amy Swallow, Mr. Ivan Sciupac, Ms. Mary Chaddock, Mr. Willie Cosner
Data Recognition Corporation	Mr. Jim Cloutier, Ms. Valerie Waller, Mr. Mike Knutson, Ms. Michelle Kruckeberg, Mr. Brad Goenner, Mr. Craig Jullie, Mr. Sam Bauer, Ms. Yi Kim, Ms. Dawn Doty, Ms. Lorraine Wren, Mr. Zach Meyers, Mr. Amalan Mariadasan, Ms. Megan Langbehn, Mr. Michael Domino, Ms. Courtney Johnson, Ms. Tonya DeGraw, Mr. Jonathan Rotz, Mr. Garrett Wright, Ms. Faith Borst, Ms. Cheri Nelson, Ms. Sim Chawla, Ms. Kate Williamson, Mr. Peter Larsen, Mr. John Bandy, Mr. Kevin Ptak, Mr. Mike Engel, Mr. Niall Finn, Mr. Pat Deshler, Mr. Jason Bailey, Mr. Scott Koy, Ms. Kristin Enestvedt, Mr. Kyle Randolph, Mr. Jim Fleming, Mr. Trevor Farnum

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## Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

*Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner*

The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is a unit-level climate survey that all military commanders and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian organization leaders are required to administer to their unit or organization within 120 days<sup>1</sup> of a change in command, and annually thereafter. Due to this congressionally mandated requirement, the DEOCS is one of the largest and most important DoD surveys. Its breadth is unmatched: over 1 million Service members and DoD civilians take the survey annually, making it the Department's largest voluntary personnel data collection.

Although massive in breadth, the survey is also incredibly localized in its impact. Results of the survey are reported directly to each commander<sup>2</sup> and their supervisor within a week after the survey closes, providing leaders with unit-specific<sup>3</sup> survey data covering a range of critical personnel topics. Because results are reported at the unit level, the impact of the data for leaders and Service members is incredibly personal; it reflects the organizational and interpersonal relations of Service members within units and is often the only mechanism for Service members to provide their command with completely confidential feedback. This combination of scope and unit-level granularity makes the DEOCS, and the data it collects, an asset of incredible value for the Department.

The DEOCS was first conceived, designed, and operated by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) in order to help commanders identify concerns and develop action plans to improve unit effectiveness and function (Landis & Dansby, 1991). It began as the Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (MEOCS) in 1990 and has been operating continuously since then, with a number of changes and enhancements made to the survey over time.

In a February 2018 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD [P&R]) memorandum, responsibility for the DEOCS was transferred from DEOMI to the Office of People Analytics (OPA), a component within the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), under USD (P&R), with policy direction and oversight provided by the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI).<sup>4</sup> In this realignment, OPA was charged to “revitalize and

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<sup>1</sup> Some Services have a lower requirement for time spent in command before a DEOCS is required.

<sup>2</sup> The DEOCS is used by both military commanders and DoD civilian organization leaders. For ease of reading throughout the report, we will simply refer to “commanders;” though unless otherwise noted, DoD civilian leaders are included in this term.

<sup>3</sup> Similar to the footnote above, the DEOCS is administered to both military units and civilian organizations. For ease of reading throughout the report, we will simply refer to “units;” civilian organizations are also implied unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Policy direction and oversight for the DEOCS was previously provided by the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO). In the Feb 2018 USD (P&R) realignment memorandum, ODMEO was divided into two distinct offices, a policy office (ODEI) and an operational component (DMOC). ODEI falls under the Office of Force Resiliency (OFR) while DMOC falls under the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA). DEOMI was also realigned under DMOC.

modernize the survey.” This memorandum, along with a subsequent May 2019 memorandum by the Acting Secretary of Defense, charted a course for OPA to redesign the DEOCS.

The current DEOCS Redesign Phase 1 report describes our work to address these mandates. We describe the three action areas within the DEOCS redesign, and the rationale, research, and analysis that guided our work across these action areas. This report is intended to serve as a comprehensive source for information regarding the DEOCS redesign and how we got to where we are today. We aim to highlight where there is continuity with the DEOCS historical mission and where we made changes in response to stakeholder feedback, in accordance with the most current science of climate assessment and prevention of problematic behaviors, and/or in accordance with survey methodology best practices. The planned DEOCS Redesign Phase 2 report (scheduled for 2022) will describe an evaluation of the effectiveness of the redesigned DEOCS and any further enhancements.

## **Introductory Chapter**

This introductory chapter begins with an overview of the DEOCS, its early manifestations, and its goals. Documenting this history is important because the survey has undergone a number of updates, iterations, and changes that have affected not just the content of the DEOCS but also its administration, use, and interpretation of the data it provides.

As with any descriptive endeavor, an important first step is creating a shared understanding of the terminology. We begin with a brief discussion of the concept of “command climate,” how we operationalize this construct, and the various theoretical frameworks that have animated not just OPA’s work, but also the seminal work on DEOCS done at DEOMI. Then, after providing some historical background on the DEOCS, this chapter discusses some of the more recent changes the survey had undergone prior to 2018, setting the immediate context for the survey redesign. Finally, we will introduce our plan, core principals, and method for the redesign, before mapping out the rest of the report describing how this plan unfolded.

## **What is Climate?**

### **Foundational Research**

There is extensive literature that describes the way that organizations affect their personnel and vice versa. Because the DEOCS is meant to provide leaders with relevant and actionable information about their command’s “climate,” this research provides important context for understanding the development of the DEOCS throughout its iterations.

Organizational climate research is punctuated by disagreements about the very nature of the concept and its status as a dependent or independent variable (Landis, 1990) as well as whether or not organizational climate is really just a measure of job satisfaction (Johannesson, 1973) and whether there is a difference between an organization’s “climate” and “culture” (Meredith et al., 2017). Further controversies in organizational climate research include whether climate is an objective attribute of an organization or is rather the subjective perceptions of individuals’ feelings about the organization (Landis, 1990). It is beyond the scope of this report to delve into these various parochial disciplinary disagreements; however, it is essential to explain these

concepts in order to understand the DEOCS as a long-term project as well as to glean OPA’s understanding of climate and how our perspective is situated in these disputes.

Attempts to measure a singular, “objective” organizational climate factor have yet to be developed because there are few methods for measuring or assessing the characteristics of an organization outside of the behaviors and perceptions of the individuals within that organization. As a result, we at OPA have taken an interactionist approach to climate that defines it as a collection of objective and subjective variables, but is not itself a one-dimensional, singular, quantifiable index (Tagiuri, 1968). Furthermore, OPA agrees with recent climate literature that defines climate as “employee perceptions of what the organization is like in terms of practices, policies, procedures, routines and rewards” (Ostroff et al., 2012).

This approach to climate allows us to understand it as a matrix of measurable and interacting phenomena that lacks a unitary framework but still provides predictable outcomes based on variables we term “risk and protective factors” (discussed more in [Chapter 6](#)). Later in this chapter, in a section describing the history and background of the DEOCS, we discuss more about the ways these frameworks helped us understand EO (equal opportunity) command climate and have influenced the development of the DEOCS. Next, however, we briefly turn toward the concept of command climate and how the research in this area has influenced the design of the survey and describe the basis of OPA’s theoretical framework for command climate.

## Command Climate

What is command climate and why is it so important? What separates the climates of high-performing military organizations from the toxic climates of commands you hear about on the news? What role do leaders play in establishing good discipline and command climate? Although a fulsome answer to these questions is beyond the scope of this report, it is important to generate a shared conceptual understanding of the terminology used throughout the rest of this report. In this respect, the purpose of the following paragraphs is to orient readers toward these questions and to provide some definitional clarity as we move through this chapter. Organizational climate, culture, and command climate are all similar organizational-level constructs that are composed of aggregated individual-level perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and nor However, these concepts differ in important ways that require some discussion.

An organization’s “culture” is often expressed in general terms as an organization’s long-held beliefs about itself, the expectations of its members, and practices shared by the group (Meredith et al., 2017). The differences between an organization’s “culture” and its “climate” can be articulated by both scale and temporality—with “climate” being more immediate and experienced in smaller groups and “culture” being more deeply rooted in tradition and being experienced throughout larger organizations. For example, the Army, as an organization, has a describable “culture” that is known, experienced, and understood by its members and is passed down through socialization and ritual. This culture has deep historical roots and is generally more stable over time than climate. While it may also be true that individual units within the

Army have some cultural traits that may be more or less persistent,<sup>5</sup> in general, you would describe units as having a “climate” rather than a “culture.”

Understanding an organization’s culture may assist in pointing to an underlying “why” of organizational behavior. Climate, however, focuses more on the “what” of organizational policies and practices (Ostroff et al., 2012). Although culture is generally theorized as a global characteristic of an organization that is stable over time, we theorize climate as an epiphenomenon that presents as a “snapshot” aggregation of individual perceptions of policies, group behavior, and leadership behavior. Climate may contribute to culture and vice versa, but it is also the case that climate is often specific to a group and can be independent or even contrary to the larger organizational culture (as is the case for so-called “toxic climates” and “sub-cultures”).

In addition to being differentiated by scale and temporality, climate has recently been most often articulated as being for some purpose; for example, safety climate or equal opportunity climate (Schneider, 2011). In this respect, we can think of command climate as the climate for, or in, a command. This framing does have some implications, particularly in a military context. Due to the hierarchical nature of command structures in the military, leaders are believed to have an outsized role in shaping the climate of any given command (Doty & Gelineau, 2008). In fact, there is an expectation that leaders set an example for their subordinates and that an overly permissive environment, where disciplinary violations are tolerated, can be seen as a poor or dysfunctional climate. Military leaders “set the tone” for their organization in terms of communication style, allocation of rewards and punishments, and by enforcing disciplinary standards (Doty & Gelineau, 2008). Members of an organization learn which behaviors leaders reinforce, encourage, simply tolerate, or actively prohibit. This knowledge shapes members’ interpretation of events and thus, drives their behavior, creating a shared “climate” of the organization.

To summarize; organizational climate, culture, and command climate are all related, broadly defined constructs that provide frameworks for understanding the aggregated perceptions and attitudes of members of a given organization. All of these constructs are useful for gaining insight at different organizational levels of spatial and temporal abstraction, but the DEOCS is meant to be a measure of command climate specifically and is intended to be a tool for commanders. Thus, both historically and in the present, the DEOCS focuses on discrete factors that are related to military commands and relevant to commanders regarding the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of unit members.

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Background**

### **Beginnings of Equal Opportunity Pre-1980s**

In recent years, the DEOCS has evolved to serve as the cornerstone of the Department’s efforts to address various types of problematic behaviors and poor climate by empowering commanders with actionable information about their unit. However, this has not always been the case. To

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<sup>5</sup> 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne or the “Screaming Eagles” are well known for their courage, discipline, and for having had Jimi Hendrix as a member.

understand the contemporary DEOCS, it is important to begin with the history of Military Equal Opportunity (henceforth MEO or EO) initiatives in the Department and how this matrix of regulations and protocols shaped the policy and operational landscape in which the DEOCS would emerge.

One of DoD's foundational EO directives was Executive Order 9981, issued on July 26, 1948. This order established a commission on Equal Opportunity in the Military that sought to racially integrate the Armed Forces. This was no doubt an incredible act of political courage on the part of President Truman, as there was widespread opposition to racially integrating the Armed Forces at the time (Landis, 1990). The first DoD directive that applied to all Services in regard to EO was DoD Directive 5120.36, issued in July 1963 by then-Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. The importance of this directive is twofold. First, it was this directive that acknowledged that racial discrimination was harmful to effective mission accomplishment and led to a degradation to morale. Second, it placed the responsibility for EO issues within units on the individual unit commander. Although the first point is self-evidently important, the second aspect—identifying the unit commander as being responsible for what we now might call EO “climate”—would have significant consequences for future EO and command climate efforts. There have been many efforts to collect data from Service members about EO issues and climate (e.g., the Racial Awareness and Perceptions Survey in the 1970s). But these efforts only provided commanders de-contextualized data at the installation rather than unit level and did not provide commanders with actionable guidance, both of which were operational voids command climate surveys would fill in later years (Hiatt et al., 1978).

### **Research and Development of the Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey 1980s–2005**

In 1987, DEOMI initiated a process to develop a measure (i.e., survey) of command climate and provide commanders with actionable guidance (Landis, 1990). This survey, MEOCS, was released in June 1990. This survey was the result of years of rigorous organizational psychology research identifying the most important variables and behaviors that contribute to EO climate (Barnes, 1996).

According to Landis (1990), the MEOCS development was based on a theoretical model that postulated that command climate in a unit is largely informed by the summation of a set of cognitive operations made by people in that unit or organization. These cognitive operations are generated from a matrix of past experiences that also reinforce expectations about concepts like how punishment and rewards will be distributed and what sorts of behaviors are associated with each. Based on the awareness of these behaviors and expectations, individuals create normative judgments about the organization and institution that are represented by constructs like “satisfaction” and “commitment.” From their studies, Landis and Fisher developed a definition for “positive” EO climate:

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*“The expectation by individuals that they will have equal access to opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards within an organization. It is also the expectation that these opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards will be accorded on the*

*basis of a person's abilities, efforts, and contributions; and not on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.”—Landis & Fisher, 1987, p. 8*

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This definition provides us with two important insights to the foundational theoretical framework that animated the DEOCS genesis and continues to influence our understanding of climate. First, as mentioned previously, command climate is not an objective element that exists separate from the perceptions and attitudes of members of the organization. Second, any judgment about command climate made on the part of an individual in an organization may or may not be based on witnessing any particular behaviors but may be influenced by other social cues within the organization (Landis & Fisher, 1987).

The MEOCS itself was a 124-item paper survey composed of six parts (Landis et al., 1993). In the first section, participants were asked to estimate the likelihood that 50 equal opportunity-related behaviors occurred in their unit over the past 30 days. The response options were on a 5-point scale from “very high chance that the action occurred” to “almost no chance the action occurred.” The five “factors” addressed by these items were: sexual harassment and discrimination, differential command behaviors, positive command behaviors, racist and sexist behaviors, and “reverse discrimination.”

Additional parts of the survey focused on participants’ views on their unit or organization, including organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work group effectiveness. The final two sections dealt with questions related to “racial awareness” as well as participants’ personal experiences with discrimination.

Once introduced, the MEOCS was broadly used and viewed as a valuable organizational development tool (McIntyre et al., 1996). However, some users noted the survey was less applicable to certain populations, including smaller units and civilians (McIntyre et al., 1996). In response to feedback from the field, a number of variations on the MEOCS were developed throughout the 1990s. These include the Senior Leader Equal Opportunity Survey, the Small Unit Equal Opportunity Survey, and the MEOCS-EEO civilian version. These various versions ended up having differing levels of utility and were not in widespread use for very long.

As the 1990s gave way to the new millennium, there were increasing proposals for a “MEOCS 2000” (Truhon, 2000). These calls for an updated MEOCS included recommendations that the survey become more “modular” (Barnes, 1996) and that each module be shortened. In addition, with increasing internet access, there was some suggestion that DEOMI should provide a web-based survey, rather than the paper surveys that were then in use (Barnes, 1996). Finally, early MEOCS researchers recognized that the issues that constitute “equal opportunity” concerns would change dramatically as the demographics of the population changed and that there was a need to have some flexibility in the instrument as new personnel issues arose (Barnes, 1996).

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey and the Computerized Era 2005–2016**

In 2005, DEOMI replaced the MEOCS with the DEOCS. This name change corresponded with a number of other updates to the survey that were the result of years of testing and development (Truhon, 2000, 2008). These revisions included shortening the survey, making items and terminology more neutral, and perhaps most importantly, providing survey administrators the

opportunity to request a web-based version of the survey for the first time. The survey also began to further expand its scope beyond EO in an effort to measure “organizational effectiveness” in a more comprehensive way. In the new web-based DEOCS, organizational effectiveness was measured using 25 items grouped into six scales with categories including organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Truhon & Parks, 2005). Additionally, the survey incorporated Sexual Assault and Prevention and Response (SAPR) questions that aimed to characterize the organization’s SAPR environment.

Over the years, DEOCS usage has grown tremendously, from 154,381 surveys administered<sup>6</sup> in Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 (the first year the survey went digital) to 3,104,702 surveys administered in FY 2018 (McDonald, 2018).

The primary reason for this rapid increase in DEOCS administration was the passing of the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2013 (Section 572)*, and amended by section 1721 of the *NDAA FY 2014*, which mandated climate assessments within all DoD organizations. Specifically, this requirement mandated that leaders of DoD organizations must conduct a climate assessment within 120 days of taking command and at least annually thereafter while in command. A subsequent November 20, 2014, memo from the Acting USD (P&R) designated the DEOCS as the Department’s official survey tool to support the NDAA requirement for a DoD command climate assessment program ([Appendix A](#)). Furthermore, this mandate also requires unit climate assessment results to be made available to the next most senior commander in the chain of command. This requirement has had broad implications for the usage of the DEOCS as well as for how the results are used by upper echelon leadership.

Although initially conceptualized and used as a commander’s tool for assessing and managing their command’s climate, these new requirements have somewhat complicated the survey’s purpose. The DEOCS now, in addition to serving as a tool for commanders, is also used to ensure commander accountability with regard to their command climate, particularly as it relates to sexual assault per the FY 2013 NDAA congressional mandates. In addition, allowing upper echelon commanders direct access to subordinate commanders’ DEOCS results has caused some concern that the survey will be used as a “report card.” The initial intent was certainly guided by important oversight principals, but our focus groups and qualitative data have shown that these accountability mechanisms also produce some unexpected and often contradictory outcomes in how the survey is understood by commanders (discussed further in [Chapter 2](#)).

### **Assessment to Solutions**

Around the time the 2013 NDAA took effect, DEOMI also began to implement newly developed recommendations for commanders designed to complement DEOCS results. This included a more comprehensive process of climate assessment called Assessment to Solutions (A2S). The A2S represents the climate assessment as a five-step process: Prepare, Conduct, Interpret, Plan, and Execute. It provides concrete guidance for additional follow-on assessment actions for EO professionals to take after completing the DEOCS to expand upon the DEOCS findings. These follow-on assessment actions include conducting focus groups or individual interviews,

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<sup>6</sup> Surveys administered refers to the number of surveys that an administrator sent out to the field for completion. It is not the number of surveys completed or returned. We were unable to confirm the number of surveys completed during these years from the documents obtained.

observations, and records reviews. Additionally, the A2S process provides commanders with toolkits and resources that can assist commanders in leveraging the results of their climate assessment to craft and execute an action plan to improve their command climate based off the results of their climate assessment.

## **DEOCS 4.1**

DEOMI launched DEOCS 4.1 in August 2017, building on prior organizational and psychometric research (DEOMI, 2018a, 2018b; Schneider, 2013). Enhancements from 4.0 to 4.1 included a reduction in items from 95 to 56, a color-coding scheme for the reporting of results, and “like unit” comparisons as well as Service averages.

In October 2017, DoD’s Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity requested that OPA conduct an independent assessment and evaluation of DEOCS 4.1. This work was conducted by OPA’s Retention and Readiness (R&R) Division, overseen by Paul Rosenfeld. The division undertook this assessment in order to document the DEOCS 4.1 process, methodological considerations, use of the data collected (including identifying key stakeholders), and to provide practical recommendations for improving the collection and use of DEOCS data (Alley et al., 2018).

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Realignment to OPA**

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*“In placing responsibility for the DEOCS, which has proven an invaluable tool for the assessment of organizational climate in DoD, under the Department’s premier survey and analytic element, it is my intent to revitalize and modernize the survey to preserve and enhance its utility and credibility into the future.”—  
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum,  
“Realignment of Force Resiliency Elements of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness,” February 21, 2018*

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On February 21, 2018, Robert L. Wilkie, USD (P&R), signed a memorandum outlining a strategy for realigning resources within the P&R portfolio. Among other realignments, this memo shifted the responsibility of managing the DEOCS from DEOMI to OPA.<sup>7</sup> OPA was stood up in 2016 to harness cutting-edge analytic methods to understand and improve the DoD workforce and to develop a collaborative research environment for DoD. OPA’s mission is to provide the go-to expertise for scientific assessments, data analytics, and outreach to improve the lives of the DoD community. To meet this mission, OPA leverages a wide range of methodologies (e.g., surveys, qualitative research, quantitative and data science techniques) to address a wide range of personnel constructs (e.g., recruiting, selection, resilience, retention, and

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<sup>7</sup> Another aspect of this realignment involved the division of ODMEO into two organizations: ODEI, under the OFR, which was charged with policy oversight, and DMOC, which was charged with the operational elements of diversity and equal opportunity activities and was aligned under DHRA. DEOMI was aligned under DMOC. Thus, both DEOMI and OPA were part of DHRA as a result of the realignment, and the Director of DHRA oversaw the transition of the DEOCS from DEOMI to OPA.



personnel security). OPA research and key findings are regularly reported to policy officials, senior DoD leaders, and Congress.

Following the directive to realign the DEOCS program, DHRA (including OPA, Diversity Management Operations Center [DMOC], and DEOMI, with consultation from policy officials in ODEI) undertook transition planning, realigning resources, designating responsibilities, and reconfiguring contractual obligations. During this time, members of the OPA staff began to get familiar with the DEOCS program and spent several days on site with DEOMI staff. At the end of this process, Matt Boehmer (Director of OPA) and Clarence Johnson (Director of DMOC) signed and delivered a memorandum to William Booth (Director of DHRA) outlining the way forward. This memo outlined that OPA would manage all aspects of the DEOCS, (including survey design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of results),<sup>8</sup> and DEOMI would be responsible for maintaining a center for excellence in training command climate specialists as well as maintaining the repository of information on the other follow-on elements of climate assessment. When the transition to OPA was complete, the name of the survey was updated from the DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey to the Defense Organizational Climate Survey ([Appendix B](#)).

Within OPA, the responsibility for managing the DEOCS program was placed within the Health and Resilience (H&R) Division. H&R conducts multiple large-scale, congressionally mandated surveys addressing climate-related issues across the entire DoD community. These include the *Workplace and Gender Relations (WGR)* surveys of the *Active Component (WGRA)*, *Reserve Component (WGRR)*, and *DoD civilians (WGRC)*; the *Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR)* survey; and the *Workplace and Equal Opportunity (WEO)* surveys of the *Active and Reserve Components (WEOA and WEOR)*. In addition, H&R conducts qualitative research (including congressionally mandated focus groups) and advanced analytic research to inform prevention and response efforts across multiple domains of resiliency (including sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, diversity and inclusion, and suicide).

### **Secretary of Defense Memorandum Directing Enhanced Climate Assessment Tools**

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*“To identify emerging climate challenges within military units and provide critical oversight mechanisms...develop and provide leaders with assessment tools that help them with developing an appropriate course of action from a suite of interventions, and provide them with feedback on the impact of their efforts.”—  
Secretary of Defense Memorandum, “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault in the Military,” May 1, 2019*

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On May 1, 2019, then-Acting Secretary of Defense (SecDef) Patrick T. Shanahan released a memorandum outlining various actions to address sexual assault in the Department in response

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<sup>8</sup> After the division of responsibilities was complete, OPA submitted an FY21 POM Issue Paper to align support needed to manage the DEOCS program. The budgetary requirement was approved, with funds added to OPA’s baseline budget for the continuing maintenance of the DEOCS program beginning in FY21. OPA’s redesign efforts in FY 19 and FY 20 (described in this report) were supported by DHRA and OPA as Unfunded Requirements, including two temporary (2-year term) full time equivalents.

to an increase in rates of sexual assault experienced by active duty women in 2018 (Breslin et al., 2019). Among these actions, USD (P&R) was directed to “develop and provide leaders with assessment tools,” and to provide a Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) to the SecDef outlining how the task would be accomplished. USD (P&R) operationalized this directive via the DEOCS and provided a POAM to SecDef in October 2019 outlining three lines of effort as part of the DEOCS redesign (described in detail below).

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Plan of Actions and Milestones**

In the aforementioned May 1 memorandum, the Acting SecDef directed USD (P&R) to develop a POAM to create new climate assessment tools for unit-level leaders ([Appendix C](#)). OPA was tasked with this work. Consultation with senior leaders, key stakeholders, commanders, and Service members indicated a need for an update to the content of the DEOCS to enhance its relevance to key personnel issues and to provide actionable information for commanders, as well as updates to the DEOCS administration and reporting system

During the development of the POAM, OPA began gathering information from key stakeholders across the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Services by convening a Command Climate Assessment Summit in July 2019. During presentations and discussions with approximately 100 summit participants, OPA collected information regarding stakeholders’ views on the purpose and goals of the DEOCS, the types of information commanders and DoD leaders need to improve climate, and ideas for improvements to the administration, reporting, and analysis process to make the DEOCS more useful for all users. OPA also held multiple meetings with Service representatives to identify technical capabilities and existing climate dashboards and tools, including those in development and those already in use. The resulting POAM action areas, developed in consultation with key OSD stakeholders, are listed below.

### ***Action Area 1: Create Defense Organizational Climate Survey Administration Platform***

The first action area outlined the development of a new web administration platform for requesting a DEOCS, administering a DEOCS, and reporting DEOCS results (including storage of these results for future access). DEOMI administered the DEOCS via a proprietary system, which limited the government’s flexibility in managing the system and the DEOCS program. For Action Area 1, USD (P&R) set out to develop a new government-owned administration platform that includes a survey request system, administration portal, report automation, and a data retrieval system. The new system, which launched July 27, 2020, is compatible with OPA’s other DoD surveys, follows industry best practices, and allows for future upgrades. The new system, including the rationale and methodology guiding its development, is described in DEOCS Administration.

### ***Action Area 2: Redesign Defense Organizational Climate Survey Content***

Multiple independent assessments of the DEOCS have indicated that the content could be improved to increase validity, provide actionable results, and reduce survey burden (Adis et al., 2020; Alley et al., 2018; Army Research Institute, 2014). In addition, the scientific literature on organizational climate has grown since the previous DEOCS update, and this research is not reflected in the DEOCS 4.1. For example, recent OPA research has highlighted the importance of factors such as workplace hostility for predicting sexual assault (Samuelson et al., 2021).

However, workplace hostility was not captured on the DEOCS 4.1. In addition, some of the factors on the DEOCS 4.1 have demonstrated low utility over time. Therefore, Action Area 2 set forth by USD (P&R) outlined a redesign of the survey content (i.e., the constructs covered on the survey and the specific survey questions).

### **Action Area 3: Create Defense Organizational Climate Survey Reporting Tool and Toolkits**

In the third Action Area, USD (P&R) outlined a plan to build a climate dashboard and reporting tool that would display DEOCS results and, ultimately, other metrics of relevance for commanders to proactively understand and address unit climate challenges. This final Action Area represents the greatest departure from the historical DEOCS program. Although a survey administration system and survey instrument existed previously, and were simply undergoing revisions, a dashboard was not historically part of the DEOCS.

The objectives of the climate dashboard, outlined in the POAM, are to (1) display unit-level climate metrics, including full DEOCS results, and (2) connect commanders to resources to address identified climate issues. Discussions with the Services revealed that efforts for two Service-wide climate dashboards were in progress or had launched; however, neither fully addresses both objectives of the DEOCS dashboard. The Army's Command Climate Navigator uses a subset of DEOCS results and a plethora of toolkits to guide commanders in creating a Climate Action Plan. The Navy's Risk Mitigation Dashboard uses a modeling approach to measure risk in four key areas and offers resources to mitigate risk. Neither effort displays full DEOCS results. A DEOCS reporting tool or dashboard is needed to display a unit's full DEOCS results and assist commanders in identifying potential problem areas. Per the POAM, additional climate-related data will also be phased into the dashboard. OPA is working with the Services and OSD policy offices to integrate relevant toolkits to address organizational climate. Feedback from users will be used to make updates to the dashboard to ensure optimal functionality and usefulness. A beta version of the dashboard launched in July 2020, but enhancements are planned through 2024 (pending resources).<sup>9</sup> The dashboard is discussed in greater detail in DEOCS Analysis and Reporting.

Below we introduce in more specificity our approach to executing the profoundly important task of redesigning the DEOCS. Where applicable, we will indicate where in this report more information will be available. Many of these data-gathering lines of effort and content and platform development are described in more thorough detail in subsequent chapters; however, the following sections provide a high-level overview.

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Approach**

### **The Purpose of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey**

Our first step in redesigning the DEOCS was to clarify and state the purpose of the DEOCS. Defining its purpose may seem simple and straightforward, and perhaps unnecessary, but it has many implications for decision making. We defined this purpose as follows:

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<sup>9</sup> As of this writing, resources have not been aligned for the execution of Action Area 3.

The DEOCS is a tool for commanders to provide reliable and actionable information on risk and protective factors that allow them to take immediate steps to improve the climate in their unit. Ultimately, the DEOCS should serve as a tool to prevent problematic outcomes and bolster desirable outcomes.

Thus, the DEOCS should provide commanders with important information about the health and overall climate of their unit that enables them to make important decisions about their unit. At OPA, we view the DEOCS as primarily a commander's tool to aid in this important type of decision making. However, in recent years, policymakers and senior leaders in OSD and the Services are increasingly interested in the data collected by the survey, which they can use to evaluate programs and track climate and problematic behaviors of interest to the Department. We view these uses of the data, though potentially incredibly valuable, as secondary to the primary purpose of serving as a tool for commanders. Indeed, this is what makes the DEOCS unique from almost all other DoD surveys.

The collection, analysis, and representation of organization-level climate data aligns with USD (P&R)'s core strategy of "data dominance" (Personnel and Readiness Strategy for 2030, October 2020). By providing commanders with accurate and timely climate data, we empower commanders to employ data-driven solutions to "get ahead" of personnel problems (e.g., harassment, suicide, sexual assault) and to bolster desirable outcomes (e.g., retention, readiness), ultimately allowing the Department to continuously hone our national competitive advantage over the Nation's enemies. As such, the DEOCS is a key pillar of the Department's pivot to prevention (DoDI 6400.09).

Recent events at Fort Hood<sup>10</sup> have demonstrated the importance of getting ahead of climate issues early. Indeed, one of the recommendations of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee was an increased emphasis on command climate and the utilization of command climate tools (like the DEOCS) to prevent tragedies from occurring within the Force (FHIRC, Nov 6, 2020). At OPA, we view the DEOCS and other command climate tools as just one crucial part of a more holistic strategy to leverage the best data analytics to assess and improve prevention efforts across the Total Force.

In sum, the DEOCS provides commanders and leaders a place to begin to understand the social, organizational, and operational climate of the discrete units that compose the Total Force so that they can stage targeted interventions where needed. The DEOCS also provides Service members and civilians an opportunity to provide real-time feedback to commands and allows them to speak directly to their commands in ways that might not be possible in other venues. Finally, for researchers, policymakers, and upper echelon decision makers, the DEOCS is an incredible resource of data and information about the health, readiness, and resilience of the Total Force.

### **Strategic Target Outcomes**

With the purpose of the DEOCS clearly in view, we moved to the question, "What does a success look like for the DEOCS?" Or, in other words, "How will we know the DEOCS is

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<sup>10</sup> Fort Hood was the site of the April 2020 murder of 20-year-old US Army Private Vanessa Guillen, who had previously reported experiencing sexual harassment.

working?” To answer this question, we consulted policymakers and senior leaders to identify personnel issues strategically important to the Department.<sup>11</sup> These personnel issues, hereafter referred to as strategic target outcomes (STO) are racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault,<sup>12</sup> suicide, readiness, and retention. In Table 1 below, the Army Research Institute (ARI) lists all six STOs along with their definitions.

**Table 1.**  
***Defined Strategic Target Outcomes (STO)***

STO	Definition
Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination	Unfair treatment and/or behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a reasonable person and is based on race, color, religion, and/or national origin (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021a, 2021b).
Readiness	The capability of a unit or organization to perform the mission or function for which it is organized or designed. Readiness also includes overall work performance and deployability (DoD, 2020a).
Retention	The individual's voluntary decision to stay with their unit or organization after their obligated term of service has ended (i.e., as determined by their enlistment contract) or until the completion of the mission or project (Congressional Research Service, 2020; Das & Baruah, 2013; Knapp, 1993).
Sexual Assault	Intentional and unwelcome sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent (DoD, 2017; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018).
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature. These behaviors are so severe and pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018).
Suicide	The act, or an attempt, of taking one’s own life voluntarily and intentionally (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

If the DEOCS is working as intended and providing commanders with valid, reliable data on climate in their unit that allows them to take action to address problems, we would expect to see impacts on these STOs in the long term. Of course, there are many other variables at play in this causal chain, of which DEOCS is just one small piece. However, if we were able to run a true experiment, whereby some units were randomly selected to use the DEOCS and others were not, we would expect to see improvements in the STOs in our experimental group because commanders have the information needed to take action to improve climate related to the STOs.<sup>13</sup> Defining our successful end state for the DEOCS (success=change in the STOs) had numerous consequences for our redesign process, including shaping the information we collected

<sup>11</sup> These personnel issues were identified as being of importance: to Department senior leadership (e.g., included in quarterly updates for the SecDef); to Congress (e.g., legislative requirements); and to the American public (e.g., media attention).

<sup>12</sup> As directed in Section 540D of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (2019).

<sup>13</sup> Even better would be an experiment with parallel universes, where the DoD in Universe A has the DEOCS and the DoD in Universe B does not. At the time of this writing, this technology is not available.

in support of the effort (e.g., determining the focus of our literature review, informing the questions we asked in focus groups) and most notably in designing the content of new survey, which prioritized prediction of STOs in our selection of survey constructs (DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection) and in the selection of specific survey items (DEOCS 5.0 Item Selection).

## **Guiding Principles**

Finally, with the purpose and the ideal end state of the DEOCS defined, we identified three core principles to further guide our decision making: ensuring the DEOCS is (1) accurate and data driven, (2) user friendly, and (3) actionable. These three principles are in many ways interrelated and interdependent, and all are ultimately in service of the purpose of the DEOCS as a tool for commanders and enabling the DEOCS to meet its long-term objective of addressing the STOs.

### ***Accurate and Data Driven***

The entire premise of the DEOCS, from its inception, is the idea that, when provided with good and reliable information, people (in this case, commanders) can make better decisions. This is the underlying rationale for the command climate assessment requirement. It drives the notion of why unit commanders need survey data in the first place.

However, not all surveys accomplish this effectively. In fact, there is a huge range of variability in survey quality, and entire fields of study devoted to optimizing surveys to collect good, useful, important information. The quality of the information received from the DEOCS, including both its relevance, as well as its accuracy, will make or break the success of the DEOCS as a tool for commanders to drive change in the STOs.

First, if the information provided by the DEOCS is not relevant for the purpose of the DEOCS, it does not matter how interesting or even accurate that information may be. To provide an exaggerated example, information about unit members' favorite dessert may be interesting and may be obtained with accuracy (provided the methodology is sound) and may even drive change in a unit (e.g., a commander might ensure that cupcakes are always available during social events, given her unit's preference). However, this information is unlikely to drive change that is relevant for the STOs.<sup>14</sup> In order for the DEOCS to work, it must collect information that is relevant, ideally the most relevant information, for impacting the STOs.

Second, even if the information solicited is highly relevant, if the information provided by the survey is not accurate, then it cannot be used to truly understand risk for STOs and inform the appropriate action. If the information is not accurate, then at best, a commander's attempts to improve climate guided by the DEOCS will not work. At worst, inaccurate information could lead to actions that inadvertently worsen unit climate and ultimately worsen the STOs in the long term.

In line with this rationale, relevant and accurate information were necessary for planning a successful DEOCS redesign effort. In order to redesign the DEOCS, we aimed to collect relevant and accurate information from a wide range of sources and stakeholders. This information informed every aspect of the DEOCS redesign. Thus, we took a data-driven

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<sup>14</sup> To our knowledge, no research has examined the association between cupcakes and the STOs.

approach to creating a tool, the DEOCS, that is itself optimized to enable data-driven decision making.

### ***User Friendly***

In order for the DEOCS to “work” and achieve its purpose, people need to use it. Unit members must take the survey and feel comfortable providing their honest responses, and commanders and their teams must use these data to drive actions. Although commanders are required to administer a DEOCS, the survey is voluntary, and people are not required to take it. Even if the survey were mandatory (which we do not recommend),<sup>15</sup> Service members cannot be forced to respond to a survey openly and honestly. Moreover, commanders are not required to use DEOCS results to inform their actions. Finally, although survey administrators may be required to request and administer a DEOCS as part of their job duties, their experience in doing so will shape their perceptions of the DEOCS, and any time savings in a more efficient and user friendly system can be leveraged. With less time spent on the business of administering the survey, survey administrators will have more capacity to do the crucial work of survey outreach (encouraging unit members to take the survey), survey results interpretation, and translation into action (a necessary part of the DEOCS meeting its objectives).

Therefore, ensuring all aspects of the DEOCS are user friendly for all users is essential. A user friendly process for survey administrators frees up their valuable time, a user friendly survey for participants makes people more likely to take the survey (and take it again the following year) and provide good data, and a user friendly reporting of survey results supports commanders (who are also busy) in digesting their unit’s results and taking necessary action. This “user friendly” principle is clearly reflected in our design of the new survey administration system (DEOCS Administration) and in creating the DEOCS dashboard (DEOCS Analysis and Reporting). Everything about the survey itself is also created with the participant’s experience in mind (DEOCS 5.0 Survey Instrument Development). We continue to learn every day from users in the field, via the DEOCS help desk and users reaching directly to OPA, regarding what’s working, what’s not working, and what is cumbersome or could be improved, across all aspects of the DEOCS process. This information will continue to drive enhancements into the future.

### ***Actionable***

In order for the survey to work, it is not enough for many people to take it, and it is not enough for it to provide the most accurate and relevant assessment of climate mathematically possible,<sup>16</sup> nor for the results to be clear and understandable for users. The last, most critical, piece is that commanders use the information to take appropriate action.

This crucial piece is perhaps the most difficult and the least “finished” portion of the DEOCS to date. We are not alone in this challenge. Although there are numerous surveys across DoD—and beyond surveys, numerous data visualization efforts underway—the translation of survey

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<sup>15</sup> In accordance with DoDI 1100.13 “DoD Surveys,” OPA and the Services developed a set of guidelines for DoD surveys, which includes the following: “Participation in surveys and focus groups must be voluntary.” Furthermore, all DoD surveys follow Human Research Protection Program guidance and include a privacy advisory stating that there’s no penalty for not responding.

<sup>16</sup> To be clear, we certainly have not met this bar!

results and other forms of personnel data into action remains a challenging and an under-developed practice.

This is for good reason. The fields of clinical psychology and psychiatry—and related areas of sociology, public health, and behavioral science—have developed robust insights across many decades. This has allowed for the reliable identification and quantification of various human behaviors, mental states, personality traits, group dynamics, and more. Taking this information and translating it into an intervention or action that has a measurable impact on the behavior, state, or dynamic in question, however, remains a profoundly challenging endeavor across all of these disciplines. Certainly, progress has been made. However, unresolved questions remain about the effectiveness of psychotherapy (Dragioti et al., 2017), and this effectiveness depends on many factors (Lynch & McKenna, 2010; Chatoor & Kurpnick, 2001), even though psychotherapy is a well-studied and long-established intervention delivered by skilled and trained professionals. The DEOCS is asking commanders, who may have limited training regarding the issues at hand, to implement unspecified changes or actions that will have a measurable impact on human behaviors that are often very difficult to change—this is a tall order.

This does not mean the DEOCS cannot work. Indeed, there are many behavioral interventions that have been shown to work (Basile et al., 2016). However, the challenge is making these interventions easily accessible to unit commanders and personnel on the ground, ideally tailored to meet the unique needs of their unit population and in response to their unique constellation of risk and protective factors identified in their DEOCS results and ensuring commanders and other relevant personnel have the training needed to implement these interventions. This work with respect to the DEOCS is in its infancy and was not part of our DEOCS redesign effort. However, we view this as an ideal and necessary end state for the DEOCS if it is to ultimately achieve its objectives. Therefore, to the maximum extent possible, we designed the new survey with the principle of actionability at the forefront to poise the DEOCS for future enhancements in this domain. We chose survey content based on potential actionability—creating a user friendly dashboard is one step on the journey of making survey results come to life and ensuring that results are directly linked to recommended follow-on actions that can move the needle on critical climate issues.

## **Summary of Information-Gathering Efforts**

In order to begin the task of redesigning a survey as large and as important to the Department as the DEOCS, and in line with the principle of being data driven, one of the first and most meaningful steps OPA undertook was to gather information. This information gathering consisted of OPA gaining insight about how the survey has been and is used, what could be improved, and perceptions of the survey in the field and among our stakeholders. Additionally, we sought to collect information on climate assessment generally and leading indicators of the STOs from the current scientific literature. We relied heavily on conversations with DEOMI and on the recent evaluations of the DEOCS conducted by ARI and OPA's Retention & Readiness Division (U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2014; Alley et al., 2018) to provide a framework for understanding the survey, as well as providing recommendations to help orient the redesign team's efforts. These recommendations proved



instrumental in helping to frame the changes made in the redesign in order to address limitations of the survey as it was currently administered.

The information-gathering stage of the redesign lasted approximately nine months and took shape through four distinct lines of effort: a literature review, focus groups with Service members, interviews with stakeholders (policymakers and senior leaders in the Services and OSD), and responses collected directly from the field via a DEOCS redesign survey. These efforts provided OPA with meaningful information into the DEOCS's contemporary use in order to ensure the redesign process was undertaken thoughtfully, represented the needs of those who use it most, and used the most contemporary academic insights. These efforts are detailed in later chapters. However, here we briefly describe their scope and note where in the report you can learn more.

### ***Literature Review***

Our goal in the literature review was to examine relevant academic and scientific literature within the past 10 years, as well as internal DoD reports, to help us understand what behaviors and constructs would be most appropriate for inclusion in our redesign of the survey. We use the term “preliminary constructs” to describe the topics or factors that were considered for inclusion on the survey. Examples of preliminary constructs include “Cohesion,” “Morale,” “Leadership Support,” and “Connectedness.”

The literature review included over 300 peer-reviewed journal articles, published reports, and internal DoD reports and generated over 400 preliminary constructs. This information was foundational for making data-driven selections of constructs to include in the updated DEOCS. The DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection has a detailed description of the literature review methods and how the results were used to inform construct selection.

### ***Focus Groups***

In July 2019, OPA held a Command Climate Assessment Summit, during which nine focus groups were conducted with summit participants. The focus group participants included researchers, policymakers, program analysts, and other key DEOCS stakeholders from OSD and the Services. These focus groups were primarily brainstorming sessions and focused on DEOCS 4.1. Subsequently, in the winter of 2020, OPA conducted an additional 14 focus group sessions with 158 participants, including commanders, Service members, and Equal Opportunity Advisors to gather insights on the current DEOCS 4.1 as well as to inform OPA's redesign effort. These focus groups were guided by trained moderators, while another researcher took notes. The sessions were also audio-recorded, and these recordings were transcribed. The transcribed qualitative data were coded and analyzed for key themes and recommendations.

Both the summit and military focus groups allowed for participants to express their views, experiences, and suggestions associated with the current DEOCS. The views captured were wide ranging and the participants' perceptions on the content, process, and reporting of the DEOCS were varied and often contradictory. The results from these focus groups were incredibly valuable for OPA to understand the perceptions of the DEOCS survey “on the ground” and assisted the redesign team across all redesign action areas. Recommendations for

the content, process, and reporting elements of the redesign that emerged from these focus groups, as well as the methodology employed to conduct the groups and analyze the results, are thoroughly documented in DEOCS Focus Groups of this report.

### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

Although OPA considers Service members and commanders the primary stakeholders in the DEOCS redesign process, we also conducted a separate information-gathering stream for our upper echelon policy office- and Service-level points of contact (POC) who may have different perceptions, needs, and priorities for the survey than those on the ground. The DEOCS is first and foremost a commander's tool to assess and respond to their climate, but we also recognize that DEOCS results have been used, and have the potential to be incredibly valuable, for informing key policy and personnel decisions. Indeed, the redesign effort attempts to address these needs at various levels, including with content (DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection) as well as in the platform (DEOCS Administration) and reporting (DEOCS Analysis and Reporting). Because of this, OPA identified a number of key stakeholders in OSD and the Services and conducted a series of interviews.

Although we looked to the focus groups to gather information about the survey “on the ground,” our conversations with stakeholders were aimed at elucidating their lessons learned from working with the DEOCS survey and its data. Additionally, we wanted to understand what constructs senior leaders and policymakers thought were important for inclusion on the survey. Finally, working with policy offices and upper echelon Service POCs allowed us to gather any additional documents or information they had that related to the DEOCS that we had not already located through our literature review.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by one or more OPA researchers, who were accompanied by a note-taker. We analyzed our notes from these meetings and identified key themes and recommendations, using a combination of term searching and thematic analysis to find concurrences and patterns between stakeholders. These themes and recommendations informed all aspects of the redesign. The methods and results from the stakeholder interviews are described in depth in DEOCS Redesign Survey

### ***Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Survey***

In addition to our other qualitative data-gathering sources, we also leveraged the “research block” portion of DEOCS 4.1 to field a DEOCS redesign survey. This allowed us to collect survey data from DEOCS users by adding sets of questions that participants could opt into after completing a DEOCS. These questions consisted of a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. This effort allowed us to gain more input from approximately 9,000 Service members and DoD civilians directly, far beyond what we could collect in the focus groups.

To analyze the data received from this effort, we calculated descriptive statistics of the closed-ended survey questions and used text analytic techniques to synthesize the open-ended responses. This process allowed us to identify survey constructs that Service members and DoD civilians indicated should be added to (or removed from) the survey (DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection), as well as numerous opportunities to improve user experience that informed the

design of the DEOCS platform (DEOCS Administration) and reporting (DEOCS Analysis and Reporting). The methods and results from the DEOCS redesign survey are described in depth in DEOCS Redesign Survey.

## **The Organization of the Rest of the Report**

The pursuant chapters describe our information-gathering efforts and the results in depth, followed by a description of our work to address each of the three action areas of the DEOCS redesign. Specifically, [Chapter 2](#), [Chapter 3](#), and [Chapter 4](#) detail the primary data collection activities we undertook over the course of the DEOCS redesign: (1) focus groups (DEOCS Focus Groups), (2) DEOCS redesign survey (DEOCS Redesign Survey), and (3) stakeholder interviews (Stakeholder Conversations). From there, we go onto describe (1) the new survey platform (Action Area 1; DEOCS Administration), new survey content (Action Area 2; DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection, DEOCS 5.0 Item Selection, and DEOCS 5.0 Survey Instrument Development), and (3) the Unit Commander Dashboard (Action Area 3; DEOCS Analysis and Reporting). Finally, Discussion discusses and summarizes our overall approach, and in particular highlights the key innovations we made in line with our guiding principles of ensuring the DEOCS is data driven, user friendly, and actionable. We also sketch our vision for the future of the DEOCS and its role in continuing to provide commanders with an accurate, user friendly tool that empowers leaders to identify and take action to address emerging climate problems in their unit, and ultimately impact key Department priorities.



## Chapter 2: Defense Organizational Climate Survey Focus Groups

*Clancy Murray, Hunter Peebles, Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Rachel Clare, Amanda Barry, Dr. Ashlea Klahr*

### Introduction

In order to inform the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) redesign effort, the Office of People Analytics (OPA) conducted a series of focus groups designed to collect qualitative insights on the DEOCS from a wide range of stakeholders, including Command Climate Assessment Summit participants (which included researchers, policymakers, program analysts, and others) as well as groups with commanders, Army Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA), active duty members, and National Guard members. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology, insights, and key findings that were gleaned from the focus group data collection effort. The insights obtained from these groups played a substantial role in informing the new DEOCS administration platform and process, the DEOCS 5.0 survey content, and reporting of DEOCS results. In line with our core guiding principles, our approach to the focus groups was data driven and emphasized the usability and actionability of the survey from multiple perspectives. When applicable, this chapter notes differences in results between different groups of DEOCS stakeholders. We also draw out themes that were common across stakeholder groups.

### Methodology

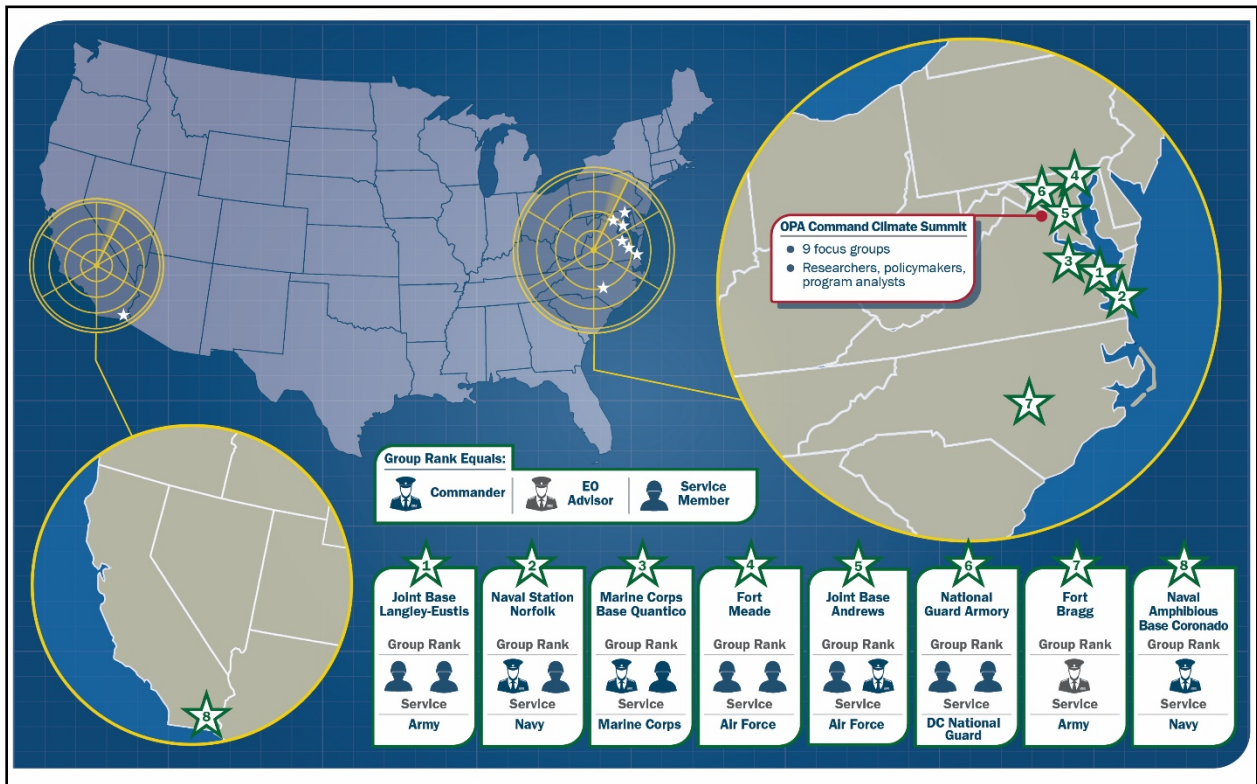
In this section, we describe the methodology we used to conduct the DEOCS focus groups, including an overview of the summit and military focus group participants, protocol development, and our qualitative analysis approach. The focus group procedures were reviewed by a DoD Human Research Protections Program officer as part of the DoD survey approval and licensing process. In Figure 1, we present an overview of the summit and military focus group locations and participants.

As shown in Figure 1, the redesign team conducted nine focus groups at the Command Climate Assessment Summit, which took place at the Mark Center in Alexandria, VA, in July 2019. The purpose of the summit was to bring together key stakeholders to discuss the current DEOCS 4.1 and recommendations for the revised DEOCS 5.0. Summit focus group participants included researchers, policymakers, program analysts, and other key stakeholders from DoD-level offices and the Services. Approximately 100 individuals participated in the summit focus groups and each group consisted of eight to 12 participants.

The military focus groups were conducted across eight military installations in February 2020 and included 14 separate focus groups. With support from the Service Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) offices, OPA compiled a list of potential military installations in and around the Washington, DC metropolitan area to visit. Once the installations were selected, OPA identified points of contact (POC) at each installation to aid in securing a location on-base to conduct focus groups and aid in recruiting participants. Installation POCs largely handled recruiting and were asked to recruit up to 15 participants for each focus group. Because the

discussion focused on the DEOCS 4.1, we asked to speak to individuals who were familiar with the DEOCS. For budgetary reasons, all but two of the groups took place in person at a military installation within three hours driving distance of the DC metropolitan area. The two groups that were outside of the DC area were conducted remotely via telephone. A total of 160 individuals participated in the military focus groups, including commanders who had administered a DEOCS, active duty and National Guard Service members who had taken a DEOCS or were familiar with the survey, and EOAs who had assisted in the DEOCS administrative process.

**Figure 1.**  
*Overview of the DEOCS Summit and Military Focus Group Participants*



Note. The group rank icon equals one focus group conducted with that respective population, such as a commander, Army EOA, or Service member. Each green star represents a military installation where a military focus group took place.

Both the summit and military focus group sessions were 90 minutes each and were led by a trained moderator. The focus groups that took place in person were conducted in a meeting or conference room setting with a note-taker. All groups were also audio-recorded and later transcribed. A further breakdown of the military focus group populations is in [Appendix D](#).

## Protocol Development

In this section, we discuss the protocol development for both the summit and military focus group discussions.

### **Summit Focus Group Protocol Development**

We developed the protocol for the summit focus groups with the intent of discussing command climate assessments, including how the participants use these assessments and what they need from them. While there were specific questions within the protocol about the DEOCS, summit participants were encouraged to think about “any and all” command climate assessments they have used in the past. The protocol was divided into three topic areas:

1. Command climate assessment purpose and content,
2. Survey administration, and
3. Reporting results.

The summit focus groups also asked participants to provide written responses to two questions that informed a word cloud that is described further in this chapter. To view an example of the summit focus group protocol, the handouts for the sessions, and the word cloud activity, please refer to [Appendix E](#), [Appendix F](#), and [Appendix G](#), respectively.

### **Military Focus Group Protocol Development**

The military focus group protocols were designed with the intent of gathering insights from commanders, Army EOAs, and Service members to identify successes and challenges related to the current DEOCS 4.1 and to assist with the modernization and redesign of the DEOCS. To gather insights from those who had administered a DEOCS and those who had taken a DEOCS, two separate protocols were developed. One protocol was designed for Service members who had taken a DEOCS, and the other was designed for commanders and EOAs who had administered a DEOCS. The focus group protocols were divided into five topic areas:

1. Purpose of the DEOCS 4.1,
2. Making the DEOCS 4.1 more useful,
3. Leading indicators of the strategic target outcomes (STO),<sup>17</sup>
4. Command climate activity, and
5. Making the DEOCS an indispensable tool for commanders (commander-protocol only).

The command climate activity asked participants to write down words, phrases, behaviors, and traits that described a positive and negative command climate. Once the participants had completed their list of terms, the moderator asked everyone to share their responses and describe a positive or negative command climate. The written responses were collected at the end of each

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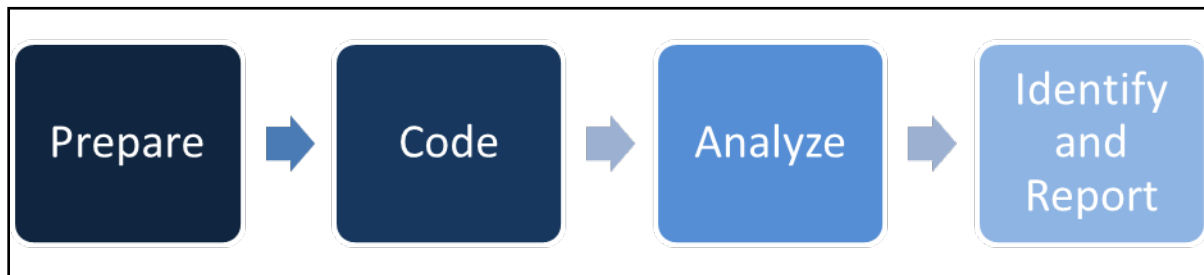
<sup>17</sup> For additional information on the STOs and their definition, consult Chapter 1.

focus group, transcribed, and analyzed. To view both the Service member and commander/EOA protocols, please go to [Appendix H](#) and [Appendix I](#), respectively.

## Qualitative Analysis

The redesign team analyzed the findings from the summit and military focus group discussions in four steps, depicted in Figure 2 described below.

**Figure 2.**  
*Steps Taken to Analyze and Interpret Summit and Military Focus Group Qualitative Data*



### **Step 1: Prepare**

As discussed above, each of the summit and military focus groups was led by a trained moderator with a note-taker onsite to capture key themes and assist as needed. In addition, all sessions were audio-recorded using digital voice recorders to ensure no information was lost. During both the summit and military focus groups, participants were asked to write down responses to specific questions, which are listed below. At the end of the summit and military focus group sessions, the note-taker gathered the written responses provided by participants, and the redesign team met to debrief on the session and identify key findings.

- Summit focus group activity questions:
  - If you could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure...?
  - The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is...
- Military focus group activity question:
  - When you think about an effective or positive command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that come to mind?
  - When you think of an ineffective or negative command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that spring to mind?



During the week following the focus groups, team members assembled their notes, uploaded the audio-recordings, and sent the recordings to be transcribed.<sup>18</sup> Because both the summit and military focus group participants did not limit their responses to a single word during the written activity, these data required additional cleaning. To clean the activity responses, three members of the redesign team met in person to review the raw responses and group similar terms when applicable. For example, “never around” or “not available” were reworded as “inaccessible” or a response of “a command that doesn’t waste time on useless items” was changed to “efficiency.”

### **Step 2: Code**

Once the notes were transcribed and cleaned, the redesign team uploaded the data into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program used to apply codes to qualitative data. These codes were then used to analyze the data and identify key themes. Using the summit and focus group protocols as a guide, the redesign team developed a deductive and inductive coding scheme to search for themes and cluster ideas related to:

- DEOCS 4.1 survey administration, content, reporting, and general perceptions,
- Recommendations for updating the DEOCS,
- Positive/negative command climate descriptions, and
- Command climate activity.

The qualitative codes were modified throughout the data analysis process as emerging themes and findings were identified. For quality control purposes, two team members independently coded all the qualitative data using NVivo, including both the raw and cleaned data from the summit and military focus group activities. A full account and description of the finalized first-, second-, and third-level NVivo codes can be found in [Appendix J](#).

### **Step 3: Analyze**

To analyze the data, the redesign team conducted a rigorous, systematic analysis of the summit and military focus group data by examining the coded data in NVivo using a combination of queries. Queries allowed the research team a flexible way to gather and explore the data to find and analyze words and phrases, ask questions, and identify emerging patterns. We describe the three main types of queries used to analyze the summit and focus group data below.

1. **Text Search.** Search for all occurrences of a word, phrase, or concept. This was also expanded to find similar words when applicable. For example, when searching for the word “Cohesion,” the redesign team expanded this to find similar words such as “Unity.” The text search query was most frequently used for identifying and assessing the

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<sup>18</sup> For this project, we partnered with Rev, a San Francisco-based company, on transcription. All audio-recordings were uploaded and sent to Rev within three days of the completion of the discussion. The transcriptions were then sent back to the researchers, where the data were reviewed and uploaded to NVivo, a qualitative data analysis program.

constructs ultimately selected for the revised DEOCS 5.0. [Chapter 6](#) has more detailed information on this topic.

2. **Coding Search.** Search for all content coded at a specific code or combination of codes. For example, the redesign team looked at the code “purpose and goal” when searching for key themes and findings for the section on “perceptions of purpose and goal.”
3. **Matrix Coding.** Search for a combination of items (usually codes that were mentioned during discussions with specific groups such as commanders, Services members, or summit participants). For example, the redesign team used this type of query to compare what commanders, Army EOAs, and Service members said about positive command climates.

#### **Step 4: Identify and Report**

While analyzing the qualitative data, the redesign team began to note key findings and recommendations. Generally, to be classified as a key finding, a sentiment had to be expressed by the majority of focus group and summit participants; however, some key findings were only expressed by a small handful of participants but are noted in this chapter because they present a unique viewpoint that provides helpful context to a specific topic. For example, a small number of military focus group participants gave examples of how the DEOCS 4.1 highlighted hostile or discriminating workplace behaviors that were creating a negative command climate, and how the DEOCS results allowed commanders to correct these behaviors, thereby improving their command climate. Although this example was provided by a small number of participants, it is discussed here because of its high relevance for understanding the DEOCS and how it is used. Recommendations were also developed based on a combination of participant recommendations, focus group findings, and survey methods best practices.

#### **Research Gaps and Limitations**

Like other qualitative research, the findings within this chapter are not generalizable to Service members, commanders, EOAs, or policymakers as a whole. For example, roughly 260 participants were present for these focus groups, making up only a tiny portion of DEOCS users, which included over 1 million survey participants in 2019. Further, except for Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, all summit and military focus groups were conducted with populations on the east coast of the United States. As a result, there may be systematic differences in DEOCS perceptions by geographic region, both within and outside the continental U.S. locations that were not captured in this effort. Also important is that these groups were conducted before many of the changes to the administration, content, and reporting were designed. This was intentional, as the information from this group was envisioned to inform those redesign efforts. However, that means that these groups do not capture reactions to the changes made. Future efforts will assess qualitative and quantitative impacts of the DEOCS redesign.

## Results

In this next section, we discuss the themes that emerged from our analysis of the focus group data. We group these themes into overarching sections focused on (1) overall perceptions of the DEOCS, (2) perceptions of the DEOCS administration process, (3) perceptions of DEOCS 4.1 survey content, and recommendations for new content and (4) perceptions of DEOCS reporting.

### Overall Perceptions of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey

In this section, we discuss overall perceptions of the DEOCS 4.1 purpose and goals based on discussions with summit and military focus group participants.

#### ***Perceptions of the Purpose and Goals of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey***

Participants from the summit and the military focus groups showed a high degree of convergence when asked to discuss the purpose and goals for the DEOCS. For example, nearly all participants stated that the purpose of the DEOCS was to measure a unit’s command climate and serve as a “pulse check” for commanders. Several participants also described the DEOCS as a report card that measures the climate of the unit. One Service member described the survey as a “Yelp review.”

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*“It’s a snapshot of how the unit feels the organization is performing and/or working or where is it? So basically, I’m giving my organization an opportunity to tell me ‘Tell me what you like about this unit and tell me what you don’t like about this unit. What’s working, what’s not working?’”—Summit Participant*

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A small number of summit participants discussed how the DEOCS can be used to flag climate issues that could be an indicator of negative behaviors such as sexual assault and suicide. Military participants did not generally discuss the use of the DEOCS as a measure of STOs directly or indirectly, and more generally reported its use to identify emerging or current problem areas in the unit.

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*“A lot of the precursors to sexual assault and the correlates of sexual assault are in the DEOCS so while they aren’t going to get prevalence of sexual assault, they’re going to get prevalence of a lot of other problematic and destructive behaviors...”—Summit Participant*

*“[I think the DEOCS is used] as another data collection point for SAPR [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response] SARC [Sexual Assault Response Coordinators] reporting, because it was a convenient tool to see how we were doing with SAPR. I really think it’s an EO/SAPR reporting mechanism, and as a byproduct, somehow you get some climate assessment data points.”—Commander*

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Of note, the purpose of the DEOCS as described by participants informed our understanding and aligns with our guiding framework of the DEOCS as a tool to help commanders and leaders improve their unit or organizational climate.

### ***Perceived Value of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey***

Participants were asked to discuss the value and general usefulness of the DEOCS. Both value and usefulness were left to participants to interpret and, therefore, varied greatly among participants. The commanders, summit participants, and Army EOAs we spoke with generally regarded the DEOCS as more valuable and useful compared to Service members. For example, commanders, summit participants, and Army EOAs valued the DEOCS as a potential agent for change but expressed that the value of the DEOCS was directly related to the DEOCS being used “correctly.” When asked for further clarification on what the participant meant by “correctly,” participants explained it as leadership briefing the DEOCS results to their unit, using the results to identify emerging or current issues, and being engaged throughout the entire DEOCS process from survey request to action planning and implementation.

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*“The DEOCS is the only tool that really gives [commanders] information from the grassroots up. Everything else in the military, it’s a very hierarchical organization, it’s top down.”—Commander*

*“You can do all these surveys, but if the [commander] doesn’t get up in front and give the results and give action steps, it doesn’t matter. I think that’s where the value really comes in.”—Summit Participant*

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Service members, on the other hand, saw much less value in the DEOCS. Many Service member participants, particularly those who believed they had seen no direct impact and changes as a result of the DEOCS, reported that the survey was a “waste of time.”

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*“They feel like nothing’s going to be changed or it’s just going to be overlooked. They feel like it’s just a way of feeling their problem is going to be dealt with.”—Service Member*

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### **Perceptions of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey Administration Process**

In this section, we discuss perceptions of the DEOCS administration process, including the initial survey request, outreach and messaging, survey design, and results. We also highlight barriers to accessing the survey and questionnaire design issues from the perspective of summit and military focus group participants helping OPA better understand usability.

#### ***Initial Survey Request and Development***

According to the military focus group participants, the time commitment required of commanders during initial DEOCS request and development varies. For example, some

commanders simply put in a request with their EOA, who then oversees the entire DEOCS administrative process, whereas other commanders spend significant time working with their EOA tailoring the survey to their unit. According to these commanders, their time is spent developing outreach materials and messages to their units to encourage participation and developing thoughtful and relevant short answer questions (SAQ) and locally developed questions (LDQ) to include on their DEOCS.

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*“There is a lot of administrative work that has to go out and get done before [the survey] hits the streets.”—Commander*

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According to nearly all Army EOAs we spoke with, the DEOCS request process is relatively easy to navigate, with minimal time commitment required by commanders to initiate and develop. They also reported that most of the time spent on the DEOCS is interpreting the results, which is discussed later in this section.

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*“The time-consuming part is actually sitting down after the survey closes. Reading through [the survey] ...”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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In sum, based on discussions with summit and military focus group participants, the amount of time dedicated to DEOCS 4.1 development is directly related to the engagement of the commander. For example, summit and military focus group participants noted that commanders who are highly engaged and value the DEOCS spend more time developing their survey and tailoring the outreach and follow-up messages to their unit to encourage participation.

### **Survey Timing**

Summit and military focus group participants reported that DEOCS administration typically follows the pattern of administration outlined in policy, with a DEOCS being administered shortly after a commander takes charge of a unit and then annually thereafter. Some Service members also reported that the DEOCS might be administered in response to a significant incident in a command, such as a sexual assault or suicide.

A few military participants questioned the value in administering the DEOCS upon a change of command, reporting concern that incoming commanders might be held responsible for the command climate that was left to them, whereas the outgoing commander would never see those results. Most commanders, however, reported using their initial DEOCS results as a baseline on the climate of the unit they are taking over that can give valuable insights and context to the culture of their new unit.

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*“The first 90 days of assuming command, you’re going to run the survey, but the guy I relieved, his FITREP [fitness report] is already signed. He’s really not held accountable for everything that led up to that. But is it useful for me going forward as a look? Sure.”—Commander*

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## **Outreach and Messaging Strategies**

Military focus group participants were asked to discuss the outreach and messaging used to inform and encourage participation in the DEOCS. Participants described varied approaches to messaging the DEOCS and encouraging participation. Service members reported that some commanders, who they viewed as highly engaged in the DEOCS process, would conduct outreach and follow-up with their unit during weekly meetings to encourage participation. Some commanders would also encourage participation during their walkabouts. In these communications, Service members reported that their commander would describe the importance of the DEOCS and how the responses to this survey can impact change within the unit.

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*“Our commander actually told us the DEOCS is coming up and he encouraged everyone to take it because that’s how we know what’s going on with this squadron.”—Service Member*

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Other Service members described commanders who only mentioned the DEOCS once either in person or via e-mail with a link to the survey and never followed up to encourage participation.

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*“There are some [units] that want to effect change, they want to make an impact. And there are some who check a box, ‘I sent out the DEOCS. Okay. Next.’”—Service Member*

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Many commanders we spoke with also reported extensive use of outreach and messaging to explain the importance of the survey and to encourage participation. Messaging and outreach used by commanders often included a discussion of the DEOCS as a chance to convey important information about work culture to the command and use of the DEOCS as an agent for change in the military workplace. Commanders also reported using non-monetary incentives—which included free meals or early dismissal from work—to increase response rates.

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*“I send them out an e-mail multiple times during the [fielding] period. I visit my guard mounts on their shifts to talk it up. I have my subordinate leaders talk it up as well.”—Commander*

*“We want to make sure that our people understand this survey they’re taking is definitely a huge impact to the squad and this unit they are working on.”—Commander*

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Army EOAs, commanders, and summit participants also discussed the importance of messaging the survey properly to clearly describe the purpose of the survey, how it can impact the unit, and why participation is important. They reported that messaging the survey and improving command climate is a continuous, ongoing process that is never over.

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*“It’s just like selling a car. You got to sell it.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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### ***Impact of Outreach and Messaging***

According to the military focus group participants we spoke with, outreach and messaging have varying levels of impact on DEOCS response rates. Service members reported that an open dialogue, along with motivation and engagement from their commander and other unit leaders regarding the survey, greatly increased their desire to participate in the survey. Commanders we spoke with said that although they always encourage participation, the response rates vary from year to year.

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*“I’m from a [unit] where we sit in front of a computer all day, and I’m at about 33% participant, but I do the same [outreach and messaging]. I walk around, talk [the DEOCS] up to [the unit]. I encourage the feedback that it’ll actually be actionable, we’ll do something with it, but in the end, it is voluntary.”—  
Commander*

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### ***Barriers to Completing the Survey***

Many summit and military focus group participants discussed barriers that impact DEOCS response rates, such as limited computer access and time to complete the survey.

#### ***Limited Computer Access***

According to summit and military participants, some units have limited access to computers, which makes it difficult to complete the DEOCS on the web. Computer access was particularly limited for units who were deployed or offshore during the time of DEOCS fielding. Additionally, a few Service members also discussed how their work computers blocked access to the survey. This was especially true for sailors stationed at sea, where connectivity is often sporadic on ships and information technology security is more stringent due to security concerns.

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*“We had two computers for 50 people that they can use.”—Service Member*

*“I’d guarantee you’d get more [responses] with [DEOCS mobile access].”—  
Service Member*

*“Our maintenance folks, they don’t even really have access to computers and 70% of our force is part-time.”—Summit Participant*

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To improve response rates, summit and military focus group participants widely requested an easy-to-use mobile device functionality, describing how it would address common technology barriers while likely increasing the survey’s response rates.

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*“...Whatever we can do to revitalize and modernize the DEOCS to ensure we can have it on a handheld device. This generation, everyone probably in here has a smartphone. A lot of folks who are in the deployed area do not have access to that technology, so they’re not going to do this on a pen and paper like they have in the past.”—Summit Participant*

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### **Limited Time to Take the Survey**

When talking with Service members about why they had not taken the DEOCS, several mentioned the limited time to complete the DEOCS. These participants found it difficult to sit down uninterrupted and take the survey in one sitting. To address this issue, some Service members reported that their commanders would give their units time during the day to complete the survey. The allocation of specific time to take the survey was also a strategic tactic used by commanders to increase their unit’s DEOCS response rates.

To allow participants with time constraints to complete the survey, several summit and military focus group participants suggested that the survey allow you to log out and then log back in to complete the survey. This would also help those with intermittent internet access complete the survey, as timeouts can force participants to start the survey over from the beginning.<sup>19</sup>

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*“Actually, writing something productive feedback-wise in those comment sections, it takes a while. And then for me that’s also frustrating because I’ll do it in the breaks, but you can’t start it and then stop it. [The survey] will reset, and then you have to start the whole thing over again. Why can’t I hit pause and then come back to it a little bit later? Because I don’t have two hours to sit down and just take the whole thing and give all my feedback.”—Service Member*

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### **Data Accuracy Concerns**

In this section, we discuss data accuracy concerns discussed during the summit and military focus groups, including data falsification, neutral default responses, skewed results to the highly positive or negative, and response rates.

#### **Data Falsification**

Data falsification in a survey is defined as the intentional departure from guidelines or instructions (AAPOR, 2003). In this context, summit and military focus group participants were concerned with the behavior of participants who would straight-line (i.e., select the same response option to a series of questions or every question without reading or consideration, clicking responses in a “straight line”) or speed through the questionnaire. These concerns were

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<sup>19</sup> The legacy DEOCS had the ability for members to log out of the survey and return later to complete the survey, but only for survey administrations that opted to use the print password system, in which the survey administrator received a list of passwords that are unique to each individual within that unit and was responsible for distributing these passwords. Most units did not elect to use this option for administering the survey.



validated by several Service members who described how they and others would select random question options to quickly complete the survey that they felt was too long.

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*“I think the first two times I took [the DEOCS], [I] was strictly clicking through.”—Service Member*

*“If I get off at 5:00, do I want to sit down for an hour and thoughtfully fill this out, after I’ve used all my brain power trying to get through the day?”—Service Member*

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Additionally, some Service member participants reported intentionally falsifying their demographic data to ensure that leadership would not know how they responded to the survey. More information on DEOCS 4.1 participants providing false demographic data is in the section on anonymity concerns.

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*“When you’re going through the survey, it asks what rank you are, what gender you are, and I think those are the two main ones. My thing about it, I usually just lie, because I don’t know if they could tell who I really am.”—Service Member*

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A few summit and military participants expressed concerns about the lack of survey quality control, specifically with the unit-specific passwords. Under this system, participants reported that it is possible for participants to take the survey as many times as they wish, which would increase the response rates and/or skew results in a certain direction. During some of the summit and military focus groups, we asked if anyone had seen or heard of participants using the unit-specific password multiple times to influence DEOCS results. Although many summit and military focus group participants were aware of the security issues and concerns regarding the DEOCS unit-specific passwords, most had never heard of individuals taking the survey multiple times in order to deliberately skew the results. Several Service member and commander participants expanded on this, adding that the possibility of this type of data falsification happening was unlikely due to the amount of effort it would take to respond to the survey multiple times and the general lack of engagement from participants.

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*“For me, my concern is that I know the DEOCS boasts a very high response rate, but with no quality control on how many people are actually taking the survey.”—Summit Participant*

*“An individual can take the survey as many times as they want. As soon as I get that password, I can sit there all day, all night just doing the survey and saying whatever I want to say and I can do 20, 30, 40 before it closes out.”—Commander*

*Moderator: “Have you heard of anyone taking the DEOCS multiple times in one sitting?” Service Member 1: “No.” Service Member 2: “Not that we know of.”*

*Service Member 3: “I’m not saying that it has or hasn’t happened, but I haven’t heard of it.”—Service Members*

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### **Neutral Default Responses**

Research suggests that when survey participants are presented with a neutral response option, they will be more likely to select that option than report their actual opinion (Bishop, 1987; Nowlis, Kahn, & Dahr, 2002). According to our discussions with focus group participants who had taken the DEOCS 4.1, many participants who were apathetic toward their unit’s command climate would select the neutral response option (i.e., “neither agree/disagree”) for most survey questions. Commanders we spoke with were frustrated by this, reporting that neutral response options were a way for participants to effectively opt out of the survey while still completing the survey. They also reported that the neutral response options were difficult to interpret.

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*“We’re just going to click through at the end of the day. If we don’t have a problem, we’re just going to click through this, we’re going to get it down and we’re going to mark ‘yes’ to our flight commander, saying we did do it, we’re good to go. We’re just trying to get it done.”—Service Member*

*“There’s [a response option] neither agree nor disagree. That is a worthless category. ...[Respondents] don’t have to think.”—Commander*

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### **Skewed Results to the Highly Positive or Negative**

Extreme responding is a form of response bias that occurs when participants only select the most extreme options or answers available (Furnham, 1986). For example, on the DEOCS 4.1, which includes a 7-point Likert scale, participants may only select response options 1 or 7. Commanders and summit participants expressed concern that DEOCS 4.1 participants who had very positive or negative views of their unit were most likely to take the survey, and, therefore, the results may be biased and may not accurately reflect the unit’s command climate. A few commanders expanded on this, explaining that a negative DEOCS, regardless of whether it was accurate or not, will negatively impact the morale of the unit and overall command climate.

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*“I know last year, I didn’t take it because I was like, ‘I’m good, everything is going okay.’ But this year, I was like, ‘We’re definitely taking it today because we have leadership, and they changed a lot of stuff without considering [the unit members].’”—Service Member*

*“People who respond are the people who have an axe to grind at some point. So, your data is skewed.”—Summit Participant*

*“I watched a spiral after our boss presented it to the unit. We had a very small amount of people do the survey; it was very negative. Maybe everyone else is happy, who knows? Whenever he presented that to 300 18- to 24-year-olds, they*

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*started believing that we were all sad. Like we are a bad unit, and they didn't think that before.”—Commander*

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### **Response Rates**

Nonresponse bias is when a potential participant, who differs in meaningful ways from individuals who have taken a survey, is unwilling or unable to participate in the survey (Fowler, 2009). Because the DEOCS 4.1 is voluntary, individuals are not required to take the survey. If only a small proportion of individuals respond to their unit’s DEOCS, the low response rate can impact the quality of the data, and impact how leadership interpret and use the results. During discussions with summit and military focus group participants, there were questions regarding the validity of the survey results due to low response rates. For example, some commanders reported that they were slow to trust survey results in units with very low response rates.

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*Commander 1: “So the way I gauge is, if I do a DEOCS and I have a 50, 60, maybe 70% response rate, then I’m very keen. If it’s anything lower than 50%, then I’m like...” Commander 2: “Yeah, the confidence is down.”—Commanders*

*“Last year, I had like a 12% participation rate, which is probably the lowest of the three [DEOCS] I administered. I didn’t take too much stock in it.”—  
Commander*

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When asked what had contributed to low response rates, many focus group and summit participants discussed survey fatigue caused by the high number of DoD surveys given to a unit and how this can negatively impact the DEOCS 4.1 response rate.

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*“Well, sometimes you just get survey saturation ... and so they just choose to not participate.”—Summit Participant*

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To increase response rates, commanders said they would continuously remind their unit about the DEOCS and provide non-monetary incentives, such as time off or free food, to encourage participation. A few commanders also provide “free time” for their unit to take the survey during working hours.

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*“In my old [unit], we would be regularly incentivized [to take the DEOCS]. If we get above a certain percentage, then we’ll cut out a half-day on Friday.”—  
Service Member*

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### **Anonymity Concerns**

Despite the fact that the DEOCS was fully anonymous, nearly all summit and focus group participants discussed anonymity concerns and the impact that these concerns have on data accuracy and response rates. Most Service members we spoke with believed that their unit’s

leadership could identify them by their responses to the demographic questions if they chose to. However, although Service members presented this as a concern, none of them believed that their leaders had actually identified individuals based on their own DEOCS responses. Regardless, some Service members reported that, in order to hide their identity, they would intentionally falsify their demographic data, whereas other Service members decided to skip the demographic questions or not take the survey entirely. This sentiment was echoed by some summit participants who believed that Service members have falsified their demographic data to hide their identity.

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*“So that was why I didn’t fill it out, and I was like, it’s not important if you guys do it this way. If you say it’s anonymous and you want me to be honest, but then you assign me a number, and it’s in alphabetical order...it’s no point in me doing it on the survey.”—Service Member*

*“If I’m a female or if I’m the only Hispanic, will I want to answer this [DEOCS] or do I change who I am in the survey so they [leadership] don’t know?”—  
Summit Participant*

*“There’s still a big question about anonymity on the survey and so [DEOCS participants] feel like they can’t give truthful, honest answers because they don’t believe it’s anonymous.”—Summit Participant*

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Nearly all commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants were aware of anonymity concerns surrounding the DEOCS and how the concerns were enhanced by the demographic questions; however, many commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants we spoke with described the importance of capturing some demographic information. Many Service members, on the other hand, disagreed and stated that the demographic breakdowns were unnecessary to address command climate issues with their unit.

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*“I realize you’re trying to get statistics across different demographics, but at the end of the day, does it really matter? If there’s an issue, there’s an issue, whether it’s related to all that stuff.”—Service Member*

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Commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants also reported that there was a misunderstanding among Service members about what the DEOCS results looked like with regard to demographic breakdowns. For example, nearly all Service members we spoke with were unaware that the DEOCS cannot be administered to units with fewer than 16 members, and survey results are also not reported separately by demographics if there are fewer than five participants within the respective demographic group. This misunderstanding, according to focus group and summit participants, can increase anonymity concerns among Service members, which can lead to decreased response rates.

To address questions surrounding DEOCS anonymity, commanders, and Army EOAs expressed the importance and need to fully explain how the information is reported on the DEOCS to protect the anonymity of participants. Additionally, many Service members asked for more

information covering how the DEOCS is reported, including how demographic data are used and what steps are taken to protect participants' identities.

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*“We encourage the units that just before the survey starts or within the first week of the survey, to have a little class on how the survey is anonymous and talk to the formation and explain the anonymity is protected unless you self-identify.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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## DEOCS 4.1 Content

As discussed in [Chapter 1](#), the DEOCS 4.1 is composed of 56 core multiple-choice questions that are scored on a 7-point Likert scale. In addition, commanders can customize their DEOCS 4.1 with up to 10 LDQs (multiple-choice questions) and five SAQs. These items are unit specific and may be self-authored by the commander and/or survey administrator or selected from a list of suggestions.

### Survey Length and Repetition

Most summit and military focus group participants agreed that the current DEOCS 4.1 is both long and repetitive. Of the participants who had taken the DEOCS 4.1, most said it took between 30 minutes and one hour to complete the survey. When asked what aspects of the survey contributed most to its length, many participants explained that the SAQs took up a significant amount of time, especially if a participant wanted to provide thoughtful written responses.

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*“It took me some time...I think it takes you more time toward the end, when your command puts in their specific related questions, because it’s more related to you. That’s where I think it drags out a little bit.”—Service Member*

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Many also perceived that the questions on the current DEOCS 4.1 are redundant both within the survey and with other surveys. For example, a few military focus group participants reported that the survey appeared to ask the same question repeatedly or only slightly rephrased. This may be because questions within a scale are highly similar and, therefore, feel repetitive to participants. Several summit participants also thought that the current DEOCS 4.1 included questions that overlapped with other required DoD surveys. One summit participant recalled the addition of items from the *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (WGRA)* and expressed concern that items used from other surveys may increase survey burden for participants. Additionally, many of these participants stated that the perceived redundancy of the DEOCS 4.1 with other surveys may contribute to a low response rate.

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*“There is a lot of redundancies within those questions. Get to the point that you’re trying to achieve and then move on, but it seems like, well, I just answered that.”—Commander*

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*“It’s the subtle redundancy. ... ‘Oh, another survey, they’re going to ask me the same thing over and over.’”—Summit Participant*

*“[They] added some WGRA items on the DEOCS. Why would you duplicate when we’re talking about survey burden? We already have a survey that asks the questions. Why do you need to ask them a second time?”—Summit Participant*

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### **Response Options**

The multiple-choice items for the current DEOCS 4.1 are measured on a 7-point Likert scale.<sup>20</sup> The summit and military participants expressed that there were too many response options associated with each question, which added to the survey length. Some Service members also noted that the number of response options was overwhelming and, therefore, made it difficult to complete the survey. To address these issues, some military focus group participants suggested that the revised DEOCS limit the number of response options to reduce survey burden.

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*“I don’t like how it has so many options for how much you disagree or agree. I don’t know what slightly agree and strongly...I don’t know. I agree, but I don’t know how much I agree.”—Service Member*

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### **Specification Errors**

When a concept implied by a survey question differs from the concept that was intended to be measured in the survey, this is referred to as a specification error (Weisberg, 2005). Many summit and military focus group participants reported that the current DEOCS 4.1 does not specify clearly what level of leadership the question is measuring. As a result, participants who had taken the survey reported confusion about how to respond to some questions, specifically those surrounding leadership. To alleviate this confusion, participants suggested the revised DEOCS clearly specify which level of leadership is being measured by a question.

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*“The mandatory questions don’t specify what level of command, so the level of command that is the source of the problem can’t be identified.”—Commander*

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In addition, several military focus group participants reported that key information in some DEOCS 4.1 questions was not sufficiently clear or was overlooked by participants, causing participants to incorrectly respond to the question. For example, one commander noted that several participants within their unit incorrectly responded to question 32 “In the past 12 months, I have known someone in my organization who has thought of, or attempted, or died by suicide.” This commander found that several participants within their unit responded in the affirmative to

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<sup>20</sup> The 7-point Likert scale used on the DEOCS 4.1 includes the following response options: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Slightly Disagree, (4) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (5) Slightly Agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly Agree.

this question without realizing that it was referring to the organization and not just someone they know.

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*“We get a lot of people that say yes to [question 32]. ... They just happen to know of someone, not necessarily reading the instructions completely about [suicide] being in the organization.”—Commander*

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### **Negative Question Priming**

Priming occurs when a person is exposed to a stimulus and it influences how they respond to a later stimulus (Weingarten et al., 2016). Some summit and commander participants expressed concern that the DEOCS 4.1 had negatively worded questions that primed participants to respond more negatively than they would otherwise. For example, DEOCS 4.1 question 28 states “My future seems dark to me.” According to some summit and military participants, items such as these lead to results that appear more negative than they should be, and that the questions prime the participant and commanders for negative responses.

---

*“We’re automatically pushing them toward a negative direction and if you notice across the DoD, all my counterparts, we’re getting away from, we still prevent, but we’re getting away from focusing on preventing negative behavior and problematic behavior and suicidality and all that stuff. We’re actually looking at how do we promote positive behavior and give people the tools and resources they need.”—Summit Participant*

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### **Perceived Measurement Effectiveness**

When asked if the DEOCS 4.1 measures command climate effectively, the response varied among summit and military focus group participants. Although some participants believed that the DEOCS 4.1 measures command climate effectively, others stated that the concept of “command climate” is too complex to simply measure with a survey. Participants also stated that measurement effectiveness was highly correlated with response rates. For example, if there was a high response rate, commanders reported that they were more likely to feel that the survey effectively measured their unit’s command climate, whereas lower response rates instilled less confidence in the results.

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*“I can tell you [the DEOCS] was reliable. It was pretty honest.”—Commander*

*“It depends on what’s the percentage of people from your [unit] taking the DEOCS. I mean if you have a group of 100 that’s in your unit and you only get 30 people taking the DEOCS, those numbers can be skewed.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

*“I think it does [measure command climate effectively], but it’s just not being used. The DEOCS isn’t bad, it’s just, it’s not being used. They’re not utilizing anything. They make it seem like it’s so important.”—Service Member*

### Command Climate Insights

In order to inform content for the updated DEOCS 5.0, military focus group participants were asked to write down terms and behaviors they associate with a positive and negative command climate. Participants were then asked to share their responses and discuss how they might contribute to a positive or negative command climate. This activity was intended to demonstrate the traits and behaviors that commanders and Service members find to be important in a command climate and provide more insight for the construct selection process for DEOCS 5.0.

Figure 3 shows the word cloud developed from this activity. The terms listed are the 20 most frequently cited terms that military focus group participants used to describe a positive command climate (left) and a negative command climate (right). We provide further discussion about these terms and what participants indicated creates and impacts a positive and negative command climate below. The responses were cleaned and combined by OPA when similar to other terms. Three members of the redesign team met in person to review the raw responses and group similar terms when applicable. For example, “never around” or “not available” were reworded as “inaccessible” or a response of “a command that doesn’t waste time on useless items” was changed to “efficiency.” Finally, although we did not conduct this activity with the summit participants, we do include their thoughts on terms and behaviors they associated with a positive and negative command climate that arose during the summit focus group discussions.

**Figure 3.**  
*Military Focus Group Participants Most Frequently Used Terms Describing Positive and Negative Command Climates.*

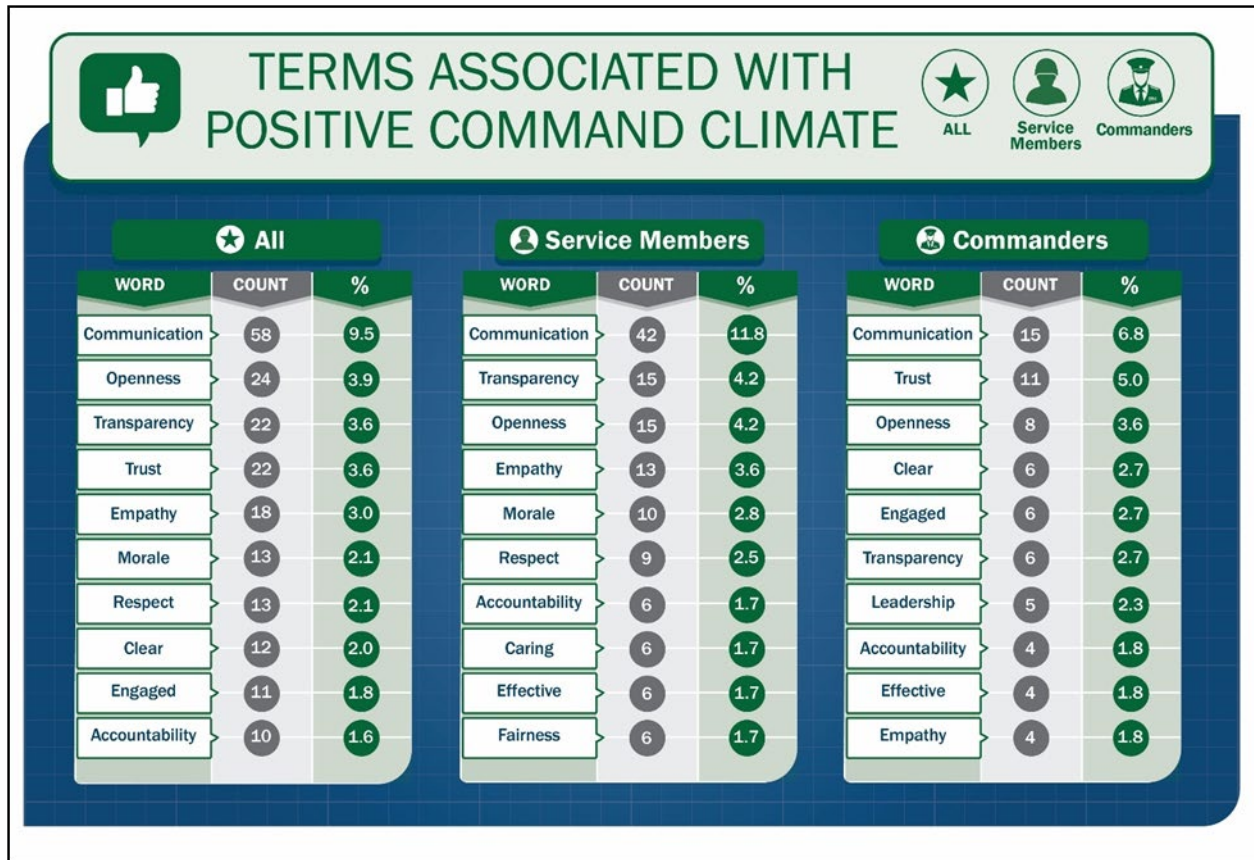




### Positive Command Climate

Figure 4 below shows the top 10 terms all military focus group members used to describe a positive command climate. We also included terms used by Service members and commanders in the second and third column to highlight any differences. The count column describes how many times each term was written during the activity, while the percent column describes the overall percentage the term was used based on the total number of terms (n = 609). For example, the term “communication” was written 58 times among all military focus group participants and accounted for 9.5% of the total number of terms mentioned during the activity. As shown below, the terms most frequently cited to describe a positive command climate were “communication,” “openness,” “trust,” and “transparency.”

**Figure 4.**  
*Terms Associated With a Positive Command Climate*



Nearly all summit and military participants described a positive command climate as one that focuses on open communication built on trust and transparency between the commander and their unit. Participants, particularly commanders and EOAs, stressed the importance of frequently communicating to their unit about what is going on to promote trust and guard against

gossip and speculation. Additionally, one commander reported that open communication allows more timely identification of issues within the unit.

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*“I’ve found that the major difference, that make or break factor, for every command I’ve been under had been clear, timely, considered, and consistent communication. If you don’t have any of those things, then the climate suffers.”—  
Service Member*

*“If there is good lateral and vertical communication throughout the command, a lot of that stuff [i.e., treated with respect and dignity] has already [been] taken care of.”—Summit Participant*

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Trust was also used to describe commanders trusting their subordinates to complete a task without relying on micromanagement. This coincided with empowering the unit, particularly junior leaders, to allow them to make decisions without going up the chain of command for approval. One commander suggested that leaders create a “line in the sand” where junior leaders can operate autonomously at their own level up to a certain point. Any decision that requires additional approval must be brought by the junior leader up the chain of command. Another commander agreed and added that allowing junior leaders to make decisions without their commander’s input allows for a more efficient unit by not creating a slowdown in the chain of command.

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*“You’re allowing them to be leaders and you trust them to make good decisions, you trust them to get the job done and you’re not hovering over them.”—Army  
Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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Participants, particularly Service members, also stressed the importance of having a leader who was engaged, available, and supportive of their needs. Nearly all Service members, when asked about what made a positive command climate, used examples of leaders, both junior and higher ranking, that would walk around and visit their unit. Service members liked having leaders who asked about and were interested in their professional and personal well-being. Service members also said that having a leader who was cognizant and supportive of their well-being increases their morale and “willingness to work those extra hours, when needed.”

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*“The information [about problematic behavior] is fleeting but the engagement of the commanders is another way to try and mitigate some of those [problematic] behaviors.”—Commander*

*“I can’t replace walking around, being there, knowing your people, talking to people. That’s everything from, am I going to be ready to deploy or do I have kids at home or whatever...Know people as individuals and what their skills are and what they can contribute to the mission and all that.”—Summit Participant*

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Another behavior that participants linked to a positive command climate was recognition and appreciation of their work. Service members reported that recognition from their leaders pushed them to be a more engaged worker. One Service member highlighted this point through an example of a Colonel who specifically asked about the Service member's responsibilities and how that fit with his mission. At the end of the conversation, the Colonel thanked him for his work. The Service member explained that it felt great to be appreciated and receive recognition from a high-ranking officer. Similarly, another Service member provided an example in which their commander recognized one of their Airmen for his work and connected that acknowledgement to future performance, now naming this Airman as one of their "number one workers."

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*"The Airman now has ownership of this one thing. That is his thing. It's not just something he's being told to do."—Service Member*

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Similarly, participants reported that a positive command climate was also associated with professional development. Service members reported that it was important to have an opportunity to gain more experience and responsibility while they advance within their careers; however, if this is not possible, participants said Service members become disengaged and will look for opportunities elsewhere, usually by leaving the Service. One commander explained that a positive command climate was associated with "promoting people, who have shown the potential to do more."

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*"It's a clear path for their future, their goals, training to get them there... Once you start to actually show [other unit members] that, then they actually get a little bit more motivated and a little bit higher morale."—Service Member*

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### **Negative Command Climate**

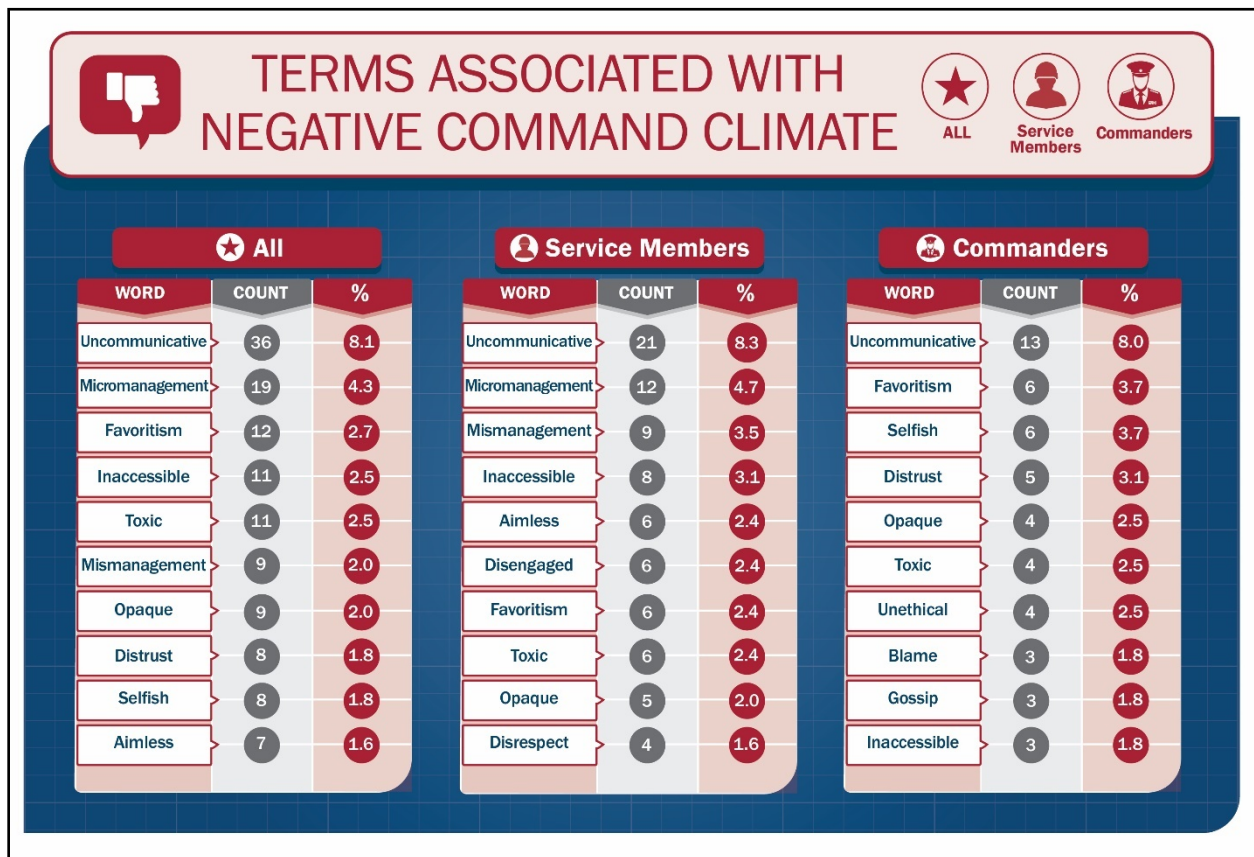
Figure 5 shows the top 10 terms most frequently used by military focus group participants to describe a negative command climate. As with Figure 4, we also included terms used by Service members and commanders to highlight any differences. The count column describes how many times each term was written during the activity, while the percent column describes the overall percentage the term was used based on the total number of terms (n = 443). For example, the term "uncommunicative" was written 36 times among all military focus group participants and was 8.1% of the total number of terms mentioned during the activity. The most frequently used terms to describe a negative command climate were "uncommunicative," "micromanagement," and "favoritism." Below, we describe a negative command climate based on discussions with summit and military focus group participants.

According to military participants, being an uncommunicative leader fosters an environment in which negativity, gossip, and rumors can thrive. This can then lead to a "loss of control" for the leaders of that unit.

*“Without information, it’s a hole and the hole gets filled with whatever. Speculations and other things.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

Another common negative command climate theme was leadership that relied on micromanagement. According to one commander, micromanagement can hinder Service members’ growth, create a negative morale, and create an overall inefficient work environment.

**Figure 5.**  
*Terms Associated With a Negative Command Climate*



*“Decreasing micromanagement, because a lot of leaders, they're used to having more control so it's hard to let it go. Trust your subordinates to do the job that they specialize in. Let them do it instead of, ‘I know how to do it right, and only I know how.’”—Service Member*

According to most military focus group participants, the leaders within a unit have a direct and significant impact on the command climate. Participants used a variety of terms to describe a “bad” leader, including an individual who is apathetic, inconsistent, unfair, uncaring, uninvolved,

or not available. According to participants, this type of behavior decreased trust in the leader, lowered morale, and negatively impacted the unit's productivity. One Service member highlighted this point with an example of going to his leader to ask for assistance and instead of providing support, the leader ignored his problem and told him "That's just how it is." The Service member was frustrated by this response and expressed that this type of attitude from his leadership negatively impacted the overall morale of the unit. To address these issues, some summit participants stressed the importance of leadership development.

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*"It just takes one. It just takes one bad supervisor in one section not holding folks accountable...that's going to spiral to that section and then it's going to touch other sections and before you know, where did this originate?"—Commander*

*"Apathetic leadership in the middle levels seems to be a pretty large problem for us."—Service Member*

*"I put leadership development. Lot of the issues I have seen is a lack of leadership."—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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Finally, military participants stated that a negative command climate was associated with limited or no professional or leadership development opportunities. Most summit and military focus group participants agreed that, without advancement and the opportunity to grow and learn, the morale of the unit and work engagement suffered. Additionally, lack of leadership development can also allow poor leaders to continue their negative leadership style, which can negatively impact the morale of the unit and create further problems.

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*"They get stuck in this job where it's not really their job or they get to a place where they are working in that capacity and they may really love their job but there is not opportunity of them to advance and gain higher education."—Commander*

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## **DEOCS 4.1 Results Reporting**

In this section, we discuss insights gleaned from focus group participants regarding the DEOCS 4.1 report, including analysis and interpretation considerations, briefing of results, actionability, and impact of the results. For an example of a DEOCS 4.1 report, refer to [Appendix K](#).

### ***Analysis and Interpretation***

Most commanders we spoke with described the DEOCS 4.1 results as highly technical, making them difficult to digest and interpret. Some commanders and summit participants stated that the structure of the DEOCS 4.1 report made it difficult for them to identify problem areas. The difficulty was mainly attributed to the report length, which can be close to 100 pages for a larger unit.

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*“I’m going to tell you how [commanders] read [the DEOCS results]. They go to this page [with graphs] and look how much red they have and then they go to the last part and all the written comments.”—Summit Participant*

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Because of this, commanders described relying heavily on their EOA to assist in interpretation of results, and for drawing out key findings. Army EOA participants also reported spending significant time evaluating DEOCS 4.1 results, but did not experience the same difficulty in interpreting the results as the commanders we spoke with.

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*“You got a hundred page [of results]. I know exactly what I need to do with this: make sure my organization is great, but I don’t know how to read it because it looks like French to me.”—Summit Participant*

*“The time-consuming part is actually sitting down after the survey closes.”—  
Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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To address these issues, Army EOAs, commanders, and some summit participants suggested that the revised DEOCS report include simpler, easy-to-understand language and graphics. These participants did not provide specific examples of how the results might be presented, but they did reiterate that the report be easy to digest and interpret so leadership can quickly begin next steps that may include more information gathering (e.g., focus groups) and/or developing and implementing their action plans.

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*“Sometimes I see the DEOCS report for the command level, it comes back with the only language written in it...I don’t know who you’re talking to here. Are you using this scientific language that not everybody is going to grasp? Just make it as simple as possible. Everybody who needs to understand [the results report] can understand it, and we can move forward with the process.”—Summit Participant*

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## **Demographic Data**

There were mixed responses when asked if the revised DEOCS should include demographic breakdowns. Some military focus group participants, particularly Service members, believed it was unnecessary and did not add value, whereas many commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants believed the demographic information enhanced the analysis and interpretation of results as well as subsequent action plans. Some Army EOAs, however, expressed a need to only focus on key demographics such as gender and race.

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*“I think you only need male/female and minority/majority...This allows you to take a quick view.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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## Short Answer and Locally Developed Questions

Commanders and Army EOAs generally found that the SAQs and LDQs were easier to interpret than the core multiple-choice questions.<sup>21</sup> Commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants explained that because the SAQs and LDQs were selected by or developed by the unit, the results from those questions provide greater context and/or are of greater interest compared to the core questions.

In addition, according to commanders and Army EOAs, responses to the SAQs often identified specific problems that could be addressed far more easily than the core questions. Although the SAQs were said to be the easiest to interpret, commanders and summit participants reported that digesting and interpreting these results is also the most time-consuming part because these are comments rather than multiple-choice items. When commanders choose to read through all responses, the process can take quite a while.

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*“It gives you a general feel [for the climate], but it’s not going to give you the why behind it. That’s where the comments come in afterwards, and there’s no chance on the beginning stuff to really provide any of that like, okay, well, you rated this as a strongly agree. Well, why do you strongly agree with this? There’s no vignettes on that for me to dive down deeper.”—Commander*

*“...when you get a survey, like from a large command, thousands of people, you may get 200 or 300 pages of comments, and that’s tough to read through.”—  
Summit Participant*

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## Assessment to Solutions

Summit and military focus group participants were asked about their familiarity with Assessment to Solutions (A2S), the framework developed by Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) that is used for understanding and intervening in command climate.<sup>22</sup> A2S is a multipronged approach that advocates for the use of the DEOCS 4.1 in combination with focus groups, interviews, and record reviews, as well as EOA-assisted action plans to address long-term command climate change. Familiarity with A2S varied during our focus group and summit discussions. Nearly none of the Service members we spoke with had heard of A2S. The commanders, Army EOAs, and summit participants were more familiar with A2S, but the perceived value of the resource varied. Several summit participants valued the A2S because they said it gave further insights and recommendations to commanders. Conversely, only a small handful of commanders said they were familiar with the resource, and none indicated they had used it. Most commander participants reported that they had never heard of A2S.

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*“Assessment to solutions is a great tool for me as a practitioner. So, then I can recommend my commander some things, this is what we need to take. These are*

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the LDQs and SAQs refer to Chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> Chapter 1 has more information regarding A2S.

*the steps we need to do to take some action to see some positive change. It's a great tool, when it's utilized.*—Summit Participant

*"I've never heard of [A2S]."*—Commander

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### **Additional Assessments to Support DEOCS 4.1 Results**

During the summit discussions, some stakeholders said they believed strongly that no changes should be made to a unit based solely on DEOCS results. Instead, they encouraged additional information-gathering methods, such as conducting focus groups, unit observations, or walkabouts, and reviewing relevant documents. One summit participant gave an example of how a follow-up focus group provided valuable insights into DEOCS results and showed that responses to a specific question may not be accurate. Another summit participant described a situation in which they received unexpected DEOCS results. To gather additional insights, the commander conducted a follow-up focus group session and found that discussions in the focus groups did not align with their unit's DEOCS results. More specifically, they found that some participants had misunderstood the survey's SAQs and multiple-choice questions, which had impacted their unit's DEOCS.

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*"I don't want to make any command changes just on the results of the DEOCS. I shouldn't do that, and I should never advise a commander to do such."*—Summit Participant

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None of the military focus group participants we spoke with discussed conducting observations or reviewing the organization's records and reports as additional assessment methods. Some commanders, however, had conducted focus groups with their Service members after they administered their DEOCS. The Service members we spoke with echoed this point and said some of their commanders had conducted their own focus groups (also frequently referred to as "sensing sessions") to gather further insights covering specific topics after the survey was complete.

Both commanders and Service members who had participated in these focus groups reported that the conversations from those sessions increased trust and transparency within the unit. Commanders also reported that these focus groups helped them gather additional context regarding issues highlighted in their survey and were helpful in creating subsequent action plans. Finally, in order to conduct a successful focus group and encourage open and honest communication without fear of retaliation, one commander reported that he requires all participants, including himself, to leave their rank at the door.

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*"The commander actually sat down with the entire unit and addressed everything with everyone individually, and then did groups with all the specialists and below were in one group, and talked to each rank separately, dealing with different issues that might pertain to them."*—Service Member

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*“The first thing they recommend is take this [rank patch] off when you walk in the room. Take it off, hang it up, and say ‘There’s no rank here.’ You get a lot of respect for doing that.”—Commander*

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## **Briefing Results**

Section 587 of the *National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Fiscal Year (FY) 2014* only requires that DEOCS results be provided to commanders and to the next-higher level of command but does not set a standard for sharing DEOCS reports with the commander’s unit. Only about half of the military focus group participants who had taken the DEOCS reported having been briefed on their unit’s results. Of these participants, most reported that their briefing consisted of a 15- to 30-minute in-person PowerPoint presentation showing the high-level findings of the DEOCS. In addition, some participants reported receiving an e-mail with an attachment showing the high-level survey results but no in-person presentation to review and discuss the results as a unit.

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*“So, our percentage was overall, in my flight, our percentage was at 51% red. And we went through every block that was red for our unit, how the Airmen felt. We went through every single block that was red in detail explained. We were in that conference room for at least two hours explaining how things made us feel.”—Service Member*

*“Now I’ve seen different commanders handle it differently here. I’ve seen commanders be really upfront with the DEOCS feedback and they’re like ‘Hey, these are the hot topic things.’ ...And then I’ve seen it the other way where it’s you take the DEOCS survey and then you hear basically nothing. It doesn’t seem there’s a whole lot of standard when it comes to feedback from the DEOCS. Commanders will handle it differently.”—Service Member*

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Some Service members expressed frustration that they put time into the DEOCS and were often not shown the results. Many Service members reported a desire for greater frequency and transparency in commanders’ reporting of DEOCS results. Service members reasoned that, if they took the time to respond to the survey, then the commander has a responsibility to brief the unit on the results. Many commanders and summit participants echoed this sentiment, expressing that DEOCS results should be shared with their units to increase transparency and support for the DEOCS. One summit participant suggested that commanders use the DEOCS results discussion to engage their unit and ask for suggestions on how to make positive impactful changes within the unit. Several Service members echoed this suggestion and offered an example of how their commander gave a detailed review of the DEOCS results and then opened it up for suggestions on how to address some issues within the unit. One Service member explained that “it provided more opportunity not only for people to point out issues that they were seeing, but also to provide suggestions and give even more feedback.” Other Service members reported that this style of briefing made them feel as if their voice was being heard and that effort was being put into improving the unit.

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*“Just like how we’re able to tell you what’s wrong, you should tell us what’s right and what’s wrong and what you can do about it.”—Service Member*

*“Share the results with your people. Let them have access to the report. Discuss with them what action you’re planning to take. Use it as some kind of town hall, open forum-type discussion where your own people can give your ideas on how to implement results.”—Summit Participant*

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Army EOAs reported that they recommend commanders report on every piece of information they take from the DEOCS, even the seemingly insignificant results. Their reasoning being that if commanders are seen to be paying attention to the jokes or the lower-priority responses, then Service members will feel that they have a greater voice and that commanders are really listening to feedback, thereby increasing buy-in for the survey.

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*“I think sometimes in the comments there will just be strange comments that people will type things to see if you’re reading them, like... ‘I recommend we take the building up and move it 400 feet to the left.’ Like crazy things, and as silly as that sounds, those are the ones that we ask the people back briefing, the respondents. We tell them to lead with those responses because that shows that they’re reading the smallest details in the surveys.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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## **Actionability and Impact of Results**

This section describes the perceived actionability of the DEOCS 4.1, as well as how impactful these results have been for participants’ units and the specific impacts that results have had in the past. Summit and military focus group participants reported varying levels of action taken by commanders and the impact of changes made to the unit because of the DEOCS results. About two-thirds of participants we spoke with said they had not seen any changes within their unit because of the DEOCS. Many Service member participants also followed up by expressing frustration that there was no perceivable impact from participating in the DEOCS. Summit participants echoed this issue and reported that commanders being seen as failing to address or act on DEOCS results would cause participants to develop a negative view of the survey and lead them to choose not to participate in the future.

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*“I find it frustrating to have these [DEOCS result] briefings and then nothing happens.”—Service Member*

*“A lot of time the advisor is kind of following [the survey] from a very strict administrative perspective and I think the developmental part of getting DEOCS results is frequently a little lost and there’s not momentum afterwards and there’s no change, which then just makes people more cynical about taking the survey.”—Summit Participant*

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*“If the commander cares, they’re going to sit down and they’re going to dig into [the DEOCS results]. They’re going to say, ‘Okay, these are the areas where we are hurting, these are the areas where we are good,’ and it gives them the opportunity to say, ‘Okay team, let’s sit down. What can I do to address these areas?’”—Summit Participant*

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When we asked the military participants to describe any changes that had occurred as a result of the DEOCS, both commanders and Service members reported that the majority of changes focused on shifts, time off, and addressing work-life balance issues.

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*“Two of our crews weren’t getting their full third day off, they were coming in midnight the day before. I know, almost all the crew members addressed it in the DEOCS, so it was changed, and they switched the day, and they made sure that everyone’s schedule coordinated, so everyone had the same days off, and got their full three days off.”—Service Member*

*“We had one incident here where there was an issue with shift change and comments came out and then the chain of command agreed with what the problem was and authorized the way the shift change was commencing and it dramatically improved on that demographics work snap. They love it.”—Service Member*

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A few military participants reported that the DEOCS results highlighted inefficiencies regarding training, which commanders reviewed and addressed. As a result, the units found that their unit’s command climate improved, along with their productivity level.

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*“For our unit, we made a point about how training was all over the place...And [commanders] were like ‘Okay, so if you can go through and prove that all of the content is consistent between the two [trainings], basically the same content, nothing’s missing, then you only need to do [the training once].”—Service Member*

*“They also streamlined when we were doing training. So it was one of those things where every single month we have a promotion and recognition ceremony and our commander’s call anyway...But some of the processes for us got streamlined and it made it infinitely easier and a better work relationship with our other offices. Where we’re leaving once a month but when we leave once a month, we only have to leave once a month to take care of that.”—Service Member*

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A few military participants also gave examples of how the DEOCS highlighted hostile or discriminating workplace behaviors that were creating a negative command climate. The results allowed commanders to correct these behaviors, thereby improving their command climate.

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*“I saw one instance where a commander was inadvertently discriminating, if you will. Didn’t know he was doing it, didn’t mean to do it, but once it was brought to his attention, he immediately corrected. He was actually pretty embarrassed about it because he didn’t realize it.”—Commander*

*“I had a situation where one of my company areas, the NCO was degrading soldiers and after conducting the survey, the command leadership they’re not down there with the soldiers all the time, they don’t hear, they don’t see. But what came out of that survey, the NCO that was degrading soldiers, that could mean he made a change and now the morale of that company improved drastically.”—Service Member*

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### **Actionability of Short Answer and Locally Developed Questions**

As discussed previously, commanders and Army EOAs found the responses provided to the SAQs and LDQs to be more actionable than the core multiple-choice items, particularly the SAQs, because they allowed for clearer interpretation, examples of problematic areas, and other concerns related directly to their unit. Commanders and Army EOAs also noted that, although these questions were much easier to act upon, they were more time consuming to review, digest, and interpret due simply to the length of the responses.

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*“I think the questions at the end, locally developed questions and the short answer questions...The DEOCS itself is kind of hard to read and they can just scroll right down to those questions and most of the individuals that speak, that provide those answers are providing not only what’s going wrong with the organization, but ways to fix the organization.”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

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### **Disciplinary Action as a Result of Defense Organizational Climate Survey**

When asked if commanders should face disciplinary action for negative DEOCS results, the majority of summit and military focus group participants said no, although some Service members felt they should. Participants across populations generally communicated that a pattern of negative DEOCS results should lead to an investigation of the issues behind the results. According to these participants, this provides a source of accountability for commanders through the DEOCS without being too reactionary. Some summit participants expanded on this and noted the DEOCS 4.1 could also be used as an instrument for self-awareness and professional development.

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*“I guess it depends on the severity of the reports. If someone is having horrible reports every single time and nothing’s changing, then you got to shift something.”—Service Member*

*“But the important thing is that it is not used for grading the command, because once you start doing that, then there’s reluctance to participate, and you don’t start reporting things...”—Summit Participant*

*“If we start down that rabbit hole, I think the survey is going to become a weaponized tool because people can put whatever they want, they can answer it however they’d like...”—Army Equal Opportunity Advisor*

One Service member described an experience in which DEOCS results led to a commander and other leaders being removed because of their poor leadership. However, most summit and military participants believed that the results should not be punitive. One summit participant explained that associating this tool with negativity could disincentivize commanders from requesting a DEOCS for their unit. For example, a commander who believes they will receive negative DEOCS results and knows that they could receive disciplinary action for a negative report may be less likely to prioritize administering a DEOCS within their unit, even if they could really benefit from soliciting feedback during a difficult time for the unit.

*“I have a completely different outlook on the DEOCS survey... We’ve actually had commanders removed from their position within the last year because they weren’t commanding correctly. I’ve personally had my E-8 removed from her position because of commanding incorrectly or she was not being that chief to us that we needed.”—Service Member*

## Discussion

DEOCS stakeholders who participated in the summit as well as military focus groups provided a variety of insights on DEOCS survey administration, content, reporting, and follow-on actions. These insights impacted all aspects of the DEOCS redesign, as well as our plans for future enhancements. Overall, the majority of summit and military focus group participants were aligned in defining the purpose and goal of the DEOCS as a tool for commanders, and were wary of changes that would turn the DEOCS into a “report card.” Many participants saw value in the survey, but stressed that it was only valuable if leveraged correctly to positively impact a unit’s command climate. Most summit and military participants also expressed the need to improve DEOCS messaging and outreach strategy to clearly communicate the survey’s purpose, encourage participation, and address participants’ anonymity concerns.

Nearly all participants we spoke with believed that the level of engagement of the commander and other leadership overseeing the DEOCS was directly tied to the overall response rates and subsequent impact of the survey. For example, summit and military focus group participants reported that having leadership clearly communicate the purpose and goals of the DEOCS and ensure that their unit had time to take the survey greatly improved response rates. By contrast, commanders and leadership who viewed the survey as a “check” on the to-do list and did not encourage participation saw lower response rates. The most prominent barriers to completing the survey were having access to computers, quality internet access, and sufficient time during the day to take the survey. To address these barriers, several summit and military participants

requested that the DEOCS be easily accessed via a mobile device and allow participants to take the survey across multiple sessions.

When discussing the survey structure and content, most summit and military focus group participants agreed that the current DEOCS 4.1 is too long and seemingly redundant both within the survey and with other DoD surveys. Service members also reported that while they generally enjoyed responding to SAQs, these questions are also the most time consuming. Furthermore, many of the participants found the 7-point response options to be overwhelming.

When asked if the DEOCS 4.1 measures command climate effectively, summit and military focus group participants provided a variety of responses. Some participants stated that command climate is too vague and difficult to interpret and that the DEOCS did not adequately capture this complex topic, while others disagreed and reported that the survey measures command climate effectively. Several summit and military participants also discussed a lack of question specificity regarding leadership levels, which caused confusion for both survey participants and unit leaders in interpreting the DEOCS results. This issue is particularly salient given the emphasis participants placed on various aspects of leadership and leader behaviors when describing both positive and negative command climates, highlighting the importance of targeted leadership questions as part of the DEOCS redesign effort.

Indeed, the vast majority of focus group participants provided similar descriptions of a positive and negative command climate, often focusing on leaders. Positive command climates included those with supportive, transparent, available leaders who were highly communicative and encouraged trust and cohesion within the unit. Many participants also agreed that leadership's support and encouragement of professional development opportunities contributed to a positive command climate. Conversely, negative command climates lacked clear communication, ignored problematic behavior, and had leaders who were unavailable and unsupportive. These descriptions of positive and negative command climate were highly informative and an important part of the selection process for developing the content of DEOCS 5.0 ([Chapter 6](#)).

When discussing the DEOCS 4.1 report for commanders, a common issue expressed by both commanders and summit participants was the difficulty associated with digesting and interpreting DEOCS 4.1 results. Additionally, although commanders reported that short answer results took more time to digest than the multiple-choice results, they did find this information easier to interpret and act upon, and generally quite useful.

When discussing actions springing from the DEOCS, the feedback from summit and military focus group participants varied. Although nearly all focus group participants agreed that it was important to brief the unit on the DEOCS results, only about two-thirds of participants we spoke with had seen the results of their unit's survey. A few participants were able to provide examples of changes that occurred within their unit because of the DEOCS, such as schedule changes to improve work-life balance, whereas many others indicated they had never seen changes as a result of the DEOCS. To increase buy-in and response rates, and to maximize the utility of the DEOCS as a tool, several summit and military participants noted the importance of not only sharing the results with the unit, but also leveraging the results to positively impact the unit's command climate. Relatedly, most participants believed that commanders should not face disciplinary action for a single poor DEOCS result; however, many of these participants also

reported that commanders should be held accountable for consistently poor DEOCS reports, or for failing to act in response to poor DEOCS results.

In the next chapter, we describe our efforts to collect additional data directly from Service members through the DEOCS redesign survey, which included both qualitative and quantitative input from the field.





## Chapter 3: Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Survey

*Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Adon Neria, Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Julia Dahl, Kasmira Miran, Brittany Owen, Kimberly Hylton, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner*

### Introduction

One of the most important stakeholders that the Office of People Analytics (OPA) considered during the redesign process was Service members themselves. Although Service members do not often get to see Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) results, they are the source of these data and are privy to the transformative effects the survey can have by providing commanders with actionable insights about their unit. In order to collect data from Service members, OPA conducted focus groups ([Chapter 2](#)). But, as a survey and research organization, we also understand the value in providing participants the opportunity to provide truly anonymous feedback.

In order to collect this feedback, OPA conducted a survey of DEOCS participants assessing survey content, user experience issues, and accessibility. To do so, we leveraged the DEOCS 4.1 research block between March and April of 2020. Service members and DoD civilians who took the DEOCS 4.1 during this period could voluntarily opt into this secondary survey about the DEOCS 4.1 itself and its administration. The DEOCS research block has been used in the past by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) and OPA to test new items and scales prior to adding them to the core DEOCS. Survey data collected via the DEOCS research block were provided to the survey operator (i.e., OPA) and were not included in the unit's DEOCS report. This effort was a unique opportunity to collect information directly from a large number of DEOCS survey participants who provided insight into what they appreciated or disliked about the DEOCS while those issues were fresh at hand. This provided additional breadth beyond the information that was collected from Service members via the DEOCS redesign focus groups.

The DEOCS redesign survey consisted of three waves of questions fielded consecutively on the DEOCS research block. The questions within each wave corresponded to three separate yet often overlapping and entangled domains of interest for OPA: survey content, survey administration, and user experience. These three waves were fielded in two-week long periods in order to collect approximately 3,000 responses for each wave of questions. Each wave contained both multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Simple descriptive statistics were calculated for the multiple-choice questions. In order to analyze the open-ended questions, we used a series of data science text analytic methods to analyze and synthesize a large volume of text data quickly and efficiently and used this output as a “jumping-off” point to employ more traditional qualitative research techniques for further analysis. Results from this effort informed all aspects of the DEOCS redesign described in this report, as well as future planned enhancements.

The current chapter describes the methodology employed in the DEOCS redesign survey, the results from this effort, and a brief discussion of implications for the DEOCS redesign.

## Methods

The redesign survey used a convenience sample of DEOCS participants. After participants completed the DEOCS, they were given the option to launch the research block portion of the DEOCS to respond to the redesign survey. Results from the redesign survey were available to OPA, but were not included in the results provided to commanders. Results from the DEOCS research block were not weighted and are not representative of the entire population of DoD military members and civilians.

Table 2 shows the fielding schedule for each wave of the redesign survey. Each wave was offered to all DEOCS participants during the three fielding periods, which closed after approximately 3,000 responses were collected per wave. Each wave consisted of a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions, resulting in a total of 44 questions across the three waves.

**Table 2.**  
*DEOCS Redesign Survey Fielding Schedule*

Fielding Period	Multiple-Choice Questions	Open-Ended Questions	Total Questions
09 March to 13 March	9	6	15
20 March to 02 April	10	4	14
14 April to 24 April	13	2	15

## Participants

Across all three waves, a total of 9,019 Service members and DoD civilians accessed the DEOCS redesign survey via the research block. Participants opted into the survey after they completed the DEOCS 4.1. All participants to the DEOCS during the data collection period were invited to participate in the redesign survey. Table 3 shows the demographic composition of the participants who provided at least one closed-ended response, split across the three waves.

## Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Survey Items

The DEOCS redesign survey effort was intended to collect actionable information that could be used to inform decisions during the redesign process as well as to collect metrics for assessing the impact of the redesign on participants, including questions about user satisfaction with the survey content and the survey process. These data will also serve as benchmarks for examining the impact of the DEOCS redesign. A similar survey will be fielded again in 2021 to compare user satisfaction before and after the redesign. The full survey instrument is available in [Appendix L](#).

**Table 3.**  
**DEOCS Redesign Survey Respondents Demographic Profile**

Demographic Group	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Total</b>	3,006	100%	2,999	100%	3,009	100%
<b>Component</b>						
Active	1,940	65%	2,048	68%	1,752	58%
Guard	383	13%	362	12%	477	16%
Reserve	344	11%	249	8%	497	17%
Civilian	297	10%	282	9%	175	6%
Did not identify	42	1%	58	2%	108	4%
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	1,432	54%	1,579	59%	1,776	64%
Navy	383	14%	345	13%	260	10%
Marine Corps	486	18%	565	21%	591	21%
Air Force	302	11%	144	5%	118	4%
Coast Guard	69	3%	36	1%	12	<1%
Did not identify	0	<1%	0	<1%	0	<1%
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	2,338	88%	2,351	88%	2,416	88%
Officer	334	13%	318	12%	341	12%
Did not identify	0	<1%	0	<1%	0	<1%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	2,476	82%	2,505	84%	2,523	84%
Female	528	18%	494	17%	479	16%
Did not identify	2	<1%	0	<1%	7	<1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	1,441	48%	1,446	48%	1,487	49%
Minority	1,126	37%	1,133	38%	1,134	38%
Did not identify	439	15%	420	14%	388	13%

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are participants with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment included in analyses.

The questions asked during each wave of the redesign survey were categorized into three subjects. First, questions concerning DEOCS survey content were intended to inquire about whether Service members believe that the types of issues that the DEOCS 4.1 covers (broadly capturing sexual assault prevention and response, organizational effectiveness, and equal opportunity) are important for a unit climate survey. Second, questions concerning the survey administration were intended to inquire about issues related to the process of fielding a DEOCS, including outreach and accessibility as well as the degree to which Service members believe the climate assessment process can yield practical changes to unit culture. And third, questions concerning user experience were intended to inquire about issues related to the survey-taking experience, including the survey layout, question text, timing of the survey, mobile optimization,

and the burden of the survey. We particularly sought to understand what parts of the survey process could be improved by understanding how participants interacted with the survey and participants' perceptions of the role of the DEOCS in their unit or organization. For example, we asked participants whether they had ever been briefed by a leader on their DEOCS results and if they expected to be briefed on the results of the DEOCS they just completed. Finally, we used multiple-choice questions to obtain practical information about how DEOCS users take the survey, including questions regarding the best way to reach participants (e.g., DoD e-mail, personal e-mail, text) and whether participants would prefer to take the survey on a mobile device. We also asked participants whether they answered the questions honestly and if they feared retaliation because of their responses. Although these results were not generalizable, as they were not scientifically sampled and weighted, these questions provided OPA with important contextual and operational information that was essential to the redesign process.

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Demographic Variables**

We analyzed quantitative results from the DEOCS research block separately by demographic group, including component, Service, paygrade, gender, and race/ethnicity. The variables used for these analyses are described below.

### ***Component***

Participants who identified as military members on the DEOCS (Q4) were also asked to indicate their current status in their military unit (*Component*) among six options (Q9), including active duty member, traditional guardsman (drilling), guardsman on active duty, traditional reservist (drilling), reservist on active duty, and not applicable (N/A). The two reservist and guardsmen statuses (traditional and active duty) were collapsed, respectively, and civilians were retained as a separate category in order to create a four-level Component variable for analysis (*Active, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian*).

### ***Service***

Participants who identified as military members on the DEOCS were also asked to indicate their branch of Service (Q8)—*Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard*. Civilians were not asked to identify their branch, and thus results by Service are reflective of military members only.

### ***Paygrade***

Participants who identified as military members on the DEOCS were then asked to indicate their paygrade (Q7) among six options: E1–E3, E4–E6, E7–E9, WO1–CW5, O1–O3, and O4+. For simplicity and sample size reasons, we created two paygrade groupings: for *Enlisted* personnel (E1–E9) and *Officer* personnel (W1–O4+). Participants who identified as civilians were asked to indicate their paygrade (Q5) among six options. For simplicity and sample size reasons, results for civilians were not analyzed separately by paygrade.

### ***Gender***

Participants were asked to indicate their sex (Q1) as either *Male* or *Female*.

## **Race/Ethnicity**

The DEOCS contained two questions that assessed race and ethnicity (Q2–Q3). For race and ethnicity, participants were classified based on self-reported categories consistent with requirements of the Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (1997). The definitions for racial/ethnic categories are describe below.

- **Non-Hispanic White:** Members who identify as only White and not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Total Minority:** Members who identify as one or more of the races other than White and/or identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Black:** Members who identify as only Black with regard to race and who do not identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Hispanic:** Members who identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino regardless of what racial group they may also identify as.
- **AIAN:** Members who identify as only American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) with regard to race and who do not identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Asian:** Members who identify as only Asian with regard to race and who do not identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **NHPI:** Members who identify as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) with regard to race and who do not identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Two or More Races:** Members who identify as more than one race and who do not identify as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.
- **Did not identify (DNI):** Participants who did not provide enough questions to determine their race/ethnicity.

For simplicity and sample size reasons, data were analyzed for two groups: Non-Hispanic White members (members who identify as only White and not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino) and total *Minority* members (all other groups combined).

## **Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign Survey Analyses**

### ***Convenience Sample Considerations***

Data collected via the DEOCS research block represent a convenience sample of DEOCS survey participants. As is the case for the overall DEOCS, the DEOCS research block does not employ scientific sampling and weighting procedures. Therefore, estimates generated from these data represent those individuals who were given the opportunity to complete a DEOCS during the relevant time period, who chose to complete the DEOCS, and then who further opted into the DEOCS research block. These data are not representative nor generalizable to the entire

population of DoD military members and civilians and should not be interpreted as such. Scientific survey techniques are recommended to further understand perceptions of the DEOCS in the DoD community.

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

Unweighted frequencies were calculated for all survey items at the total level (including all participants), and separately for demographic groups (including by *Component, Service (Military Only), Paygrade (Military Only), Gender, and Race/Ethnicity*). Given the relatively small sample sizes and for ease of interpretation for the purposes of the DEOCS redesign, demographic groups were analyzed as follows: *Component (Active, Reserve, Guard, Civilian), Service (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard), Paygrade (Enlisted, Officer), Gender (Male, Female), and Race/Ethnicity (Non-Hispanic White, Minority)*.

### ***Text Analysis***

Due to the large number of responses and the short time frame of the DEOCS redesign effort, the analysis of the open-ended questions required the assistance of advanced text analytics to expedite text analysis efforts that what would otherwise require a team of qualitative analysts. The field of machine learning has developed text-analysis techniques called “topic modeling” that can be used to substantially reduce the amount of work required for an analyst to categorize unstructured text comments. These techniques work by converting text into numerical data and training a computer algorithm to “read” these data, which can be done considerably faster than by a team of analysts. The results of such analyses are numerical summaries and representative examples of comments that an analyst can use to draw inferences about the whole data set.

Traditional topic modeling generally involves three phases. First, data preparation is conducted to convert every comment into numerical data containing information about which words were used in a given comment (out of every single word that every single commenter used). The process of data preparation is crucial to the overall results and performance of the final models; additional information about this step is described in forthcoming sections. Second, using this numerical information, relationships are identified between different words that tend to be used together. These relationships, or “word distributions,” are organized into “topics” when certain words are identified that occur very frequently together and very infrequently with other words. The entire data set is analyzed to identify and define a set number of topics that are expected to exist within a set of comments. Third, the individual comments are analyzed to assign them to the topics that were just defined. For the purpose of this analysis, we used latent Dirichlet analysis (LDA), which assumes that people can discuss many different concepts in one statement, so individual comments can be assigned to multiple different topics.

### ***Data Preparation***

Conducting any kind of topic modeling requires substantial preprocessing of the data before they can be entered into a text analysis program. For this analysis, we used the R statistical programming environment, which has packages specifically written for topic modeling.<sup>23</sup> Using

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<sup>23</sup> This analysis used open-source R packages called: *tidyverse, readxl, data.table, tm, text2vec, SnowballC, topicmodels, and rmpfr*.

these packages, the following text processing procedures were conducted to make DEOCS text data suitable for analysis. Uniformity is an important factor in ensuring that the algorithm will recognize different instances of the same word so all text documents were converted to lowercase (otherwise the words Kick and kick would be recognized as different words). Similarly, words are “stemmed” to remove prefixes and suffixes from similar words. This ensures words like kicks, kicked, and kicking are all converted to kick. Special attention was given to contractions; words that are commonly used together in a contraction were converted to a contraction (e.g., do not to don’t; can not to cannot; must not to can’t; and did not to didn’t). Additionally, to avoid confusing the algorithm, extraneous characters like punctuation (including apostrophes and hyphens) and numbers were removed from all comments. In summary, all capitalization, variations of the same word, and non-alphabetical characters were removed except for spaces to achieve uniformity prior to analyses.

Notably, because the analyses involved identifying patterns of word usage and identifying the frequency that certain words are used by groups of commenters, there is a premium placed on words that impart meaning that is important to the analyses being conducted. For this reason, several procedures were conducted to remove words that were not likely to convey meaning to the analyses. The first such process involved removing grammatical operators (e.g., conjunctions like for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so) as well as 571 so-called “stop words” from the “SMART Stop Word List” (including words like actually, before, concerning, did, every, etc.).<sup>24</sup> Stop words are generally considered to convey little to no meaning to a text and would otherwise be overlooked by human coders when trying to extract themes from a text document. Stop words are removed when conducting topic modeling to avoid forcing the computer to process large amounts of meaningless words, increasing processing time and load, as well as to avoid introducing spurious information into the algorithm. Similarly, words that were less than three characters long were removed to further reduce the requirement to process meaningless text. Finally, words that only appeared in a single comment were removed because words that are only used by one participant will not load on topics identified and thus do not contribute to the analyses.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Data Set Creation***

Once the data are preprocessed to reduce the amount of spurious information that is introduced to the algorithm, a series of procedures are conducted to the raw data to create the analytic data set called a Document Term Matrix (DTM), which serves as the input for the LDA. The configuration of these DTMs is key to the performance of the LDA and generally consists of a very large mathematical matrix where the rows represent individual comments (or “documents”), the columns represent every single word (or “term”) that was used across all the comments, and the individual cells are represented by counts of the number of times a word was used within a comment. However, combinations of words may impart more meaning when they appear together than they would when they appear apart from each other.

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<sup>24</sup> A full list of these SMART stop words can be found at <http://www.lextek.com/manuals/onix/stopwords2.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Higher thresholds can be used, such as ensuring that all words being analyzed can be found in more than two, three, four, or however many other comments before they are analyzed; one is generally considered the minimum.

One possible configuration of a DTM may involve treating common “bigrams” (two-word combinations like “bad morale” or “restricted report”) or “trigrams” (three-word combinations like “sexual assault prevention” or “work life balance”) as individual words rather than separate words. When multiple-word combinations like bigrams or trigrams are included into the analyses they are called “terms.” Further, several different weighting procedures exist that can be used to assign differential importance to terms according to how frequently they appear within versus across comments. One such weighting procedure that was used included this analysis called term-frequency inverse-document-frequency (TFIDF), which weighs the frequency count of individual words within the cells of the DTM against the inverse of the number of different comments the term appears in. So, the weighted frequency of terms that appear in fewer comments is reduced while the weighted frequency of terms that appear in more comments is increased.

When a weighting procedure is used to adjust the frequency counts of the terms found within a DTM, the data set is referred to as a wDTM (i.e., weighted-DTM). The selection of how to configure a DTM, or whether to use a wDTM to extract topics, is driven entirely by experience. The analyst cannot know until they have conducted an exhaustive number of similar analyses on extremely similar forms of text-data (because text-data varies so widely) how best to configure a DTM for their problem set. For this reason, the decision was made to conduct analyses using both DTMs and wDTMs configured using only unigrams, only bigrams, only trigrams, and all possible combinations thereof. The configuration with the best statistical properties (to be discussed) was carried forward to a final set of analyses that are discussed in full in the results section of this chapter.

### ***Topic Extraction***

The process of extracting topics using LDA is highly technical. LDA is a “generative probabilistic model” that uses the data that are fed into it (in this case, the comments) as the basis for generating probability distributions regarding the components within the data (in this case, information about the words in the comments). The LDA algorithm analyzes word distributions (or groups of words that tend to occur frequently together and very infrequently with other words) and defines topics according to a series of complex probability estimates for every single word in the entire data set, based upon the actual words the participants used in their individual comments. So, in this case, words that participants used frequently together, or are used frequently by certain demographic groups, have higher probabilities than other words. LDA assumes that there exists a set number of topics across the whole data set, and that every individual word has an unknown probability of belonging to one of these topics. So there are two sets of probabilities: (A) known probabilities of words that Service members used when they submitted comments, and (B) unknown probabilities of words associated with the topics that the Service members talked about in their comments. Broadly speaking, LDA takes information about A to estimate B.

Defining the number of topics for LDA to extract is crucial to the function of the algorithm, and similar to deciding upon the configuration of the DTM, it is controlled entirely by the analyst who must evaluate the statistical performance of several different models evaluating several different numbers of topics. For the purposes of this analysis, we ran 49 different models estimating probabilities for two to 50 topics. Moreover, we iterated each of these 49 models



1,000 times to investigate a total of 49,000 different configurations of topic assignments. This number is multiplied by six when taken together with the number of different DTM and wDTM configurations that were considered, resulting in 294,000 models that were analyzed as part of this effort.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Model Evaluation***

The property of generative probabilistic models, such as LDAs, to make unique inferences of data that are being analyzed—using the data that are being analyzed—means that there is frequently no objective standard by which one may evaluate such a model’s performance. Other variations on LDA have been created in which analysts are able to define parameters according to the kinds of relationships that they would expect, given their prior experience with a specific problem or with the kinds of data that are being analyzed. However, where there is no prior experience to guide analysts, as is the case here and in much of the data science literature, the traditional standard is generalizability (or, replicability). That is, splitting the data into test and holdout samples, running similar procedures on each, and comparing how similar the results yielded from the test and holdout samples are to each other. Several metrics exist that evaluate the similarity of test and holdout models for the purposes of identifying the appropriate number of topics to extract from an LDA. However, most are computationally intensive, especially where there are a large number of configurations being run, as was the case for this project. For this reason, the present research used the harmonic mean of the log likelihood (HMLL), a highly popular metric that trades off computational accuracy for greater efficiency and interpretability.

Originally proposed by Newton and Raftery (1994), the HMLL provides quick approximations of larger-scale Bayesian posterior probability distributions—such as those generated by an LDA—summarized into a single integer (usually in negative space). A collection of these integers can then be used across a large number of configurations of an LDA model as a shorthand estimation of the degree to which a particular configuration of a model generalizes across test and holdout samples. Subsequent research finds variability in the approximations that are yielded using HMLL, as other metrics are more precise if more computationally intensive (Wallach et al., 2009). However, use of HMLL remains popular for its speed and ease of use. For the purposes of this research, a set of HMLL integers was generated for each configuration of the data per question asked of the participants and graphed into 72 instances of the following graph displayed in Figure 6.

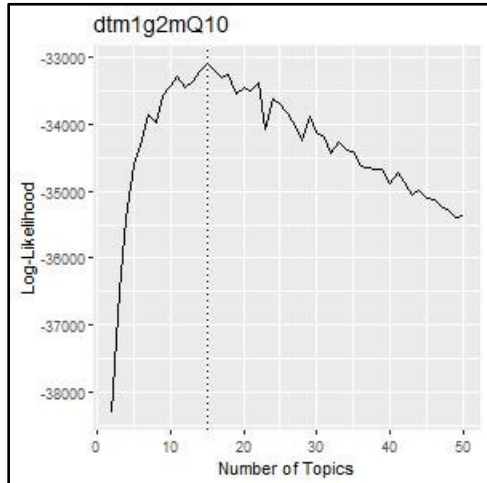
Figure 6 illustrates that for a single question and a single configuration of the data, 50 comparisons were run to evaluate the degree to which the LDA model produces similar results across test and holdout samples of the same data. Generally, the model with the lowest HMLL (depicted as the highest point in the graph since the data are in negative space) are considered the best so the number of topics that are chosen tends to correspond to the lowest HMLL (15 in the case of Figure 6). The results of these models were then visibly compared against those of other

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<sup>26</sup> This does not include so-called “hyperparameters,” which, similar to the specific number of topics the LDA must extract, are numerical values that must be set by the analyst for a machine learning algorithm to function. It is considered best practice to evaluate the performance of every hyperparameter before analyzing the results of an LDA. However, doing so would have increased the number of configurations to consider from 249,000 to at least 996,000. Due largely to time considerations, for the purposes of this analyses, all hyperparameters were set to their default values by the package that was used for analysis.

models with approximately similar HMLL values and the topic model that yielded the most intuitive-to-understand results were selected for analysis. In some cases, none of the models yielded human-readable or intuitive models for which no topic models were selected for further analysis. This occurred for question 14 of the first deployment, questions 11, 12, and 14 for the second deployment, and questions 14 and 15 for the final deployment.

**Figure 6.**  
*Latent Dirichlet Analysis (LDA) Topic Model*



### *Results Summary*

A topic modeling algorithm can output results in a number of flexible formats to conform to the requirements of the analyst who will be synthesizing the results. In this case, the result of these processes emphasized term-frequencies for each of the open-ended questions to highlight commonalities in the language Service members used when responding to the survey. Each question yielded a term-frequency matrix (TFM), which lists the most frequent terms (usually, bigrams) identified for each question, a topic-word distribution (TWD), which lists the individual terms and their probability of being associated with each of the topics identified by the LDA, and a topic-comment distribution (TCD), which shows each comments' probability of being associated with each topic. The LDA algorithm could only produce topic models when the Service members' responses were sufficiently long (in terms of word count) and contained enough variation in the terminology used that the algorithm could make associations between participants. Topic models were produced, when the data warranted, resulting in 69 total models representing nine of the 12 total open-ended questions asked.<sup>27</sup> That is, for these nine questions, a set of topics was identified and extracted by the algorithm (ranging from 10 to 13 topics per question) and the top (most frequent) words per topic were outputted showing their probabilistic prevalence. These topic models allowed for OPA researchers to examine these "topics" for coherence in order to make data-informed judgments about the "themes" presented. Analysts

<sup>27</sup> In the instances when a model was not produced, it was often because the responses were not long enough; for example, many one-word responses.

used these topic models in conjunction with the TFM, TWD, and in particular, the TCD mentioned above, to get a sense of the associations the algorithm was able to make across the entire data set. The “topics” that were extracted were used to identify a set of overarching “themes” that were present across the set of comments and were used to inform the qualitative analyses described below.

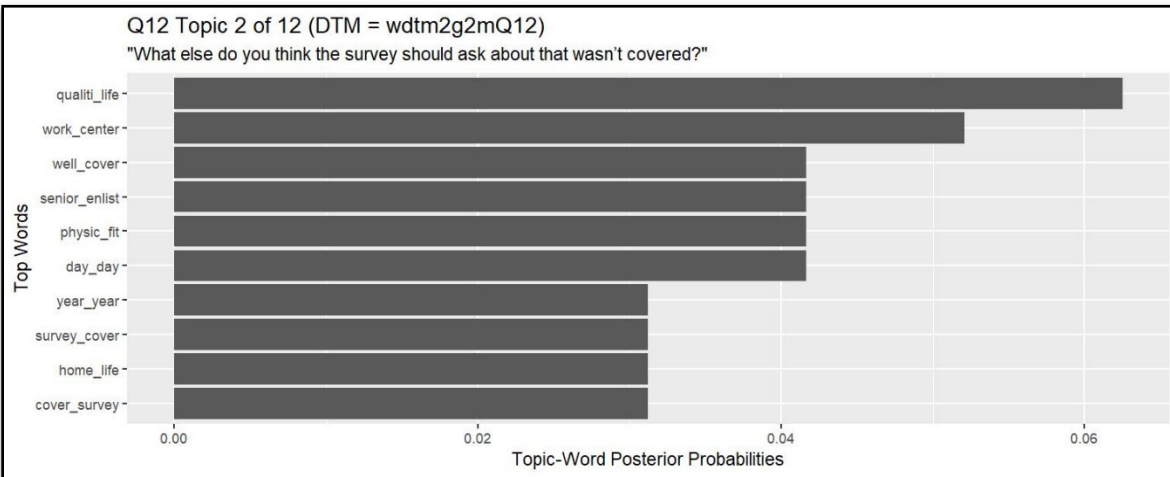
### *Qualitative Analysis*

Due to constraints in the size and scope of the corpus (number of responses and length of responses), many of the topic models did not possess high levels of coherence. This is not uncommon in the topic modeling literature and analysts are free to discard individual topics and associations that the algorithm makes when they do not make sense. We used a combination of prior contextual knowledge with the results of the topic models, TFM, and TCD to analyze the data and interpret the results. Although there were 69 topic models produced, not all of them were equivalent in coherence or novelty. Many were repetitive or lacked ontological consistency. Because of this, we employed a process that combined the robust curative capacity of the topic modeling with the critical knowledge and subject matter expertise of an OPA qualitative researcher.

The process began by examining the topic models that were produced for each open-ended question and then attempting to infer overall themes from output identified as a “topic” by the LDA output. Each open-ended question produced between 0 and 13 “topics” that were modeled by the aforementioned LDA process. A sample of the output is shown below in Figure 7. The output of the LDA process looks like a bar chart with the posterior probabilities of the terms on the X axis and a list of terms that were “grouped” on the Y axis. To understand these diagrams, the analyst first looked at the terms on the Y axis and grouped them thematically and based on the valence of the question (e.g., “What do you think should be included on the survey?” or “What do you think should not be included?”). Once the analyst had grouped the key “terms” of that topic, they reviewed the topic frequency table as well as the topics totals table in order to see how well the identified bigrams and unigrams were represented in the comments. Additionally, the OPA analyst read through all raw comments from that question to ensure that their understanding of the key topics was correct and to identify if the program had missed anything. This process was done for each topic model generated. Then, overall topics were sorted by question and organized by categories generated by the analyst. This produced thematic results by question, but also incorporated the frequency of any outstanding unigrams or bigrams that appeared in the responses in the term frequency table (e.g., although it was not necessarily a “theme,” the term “morale” appeared frequently and was thus included as a standalone topic).

The overall qualitative methodology used to interpret the topic model and term frequency data was based on Glaser’s and Strauss’ (1967) grounded theory practice of the constant comparative method, which involves comparing one piece of data (i.e., text) to another to determine similarities and differences. Similar data are then grouped together into categories based on the researchers’ prior knowledge of the subject matter (Charmaz, 2014). This method provided the ability to uncover patterns and continuities in what was otherwise an incredibly large and idiosyncratic data set. An example of this overall process is illustrated in Figure 7.

**Figure 7.**  
*Sample LDA Output*



### *Sample Qualitative Process with Topic Model Output and Themes*

Figure 7 is one topic generated from the LDA output for the responses to the research block question, “What else do you think the survey should ask about but wasn’t covered?” Note the various bigrams generated by the topic modeling and their posterior probabilities.

This was just one of 12 “topics” outputted by the LDA process for this question. This topic had a decent amount of coherence, but not all of the bigrams were necessarily related in meaningful ways. In order to make sense of this output, the analyst sought out these bigrams within the comments themselves to understand how they appeared contextually. You can see that the bigram “quality\_life” (quality of life) had the highest posterior probability within this matrix, meaning that it had high associations with other bigrams produced. Upon reading all of the comments, the analyst systematically organized the comments by both the bigrams represented here and created categories, or “codes,” that fit with the contextual information. So, for example, a category was created for “quality of life” and associated with terms within the comments themselves that were related. These included items like “home life,” “day to day life,” and “physical fitness,” which are also represented by identified bigrams. These categories were generated for all topics that appeared within a particular question and when there was overlap with other topics, this was noted. These sorts of categorizations were done for each question and, eventually, were incorporated across questions with similar valences (e.g., “What is important?” as opposed to “What is not important?”). Each question on the survey produced an LDA output that had many potential “themes” that needed to be analyzed for coherence and organized like the ones mentioned above. This analysis resulted in multiple overarching themes that ran across questions and comments (discussed below) and key words (like “morale”) that appeared repeatedly as either bigrams or unigrams, signaling their importance for consideration.

## Results

Below we describe the results of descriptive analyses of the closed-ended (i.e., multiple-choice) questions on the research block, followed by a description of the results from the open-ended comments. These results informed all aspects of the DEOCS redesign, from the survey administration system to the survey content to reporting.

### Closed-Ended Results

Below we highlight key findings from the closed-ended questions. The full results are available in [Appendix M](#). As noted above, these are unweighted data and the results only represent the views of those who completed the optional DEOCS research block. Although we cannot quantify how much these views may diverge from the total population, it is important to keep in mind that these individuals chose to complete the DEOCS first, and then these individuals further chose to complete a set of optional additional questions after completing the core DEOCS. Thus, we might assume that the individuals who responded to these questions are more favorable toward surveys generally, and/or the DEOCS specifically, and/or have fewer barriers to completing surveys (which may include but are not limited to time constraints, IT-related limitations, contact limitations that impact recruitment, and other operational considerations that are particularly relevant in a military context). We are unable to quantify or correct for the bias in these findings that arise as a result. Nevertheless, these findings represent another window through which to understand perceptions of the DEOCS, and taken together with other information (e.g., focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and the open-ended qualitative survey responses), help to provide a more complete, albeit imperfect, picture of Service members' and DoD civilians' perceptions and priorities with respect to the DEOCS.

Although we examined results separately by demographic group, we did not test whether these differences were statistically significant. Any differences between groups should be interpreted with caution.

### ***Survey Administration and User Experience***

#### ***Survey Access***

Several questions were designed to capture information regarding how people accessed the DEOCS and whether they encountered any challenges in doing so. This information is critical for ensuring the survey is accessible and removing as many barriers to response as possible.

Results suggested few challenges with the recruitment and log in process (remember, however, that this is among those who successfully completed the survey). Specifically, the majority of participants indicated the way they were notified about the survey made sense (79%), and most people understood why they had been asked to take the survey (79%). In addition, the majority of participants (80%) agreed the log in process was reasonable. Survey administrators play a crucial role in recruitment and outreach for the DEOCS, and indeed more than half of participants indicated appreciation for the role of the Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) or survey administrator in the DEOCS administration process (55%), although many provided a

neutral response (34% neither agreed nor disagreed), suggesting that this role is not equally prominent across all organizations employing the DEOCS.

Several questions indicated some room for improvement in user experience. For example, one in five participants (20%) agreed that they encountered a computer-related challenge in completing the survey. In addition, only approximately half of participants (52%) reported liking the survey website, whereas 40% were neutral and 8% did not like it, suggesting some room to improve positive perceptions of the site itself.

Devices used to complete the survey were fairly evenly distributed across three major types, with 32% completing it on a work/military computer, 29% completing it on a personal computer, and 38% completing the survey on a mobile device. However, component differences were noteworthy, with nearly half of active duty members completing via mobile device (49%) compared to only 2% of civilians. Civilians primarily completed the survey via a work/military computer (75%). The plurality of Reserve and Guard members completed via a personal computer (49% of guardsmen, 52% of reservists).

The most common place for completing the survey was at off base housing (42%), followed by a military location (31%), on-base housing or barracks (18%), or another work location (9%). Again these location patterns differed notably by Component, with the plurality of active duty members completing the survey at a military location (42%) followed by on-base housing or barracks (29%), and the plurality of Reserve and Guard members and DoD civilians completing the survey at home off base (64% of guardsmen, 84% of reservists, 53% of civilians).

Taken together, these results indicate there is not a one-size-fits-all best approach in terms of how, when, and where people take the DEOCS. Thus, efforts to improve accessibility and remove barriers to access must consider the unique situations and constraints facing the many unique populations that the DEOCS serves. Limiting access to the survey to military/work devices (e.g., by adding a CAC-enabled log in) would certainly present a significant barrier to response, as most participants did not access the survey via a military/work computer. However, the site must be accessible from military/work computers, as approximately one-third of participants completed the survey this way. Finally, mobile access is important because this was the device used by nearly half of active duty members.

### ***Survey Burden and Survey Response***

Survey length, survey burden, and survey fatigue are concerns commonly voiced by stakeholders and in focus groups. However, among those who chose to complete the optional DEOCS research block, these concerns appeared less salient.

The majority of participants (72%) had been asked to complete at least one other military survey in the past 12 months, with half (51%) being asked to complete two or more military surveys in addition to the DEOCS in the past year. Civilians received fewer survey requests than military members did, although more than half (65%) still received at least one request in addition to the DEOCS.

Nevertheless, most participants indicated the number of surveys they are asked to complete is “about right” (71%) and a minority (12%) indicated wanting more opportunities to give survey

feedback. Seventeen percent indicated they are asked to provide too much survey feedback. The perception of “too many surveys” appeared less common for Navy members (7%), women (11%), and DoD civilians (11%).

Out of a list of eight factors that might convince them to take a survey, participants most often selected “knowing how the survey will be used to benefit my unit in the future” (31%) and “assurance that my responses are kept confidential” (29%) as being most effective for boosting their likelihood to participate. The least endorsed factors were “a friend telling me they had already taken the survey” (2%), “receiving a request to take the survey from my Service Chief” (3%), and “receiving a text message to remind me to complete the survey” (3%). These patterns were largely consistent across all demographic groups.

Here again, it is important to recall that these results are among those who chose to complete the survey. Survey fatigue may be greater among those who chose not to complete (perhaps driving their nonresponse), and the factors that might motivate nonresponders to participate may differ also. Additional research with DEOCS nonresponders is needed. Nevertheless, these results provide important insights to inform messaging to encourage DEOCS participation.

### ***Privacy and Anonymity***

Several questions on the survey focused on perceptions of privacy and anonymity. Just over one-quarter of participants agreed they were concerned about the confidentiality of their responses (27%), and less than half disagreed (44%), which is striking given that these are the individuals who nevertheless chose to complete the DEOCS. Across multiple similar items, concerns about privacy appeared higher among active duty members and also higher among racial/ethnic minority members compared to non-Hispanic White members, and highest among those who chose not to disclose their race/ethnicity (which is perhaps unsurprising as choosing not to disclose may have been driven by privacy concerns). Furthermore, one in four participants agreed that it is risky to be totally honest about issues covered on the DEOCS (25%), whereas another one in four neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (26%).

Despite these concerns, the vast majority (86%) indicated they answered questions on the survey honestly, which was largely consistent across demographic groups.

### ***Follow-On Actions and Accountability***

Finally, multiple questions about the DEOCS process focused on perceptions of outcomes and follow-on actions after the DEOCS is completed. In general, results suggest room for improvement in ensuring DEOCS results are shared with unit members and used to inform action. For example, slightly less than half of participants agreed that commanders (in general) use information from surveys like the DEOCS to inform their decision making (47%).

Several questions focused on expectations regarding the outcomes of the DEOCS the participant had just completed. Only approximately half of survey participants were confident that they would be briefed on the survey results (51%). Somewhat more favorably, more than half of participants (62%) believed their commander will use information from the survey to improve the unit, although nearly one in four neither agreed nor disagreed (24%) and 15% disagreed.

Beyond the unit commander, approximately half (52%) agreed that the answers on the survey will be used by higher-level leadership to improve the climate of their unit.

Respondents were also asked about their previous experiences with DEOCS follow-on actions, including whether their current commander or any of their previous commanders ever talked with the unit about issues raised in a DEOCS. Almost two-thirds of participants (63%) said “yes,” whereas over one-third of participants (37%) said “no.” Finally, when asked whether a commander had ever shared an action plan to address issues raised in a DEOCS, 56% indicated “yes” while 44% indicated “no.”

### ***Survey Content***

Several of the survey questions were designed to provide insight into perceptions of the content of the DEOCS. On the whole, these indicated high levels of satisfaction with DEOCS content, with some room for improvements. First, the majority of participants (74%) indicated the questions on the survey were clear and easy to understand. In addition, most believed the survey asked about important issues that their commander needs to know about (72%). Women (81%) appeared more likely than men (70%) to agree.

Across all demographic groups, a majority of participants agreed that the issues raised on the survey should be monitored by higher-level leadership (66%), with approximately one-third strongly agreeing (33%). However, approximately one-quarter of participants (26%) indicated “neither agree nor disagree,” suggesting some degree of ambivalence on this topic. Approximately one in 10 (9%) disagreed. These patterns were largely consistent across demographic groups.

One-quarter of participants (25%) indicated there were problems in their unit that were not asked about on the survey, whereas one-third (34%) provided a neutral response. Less than half (41%) disagreed, which suggests some opportunity to improve coverage of the DEOCS in terms of topic areas. Our analysis of the open-ended comments, described in the following section, provided rich data regarding Service member perceptions of important topics to cover on the DEOCS, including what topics were seen as missing in the DEOCS 4.1.

### ***Open-Ended Comment Results***

Although the quantitative data provided many useful insights, and will provide important pre- and post-metrics to compare against after the launch of DEOCS 5.0, the qualitative data were particularly useful during the redesign process. We used the results from the topic modeling, themes, and comments from the qualitative data to gain a better and more holistic understanding of Service members’ views of the survey, which we then used to inform various parts of the process, most notably the content selection. Below we describe the key findings.

### ***Survey Administration and User Experience***

#### ***Survey Access***

Respondents discussed the need to improve access to the survey. Generally, this came down to IT challenges and there were hundreds of comments requesting that the survey be more “mobile



friendly” since many Service members lack access to computers. In a similar vein, there were general concerns about IT infrastructure and access to technology. While providing access to computers and the internet at military locations is generally outside the scope of the DEOCS redesign, making sure the platform works well on mobile devices was a priority of the DEOCS redesign effort.

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*“Make the survey available via cell phone and have a link texted out. You would reach a larger population by having the survey reachable via cell phone. Lack of government computers means that soldiers at the lowest level do not check their e-mails often and are not put on distribution lists to receive the survey.”—Active Duty, Army, O1–O3, Female*

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### ***Survey Length and Survey Burden***

Somewhat contrary to what the closed-ended data would suggest, many participants who completed the supplementary research block survey commented that they felt that Service members are overly burdened with completing surveys. This was a common response, particularly when we asked about potential improvements to the survey. It was often recommended that we make “the survey shorter” to make the process of completing the survey less burdensome. Additionally, participants had specific recommendations about which content and issues were most important over others (discussed more below in “content” section). However, there was general consensus that survey length, as a proxy for survey burden, was an issue.

Importantly, although many participants discussed the length of the survey as a concern, many also suggested they be given more opportunity to provide context for their response in the form of more “open text” (open-ended questions with short answer response) opportunities and a less restrictive character limit (the open text portions had a 1,000 character limit).

### ***Privacy and Anonymity***

Echoing what we saw in the closed-ended data and in the DEOCS redesign focus groups, another important area of concern for participants was anonymity. This was characterized in a number of different ways. Concerns over retaliation and reprisal for submitting honest and candid feedback on the DEOCS survey was one of the primary themes. This manifested in some participants suggesting that OPA get rid of the demographic questions, while some recommended that the redesign remove specific demographic questions like “rank.” Many of the responses suggested that, particularly in smaller units, there is a belief that it is currently far too easy to associate DEOCS responses with individuals. Some suggested that being able to see how DEOCS results are presented to the commander could help alleviate concerns about the results being identifiable.

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*“Get rid of asking about rank, regardless of whether or not it is tracked or not the second you ask someone what their rank is it is automatically assumed that you can cross reference the rank with the comments.”—Army National Guard, E7–E9, Male*

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*“Commanders need to be more transparent in showing the results to sailors so they can understand whether or not they are truly anonymous. Most people feel that reprisal would be in their future if they say how they really feel.”—Active Duty, Navy, E7–E9, Male*

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### ***Follow-On Actions and Accountability***

Many participants indicated a perception that there was not enough accountability for their commanders based on the results of the DEOCS and that they rarely, if ever, saw improvement after a survey was completed. Some of these anecdotes and narratives described by participants were viscerally and emotionally compelling as they described their frustration with their command’s lack of responsiveness. Consistent with the quantitative results, many comments indicated that commands were not briefing out the DEOCS results to their subordinates, which contributed to a high amount of dissatisfaction with the DEOCS process. Respondents described how not hearing the results of the survey or failing to see actions arising from it makes unit members believe that their concerns are not being listened to and that their command is not taking the survey seriously, which contributes to unit members failing to take the survey seriously.

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*“Send the responses to the commander's rater and senior rater. There is currently no accountability for the survey.”—Active Duty, Army, E1–E3, Male*

*“Commanders rarely listen and take action for the responses given.”—Reserve Component, Army, E4–E6, Male*

*“Make a corrective action or response that is visible to Brigade Commanders (O6) and higher. That way it enforces the concept and provides a response to feedback over time. It should be included in commanders’ files to review for boards. A pattern could be established and weed out toxic leadership.”—Active Duty, Navy, E4–E6, Female*

*“I would say that responsibility would fall on your command team, but from there you need good senior NCOs ensuring that the message is delivered down to the lowest man! The whole back-brief philosophy, it applies here. Putting info out is great, but if you’re not making sure that that info is reaching the lowest levels, then what is the point?”—Active Duty, Marines, E4–E6, Male*

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### ***Survey Content***

*“Make sure to make [the DEOCS] feel personal. A lot of time, I notice my eyes drifting away and losing interest. It isn't until questions that ask about my personal self that I feel I should speak up because I see the stress in others. I care for my crew and I want a fair Navy for not only myself but for them and anyone else who follows in our footsteps.”—Active Duty, Navy, E1–E3, Male*

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*“Give more options for people to speak to certain issues. Sometimes I have a lot to say, but the questions being asked don't meet the threshold for me to speak to it. Especially for questions in regards to fairness, accountability, or why I'm exhausted.”—Active Duty, Army, O1–O3, Female*

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Because two of the open-ended prompts on the research block survey asked about survey content, some of the most compelling information we received in the qualitative data were about what participants liked about the current survey content and what they thought was missing or could be improved. This information was critical for assessing topics and items for inclusion on the survey ([Chapter 6](#)).

### ***Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment***

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*“Stop asking so many questions about SHARP [Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention], sexual harassment, and discrimination. Maybe focus more on training opportunities, leadership, and unit readiness or things inherently military.”—Army National Guard, E4–E6, Male*

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One content recommendation that came up repeatedly was the insistence that OPA consider having fewer SAPR questions on the survey. There was a sense that although these questions were important, participants often found them repetitive and felt like other important aspects of command climate (including morale, stress, and leadership) were neglected or not given enough consideration. Importantly, when asked what some of the more important issues were to cover on the survey, sexual assault and sexual harassment were still ubiquitously the top-reported issues. However, many who commented on their importance also pointed out that other surveys (including the Workplace and Gender Relations surveys and Service-specific surveys) also cover these issues, and suggested these topics could be covered more efficiently (with fewer questions) to remove redundancy and allow for other important topics to also be captured via the DEOCS.

### ***Morale***

Although participants identified many important issues to include in the new DEOCS survey, morale was by far the most frequently mentioned issue or topic, and accounting for misspellings, morale appeared as the single most common “unigram” related to climate revealed throughout our qualitative data. Respondents generally did not believe that the current DEOCS adequately captured morale and its impact on command climate.

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*“Please ask about morale and how the unit raises it or keeps it high. In my experience, if there is low or no morale, everyone hates going to work, and that's going to lead to low scores and numbers across the board.”—Active Duty Army, E4–E6, Male*

*“Find out about chronic, toxic work environments that degrade morale and may contribute to Airman suicides.”—Active Duty, Air Force, O1–O3, Female*

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### ***Work-Life Balance***

Another of the most common and specific recommendations for inclusion on the new survey were questions that address a sense of work-life balance within an organization or unit.

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*“Marines’ workplace productivity is directly related to their mindsets, living conditions, and overall happiness with their current situation. You don’t have to be happy to be a good worker, but you should never be miserable at the workplace and if you are, then your productivity is negatively affected. Unfortunately, the ‘adapt and overcome’ mentality and phrase allowed subpar leaders to progress and disregard real issues.”—Active Duty, Marine Corps, E4–E6, Male*

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*“Ask about commutes, cost of living, and telework options utilized. Many employees would be less stressed, more productive, and better engaged using technologies and telework options.”—Active Duty, Navy, E4–E6, Female*

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### ***Leadership***

Following morale and work-life balance as top recommendations, there was an overwhelming call to include questions on leadership, particularly toxic leadership, at varying levels. Along with a focus on toxic leaders, another common theme that emerged from the qualitative data was a desire to be able to parse out the various “levels of leadership” that exist in real organizations and commands, but are not necessarily represented in the survey. Respondents shared a desire to specify their immediate supervisors and commanders in order to have some clarity as to who they were talking about. Respondents described perceiving a lack of clarity in the question text of DEOCS 4.1 where the categories of leaders identified did not accurately reflect many participants’ actual chain of command or did not provide a clear opportunity to provide targeted leadership feedback. Many expressed a desire for the survey to focus more on “mid-level” leaders like NCOs, whose leadership more directly affects junior Service members in particular.

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*“Ask the hard questions of who is toxic and needs to be removed with suggestions of how to fix it.”—Army National Guard, E7–E9, Male*

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*“Toxic leadership or unproductive leadership needs a place in the survey. It consistently ruins units and it is still an issue.”—Army National Guard, E4–E6, Male*

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### ***Mental Health, Stress, and Substance Use***

Many participants expressed a desire to have the survey include questions about stress, mental health, and drug and alcohol abuse. Respondents mentioned that these issues have a deleterious effect on their organization’s climate but are often overlooked by commands, and particularly problems with alcohol often go undetected because of certain cultures within their Service.

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*“A lot of stress factors occur outside of work [i.e., health-related topics] that can still bleed over into stress-levels at work. They're not exclusive, there should be a question that focuses on health concerns.”—Active Duty, Navy, O1–O3, Female*

*“Maybe add to the survey some alcohol- and drug-related question. Having an anonymous poll of alcohol abuse, suspected alcohol abuse, addiction, drug abuse, et cetera, could potentially offer the unit a more accurate way of judging how serious of an issue it is. Depression, anxiety, and stress-related mental illnesses occur way more frequently than this institution believes, and they aren't putting forth enough effort to recognize and treat Marines with these issues.”—Active Duty, Marine Corps, O1–O3, Male*

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### ***Other Key Topics***

Although not as frequent as the themes outlined above, other issues that were frequently cited included communication, stress, trust, and fair treatment. There were multiple comments encouraging an exploration of different issues seen by participants as being especially important for being able to affect positive change in commands; for example, issues around commuting and telework. Finally, there was a fair amount of enthusiasm for addressing issues relating to career opportunities, particularly for junior Service members.

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*“The survey needs to be more focused on enlisted leadership and career advancement. The biggest problems are administrative issues. Not getting your order or promoted because of admin problems is a morale killer.”—Active Duty, Army, E1–E3, Male*

*“The survey should focus more on how much an individual trusts their unit to help with personal situations. Many people do not feel comfortable disclosing to their units when they need help and will suffer alone or let their careers suffer.”—Active Duty, Marine Corps, E4–E6, Male*

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### ***Civilian vs. Military Considerations***

Multiple participants identified the importance of tailoring the DEOCS for DoD civilians and Service members. Many of these comments focused on DEOCS 4.1 questions about sexual assault reporting for military members (i.e., restricted vs. unrestricted reporting). Unlike most questions on the DEOCS 4.1, these questions are a knowledge check regarding military policy. However, the policies governing sexual assault reporting differ for military members and DoD civilians, and thus many DoD civilians are not familiar with military sexual assault reporting policy and perform poorly on these knowledge-based questions. These items can drive an unfavorable score for “sexual assault response” on the DEOCS 4.1 for civilian-heavy organizations, which many participants believed was not an accurate reflection of the climate in these organizations.

## Discussion

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*“Try to put yourself in our shoes. We balance a lot; how to be good airmen, how to be good role models for civilians and family, we go home and can’t turn off the ‘work switch’; we try to decompress (some turn to drinking; others, excessive eating). Most come to work with a mask; a mask to hide the ‘stress’... I would say THINK of how we can fix this. It’s all about asking us the right questions for us to change and to let supervision know our airmen need help.”—Active Duty, Air Force, E4–E6, Female*

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OPA aimed to gather input from a large number of DEOCS survey participants to inform all action areas of the DEOCS redesign (administration, content, and reporting) and to provide metrics for assessing the impact of the redesign. The survey fielded from March 9 until April 22, 2020 and collected closed-ended and open-ended responses from over 9,000 Service members and DoD civilians. Many of the themes echoed what we heard in the DEOCS redesign focus groups ([Chapter 2](#)), although we also uncovered new information, particularly regarding topics that Service members and DoD civilians want to see on the DEOCS.

This information was a powerful signal from the field about the direction the redesigned DEOCS should take and had a direct impact on the DEOCS redesign. Quantitative data (multiple-choice questions) provided crucial information about participant’s experiences with technology in relation to the survey and expectations around privacy and communication with leadership about the survey results. These responses from the field also provided critical feedback about the content and experience of the survey that were weighed heavily in OPA’s decision making in terms of how to make the platform more accessible ([Chapter 5](#)) and what content to include on the survey ([Chapter 6](#)).

Although the analysis of the quantitative data collected from the research block was fairly straightforward, the effort to analyze the qualitative data was more complex and involved the use of advanced computerized text analytics. This effort is part of OPA’s broader goal of bringing cutting-edge text analytics to the DEOCS and other efforts. In this case, the use of text analytics allowed us to quickly process and analyze text comments from thousands of users in the field in order to inform next steps in the redesign. The open-ended comments were particularly informative for our selection of new survey content for the DEOCS 5.0 ([Chapter 6](#)).

Because OPA considers Service members to be the most important stakeholders in the DEOCS redesign (along with commanders), we leveraged every analytical tool at our disposal in this effort to understand, analyze, and document these important signals from the field and incorporate their feedback the redesign. The next chapter describes the efforts OPA undertook to gain feedback and guidance from policymakers in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Services, whose input was also essential for the success of the redesign.

## Chapter 4: Stakeholder Conversations

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*Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Julia Dahl, Jessica Tercha, Clancy Murray, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Brittany Owens, Amanda Barr*

### Introduction

The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is one of the Department of Defense's (DoD) largest data collections and has a long and important history within the Department ([Chapter 1](#)). Because of its broad reach and the granularity of information collected, the DEOCS is of great interest and value to numerous parties throughout the Department. Unit commanders, who use the information to inform their command decisions, are the original and primary audience for the DEOCS. However, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and Service policymakers and senior leaders have increasingly seen the DEOCS as an important source of climate information, with the ability to provide decision makers at all levels with actionable information about the various echelons of the DoD workforce.<sup>28</sup>

Because the survey and the data it collects are so fundamental to providing leaders at various levels with actionable insights, the Office of People Analytics (OPA) set out to speak to a diverse set of leaders, policy offices, and researchers in order to ensure that the redesign was informed by those who plan to rely on the data now and into the future. This was indeed a high-stakes endeavor, as OPA's task was to support the areas of the survey that were working (excellent response rates, impressive buy-in from commanders) while also attempting to "revitalize and modernize" the survey in important ways that would increase its utility to leaders and those in the field.

Therefore, as part of the information-gathering process for the DEOCS redesign, OPA conducted semi-structured conversations with key DEOCS stakeholders in order to better understand the tactical, operational, and strategic significance of the DEOCS survey. These stakeholders included policy officials and senior leaders from relevant organizations within the Services and OSD. Many of these individuals themselves were also current or prior Service members, including some who had served as commanders or Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA). The purpose of these interviews was to provide the DEOCS redesign team with the unique perspectives of stakeholders on a variety of issues affecting the survey, its administration, and reporting.

Although OPA considers Service members and commanders to be the most important stakeholders in the DEOCS redesign process, policy officials and leadership from the Services and OSD are also crucial. We recognize that these stakeholders may have different needs, perspectives, and expectations from the DEOCS survey and data than those on the ground. Because of this, we devoted one of our information-gathering lines of effort to this group.

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<sup>28</sup> Applications beyond the unit level are relatively new within the history of the DEOCS and as of this writing, numerous potential applications of DEOCS data beyond informing the unit commander are under discussion and/or underway. Many of these emerging applications were not underway when we conducted the stakeholder interviews in late 2019 through early 2020, but are underway as of March 2021. Chapter 10 has a discussion of these potential uses of DEOCS data.

Although the DEOCS is first and foremost a commander’s tool to assess and respond to their climate, DEOCS data also represent a powerful tool for informing key policy and personnel decisions. Indeed, the redesign effort intends to address the decision-making needs of stakeholders at various levels, and these considerations informed decisions regarding survey administration ([Chapter 5](#)), survey content ([Chapter 6](#); [Chapter 7](#); [Chapter 8](#)), and survey reporting ([Chapter 9](#)). Because of this “dual mission” of the DEOCS, informing both commanders in the field and strategic policy decisions, we strived to thoughtfully balance the needs of our varied stakeholders while also ensuring the primacy of the DEOCS as a commander’s tool.

OPA looked to the focus groups with Service members and commanders ([Chapter 2](#)) and to the DEOCS redesign survey ([Chapter 3](#)) to gather information about the survey “on the ground,” while our conversations with policy office and Service branch stakeholders were aimed at elucidating lessons learned from working with the DEOCS and its data in different contexts. Additionally, we wanted to understand what constructs senior leaders and policy officials thought were important for inclusion on the survey. Finally, working with policy offices and upper echelon Service points of contact (POC) allowed us to gather any additional documents or information they had that related to the DEOCS that we had not already located through our literature review.

Like the data from the focus groups, the information gathered from stakeholders was entirely qualitative. In order to understand and incorporate these data, OPA synthesized notes from these meetings and identified key themes and recommendations. We used these recommendations as part of our process of content development and in the selection of specific constructs for inclusion on the survey ([Chapter 6](#)). Furthermore, we used stakeholders’ unique insight into the administration of the survey to enhance our ability to create a streamlined administration and reporting process for DEOCS 5.0 that would meet the needs of commanders and our policy office stakeholders. Finally, guided by stakeholders’ informational needs, we designed key methodological changes to DEOCS data collection to improve the reliability and validity of DEOCS data for future aggregation and use for strategic decision making ([Chapter 5](#); [Chapter 9](#); [Chapter 10](#)).

## Methodology

Starting in October 2019, OPA began in-person conversations with representatives from OSD and Service policy offices, and these conversations continued into the spring of 2020.

### Participants

We sought to identify a diverse set of leaders, researchers, and policymakers who could assist us in creating a survey and process that would “walk the line” between improvement and continuity. These stakeholders were defined as:

- Offices and organizations historically designated as key POCs for DEOCS or command climate assessments in OSD or the Services (e.g., DoD Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [ODEI]; Service Military Equal Opportunity [MEO] directors; DEOMI).



- Climate assessment experts in OSD and the Services.
- Experts and policy officials relevant to the DEOCS strategic target outcomes (discussed in more detail in [Chapter 1](#)); OSD or Service level (e.g., DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office [SAPRO])

The following offices participated in the stakeholder conversations:

- OSD offices and organizations:
  - DEOMI met with OPA on 11/22/19
  - The Defense Suicide Prevention Office met with OPA on 12/18/19
  - ODEI met with OPA on 12/19/19
  - SAPRO met with OPA on 11/26/19
- Service MEO offices:<sup>29</sup>
  - U.S. Army Equity and Inclusion Agency (USAE&IA) met with OPA on 12/18/19
  - 21st Century Sailor Office, OPNAV N17, met with OPA on 12/5/19
  - Marine Corps MEO Office met with OPA on 12/19/19
  - Department of the Air Force Military Equal Opportunity Office met with OPA on (A1Q) 11/25/19
  - The National Guard Bureau Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion met with OPA on 11/20/19
- Other Service organizations:
  - Air Force Resilience Directorate<sup>30</sup> met with OPA on 3/13/2020

## Protocol

A flexible protocol was designed to guide in-person stakeholder interviews, allowing for appropriate variation depending on the needs, priorities, and areas of expertise of the particular individual(s) involved in each conversation ([Appendix N](#)). However, the contours of the protocol sought to obtain similar information from all.

<sup>29</sup> The Coast Guard was not invited to participate in stakeholder interviews; however, we solicited and received feedback from the Coast Guard at multiple points during the survey design process.

<sup>30</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to schedule conversations with all Service SAPR/SHARP policy officials as originally planned; however, these offices were given the opportunity to provide feedback at multiple stages during the DEOCS 5.0 design (described further in [Chapter 6](#)).

The interview protocol was guided by our goal of eliciting participants' views on:

1. The purpose of the DEOCS, including differences of opinion regarding the purpose of the survey, either within stakeholder groups and/or between stakeholder groups.
2. The stakeholders' general goals and priorities for command climate assessment and what they hoped to achieve via the DEOCS as a tool for commanders as well as what they wanted to achieve via the application of DEOCS data at the strategic level. This included questions regarding promising measures or scales of interest as well as measures or metrics that seem to be working well on the current survey or that stakeholders were interested in adding.
3. Finally, we aimed to understand what was working and what was not on the current DEOCS (4.1), including everything from survey registration, survey content, and survey reporting to data analytic tools and capabilities.

In addition to these considerations, the redesign team also leveraged our stakeholder interviews to gather any ancillary information about the DEOCS that would assist us in our mission. Not all of the information gathered from stakeholders in these interviews could be translated into immediate short-term changes to the survey but would rather inform the long-term strategy.

This included directing us to other important stakeholders we had not considered, general lessons learned from their DEOCS experience, and information regarding senior leader preferences, goals, and priorities with respect to the DEOCS. These conversations provided OPA with key organizational and department-level context for the survey.

All stakeholder conversations were led by OPA researchers, often with multiple team members in attendance. An OPA note-taker was also present for all sessions. Sessions were not recorded.

## Data Analysis

Following each stakeholder conversation, the note-taker cleaned and finalized the notes from the conversation. Comments were sorted into buckets, sections, and then subsections that aligned with the codes that were used in the focus group ([Chapter 2](#) and [Appendix J](#)). New buckets, sections, and subsections were created to accommodate findings that were novel to the stakeholder conversation. Once organized by themes, these key themes and recommendations were then reviewed and used to inform all aspects of the DEOCS redesign. The use of stakeholder feedback to inform content selection in particular is described in detail in [Chapter 6](#).

## Results

In this section, we provide a synthesis of key themes from the in-person conversations with stakeholders. We have organized the themes into three areas aligned with the three action areas of the DEOCS redesign: (1) Survey Administration Process, (2) Content, and (3) Results. We also highlight differences between the groups of key stakeholders where appropriate.

## Survey Administration Process

This section summarizes stakeholders' suggestions regarding the overall survey administration process, including anonymity concerns and participant survey burden.

### **Anonymity Concerns**

Stakeholders noted that Service members have expressed concern about the anonymity of their DEOCS responses. Similarly, some stakeholders noted that commanders may order a DEOCS for a small unit (e.g., units with fewer than 50 Service members).<sup>31</sup> Because these units have a small number of participants, Service members have expressed concern that commanders could potentially identify them and retaliate. Although some stakeholders said they knew of commanders who had tried to identify participants, none of the stakeholders knew of a commander retaliating against a Service member because of their DEOCS responses. Instead, stakeholders explained those commanders were trying to identify participants in order to add context to their analysis and interpretation of DEOCS data. Because of these anonymity concerns, stakeholders said they suspect that participants falsify their demographic information or refuse to take the DEOCS survey. Either action by Service members undermines the validity of the DEOCS data. We provide further information on stakeholders' views regarding data falsification in the Survey Reporting section below.

### **Respondent Survey Burden**

Many stakeholders mentioned participant survey burden related to commanders indiscriminately surveying larger groups of Service members than necessary. For example, stakeholders noted that commanders of installations, or of several units, can request a DEOCS for only Service members or units who have not recently taken a DEOCS. However, in order to gauge the current climate, some commanders over-survey, resulting in Service members completing the DEOCS survey multiple times a year. As a result, stakeholders expressed concern that Service members are less likely to take the survey over time, which can negatively impact DEOCS response rates.

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*Stakeholders expressed concern regarding the saturation of surveys being asked of Service members and the negative impact this has on the DEOCS response rates.*

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Stakeholders also reported that the current DEOCS is not the only climate survey that is administered, as some of the Services implement a Service-wide climate survey, and there are other organizational, occupational, or ad hoc climate surveys that arise. This survey overlap leads to confusion among Service members, which can further reduce DEOCS response rates and decrease DEOCS buy-in among Service members. Stakeholders pointed out that OPA also surveys Service members on gender discrimination, racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, sexual assault and sexual harassment, and other constructs that stakeholders noted can be indicators of a negative command climate. Although these surveys contribute to the Service's understanding of their workforce, stakeholders noted that these types of surveys can also

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<sup>31</sup> Stakeholders shared that despite DEOMI's recommendation that the DEOCS should not be administered to units with fewer than 50 Service members, commanders have made DEOCS requests for units with only 16 Service members. A minimum of 16 responses are required to generate a DEOCS report.

contribute to a sense of redundancy for Service member participants. Some stakeholders suggested that a DoD-wide survey working group should be convened with the goal of minimizing or eliminating redundancies between overlapping surveys and reducing overall survey burden across Services.<sup>32</sup>

In order to maximize the response rate of the redesigned DEOCS, stakeholders suggested commanders strategically administer the survey during specific times such as working around deployments. Stakeholders pointed out that when units are preparing for deployment, they have additional trainings and drill requirements in addition to their day-to-day tasks. As a result, Service members have limited time to take a climate survey. Additionally, commanders are focused on other critical deployment tasks and do not have the time to encourage their unit to respond to the DEOCS. By launching the DEOCS at strategic times, the commander would be able to increase their focus on DEOCS development and outreach while also allowing for Service members to complete the survey.

## Survey Content

This section summarizes stakeholders' thoughts and suggestions regarding the DEOCS content.

### ***Performance-Oriented Questions***

Nearly all stakeholders suggested that the updated DEOCS should include questions that measure and identify high-performing commanders. Stakeholders suggested that these include constructs such as leadership, trust, communication, and accessibility. Stakeholders also suggested that the revised DEOCS clearly identify which leader the question is referencing. The leadership questions in the DEOCS 4.1 ask about the "senior leader," which is defined as the survey participant's current unit commander or civilian equivalent. However, stakeholders noted that there was still confusion from both the Service member taking the survey as well as the commander and EOAs who were analyzing and interpreting the data about who the questions were referring to. This lack of clarity surrounding which leader the questions are referencing has also caused many stakeholders to question the accuracy of the DEOCS results regarding leadership. To ensure the survey results are attributed to the correct leader and to limit participant confusion, stakeholders suggested that the revised DEOCS clarify what level of leadership the survey is referencing.

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*Stakeholders would like the revised DEOCS to include performance-oriented questions on topics such as leadership, trust, communication, and accessibility.*

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<sup>32</sup>The Inter-Service Survey Coordinating Committee (ISSCC) was established in the 1990s to coordinate surveys and focus groups across DoD. In 2015, the ISSCC was tasked with forming a "Tiger Team" to develop an action plan to address the issues of survey burden and duplication. Their resulting report can be found here: <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1038400.pdf>

## **Additional Topics of Interest**

When asked about the strategic priorities that the redesigned DEOCS should target, stakeholders overwhelmingly suggested that the survey measure command climate issues that could indicate a risk for specific problematic behaviors. For example, stakeholders suggested that the redesigned DEOCS include a “Connectedness” question to indicate risk for suicidal ideation. Another suggestion was to include questions to identify “Toxic Leadership” to use as a risk indicator for sexual assault, sexual harassment, and substance abuse. Additionally, many stakeholders also mentioned that the current DEOCS does not adequately measure certain constructs of interest to them. Therefore, to increase buy-in, stakeholders suggested that the revised DEOCS include questions on “Belonging,” “Inclusiveness,” “Leadership,” “Connectedness,” and “Work-Life Balance.”

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*“As a commander, I value these surveys. Reduce the quantity of questions to reduce decision fatigue. More high-quality questions will provide meaningful feedback.”*

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## **Survey Results**

This section summarizes stakeholders’ feedback regarding DEOCS 4.1 results reporting, including analysis and interpretation, EOA survey burden, report breakdown, sharing results, data falsification, and actionability and impact of DEOCS results.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

Stakeholders noted that current DEOCS unit-level reports are long and highly technical, which can cause commanders to rely heavily on EOAs to aid in analysis and interpretation of the results. Additionally, stakeholders indicated that both commanders and their EOAs spend significant time reviewing and interpreting the results. Although stakeholders believe that commanders find the open-ended and locally developed questions as providing the most useful information, these questions are also the most time-consuming items to digest and interpret.

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*Stakeholders find the current DEOCS results highly technical., time-consuming, and difficult to interpret and analyze.*

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To decrease the amount of time spent on DEOCS analysis and interpretation for unit commanders and EOAs, stakeholders suggested that the new DEOCS include easy-to-read charts and graphs. Additionally, to provide further perspective, stakeholders suggested that the new reports include relevant contextual information such as prior deployment information and base location (this type of information being most relevant and useful for audiences other than the unit commander, given this information is typically already known by the unit commander). They identified this sort of contextual information as an important part of analysis when reviewing DEOCS results and, therefore, warranted inclusion. Finally, stakeholders noted that some commanders struggle to make the “cookie-cutter” DEOCS results actionable. To address this issue, stakeholders suggested that the updated DEOCS reports include a section that highlights actionable items for commanders to address in the short and long term. The Actionability and Impact section contains more information on actionability.

### ***Equal Opportunity Advisor Survey Burden***

According to stakeholders, commanders rely heavily on EOAs to interpret results, and in some cases to conduct follow-on focus groups. Stakeholders emphasized that EOAs may administer or support as many as 50 surveys per year and are frequently overwhelmed. To reduce the burden on EOAs, stakeholders suggest strengthening the relationship between DEOMI and EOAs as well as developing trainings for EOAs on the revised DEOCS reports. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of providing information on the redesigned DEOCS ahead of the rollout to allow EOAs time to become acquainted with the revised survey and report.

### ***Report Breakdown***

According to stakeholders, commanders and EOAs manually compile previous DEOCS reports to analyze and interpret trends in the data, which occupies a significant amount of time. To ease this burden, stakeholders suggested that the new DEOCS reports provide current and past results by both commander and unit. There was also interest across stakeholder groups in a DEOCS dashboard that can show trends in data. Stakeholders also suggested that the dashboard include the ability to filter data by demographics, location, commander, and unit to maximize analysis and interpretation of results.

### ***Sharing Results***

Commanders are encouraged to brief their current DEOCS results to their units and to validate any “red flags,” or negatively scored items that require attention, with focus groups. However, stakeholders noted that most Services do not require commanders to share their current DEOCS results with their unit. To increase transparency and buy-in among Service members, stakeholders suggested that commanders be required to share DEOCS results with their unit. One stakeholder also suggested that the DEOCS results be shared with a multidisciplinary team, such as Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention personnel, substance abuse counselors, and legal personnel in order to holistically address any problematic behaviors that were flagged by the survey.

### ***Data Falsification***

Many stakeholders believed that Service members who were more likely to respond to the DEOCS tended to have very positive or negative viewpoints. Furthermore, there is a common concern that the DEOCS can be weaponized by Service members who falsify the information by deliberately and negatively skewing the data. Additionally, several stakeholders also pointed to security gaps within the current DEOCS survey administration that allow one person to take the survey multiple times. These data falsifications can undermine the validity of the data and make it difficult to analyze and interpret. Additionally, according to stakeholders, the concerns surrounding the accuracy of the DEOCS data make commanders reluctant to share DEOCS results, particularly with their supervisors. Finally, because of these data concerns and the fact that the DEOCS is conducted within the first 120 days after a commander takes command of a unit, many stakeholders emphasized that the current DEOCS, or the revised DEOCS, should not be used as a “report card” for commanders. Similarly, some stakeholders voiced that

commanders and their leadership teams cannot, and perhaps should not, be held accountable for problematic behaviors such as substance abuse and suicide.

### ***Actionability and Impact***

Stakeholders had mixed views on the actionability and impact of DEOCS results. For example, some stakeholders noted that commanders with a large civilian population may not prioritize their DEOCS results because they feel they cannot impact their unit's climate. Conversely, stakeholders also emphasized that DEOCS reports should highlight areas that commanders can immediately address and make noticeable impacts on a unit's climate. For example, one former commander shared that he improved work-life balance for his unit following the results of a DEOCS by working with legal staff to develop flex schedule policies for Service members. Regardless, most stakeholders said they feel that commanders who do not see the DEOCS reports as actionable are less likely to be engaged in further DEOCS administrations, which can result in lower response rates from Service members.

## **Conclusion**

DEOCS stakeholders who participated in the in-person interviews provided OPA with important insights into how to revitalize and modernize the DEOCS survey. All of the recommendations provided by stakeholders were taken into consideration, particularly during the content development phase. However, the institutional knowledge and experience shared with OPA through the data-gathering process with stakeholders was an invaluable resource that will continue to provide us with important contextual and historic insight into the survey.

Overall, stakeholders from the in-person interviews expressed great enthusiasm for the DEOCS redesign and were eager to share their suggestions and experience in order to better the survey. These suggestions included ways to improve the survey administration process and decrease participant burden, modify and clarify DEOCS content, and update the report for easier data analysis and interpretation. Stakeholders hope that these suggestions will not only increase data accuracy and response rates, but also ultimately improve buy-in and impact among commanders and Service members.

This is the final chapter describing our data-gathering efforts to inform the DEOCS redesign. The following chapters describe how we used this information to execute the three action areas of the DEOCS redesign. The next chapter discusses the administration of the survey, going through the process of the DEOCS registration, and highlights where we staged targeted interventions that align with our three core redesign principles: data driven, usability, and actionability.





## Chapter 5: Defense Organizational Climate Survey Administration

*Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Abigail Moore, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner*

Given the nature of the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) as a unit/organization-level survey, the survey administration process deviates significantly from typical Department of Defense (DoD) surveys (and surveys more generally). The first chapter of this report laid out the historical, social, and policy trajectory of the DEOCS; this chapter begins with a detailed description of the contemporary policy architecture that supports the DEOCS, at both the DoD and Service levels, and how the DEOCS is administered within this architecture from a process standpoint. Specifically, this chapter outlines the processes that survey administrators and participants undergo to complete a DEOCS (and ultimately fulfill policy requirements). We also highlight changes that the Office of People Analytics (OPA) has made to the survey administration process in order to improve data quality and in response to feedback collected from stakeholders ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#); [Chapter 4](#)).

### Policies Governing Defense Organizational Climate Survey Administration

The contemporary DEOCS is governed by federal law and policies at both the DoD and the Service levels. In general, Congress sets requirements through federal law that DoD must implement. DoD Instructions (DoDI) implement the congressional requirements by describing policies, programs, or activities that will be undertaken to meet the requirement and assigns responsibilities. Service-level policies provide further specificity for how the DoD-level policies will be enacted at the lowest levels. These three levels of policy set the parameters for how the DEOCS is administered. The following sections discuss all three of these and Table 4 highlights areas of overlap as well as points of discontinuity.

#### Congressional Requirement

Section 572 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 as amended by sections 587 and 1721 of the NDAA FY 2014 set the broad requirements for command climate assessments. Specifically, these federal laws require commanders to assess climate within 120 days of assuming command and annually thereafter, and require results of the assessments to be disseminated to the commander's supervisor. They also put forth requirements for Services to track compliance with this mandate via performance evaluations and assessments.

#### Department of Defense Level Policy and Memorandum

The DEOCS predates any congressional requirement related to command climate assessments but a subsequent November 2015 Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD [P&R]) memorandum designated the DEOCS as the Department's official survey tool to support the NDAA requirement. Implementation details of the NDAA requirement are provided in Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Program. DoD Directive 1350.02

(DoDI 1350.02) which was most recently updated in September 2020. DoDI 1350.02 sets several parameters for how the DEOCS is administered; namely, it provides guidance on:

- Who should be invited to take a unit/organization’s DEOCS—All Service members. Civilians may be included, and contractors are not allowed to participate.
- How often a DEOCS should be administered—Within 120 days after assumption of command and annually thereafter while retaining command, but not more frequently than every 12 months to reduce survey burden.
- Minimum unit size for a DEOCS—At least 50 people (units smaller than 50 people should be combined with larger units).
- How and when results are reported—To commanders and the next higher level of commander simultaneously and within 30 calendar days of the initial survey request. Aggregated results can be provided to DoD components as requested.
- How compliance is tracked—In a statement in a commanders’ performance evaluation or annual fitness report.

Together, these policies are the foundation of the current DEOCS program and are the parameters around decisions OPA has made in our attempts to revitalize and modernize the DEOCS administration process. Beyond these foundational requirements, the Services have flexibility in how they implement their surveys and the policies surrounding climate assessment (discussed below).

**Service Level Policy**

The chart below lists the various policies that each Service has in place that govern administration of the DEOCS.

**Table 4.**  
**Service-Level Policies**

Service (Documentation)	Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS) Frequency	Unit Sizes Requirements	Briefing/Reporting Up Requirements	Other Notes
Army (AR 600-20)	Within 30 days.  Again at 6 months (currently being revised).  Annually thereafter.	Units of 50+ are required.  Units of <50 to be surveyed with a larger unit.	Not addressed in the documentation provided.	Only subgroups containing ≥5 individuals will be reported.

Service (Documentation)	Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS) Frequency	Unit Sizes Requirements	Briefing/Reporting Up Requirements	Other Notes
Navy (OPNAVINST 5354.1G)	Within 90 days. 9–12 months thereafter.	Units of 16+ personnel. Units of ≤16 will use focus groups, interviews, observations, and reviewing command records and reports.	Commanders must brief their Immediate Superior in Charge (ISIC) within 60 days of completion (110 days for Navy Operations Support Centers).	Commanders must receive written approval before using paper version of DEOCS.
Marines (MARADMIN 464/13; MCO P5354.1D ch1)	Within 90 days. Annually thereafter.	Units of 50+ are required. Units of <50 to be surveyed with a larger unit.	Brief next higher Commander within 30 days.	
Air Force (AFI 36-2710)	Within 120 days. Annually thereafter. No more than once annually unless change in command.	Units of <50 personnel will be excluded from conducting climate assessments within 120 days after assumption of command but are not exempt from annual assessments (DEOCS). Units of <50 will be surveyed with larger unit.	Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA) provides Commander and next level Commander un-redacted survey results. Commanders must brief survey results to next-higher Commander within 30 days and unit members within 60 days of receiving DEOCs report.	To receive DEOCS ID and report, there must be >16 participants.
Coast Guard (ANC 048/17; ANC 095.17; COMDINST M5350.4C)	Within 180 days. Annually thereafter.	Units of 16+ personnel. Units of ≤16 may combine with other small units in order to create a suitable sample size.	The DEOCS is reviewed as a part of the annual EO review/assessment.	All personnel attached to subordinate commands must be offered an opportunity to participate in an annual DEOCS.
National Guard Bureau (Lengyel, 2018) Air National Guard (ANG; AFI 36-2710) Army National Guard (ARNG; AR 600-200)	Air National Guard (ANG): Within 120 days. Annually thereafter. Army National Guard (ARNG): Within 120 days. Annually thereafter.	ANG: Units of 50+ are required. Units of <50 to be surveyed with a larger unit. ARNG: Units of 50+ are required. Units of <30 to be surveyed with a larger unit. Units of more than 30 but fewer than 50 may use Commander’s (battalion or higher) discretion.	ANG: Equal Opportunity (EO) personnel to provide results to Commander and next higher-level in chain of command within 30 days. ARNG: Commander to brief the next higher-level Commander within 30 days.	ANG: Climate assessment is voluntary for military personnel and civilian employees, but survey requirement is not optional. DEOCS will only generate a report if participants >16. ARNG: Must use DEOCS for climate assessment.

## Survey Administration Process

The next section describes the process for registering for and initiating a DEOCS with a unit or organization and the process by which participants are informed about, access, and complete the survey. Along the way we will call out key enhancements, which are areas in which the new survey system (DEOCS Redesign Action Area 1) differs substantially from the previous system and explain the impetus behind the change. Often, these updates were in direct response to feedback from the field. The new DEOCS platform launched on July 27, 2020. Since then we have continued to iterate in response to the needs of the field and will continue to do so.

### Administrator Process

The DEOCS is unique from other DoD-wide surveys in that, although it is a DoD-wide data collection, it is primarily administered at the unit/organization level. OPA provides the survey infrastructure, overarching administration rules and guidelines, and analysis and reporting functionalities, but many administration details are determined and carried out by the Services and/or unit/organizations themselves. The Services determine which commanders/leaders are required to administer a DEOCS and track compliance with the congressional mandate to conduct climate assessment. The unit/organization administering a DEOCS has further discretion in determining the specific fielding window (within Service-required timelines), specifying who is included in the survey sample, and some of the questions included on the survey.

DEOCS surveys are administered with the assistance of an on-the-ground survey administrator. The survey administrator designation varies from Service to Service, but is often an Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) or Command Climate Specialist who has received some formal training in how to administer a DEOCS.<sup>33</sup> The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) provides DEOCS training as part of the Equal Opportunity Advisor Course. OPA also provides guides, training sessions, and other resources on the DEOCS administration process via the Assessment to Solutions (A2S) website <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/Survey>.

### Population Frame Development

Unlike most other OPA and DoD-wide surveys, the DEOCS does not employ sampling techniques to identify a subset of a population to be included in the survey sample. Instead, the DEOCS functions as a census, such that all Service members of a unit/organization are required to be included in the DEOCS survey sample population.<sup>34</sup> Because all DoD unit commanders and organization leaders are required to administer the DEOCS annually, ultimately, the annual

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<sup>33</sup> We were unable to locate any data regarding what percentage of DEOCS surveys are administered by DEOMI-trained survey administrators, or any other descriptive data regarding survey administrators. The data collected via the new survey platform will enable further analysis of the characteristics of this population. These individuals are a critical piece of the DEOCS process.

<sup>34</sup> In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, foreign nationals and contractors are not permitted to be included in a DEOCS. (PRA, 44 U.S.C 3501-3520, 1995)

population frame for the DEOCS can be considered to be all DoD military members, with some important caveats.

At the unit level, the survey administrator for the unit determines who will be invited to take a DEOCS for that particular unit under that particular commander. At present, there is not a standardized method for defining at which level in the hierarchy units are required to take the DEOCS, how to define a unit, or how to define unit membership. DoDI 1350.02 states that units should have at least 50 people, but does not specify how to handle hierarchical commands (e.g., whether, within the Army, the DEOCS should be administered to each company separately or to a battalion as a whole) or provide any other detail on how to define a unit and unit membership for DEOCS purposes. For example, if an individual is on detail, then should they be included in their “home base” unit DEOCS, in the organization/unit on which they are on detail, or both?

DoD-wide administrative personnel data sets are maintained by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Within these data sources, the primary variable used to identify a unit is a Unit Identification Code (UIC). Every military member within DoD has an Assigned UIC and Duty UIC, which distinguish between where a person is administratively assigned and where the person is currently reporting for duty. DoD-level UICs maintained by DMDC do not correspond one for one with Service UICs or other Service-level or unit-level identifiers. Furthermore, there is no policy that indicates whether the DEOCS should be administered based on assigned or duty UIC (or some other grouping variable at the Service level). OPA has examined the overlap between DEOCS units as defined by survey administrators and units as defined by either Assigned UIC or Duty UIC and these examinations do not suggest a high degree of correspondence between historical DEOCS unit rosters and administrative data based on either DMDC UIC type. More exploration of Service-level data may provide more clarity and potential methods for standardization. At present, OPA relies on the Services to track compliance and relies on survey administrators within a unit to define the population frame for each individual DEOCS administration (consistent with prior DEOCS practices).

### ***Survey Fielding Window***

At any given time, there are multiple DEOCS surveys being administered for different units/organizations throughout DoD. An individual unit’s DEOCS timing is primarily determined by the timing of commander/leader changes. The FY 2013 NDAA (Section 572), as amended by section 1721 of the FY 2014 NDAA, requires a command climate assessment<sup>35</sup> to be administered within 120 days of assuming command and annually thereafter. Although there is some seasonality to when command changes occur, this requirement mostly results in units being on idiosyncratic survey schedules. Other factors, such as deployments or maintenance periods, may require units to shift their survey fielding within the required time frame. Requirements for the length of the survey fielding window vary from Service to Service (Table 4). On average, DEOCS fielding windows are 3–6 weeks in length.

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<sup>35</sup> Per a Nov. 20, 2014, memo signed by the Acting USD(P&R), the DEOCS is the designated DoD tool for meeting this requirement ([Appendix A](#)).

**Data Collection**

Survey administrators request a new DEOCS by accessing the DEOCS Portal (through a link on the aforementioned A2S website) and providing the requisite information about the unit in registration fields. Respondents take the survey online by accessing OPA’s DEOCS survey website. More details about the registration and survey taking process are provided in the sections below.

**Registering an Account**

At the time of this writing, there are three types of accounts available within the DEOCS Portal: survey administrators, commanders/leaders, and commander’s/leader’s supervisors. The capabilities, responsibilities, and creation of each role are summarized in Table 5. Currently, accounts are tied to an individual’s e-mail address and are retained indefinitely.

**Table 5.**  
**DEOCS Survey Accounts**

Action	Survey Administrator	Commander/Leader	Commanders’/Leaders’ Supervisor
Account creation	Self-creation via defenseculture.mil	Automatically created when survey is registered	Automatically created when survey is registered
Creates a new survey request	Yes	No	No
Reviews details of a survey request	Yes	Yes	Yes
Approves or denies a survey request	No	Yes	No
Can view survey results	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can be other roles	None	Can also be a commander’s supervisor	Can also be a commander
Distributes survey invites	Yes	Optional	Optional
Monitors response rates	Yes	No	No
Manages survey fielding window	Yes	No	No
Invites survey participants	Yes	Optional	Optional

**Survey Administrator**

Survey Administrators are individuals within a unit or organization who are designated with overseeing the unit’s DEOCS administration on behalf of the unit’s commander/leader. As mentioned, these are often EOAs or Command Managed Equal Opportunity with DEOCS training. Survey Administrators submit requests for a new DEOCS by gathering all of the required registration information and entering it in the DEOCS Portal. They are also responsible for inviting unit members to take the survey, monitoring response rates, and managing the survey fielding window. When a survey is complete, a Survey Administrator may also review the

survey's results in the dashboard or download results in PDF format. Within the DEOCS Portal, a Survey Administrator can view the registration details and results of all surveys that they have registered; there is no limit to the number of units or surveys a Survey Administrator can oversee. Survey Administrator accounts are created by visiting <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/> and selecting "Create an Account Here."

### ***Commanders/Leaders***

Commanders/Leaders are individuals who head the unit for which a DEOCS is being administered. They authorize the administration of a DEOCS by approving the survey request created by a survey administrator. Although they typically do not conduct the operational tasks necessary to request and field a survey, they play a crucial role in increasing engagement and interest in the survey, and ultimately in boosting response rates, by making direct appeals to their unit members to take the survey. Commanders/Leaders can also view and download results within the DEOCS Portal. Within the DEOCS Portal, Commanders/Leaders can view the registration details and results of all surveys that have been registered to them; there is no limit to the number of units or surveys a commander can have registered to them. A commander can also serve as a commander's supervisor, but not within a single DEOCS registration (i.e., the same person cannot be the commander and supervisor for a single DEOCS).

Commanders/Leaders accounts are created automatically the first time a survey is registered with their contact information entered as the Commander/Leader (typically this information is entered by the survey administrator on the commander's behalf). The DEOCS system then sends a notification e-mail to the commander with instructions for completing the registration of their account by creating a password.

### ***Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisor***

Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors are those who are the next highest in the chain of command to the commander/leader for which a DEOCS is being administered. Per the 2013 NDAA, all DEOCS results must be provided to the supervisor. Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors do not have any formal responsibilities in the administration process but are able to view the registration details and results of DEOCS results for all commanders under them for oversight purposes. There is no limit to the number of units or surveys a Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors can have registered under their name. Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors can also serve as a commander on a survey registration, but not within a single DEOCS registration.

Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors accounts are created automatically the first time a survey is registered with their contact information entered as the Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisor. The system then sends a notification e-mail with instructions for completing the registration of their account by creating a password.

OPA will be working with Service stakeholders to develop more sophisticated user permissions and expand user roles over time. For example, Service administrative roles could enable designated Service-level users with access to multiple units' registrations and results for oversight and administrative duties. Additionally, methods for transferring accounts when a user changes posts or for sharing data between units will be developed. These functions are not yet available but are among the enhancements that have been requested and that OPA is tracking.

### ***One-Stop Shop***

In the previous DEOCS system, Survey Administrators were the only people who had accounts in the DEOCS registration system and were the only ones who could view registration details and download survey results. The new system gives Commanders'/Leaders' and Commanders'/Leaders' Supervisors greater oversight of their own DEOCS. Additionally, it eliminates the need to create a new account for every new survey registration by providing Survey Administrators a single account and provides easy access to previous registrations to reduce burden in the administration process. The new system is also streamlined in that a single account is used to access both the registration system and prior results, rather than the two that were previously required.

### ***Preparing to Register***

To complete a DEOCS request, Survey Administrators must provide information about the unit and the desired DEOCS. The required information is detailed in Table 6. A detailed guide for Survey Administrators is available at <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>.



**Table 6.**  
**DEOCS Registration Fields**

Required Information	Description	New or Updated Field <sup>1</sup>
Service component	The Service component to which the unit belongs.	No
Command level (select from a drop-down for National Guard, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Space Force)	The level of command of the unit.	No
Unit type (select from a drop-down)	Service-specific taxonomy of unit types according to main function.	Yes
Unit (select from a drop-down for National Guard, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Space Force)	Selected from a Service-specific drop-down menu of unit hierarchies.	Yes
Roster of individuals in the organization	CSV file including first name, last name, e-mail address, mobile phone number (optional), subgroup name (optional). Minimum of 16 people to register. Up to 4,000 people per roster upload, but infinite number of uploads (i.e., no maximum unit size).	Yes
Unit Identification Code (UIC) (USN, USMC, and USA only)/Personnel Accounting Symbol (PAS) (USAF and USSF only)/Operational Facilities (OPFAC) (USCG only)	Administrative code that identifies the unit.	No
Unit/Organization Title	What the unit is usually referred to as. Used within the survey, and therefore should be understandable and recognizable to survey participants.	No
Unit/Organization City	The city where the unit is administratively located.	No
Unit/Organization State	The state where the unit is administratively located.	No
Unit/Organization ZIP	The ZIP code where the unit is administratively located.	No
Reason for DEOCS request (select from a drop-down for initial request for commander assuming new position, to meet the annual requirement, ad hoc or out of cycle)	The part of the command climate assessment requirement the administration intends to fulfill.	Yes
Deployment status (National Guard, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Space Force only)	Whether the unit is or is not in deployment status.	Yes
Name, e-mail, and phone number of commanders/leaders	Contact information for the commander of the unit.	No
Name, e-mail, and phone number of commanders'/leaders' supervisor	Contact information for the supervisor of the commander of the unit.	No
Survey starts and end dates	The dates that the survey will open and close.	No
Optional: Up to 10 multiple-choice questions (formerly known as locally developed questions [LDQ] and/or up to 5 short answer questions [SAQ]).	Questions that commanders can add to the core survey content to obtain more specific information about their unique command climate, selected from a bank of options.	No

<sup>1</sup> During the DEOCS redesign process, OPA had the opportunity to update many of the response options for the fields. We did this in collaboration with Service MEO offices and in response to feedback from the field.

## *Roster*

A major change in the new DEOCS system is the addition of a Roster requirement when registering a survey. The addition of the Roster serves several important functions:

- In conjunction with a new log in system described below, the Roster provides better test security. By cross-checking information provided when a participant takes the survey with the Roster, OPA can monitor that only legitimate unit members provide survey responses.
- One of the goals of the redesign was to understand potential nonresponse bias and to employ strategies to increase the representativeness of survey results. In order to calculate accurate response rates and to examine potential nonresponse bias by key demographic factors, it is necessary to have an accurate accounting of the people in the unit, or the “population frame.” Previously, survey administrators were only required to enter the number of people in a unit, split by rank and gender. This limited amount of information about the population frame prevented a robust understanding of DEOCS coverage (e.g., whether or not everyone in DoD was given the opportunity to complete a DEOCS annually, as the requirement would suggest would be the case, or whether some individuals or groups are systematically “missing” in the DEOCS) and of nonresponse bias (e.g., whether individuals within a unit who choose to complete the DEOCS are systematically different from those who do not, and whether those differences cause bias in the survey results). The Roster allows OPA to pull additional data about the unit from administrative files that will contribute to a better understanding of coverage, nonresponse bias, and other critical issues that impact data quality and utility and will inform appropriate uses of the data and potential future enhancements.
- Also in conjunction with a new log in system, OPA aims to potentially eliminate the need for participants to answer demographic information within the survey. Eliminating demographic questions would reduce the length of the survey and also reduce potential effects on survey responses that can occur when one’s demographic identities are made salient.
- The Rosters also provide OPA with greater insight into how units are defining their population frame. By matching Rosters to variables within available administrative personnel files, OPA can better understand how units are defined and potentially provide greater standardization to the administration process in the future.

Rosters are uploaded as .csv files into the DEOCS Portal and must contain at minimum each unit member’s first and last name and one piece of contact information (e-mail address or phone number; Figure 8). The e-mail address or phone number is used in the new log in system described below. DoD e-mails are the preferred contact information. However, OPA has found that there are a small proportion of individuals in the DoD who do not have an assigned DoD e-mail address (e.g., junior Marines, some non-appropriated fund DoD civilians). In these cases, a personal e-mail address or phone number is acceptable.

Consistent with prior versions of the DEOCS, survey administrators have the option to split their unit into subgroups for the purpose of reporting results. For example, a unit may want to be able to view results separately by location for an organization that spans multiple sites (e.g., OPA East Coast office and OPA West Coast office). Within the system, the rosters are used to identify subgroup membership within a unit by entering the appropriate subgroup name in a column next to each individual. When subgroups are included, survey results are reported separately for each subgroup as well as combined for a total unit view. These subgroups, or “breakouts” as they are colloquially called, are helpful for locating the source of potential issues identified. Subgroups can also be used to help capture multiple levels within the chain of command. For instance, an Air Force group commander could administer a DEOCS to their group with each of their subordinate squadrons included as subgroups, allowing both a broad and more focused examination simultaneously. Currently, this grouping can only go down one level and administrators are limited to a maximum of 50 subgroups.<sup>36</sup>

The roster is only used within the automated DEOCS system and within OPA for analytic purposes, governed by privacy and human subjects’ requirements regarding the storage and use of this personally identifiable information (PII) data. Survey administrators, commanders, and commanders’ supervisors cannot see who has or has not responded to the survey on the roster nor can they identify individual participants and their responses (nor can anyone else outside of OPA researchers with the appropriate permissions in place). PII data are encrypted and stored in a secure network isolated by firewalls and these data are stored separately from survey responses. Roster data and survey responses can only be linked for specific, approved research purposes via a Human Research Protections Program (HRPP)-compliant process, which includes linking by a third-party analyst (i.e., an analyst who is independent of the research team). We have partnered with industry experts to design our systems with overlapping layers of security to protect participants’ information from cyberattack. All systems comply with National Institute of Standards and Technology Risk Management Framework security standards as required by the Department.

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<sup>36</sup> OPA has received requests to enhance breakout group capabilities to include subgroups within subgroups, for example. We are tracking this as a potential future enhancement.

**Figure 8.**  
*Sample Roster*

1	First Name	Last Name	Email	Add	Mobile	PH-Subgroup Name
2	John	Doe	JohnDoe@777-888-9999			
3	John	Smith	JohnSmith777-888-7777			
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
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25						
26						
27						

**Registering a Survey**

Once a survey administrator has gathered all of the unit information, they log in to the DEOCS Portal and create a new survey request. Survey administrators enter all of the unit information into an intuitive point-and-click form (Figure 9). A step-by-step instruction guide for completing the registration process is available at <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>. The DEOCS Portal retains all registration information and allows users to monitor the survey’s status before fielding as it moves through the approval process.

**Figure 9.**  
*Registration Screen*

### ***Historical Registration Information***

In response to feedback from stakeholders, the new DEOCS system facilitates using prior DEOCS registration information to populate a new request. In the previous DEOCS system, survey administrators created a new account for each new survey administration and had to maintain personal records of any DEOCS registration information after the survey closed. In the new DEOCS Portal, survey administrators retain their account indefinitely.<sup>37</sup> This allows them to view historical registration information, so that the next time a DEOCS is due for the same unit, the administrator only has to update any information that has changed rather than gather and enter it anew. This change may be particularly useful for survey administrators who manage DEOCS for many commanders, which applies to many equal opportunity advisors and others.

### ***Custom Question Bank***

Each DEOCS administration may include up to 15 custom questions (10 multiple choice and five short answer) beyond the core DEOCS survey questions. These questions are selected from a large bank of options ([Appendix O](#)). Previously, survey administrators were able to write their own questions or choose from a list of options that was available as a Microsoft Word document and required survey administrators to enter each chosen question by hand (or copy and paste). In the new DEOCS Portal, the question bank lives within the system as a point-and-click menu with several hundred options (Figure 10). These questions were carried over from the previous DEOCS and include the entire DEOCS 4.1 content as well as new questions based on user feedback (more on this below). Questions are tagged by category and searchable by keywords. Additionally, survey administrators can create and save lists of custom questions to be used for future DEOCS surveys or other units.

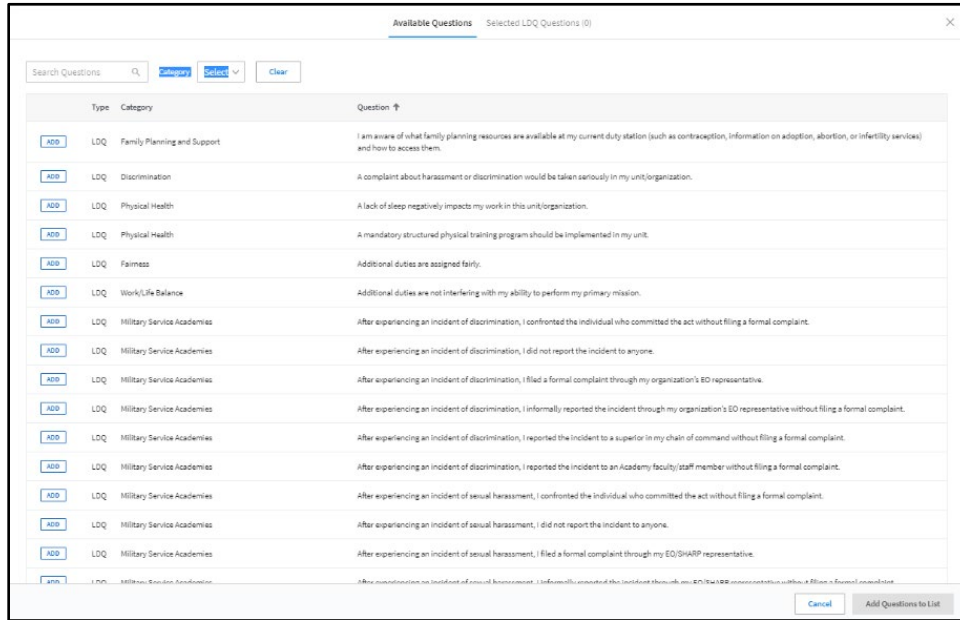
As noted above, previous versions of the survey allowed commanders to compose their own questions; however, per DoDI 8910.01, “Information Collection and Reporting,” all questions available on a DoD-wide survey such as the DEOCS must undergo the human subjects review and Report Control Symbol (RCS) review and approval process; this means that all survey questions must be reviewed and approved before the survey is sent to participants. All questions available in the question bank have been reviewed and approved via this process, and thus the DEOCS is fully compliant with DoD regulations.

Feedback from the field has highlighted the utility of being able to write survey questions to address unit-specific challenges or areas of interest and/or to be responsive to current events. In order to mitigate this lost functionality, OPA has instituted a process for the field to submit recommendations for inclusion in the question bank ([Appendix P](#)). These recommendations are reviewed through all relevant review processes and the bank is updated on a quarterly basis. In addition, OPA analysts monitor current events and draft new questions for HRPP and RCS review to address emerging areas of interest. We will continue to work to ensure the bank is as flexible and responsive as possible to the needs of the field while remaining in compliance with DoD policy.

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<sup>37</sup> Currently the accounts in the system are tied to administrators’ e-mails, so as long as they maintain the same e-mail, they will maintain the same account.

**Figure 10.**  
**Question Bank**

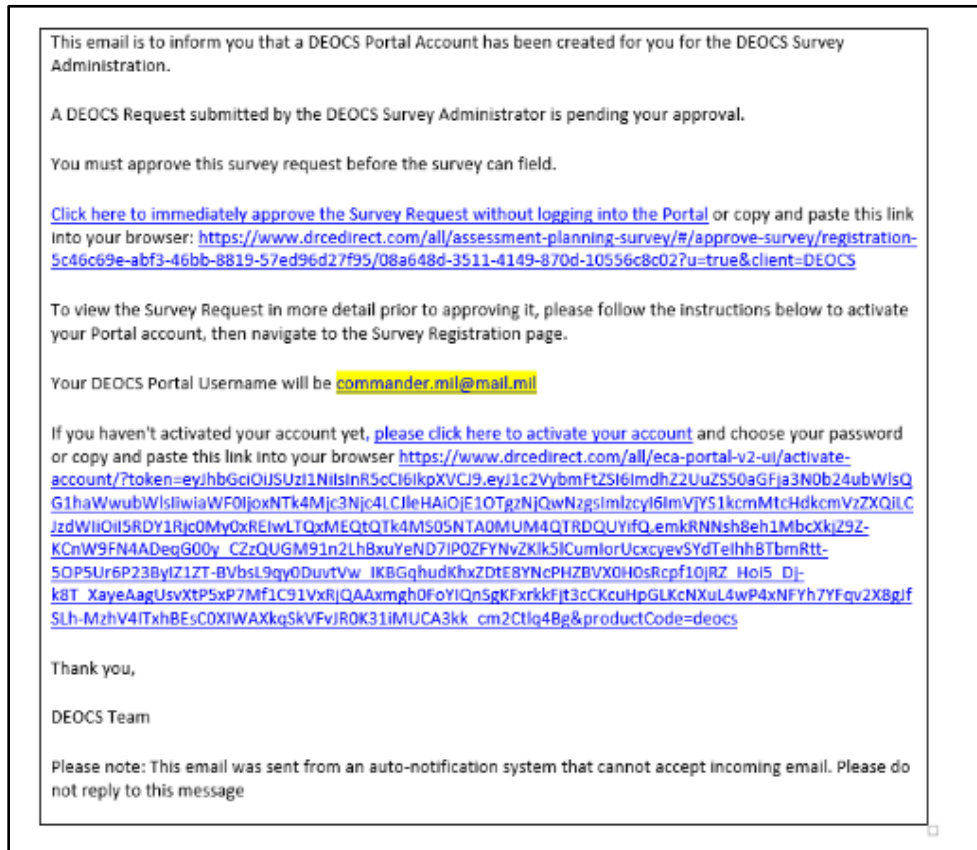


**Approving/Denying a Survey**

As a security measure, the system requires commanders to approve the request for any DEOCS for which they are identified as the commander. This approval acknowledges that the survey administrator has obtained the commander’s consent to conduct the survey and permits the survey administrator access to the survey results. After a survey is registered, the system will automatically send a notification e-mail to the commander identified in the registration that a survey has been registered on their behalf (Figure 11). The e-mail provides two methods for approving the survey. There is a quick-approve link that, when clicked from within the e-mail (if the link is not stripped from the e-mail),<sup>38</sup> automatically approves the survey without requiring the commander to log in to the DEOCS Portal (Figure 11). However, if the commander would like to review the registration before approving, they can log in to the DEOCS Portal and view all of the survey details that were entered by the survey administrator. The commander then clicks either the “Approve” or “Deny” button.

<sup>38</sup> DoD and Service IT security protocols often remove or “break” links provided in e-mails. However, the commander can still use this link to approve the survey quickly by copying and pasting the link into their web browser.

**Figure 11.**  
**Commander E-mail**



If the commander approves the e-mail, then the survey is ready to be fielded and will automatically open on the date specified in the registration. The survey administrator will receive an e-mail notifying them of the approval and providing instructions for inviting unit members to take the survey. If the commander denies the registration, then they are prompted to provide a reason for the disapproval. The survey administrator will receive an e-mail notifying them of the disapproval and reason. They can then edit their survey request and resubmit it for the commander’s approval.

**Taking a Survey**

Respondents take the DEOCS via a website. The website is mobile optimized and does not require a Common Access Card (CAC). This issue was repeatedly articulated as an important issue by stakeholders, and especially Service members ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#); [Chapter 4](#)). During our focus groups, for example, Service members identified the ability to take the survey on their phone as a key and desirable enhancement.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, in the DEOCS redesign survey ([Chapter 3](#)), we found that a large percentage of junior enlisted Service members wanted to take the survey on a mobile device. Optimizing the survey for mobile allows us to better

<sup>39</sup> The prior DEOCS website for survey takers could be accessed via phone but was not optimized for mobile and thus not easily readable on a mobile device.

reach these junior enlisted Service members, who tend to have lower response rates across OPA surveys (McGrath et al., 2019). This population is generally harder to reach for a variety of reasons, including that many of the military occupations occupied by junior enlisted personnel (e.g., combat and combat support) prevent ready computer access during the workday.

However, as seen in the DEOCS redesign survey results ([Chapter 3](#)), there are many different ways in which survey takers access the DEOCS, including on work computers (particularly the case for DoD civilians), personal computers (particularly Reserve and Guard members), and mobile devices (particularly active duty members). To ensure the broadest reach and to remove any barriers to access, participants can take the updated DEOCS on any work or personal device with an internet browser. Supported internet browsers are Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Microsoft Edge. Previously, the DEOCS was available as a paper survey (although the majority of units opted for the web-only version). Given the costs and constraints of a paper survey and increased accessibility to the DEOCS via any work or personal device, including mobile devices, OPA is not currently offering a paper option; however, we will continue to evaluate the necessity and demand for a paper option and adjust if needed.

### ***Secure Log-In Experiment***

In prior versions of the DEOCS, survey administrators would not create a roster. Rather, they would provide summary unit demographic information (e.g., total number of women, total number of men, etc.), which would be used for the purpose of comparison later. Participants would log in by one of two options. First, in the “e-mail password option,” the survey administrator would have a single password e-mailed to them that they would then distribute to the entire unit. If they had chosen to have subgroups, then they would get separate passcodes e-mailed to them for each of the subgroups. Survey administrators also had a “print password option” that provided individual passwords for unit members that the survey administrator was responsible for distributing. These passwords were provided via a downloaded Microsoft Word file, and these passwords could then be printed and handed out to each member of the unit/organization. If they had subgroups in this option, then they would download a separate file for each subgroup that contained individual passwords for distribution. Historically, the majority of units elected the “e-mail password option” to receive a single unit passcode.<sup>40</sup>

OPA has developed a new log in procedure for survey participants called “secure log in.” In the new secure log in process, participants use their contact information provided in the roster to enter the survey. Below we first describe the two experimental conditions in greater detail: the legacy condition and the new secure log in condition. We then discuss the rationale motivating a potential change to the DEOCS log in approach and the benefits of secure log in.

To test the effect of the secure log in approach on response rates and survey responses, OPA conducted a log in experiment. Starting on July 29, 2020 and ending March 22, 2021 each DEOCS registration was assigned to one of two conditions. Ninety percent of units were randomly assigned to the legacy log in condition and 10% were assigned to the new secure log in condition. Entire units were assigned to either condition so that everybody in a single DEOCS

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<sup>40</sup> We were unable to locate data on the precise breakdown of unit vs. individual passwords, but stakeholders indicated the individual “print password” option was very infrequently used due to the complexity and increased burden on survey administrators.



could access the survey the same way. The differences between the legacy log in and secure log in methods are summarized in Table 7 and explained below.

**Table 7.**  
***Secure and Legacy Log In Experiment (July 2020–March 2021)***

Role	Legacy Log In (90% of Units)	Secure Log In (10% of Units)
Survey Participants	Receive invitation from survey admin with link to survey and passcode.	Receive auto-generated invitation from DEOCS Portal with link and access information.
	Access survey via passcode.	Access survey by entering e-mail/mobile phone number. <sup>1</sup>
	Must complete survey in one sitting.	Can complete survey in multiple sittings by creating secure PIN.
	Survey tampering is possible; unit members can complete the survey more than once.	Survey tampering not possible; unit members can only complete the survey once.
Survey Administrators	Upload roster in DEOCS Portal.	Upload roster in DEOCS Portal.
	Receive one passcode for unit or passcodes for each subgroup and must distribute to unit/subgroup.	No passcodes: unit members will receive an auto-generated e-mail when the survey opens that will direct them to the survey website.
	Encourage unit to respond while survey is open.	Encourage unit to respond while survey is open.
	Use dashboard in DEOCS Portal to monitor response rates while survey is open.	Use dashboard in DEOCS Portal to monitor response rates while survey is open.
	Receive results for unit and subgroups, if applicable; results will not identify individual responses.	Receive results for unit and subgroups, if applicable; results will not identify individual responses.

<sup>1</sup> To ensure members without a military e-mail address are members of the DoD community, the system prompts users without a military e-mail address to confirm their DoD affiliation by providing their DoD ID number (found on the back of their CAC) and date of birth.

***Legacy Log-in Condition***

The legacy log in condition continued the “e-mail password option” of DEOCS administrations prior to the transfer to OPA. Once a survey request was approved by the commander, the system generated one passcode for the entire unit. If subgroups were identified on the roster, then each subgroup received a unique passcode. An automated e-mail provided the passcodes to the survey administrator, who was then responsible for distributing the passcode to members of the unit. Survey administrators typically accomplish this task by contacting the participants in person, through text, and/or by e-mail. When the survey opened, participants went to [surveysdrc.com/mil](https://surveysdrc.com/mil) and entered their unit passcode when prompted. There was no limit to the number of people who can use the unit passcode, which sometimes results in greater than 100% response rates.<sup>41</sup> Because there is no way to identify who is taking the survey, participants may submit more than one survey, and people who were not part of the unit (or were not included on the unit roster) could take the survey if they were given the passcode. Additionally, participants had to submit all their responses at once and cannot withdraw responses. If a participant experienced an interruption and left the survey partway through and wished to come back and complete the survey, then they had to start over and their initial responses cannot be

<sup>41</sup> This occurs when more people respond to the survey than were included on the unit roster.

distinguished from their responses the second time they completed questions, meaning these responses were double counted.

### ***Secure Log-in Condition***

In the secure log in condition, the system uses the contact information provided by the survey administrator in the roster to admit survey participants. Once a survey request is approved by the commander, the system notifies the survey administrator that the survey has been approved and will begin on the specified start date. On the start date, the system automatically e-mails everyone on the roster to invite them to take the DEOCS. These e-mails do not contain a passcode or any unique information necessary to enter the survey, but serve as a means of notifying participants about the survey.

Survey administrators who provided e-mails are not required to distribute any information because unit members are notified about the survey via e-mail. However, survey administrators are highly encouraged to communicate about the survey to boost participation through whatever communication channels they prefer (e.g., e-mails, posters, text, social media, during meetings). If survey administrators provided phone numbers on the roster, then they are solely responsible for reaching out to unit members to invite them to take the survey (i.e., the system does not call or text individuals about the survey at present). In any case, survey administrators do not need to distribute passcode(s) and instead just need to point unit members to the DEOCS website.

In order to complete the survey, participants visit [surveysdrc.com/deocs](https://surveysdrc.com/deocs) and enter their e-mail address (which should be the same e-mail address that was used on the roster). The system will crosscheck the e-mail address entered to open rosters and admit the participant if a survey is found. If multiple surveys are found with the same e-mail address, then the participant can choose the survey they are trying to take from a drop-down menu. If no matches are found, then the participant is not admitted into the survey and asked to contact their survey administrator to be added to the roster. If the participant uses a DoD e-mail, then that e-mail is the only piece of information needed to enter the survey. If the participant uses a commercial e-mail or phone number, then the system will also prompt them to enter their EDIPI (DoD ID number). This additional piece of verification is necessary for OPA to match the participant to administrative personnel files for analytical purposes.<sup>42</sup> Upon entering the survey, the participant is asked to create a four-digit PIN that will allow them to re-enter the survey if they close out. This ensures that participants can take the survey across multiple sittings, and that no one else can view the participants survey responses (without entering the PIN). Additionally, if participants wish to withdraw already submitted responses, then they can contact the help desk.

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<sup>42</sup> In the case of DoD e-mails, these serve as individual identifiers for the purpose of matching to administrative record data. For further discussion of the role and utility of matching people to administrative data (Chapter 10).

OPA conducts other large-scale DoD-wide surveys using a similar administration practices.<sup>43</sup> However, because DEOCS results go directly to commanders and commanders' supervisors, privacy protections are particularly salient among DEOCS participants. Anonymity concerns were cited as a concern in all three streams of stakeholder feedback (Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4). Crucially, the amount of identifiable information available to survey administrators and commanders does not differ between the legacy approach and the new secure log in approach—results are reported by exactly the same methods (described in more detail in Chapter 9). However, stakeholders have voiced concerns that participants may perceive their responses to be less private when they are asked to provide an identifier (i.e., their e-mail address or phone number) in order to take the survey. This perception could lead to lower response rates or participants being less forthright in their answers. We take these concerns very seriously and aim to ensure that any changes do not jeopardize response rates or the accuracy of DEOCS responses, which is why we are testing this new approach experimentally.

### ***Benefits of Secure Log-In***

The secure log in administration process provides several benefits in the domains of data accuracy and user experience. In our information-gathering process, we heard numerous anecdotal concerns that the legacy log in process allows non-unit members to take the survey, and allows for unit members to take the survey multiple times. In terms of data accuracy, secure log in increases test security by ensuring that only unit members identified in the roster are taking the survey. If an e-mail address provided does not match to a roster for an active DEOCS, then the individual is not able to take this survey. Therefore, this approach ensures that individuals outside of the unit (or even outside of DoD) do not contribute to a unit's DEOCS results. Next, the new approach ensures that each unit member can only submit one DEOCS response. If a response has already been submitted under a given "username" (i.e., e-mail address), then no additional responses can be submitted under that name. One individual cannot attempt to influence response rates or survey results by submitting multiple surveys.

In addition to improving the accuracy and reliability of DEOCS data for commanders, this new approach improves the user experience and makes it easier for members to complete the DEOCS, addressing direct requests made in our redesign focus groups and survey for ways to make the DEOCS as easy as possible to access and complete. First, participants don't have to remember or keep on hand their unit passcode, making it easier for members to take the survey whenever they have time from wherever they are, logging in with information that they already know (i.e., their own e-mail address). Second, participants can complete the survey in multiple sittings. In the new system, the participant sets up an individual four-digit PIN the first time they log into the survey. The participant can then leave the survey at any time and use this PIN to re-enter the survey and finish responding. This PIN also ensures that no one else can log in under someone else's e-mail address and view their responses. Finally, the new approach allows the

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<sup>43</sup> Other OPA surveys send sample members a unique log in code via e-mail. This ensures that only the right individuals complete a survey and allows for multi-session responding and withdrawal of responses (consistent with the DEOCS approach). However, we opted to use e-mail addresses for DEOCS instead of individual codes because some members of the DoD community are difficult to reach via e-mail (making it challenging to provide individual codes) and because having to keep a code on hand to enter a survey may serve as a barrier to response. In line with our core principle of usability, we wanted to make it as easy as possible for as many people as are interested to complete the DEOCS and remove any potential barriers to response.

participant to choose to withdraw their responses if they wish to do so after they submit the survey by contacting the DEOCS help desk with their username and PIN, provided the survey window is still open. Multi-session responding and withdrawing responses are not possible in the legacy approach.

Although we have not conducted any formal qualitative efforts focused on the secure log in condition, anecdotal evidence from users in the field has suggested that many survey administrators appreciate the ease of the new system. We have learned that allowing OPA to send out the links and contact participants directly lowers the burden of the process on survey administrators. Additionally, commanders have expressed a desire to ensure that the right people are taking the survey and that they are only taking it once. This allows commanders to have more confidence in the data, particularly when legacy log in surveys sometimes show response rates in excess of 100%. From a participant perspective, we have heard that the new PIN feature makes the survey easier, since they can now stop taking the survey and pick up where they left off without having to retake the whole survey.

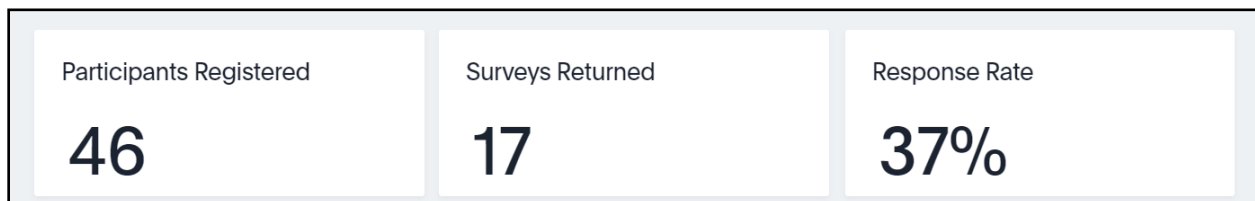
### *Finalizing the Experiment*

As of this writing, the experiment has concluded and data collection and analysis for this experiment is still ongoing. We are examining differences between the two conditions in response rates and patterns of responses to survey questions. Preliminary results suggest no adverse impact of the secure log in approach, but analysis is still ongoing. OPA will provide the results of this experiment to stakeholders and leadership to decide on the log in approach for the DEOCS moving forward.

### *Managing a Survey in the Field*

While a DEOCS is in the field, survey administrators are responsible for monitoring response rates and encouraging participation. Within the interactive reporting portion of the dashboard, survey administrators can access the tab labeled “Response Rate” to monitor the response rate of a survey in the field, which is updated in real time (Figure 12). The tab provides the number of participants registered, returned, and the response rate (i.e., the percentage of number of surveys returned divided by the total number of participants registered). These numbers are displayed for the unit overall and each subgroup. Detailed instructions for monitoring response rates can be found at <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>

**Figure 12.**  
*Response Rate Screen*



This tab also displays a “Daily Survey Returns” graph that shows the number of surveys returned each day the DEOCS has been open (Figure 13). This graph can be used to see if an e-mail or verbal message helped to boost participation or to notice when participation appears to be slowing (which suggests that another communication encouraging response may be needed).

**Figure 13.**  
*Daily Survey Returns*

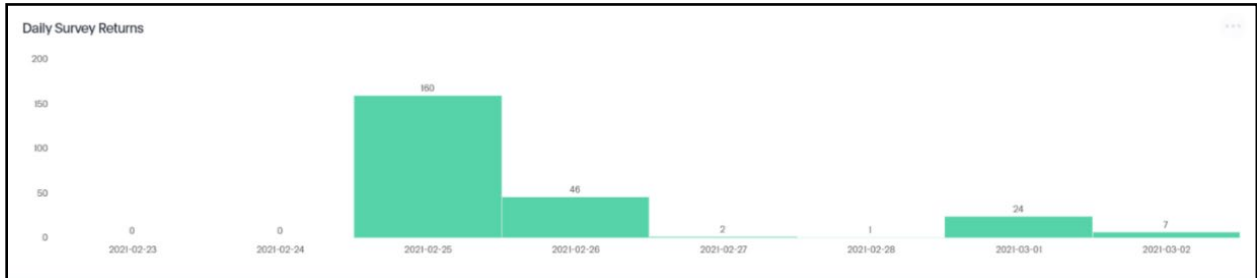


Figure 14 shows more detailed information about the current survey as well as response rate information for any other surveys registered by the same survey administrator. This information is useful for comparing the current response rate to previous DEOCS surveys to decide whether additional time in the field is needed. Figure 15 shows the current overall response rate and the response rate for any subgroups identified in the roster.

**Figure 14.**  
*Current and Previous Response Rates*

Registration ID	Overall Unit/Organization ↑	Service Component ↑	Survey Dates	Status	Number of Participants Registered	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate
44227	APP-786	National Guard (Air/Army/Joint)	11/09/2020-11/10/2020	survey end - not enough responses	46	1	2.2%
44074	DateExtension1	US Air Force Academy (USAFA)	12/10/2020-12/27/2020	survey open	16	0	0%

**Figure 15.**  
**Overall Response Rates and Subgroup Response Rates**

Current Response Rate			
Group	Response Rate	Number of Participants Registered	Number of Surveys Returned
Overall Unit/Organization	58%	36	21
Infield	75%	8	6
Catcher	36%	14	5
Outfield	56%	9	5
Pitcher	100%	5	5
5 rows total			

If the survey close date is nearing and response rates are lower than desired, then the survey administrator can choose to extend the survey past its original end date within the survey registration section of the DEOCS Portal. Conversely, if everybody has responded, then a survey administrator could close the survey early to receive results sooner. It is important to monitor response rates prior to the survey end date because a survey cannot be reopened once it closes.

To help survey administrators achieve higher response rates, the system monitors response rates and automatically extends the survey, if necessary. Three business days before the scheduled end date of a survey, the system will check a unit’s response rate. If the response rate is less than 30%, then the system will automatically extend the end date by one week. If in a week the response rate is still below 30%, then the system will automatically extend the end date one more time for a week. The survey administrator will receive an e-mail about the automatic extension with the new end date. No action is required, but if the survey administrator wishes to cancel or change the automatic extension, then they can do so within the survey registration section of the DEOCS Portal. If participants in the unit receive auto-generated e-mails from the system, then reminder e-mails sent after the extension include the new end date. If the survey administrator distributed passcodes (i.e., the legacy condition), then they should notify participants that the survey has been extended. This auto-extension is a new feature added to help reduce burden on survey administrators.

**Survey Communications**

For surveys in the secure log in experimental condition (the previous section has a description), the system sends a series of automated e-mails to unit members to encourage their participation

in the survey. This is a new feature in the new DEOCS. Previously, unit commanders and staff were the sole conduit by which participants were recruited into the DEOCS. Although OPA is adding more survey recruitment techniques (i.e., e-mails to unit members via the DEOCS system), we strongly encourage the unit-level form of recruitment as being the primary way by which participants are recruited into the DEOCS. Trust that a survey request is legitimate is one of the most important factors when recruiting survey participants (Dillman, 2017) and a survey request presented to a participant from their supervisor or someone within their chain of command removes any fear that the survey request is fake or a scam.

The new DEOCS system allows us to expand this recruitment effort by commanders with supplemental recruitment messages sent directly from the DEOCS system. Currently, the DEOCS system sends three different e-mails to unit members who had e-mails placed on a DEOCS roster ([Appendix Q](#)). The first e-mail is an introductory invitation e-mail to participate in the DEOCS. This is followed by reminder e-mails every six days. Depending on the fielding period of the DEOCS, a potential participant may receive this e-mail one or more times. If the potential participant's DEOCS is extended, either by a commander or auto-triggered due to low response rate, then the system will send revised reminder e-mails that include messaging about the potential participant's DEOCS being extended. These will be sent every six days until the DEOCS fielding window is complete, or a total of eight e-mails have been sent, whichever comes first. Respondents who complete their DEOCS will also stop receiving these automated recruitment e-mails.<sup>44</sup>

All letters were written following social exchange best practices and visual design principles,<sup>45</sup> and leverage behavioral insights on motivation and survey recruitment (Dillman et al., 2014; Oliver et al., 2017; Schreiner, 2019). The e-mails contain messages shown to motivate action, including unity appeals (“add your voice to others in your unit”) and scarcity appeals (“the DEOCS is only open for a limited time”; Cialdini, 2016). The e-mails assure, but do not overstate, the confidentiality of the DEOCS, as overstating confidentiality can be off-putting to potential participants (Singer et al., 1995; Fobia et al., 2017). Using information entered by DEOCS administrators on the registration page, each e-mail inserts a few phrases so that each e-mail speaks in the proper language depending on if the participant is in a military unit, a civilian DoD organization, or a Military Service Academy (MSA). Each e-mail also inserts the name and contact information of the survey administrator.<sup>46</sup> Because trust in the survey sponsor is an important driver of survey response (Herberlein & Baumgardner, 1978; Brick & Williams, 2013; Dillman, 2019), e-mails are sent from Dr. Ashlea Klahr and reference her position in the Department.

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<sup>44</sup> One planned future enhancement is to have up to eight different e-mails, rather than repetitive e-mails, sent from the DEOCS system to potential participants. Unique recruitment materials have been shown to increase response rates compared to repetitive messages (Dillman et al., 2014; Schreiner et al., 2020).

<sup>45</sup> E-mails are sent in html text and include features such as bold font and variable font sizes to draw the reader to the most important information. Due to DoD IT security, e-mails are often converted to plain text, losing these visual design elements.

<sup>46</sup> Future improvements to the e-mails will include expanding the capabilities to insert even more personalized information into the DEOCS e-mail request. Personalized survey recruitment materials have been shown to increase response rates (Dillman et al., 2002).

As mentioned, the main recruitment strategy is for commanders and organization leaders to recruit participants into the DEOCS. To assist with this effort, we developed a template letter with suggested language and phrasing for commanders, organization leaders, and EO professionals could use to recruit participants into the DEOCS. This letter was developed following the same design and best practice principles on survey recruitment as the letters sent from the DEOCS system ([Appendix Q](#)).

## **Results Reporting**

Within 24–72 hours after a DEOCS closes, results are analyzed and summary metrics are provided to survey administrators, commanders, and commander’s supervisors. Each of these users receive an e-mail instructing them to log in to the DEOCS Portal to view their results in an interactive dashboard or download some or all of the results in PDF. [Chapter 9](#) has a detailed description of the analysis and reporting of DEOCS results.

## **Follow-On Actions**

After a DEOCS has been completed and the results tabulated and made available in the DEOCS Portal, the DEOCS administrator’s interpretation task begins. It is generally the survey administrator’s job to look at the results of the survey and communicate them to the commander. Additionally, there are a variety of tools at the survey administrator’s disposal to assist in this analysis, including documents available on <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>. These tools are part of a comprehensive process developed by DEOMI for assessing unit climate called Assessment to Solutions (A2S).

The A2S website houses documents that describe the risk and protective factors that appear on the DEOCS 5.0, their definitions, and what kinds of outcomes they are linked to in the scientific literature.<sup>47</sup> There are also guides that can assist commands in some of the follow-on actions that are recommend by DEOMI based on DEOCS results. These actions include focus groups, individual interviews, and records reviews. These follow-on actions are meant to enhance the results of the DEOCS by providing additional data points to act as extra contextual information when considering DEOCS results.

OPA asserts that any additional data-gathering techniques (e.g., focus groups) should not be seen as a way to validate or invalidate the results of the survey. Qualitative research, even when it is conducted by trained experts, provides additional context and nuance to survey data, but does not in any way discount survey findings. A survey is open to all unit members, whereas most qualitative research captures a small subset of unit members in a more in-depth fashion. Many individuals are most comfortable providing their honest and critical feedback regarding unit climate via a confidential survey, where their identity is hidden from the commander. It is impossible to guarantee this level of privacy in interviews and focus groups. Moreover, focus groups in particular can be a challenging venue for members of a unit, particularly members who may be the target of hostile behaviors or members of an underrepresented group, to openly express their concerns. Therefore, focus group and other qualitative data should never be used to

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<sup>47</sup> Chapter 6 has an in-depth description of the DEOCS 5.0 risk and protective factors and their support in the scientific literature.



supersede or discount DEOCS results. In other words, if a problem is identified on the DEOCS but follow-on focus groups do not reveal the same problem, then this does not necessarily mean the problem does not exist or that the DEOCS was “wrong” or “invalid.” Rather, it suggests that individuals in the focus groups either (1) were not the same people who raised the problem on the survey or (2) individuals were not comfortable describing these problems in a group, out loud, or with their peers.

To be clear, this does not mean that there is not value in these follow-on data gathering activities. In the right hands, and with proper training and preparation, these qualitative data can add important contextual information as well as more specific details about the results of the DEOCS that can add depth and nuance to a briefing to the commander. However, these results must be viewed as complementary to the survey results and the caveats and limitations of qualitative research should not be overlooked.

The documents describing how to administer a survey and the new DEOCS 5.0 risk and protective factors are new to the A2S website. Other documents remain from the legacy approach. We expect these resources to be further developed and refined into the future, in collaboration with DEOMI and the Military Departments. We also plan to enhance the dashboard ([Chapter 9](#)) to provide more direct access to these follow-on resources, and tailor resources to address the specific issues identified in an individual unit’s DEOCS results.

## Training and Outreach on the Defense Organizational Climate Survey Redesign

Given the extensive reach and varied user base of the DEOCS, any changes to the system and the administration process required a robust outreach and training effort to disseminate critical knowledge and information regarding these changes. DEOMI remains the center of excellence for training, and continues to provide training for EOAs in the administration of the DEOCS. However, given the speed of the redesign and the shifts in platform and survey administration process, OPA developed training and outreach materials and hosted trainings to assist in preparing and supporting the field through the transition period. OPA worked with DEOMI to publish these training and outreach materials on an ongoing basis via DEOMI’s website <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>. This is a public-facing website and all materials available there are accessible to the public.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, OPA was in frequent contact with the Service Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) offices’ points of contact and other stakeholders in the Services who helped disseminate information throughout the Force.

In addition to static materials, in August 2020, OPA began hosting biweekly virtual live training sessions. These trainings are open to anyone involved in the DEOCS process and require an RSVP to join. Between August 2020 and January 2021, over 1,400 individuals participated in these sessions, which consisted of live demonstrations by an OPA researcher walking through the process of creating an administration account, logging in and exploring the DEOCS Portal, registering a new DEOCS, and going through the registration fields to explain any differences between the new version from the old (e.g., rostering, custom question bank). After the launch

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<sup>48</sup> All materials are reviewed and approved for public release via the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) security review process prior to posting.

of the DEOCS 5.0 content and updated reporting in January 2021, additional trainings were held, and are currently ongoing, to describe updates to the reporting system and content to ensure that survey administrators understand the updated survey and are prepared to brief their commanders given changes to data visualizations and updated survey content.

## Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the various policies and processes that govern the DEOCS survey, both historically and currently. We describe the current process of administering a DEOCS from the perspective of the survey administrator (from setting up an account to requesting a survey to monitoring response rates in the field to after actions), and the process of taking a DEOCS for unit members. In describing these processes, we highlight areas where OPA has staged targeted interventions, based largely on stakeholder feedback. The next chapter will describe the process by which OPA developed new survey content, which took into consideration feedback from many sources ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#); [Chapter 4](#)) and was based on the most promising scientific research into command climate risk and protective factors.

## Chapter 6: DEOCS 5.0 Construct Selection

*Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Clancy Murray, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Rachel Trump-Steele, Dr. Sela Harcey*

### Introduction

In this chapter, we describe the 19 factors or constructs (hereafter referred to as constructs) that are measured in the redesigned Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) 5.0 and how these constructs were selected. In designing the DEOCS 5.0, we started with a figurative blank page and, based on a rigorous process of construct selection, ultimately selected 19 constructs for inclusion on the survey instrument. The overarching principles for the entire DEOCS redesign—data driven, user friendly, and actionable ([Chapter 1](#))—also guided the process for selecting new survey content. The chapters that follow describe the process for selecting specific items and scales for measuring these constructs ([Chapter 7](#)) and the process of combining all items to create the DEOCS 5.0 survey instrument ([Chapter 8](#)).

### Accurate and Data Driven

First and foremost, the process for selecting new content was systematic and relied heavily on existing scientific research on climate. We started at the foundational level for construct selection, consistent with best practice in human-centered design and implementation science, by clearly defining the desired impact in terms of the performance gap, or the discrepancy between the ideal and current state (e.g., Handley et al., 2016). We relied upon the purpose of the DEOCS to guide our decision-making process, aiming to design a survey to serve as a tool for commanders that produces accurate assessments of climate risks and informs targeted and appropriate follow-on actions (to include follow-on assessments as needed). We then asked the question, “What should the DEOCS measure?” or, in other words, “What are the key metrics that unit commanders need regarding climate in their unit?”

To make these critical decisions regarding what to measure on DoD’s largest and most potentially impactful survey, we developed a rigorous selection process designed to choose the most actionable, empirically supported risk and protective factors for the DEOCS strategic target outcomes (STO) which include racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, suicide, retention, and readiness. This process was systematic in nature, designed to minimize the impact of individual biases, prior assumptions, and beliefs on the content selection process.<sup>49</sup> The process was also designed to prioritize the best-quality evidence, to ensure the DEOCS 5.0 is grounded in science. Finally, during our selection, we also gave weight

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<sup>49</sup> Over a century of science in psychology, sociology, and cognition demonstrate that human judgment is biased (James, 1890; Kahneman & Tversky, 1972, 1996; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Kunda, 1990; Ariely, 2008; Kahneman, 2011; Hilbert, 2012) and favors people’s own prior assumptions and beliefs. For example, many stakeholders (OPA researchers included) have preferences and beliefs about which constructs will be most accurate at assessing risk related to the STOs. These preferences and beliefs are based on our own firsthand experiences and observations, and in some cases, the research that we have worked with or produced. Sometimes we recognize that we have these preferences or beliefs, but research suggests that more often we don’t recognize our own tendencies for biased judgments (Greenwald, 1980; Greenwald et al., 2009).

to insights from a variety of DEOCS stakeholders, including Service members, commanders, policy officials, and senior leaders.

## User Friendly

As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, there are a variety of constructs that would have been appropriate to include on a survey of command climate. However, with the knowledge that a long survey could result in low response rates and lower data quality (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009), the redesign team took steps to limit survey burden by identifying the most important constructs. Our systematic selection process helped to identify the most promising constructs: those that had the best supporting evidence, served the key functions of the DEOCS, and were also deemed meaningful to stakeholders. We also made the survey more efficient by prioritizing topics that predicted multiple STOs.

## Actionable

Actionability was a key consideration in selecting survey constructs. As a commander's tool, it is important that the DEOCS directly inform actions a commander can take to improve their command climate. Therefore, the constructs measured on the revised DEOCS 5.0 can be impacted by commander and other DoD leaders through policy, programs, and practices. At several points in the selection process, actionability of a construct was considered, including during the initial literature review, and as a key consideration in the final selection of constructs. The remainder of this chapter describes in detail our construct selection methodology.

## Method

The redesign team leveraged their expertise in social and behavioral science as well as existing scientific frameworks to develop a rigorous, comprehensive method for identifying and selecting survey content for the DEOCS 5.0. To do so, we applied current OPA practices for selecting survey content and then sought out expertise in parallel applied research organizations or publications to build upon our existing practices. These sources included conversations with industry experts; authoritative texts on social science research for applications in industry, business, and governments; and methods used in other large-scale or national public health agendas and programs (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), 2016, 2017). The resulting methodology is briefly described below and followed by detailed information focused on each step within this process.

At a high level, we selected survey content (i.e., survey themes and constructs) based on three key functions: (1) provide an accurate assessment of risk and protective factors; (2) provide a basis for actionable guidance; and (3) provide the ability to track changes over time and differences between groups (or units). The term "themes" is defined as broad subjects of discussion as identified in at least one of the articles from the initial literature review discussed further below. The term "constructs" is a specific topic and can be measured by responses on one or more survey items which make up a scale. For example, the theme "Hostile Climate," includes the constructs "Workplace Bullying" and "Workplace Hostility." "Construct" is commonly used in social science research and used herein synonymously with the term "factors"

(as in the phrase, “cross-cutting risk and protective factors”). After selection, constructs were organized into the two broad categories of risk and protective factors that generally describe whether the presence of the factor is good or bad for unit climate. We define risk factors as attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative command climate outcomes; whereas protective factors are associated with positive command climate outcomes.

To generate a preliminary list of themes and their corresponding constructs for consideration, the redesign team performed an initial literature review that was scoped based on our three key functions described above. We then systematically extracted detailed information and identified preliminary themes and constructs from each article. We then followed a step-by-step process, briefly described below, to review and score the preliminary themes and constructs. Further information on the criteria and scoring is described in the four sections below.

### ***Step 1: Screening Preliminary Constructs.***

We determined whether the identified preliminary constructs that derived from the initial literature review met the minimum criteria for inclusion—scientific evidence, hypothetical time variable, and hypothetical group variable. Preliminary constructs and their corresponding themes that met minimum criteria, were moved to Scoring Preliminary Themes and Constructs.

### ***Step 2: Scoring Preliminary Themes and Constructs.***

The preliminary themes and constructs that met the minimum criteria were scored based on a set of criteria. The scoring criteria was developed to quantitatively distinguish high-performing preliminary themes and constructs, based on how likely the constructs were to facilitate the DEOCS’s key functions. It is separated into two scores: (1) scientific evidence and (2) qualitative evidence. Each score includes multiple criteria which are discussed in further detail below.

### ***Step 3: Selecting Initial Constructs.***

Members of the redesign team independently evaluated the scored preliminary themes and constructs and then met as a group to select the initial set of constructs for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0.

### ***Step 4: Selecting Final Constructs.***

The final set of constructs was modified based on stakeholder feedback provided throughout the coordination process as well as the redesign team survey development expertise. These decisions ultimately resulted in the selection of the final 19 constructs that are included on the revised DEOCS 5.0.

## **Initial Literature Review**

As discussed above, to ensure the revised DEOCS 5.0 is evidence based, we conducted an initial literature review. The goal of the literature review was to identify preliminary themes and constructs for potential inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0. We describe our article selection process

as well as approach to inputting and tracking the information below. The initial literature review identified over 100 articles which were used to identify over 400 unique preliminary constructs.

### **Article Selection**

For an article to be included in the initial literature review, it had to meet certain requirements that are described below.

- **Evidence Based:** To ensure the literature review was evidence based, the article had to be a peer-reviewed academic article (e.g., empirical, or meta-analytic), internal OPA or DoD research, or other industry standard research such as white papers and reports from federally funded research and development centers or government entities.
- **Current Research:** To ensure current research was prioritized, the search focused on articles published between 2010 and 2020.
- **Link to STOs:** To ensure the DEOCS 5.0 measures risk and protective factors linked to the STOs, the article had to examine associations with, or leading indicators for, at least one of the six STOs.
- **Meaningful at the Unit Level:** Because the DEOCS is reported at the unit or organization level and not at an individual level, the content discussed in the article must be measured, or relevant, at the aggregate unit level. For example, average unit-level endorsement of “Cohesion” in relation to lower sexual harassment rates in the unit were prioritized over research that found that an individual’s level of depression is related to their likelihood of attempted suicide. However, research is much more common at the individual level; thus, individual-level research that is applicable in the aggregate unit or organization level was included in the literature review.
- **Actionable for Leaders:** To ensure the DEOCS 5.0 results are actionable for leaders, the article’s content had to focus on findings that allowed leaders to address issues using a combination of policies, programs, and practices. For example, an actionable finding would be content that identifies poor communication from leadership. If flagged, leadership would address this issue by implementing clearer, more frequent communication within their unit or organization. An example of a non-actionable finding would be something related to the gender composition of the unit or concerns about Service-level policies, which commanders cannot influence.
- **Measured by Survey:** All articles were required to focus on content that could be measured on a survey, such as DEOCS 5.0, and capture participants’ attitudes, opinions, perceptions, behaviors, and observations. Articles that were excluded on this basis included those focused on biological markers such as genes, hormones, and neurotransmitters that may serve as leading indicators for one or more STOs, but these are not readily measured via a survey.

- **Non-Administrative Data Focused:** Similar to the above criteria, the correlates or leading indicators of focus within the article had to be those readily captured via a survey and not better or as readily captured via administrative personnel records (e.g., unit demographic composition may be associated with unit-level outcomes, but a survey is not the most efficient way to collect this information).
- **Population Focus:** To focus on constructs that are relevant to the military as well as the DoD civilian population, the article selection prioritized research on U.S. and international military populations. As a second priority and in addition to military research, the search also focused on U.S. research concentrated on the following industries: first-response and paramilitary organizations and research from structurally similar industries, like medicine, higher education, for-profit corporate settings, STEM, and professional and college-level team sports. These additional populations were included due to potential similarities to the DoD populations, which have strong culture and a team mentality.

To identify relevant literature, we mainly used the search tool Google Scholar. Google Scholar is a freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature from a variety of publishing formats and disciplines. If only the abstract was available through Google Scholar, we expanded the search to a variety of other search tools to find the full text version such as the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC) and ResearchGate. When necessary and applicable, we also e-mailed the author directly to ask for a copy of the article.

Table 8 below presents the search terms used to identify relevant articles. As noted below, the search terms were organized into three main themes in order of importance that include (1) organizational context, (2) STOs, and (3) command climate constructs. The command climate constructs were identified based on conversations from the military and summit focus groups ([Chapter 2](#)) as well as stakeholder interviews ([Chapter 4](#)).

**Table 8.**  
**Key Search Terms and Themes**

Theme	Search Terms
Organizational Context	<b>First Attempt:</b> MILITARY or POLICE or EMT or FIRST RESPONDERS or PARAMILITARY or FIREFIGHTERS
	<b>Second Attempt:</b> STEM or MEDICINE or HIGHER EDUCATION or FOR-PROFIT CORPORATE or PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAM or COLLEGE SPORTS TEAM
Strategic Target Outcomes (STOs)	RETENTION or SEXUAL HARASSMENT or SEXUAL ASSAULT or SUICIDE or HARASSMENT or DISCRIMINATION or DEPLOYABILITY or READINESS
Command Climate Constructs	<b>General Terms:</b> CLIMATE or CULTURE or UNIT LEVEL or LEADER or TEAM LEVEL or LEADERSHIP
	<b>Positive Terms:</b> COMMUNICATION or TRANSPARENCY or TRUST or EMPATHY or MORALE or RESPECT or ENGAGEMENT or ACCOUNTABILITY or CARING or FAIRNESS or HONESTY or ACCESSIBLE or PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/GROWTH or SUPPORTIVE
	<b>Negative Terms:</b> HOSTILITY or MICROMANAGEMENT or FAVORITISM or INACCESSIBILITY or TOXIC LEADERSHIP or MISMANAGEMENT or OPAQUE or DISTRUST or SELFISHNESS or BLAME or AIMLESS or CLOSE MINDED or LACK OF TRAINING or POOR LEADERSHIP or ZERO MISTAKE MENTALITY or LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY or CULTURE OF FEAR

Information from the initial literature review that met the search criteria described above was inputted into the Table of Content Evidence under the tab entitled “Table of References.” The Table of Content Evidence summarizes the scientific and qualitative evidence described below for each of the final 19 factors. It also includes the items that were chosen to measure the constructs (which are discussed further in [Chapter 7](#) and [Chapter 8](#)). The Table of Content Evidence can be found on OPA’s website, [www.opa.mil](http://www.opa.mil).

**Identify Preliminary Themes and Constructs**

For the next stage of development, the redesign team identified preliminary themes and constructs for potential inclusion on the revised DEOCS 5.0. For this report, themes are defined as broad subjects of discussion as identified in at least one of the articles from the initial literature review, while constructs are more specific. For example, one theme identified through our initial literature review was “Justice Climate,” which included constructs such as “Workgroup Fairness” and “Perceived Organizational Justice.” To identify preliminary themes and constructs, the redesign team completed four steps discussed below.

**Step 1: Identified Preliminary Constructs**

The redesign team identified specific preliminary constructs through two primary sources: (1) the article abstracts, and (2) the key findings summaries written by the research team in the Table of References. That is, going through each article, the redesign team identified and recorded all constructs that were provided in the abstract or in the summaries of key findings that related to at least one of the six STOs. The constructs were generally tied to specific measurement information (hereafter referred to as scales) discussed in the article. When a scale was not



available, the author's operational definition was used to identify constructs. Following this process, over 550 initial preliminary construct-STO pairings were identified.

### ***Step 2: Consolidated Preliminary Constructs***

In the second step, the redesign team collectively reviewed the preliminary constructs. When significant overlap was identified, the constructs were consolidated. To identify overlapping constructs, the team examined the scale or author's operationalization definition. Constructs that were conceptualized and measured in the same or very similar ways were combined into one construct. For example, Mete and Sökmen (2016) found job satisfaction was related to readiness, and the authors measured job satisfaction using the Job Satisfaction Scale (Miller & Medalia, 1955). Knapp and colleagues (1993) found job satisfaction was related to retention, and the authors measured job satisfaction using the Army Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (Kralj et al., 1991). Upon further examination of these two scales, both were determined to be the same construct and were labeled as "Job Satisfaction." Following this process, a final total of over 400 unique consolidated preliminary constructs were identified.

### ***Step 3: Identified Preliminary Themes***

After identifying and consolidating preliminary constructs, we grouped constructs into broader preliminary themes. For example, constructs such as "Connectedness," "Coworker Satisfaction," "Isolation," "Perceptions of Integration," and "Thwarted Belongingness" were all captured in a larger "Connectedness" theme. These themes were used for two primary purposes. The first was to provide an organizational framework to think about, discuss, and structure the identified constructs. Second, the themes were used to score qualitative evidence collected during focus groups and stakeholder conversations. This was done because participants often used different language to describe phenomena that was most easily grouped by "theme" since people do not generally speak in "constructs." Each theme was also linked to one or more of the STOs. Following this process, a final total of over 100 themes were identified. Each theme was made up of one to 23 individual preliminary constructs.

### ***Step 4: Developed Preliminary Theme and Construct Definitions***

Based on the scales, author definitions, and extensive discussion by the redesign team, operational definitions for each preliminary theme and construct was developed.<sup>50</sup>

### ***Summary***

The redesign team conducted an initial literature review to identify preliminary themes and constructs for inclusion consideration on the revised DEOCS 5.0. The process concluded with over 100 preliminary themes and 400 preliminary constructs identified. To narrow the preliminary constructs and ensure we provide unit commanders with the most important and useful information; we employed the following four-step process to systematically identify the best constructs for inclusion on DEOCS 5.0.

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<sup>50</sup> A list of scored preliminary themes and constructs can be found in the Table of Content Evidence located on OPA's website, [www.opa.mil](http://www.opa.mil).

## Method Step 1: Screening Preliminary Constructs

The first step of the content selection method was to review preliminary constructs to assess if they met the minimum criteria for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0.<sup>51</sup> To assess the preliminary constructs, the redesign team met and reviewed over 400 preliminary constructs identified through the initial literature review to ensure definitions were clear. The team then evaluated each of the preliminary constructs based on the minimum criteria discussed below. If the preliminary construct did not meet the minimum criteria, it was dropped from further consideration.

### **Minimum Criteria**

**Scientific Evidence.** The first minimum criterion supports the first function of the DEOCS: to assess unit level accurately and reliably, cross-cutting climate risk and protective factors related to the STOs. To meet the scientific evidence criteria, the literature had to provide preliminary evidence linking a candidate construct to an STO. This ensures that, at minimum, the construct accurately and reliably assesses climate risk and protective constructs related to at least one of the six STOs. To meet our definition of preliminary, the evidence to support the link between a preliminary construct and STO must be found in correlational or cross-sectional research (e.g., OPA Gender Relations Surveys models) or in systematic research reviews. Rigorous research evidence,<sup>52</sup> including evidence from a meta-analysis, experiment, or quasi-experimental studies, that empirically (i.e., statistically, and mathematically) linking the candidate construct with a STO, also meets this threshold. We did not consider “anecdotal” research or qualitative research (e.g., focus groups or individual interviews) to be sufficient scientific evidence. Similarly, we did not consider “theoretical” or hypothesized links between preliminary constructs and STOs that was not empirically examined to be sufficient scientific evidence. However, these types of evidence were referenced in support of the link between the preliminary construct and STO, alongside scientific evidence, when applicable.

**Hypothetical Time Variable.** The second minimum criterion supports part of the third function of the DEOCS: to serve as a basis to track improvement and decrement in command climate. Toward this end, we considered a preliminary construct to be time variable if the construct could be logically expected to change within the average amount of time that a commander commands a unit (i.e., 18–24 months). As one example, the research team determined whether a construct was time variable by considering whether the construct was capturing a “state” or a “trait.” A “state” is a condition that someone or a unit could be in, such as low morale. By contrast, a “trait” is a feature that someone or a unit has and is unlikely to change in 18–24 months, such as a unit’s gender composition. Note that we evaluated this criterion liberally, meaning that, although some aspects of climate, and particularly culture, can be very difficult to change, and in practice often remain fixed, so long as it was theoretically possible to change the construct, the construct was considered as meeting the criterion. That said, if a construct was not time

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<sup>51</sup> We did not conduct a minimum criteria screening on preliminary themes as each preliminary theme was connected to a preliminary construct.

<sup>52</sup> Our definition of scientific evidence aligns with the definition used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in its technical packages; NCIPC (2016 & 2017); Ruggeri et al., 2020.

variable<sup>53</sup> (e.g., gender, family history of suicide, prior delinquent behavior), then it could not serve this function of the DEOCS. In sum, the commander had to be able to reasonably impact the construct while they were in command of that unit and could be reasonably expected to improve.

***Hypothetical Group Variable.*** Similarly, the third minimum criterion supports part of the third function of the DEOCS: to serve as a basis to compare groups or units. Toward this end, the construct had to capture differences between units. We considered a construct to be group variable if the construct could be logically expected to differ between subgroups within the same overall organization. For example, across the people who will be taking the DEOCS, all of them should have “Access to Health Insurance” and be “Employed.” Therefore, we did not expect these constructs to differ by unit nor meet this minimum criterion. By contrast, there are likely to be different levels of “Morale” among units and individuals. For this reason, “Morale” met the group variable minimum criteria. Constructs that do not allow us to capture differences at the subgroup level<sup>54</sup> do not serve the functions of the DEOCS and do not meet this minimum criterion.

***Measurable.*** Finally, we removed any remaining preliminary constructs that could not be measured on a survey. Recall that the measurability of the preliminary construct on a survey was also an exclusion criterion in the initial literature review selection. Some articles that we included had both measurable and non-measurable constructs, and so, at this step, we screened out those remaining non-measurable constructs. For example, the redesign team felt that the preliminary construct “Genetic and Biological Determinants” was not something that could easily be measured on a survey. Therefore, this preliminary construct was dropped during the minimum criteria process.

### ***Preliminary Construct Minimum Criteria Screening Example***

This section walks through an example of the minimum criteria screening using the preliminary construct “Alcohol Misuse.”<sup>55</sup>

The research team evaluated each of the constructs from the literature review based on the scientific evidence minimum criteria for each STO. Table 9 below shows how we evaluated the scientific evidence for the link between “Alcohol Misuse” and each STO: racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, suicide, readiness, and retention. We assigned the construct six scores, one for each STO: 1 = construct meets the scientific evidence criterion for the STO and 0 = construct does not meet the scientific evidence criterion for the STO. For “Alcohol Misuse,” there was sufficient scientific evidence linking it to: sexual assault = 1, suicide = 1. For the other STOs, the evidence was not currently published or

<sup>53</sup> Variability is a statistic, or perhaps best defined when considering how to measure constructs, so it may seem odd to include in our selection of constructs. However, variability is also a feature in the conceptualization of constructs and, therefore, possible to evaluate at the conceptual level.

<sup>54</sup> Variability is a statistic, or perhaps best defined when considering how to measure constructs, so it may seem odd to include in our selection of constructs. However, variability is also a feature in the conceptualization of constructs and, therefore, possible to evaluate at the conceptual level.

<sup>55</sup> In the final version of the survey instrument, “Alcohol Misuse” was separated into separate factors of “Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking.”

included in the literature review: racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination = 0, sexual harassment = 0, readiness = 0, retention = 0.

**Table 9.**  
*Minimum Criteria Screening for the Preliminary Construct "Alcohol Misuse"*

Minimum Criteria	STO	Score
Scientific Evidence	Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination	0
	Retention	0
	Readiness	0
	Sexual Assault	1
	Sexual Harassment	0
	Suicide	1
Hypothetical Time Variable		1
Hypothetical Group Variable		1
Measurable		1

If the construct met the scientific evidence criterion for at least one STO, we then evaluated the hypothetical time variable, hypothetical group variable, and measurable criteria and assigned one score for each criterion. That is, since construct A, "Alcohol Misuse," met the scientific evidence criterion for two STOs (suicide = 1 and sexual assault = 1; all other STOs = 0), then we evaluated construct A, "Alcohol Misuse" on the hypothetical time variable, hypothetical group variable, and measurable criteria only once each. Therefore, "Alcohol Misuse" has nine minimum criteria evaluations and scores: six scores for scientific evidence (sexual assault = 1, suicide = 1, racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination = 0, sexual harassment = 0, readiness = 0, retention = 0); one score for time variable = 1; one score for group variable = 1; one score for measurable = 1.

However, if a construct did not meet the scientific evidence criterion for any STOs, then we did not evaluate the construct on the hypothetical time variable, hypothetical group variable, and measurable criteria, and the construct was dropped from further consideration. Furthermore, if a construct met scientific criterion for at least one STO but did not meet criteria for hypothetical time variable, hypothetical group variable, or measurable, then the construct was dropped from further consideration.

Thus, any construct with at least one construct/STO scientific criteria score that equals 1, a time variable score that equals 1, a group variable score that equals 1, and a measurable criteria score that equals 1, was scored in the next step (Step 2: Scoring Preliminary Constructs and Themes).

**Summary**

The redesign team reviewed over 400 preliminary constructs to assess if they met minimum criteria. To meet this requirement, the preliminary construct had to be based on literature that met the scientific evidence requirements, was able to change over time and among groups, and

could be measured on a survey. As shown in Table 10, our redesign team reviewed over 400 unique preliminary constructs, 340 preliminary constructs met the scientific evidence requirements, and 323 of the 340 unique constructs could be measured on a survey. Finally, 271 unique preliminary constructs met the hypothetical time variable and hypothetical group variable requirement.

**Table 10.**  
*Summary of Minimum Criteria Variables*

Minimum Criteria Variables	Total Number of Unique Preliminary Constructs
<b>Total number of unique preliminary constructs.</b>	<b>424</b>
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that met scientific evidence requirements. <sup>1</sup>	340
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that did NOT meet scientific evidence requirements.	84
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that cannot be measured on a survey.	19
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that can be measured on a survey. <sup>2</sup>	323
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that met time variable ONLY.	271
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that met group variable ONLY.	322
Total number of unique preliminary constructs that met time AND group variable.	271
<b>Total number of unique preliminary constructs that met minimum criteria.</b>	<b>271</b>

<sup>1</sup> This value equals the number of unique preliminary constructs after removing all constructs with only anecdotal and theoretical evidence.

<sup>2</sup> The construct “Past Suicide Attempts” is counted as for both “can” and “cannot” be measured on a survey. The count is based on the article that from which the construct was derived (e.g., Article 115 provided the “no”).

Table 11 shows the total number of unique preliminary constructs that met all the minimum criteria requirements by STO. It should be noted that some preliminary constructs were linked to multiple STOs, which is why the total number of unique preliminary constructs does not equal the total number of unique preliminary constructs that meet the minimum criteria (i.e., 271 unique preliminary constructs).

**Table 11.**  
*Total Number of Unique Preliminary Constructs That Meet Minimum Criteria by Strategic Target Outcomes (STO)*

STO	Total Number of Unique Constructs <sup>1</sup>
Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination	12
Readiness	66
Retention	49
Sexual Assault	58
Sexual Harassment	31
Suicide	104

<sup>1</sup> The sum of the unique preliminary constructs in this column (320) is greater than the number of constructs that met the minimum criteria (271) because some constructs were empirically linked to more than one STO.

## Method Step 2: Scoring Preliminary Themes and Constructs

In Step 2, the redesign team assigned scores to each preliminary theme and construct that met the minimum criteria described. Each preliminary construct received two types of scores based on the two different sources of the scoring information: (1) scientific evidence based on the initial literature review, and (2) qualitative evidenced based on the focus groups and stakeholder conversations ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 4](#)). The scientific and qualitative scoring approach and criteria is described below. We also provide an example of the scoring for the preliminary construct for “Workgroup Fairness.”

### **Scientific Evidence Scoring Criteria**

The scientific evidence scoring is based on the initial literature review described above<sup>56</sup> and focuses on the preliminary construct only. The preliminary themes were not included in the scientific evidence scoring process. The scientific evidence scoring consists of six criteria that are described below.

**Scientific Evidence (+1).** This criterion was carried over from the minimum criteria scoring and aimed to assess whether the literature provide sufficient evidence linking a candidate construct to an STO. For example, studies that we identified through our initial literature review showed that the construct “Alcohol Misuse”<sup>57</sup> is a risk factor for victimization and perpetration of sexual assault (Basile et al., 2016; Conley et al., 2017) and suicide (Hourani et al., 2018; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2018; Ringer et al., 2018; Saxena et al., 2014). Therefore, the “Alcohol Misuse” construct received a +1 for sexual assault and +1 for suicide. Note that “Alcohol Misuse” receives two points because there is scientific evidence linking the construct to two different STOs (e.g., sexual assault and suicide). If the construct had evidence for only one STO, then the construct would receive only one point for this criterion.

**Rigor (+3).** Rigor was defined as evidence from at least one randomized controlled trial (RCT), experiment or quasi-experiment, or meta-analysis that empirically (i.e., statistically, and mathematically) links the preliminary construct with an STO. Returning to the construct of “Alcohol Misuse” as an example, there was a rigorous quasi-experimental study of young adults linking alcohol use frequency with women’s (but not men’s) risk for sexual assault victimization (Conley et al., 2017). However, there was no rigorous study identified through our initial literature review that linked “Alcohol Misuse” with suicide. Therefore, “Alcohol Misuse” received +3 for this rigor criterion on sexual assault, and no additional rigor points for suicide (nor any other STO).

**Time Variable Empirical (+1).** This criterion was defined as empirical evidence showing change over time in multi-level, repeated assessments, or longitudinal study designs (i.e., “Is the construct time variable, or able to capture changes over time?”). The ability of the construct to capture change over time is important for documenting improvements and decrements related to climate, which is why time variability is a minimum criterion. However, researchers have found

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<sup>56</sup> Although our literature review was extensive, it is possible, and likely, that other research exists that provides scientific evidence not captured in our review.

<sup>57</sup> The final factors on the DEOCS 5.0 separate alcohol misuse into two factors: “Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking.”

that even if there is logical reason to believe that a survey construct will change over time, for various reasons, when they collect the data, there are little to no changes from one time point to another. For this reason, we wanted to document empirical evidence of time variability and assign a higher score. One example from the research literature review of a construct that met this criterion is “Perceived Stress.” In a study of National Guard soldiers recently returning from deployment, their ratings of “Perceived Stress” changed over 6 months and 12 months (Kim, H. M. et al., 2017). The study was about suicide risk, and so the construct received +1 for this criterion and STO.

***Longitudinal Correlation (+1).*** This criterion was defined as empirical evidence showing change over time. Additionally, those changes in the preliminary construct over time must correlate with changes in a STOs (i.e., “Is there evidence supporting the relationship between this variability and the STO?”). The example construct “Perceived Stress” met this criterion. Research showed that increases in “Perceived Stress” over 6–12 months increased risk for suicide (Kim et al., 2017).

***Group Variable Empirical (+1).*** This criterion was defined as empirical evidence showing differences between subgroups within the same higher-level organization. For example, studies that employ nested or hierarchical study designs, or that compare work groups within the same organization population, can determine whether the construct varies at this level of analysis and is able to capture differences between groups. For the DEOCS, it is important to be able to detect differences in units’ command climates. Although some constructs should logically differ between groups or units, the initial literature review may not provide evidence of this variability. One example of a construct that met this criterion was “Inclusion.” In a study of approximately 250 military units, the units differed meaningfully in their “Inclusion” climate scores. That is, some units had higher scores on “Inclusion” than other units (Boehm et al., 2014). “Inclusion” received +1 point for the STO for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

***Group Correlation (+1).*** This criterion was defined as empirical evidence showing differences between subgroups within the same higher-level organization and the subgroup differences in the preliminary construct correlate with subgroup differences at a STOs. Returning to the “Inclusion” example, there were not only differences between units, but those differences were also associated with different rates of discrimination. Therefore, “Inclusion” received +1 point for this criterion for the STO for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

### ***Qualitative Evidence Scoring***

The qualitative evidence score is derived from military and summit focus groups and stakeholder conversations described in [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 4](#) respectively. We generated three separate scores based on the population providing the information: (1) Service members (based on the focus groups), (2) commanders (based on the focus groups), and (3) stakeholders (based on the stakeholder conversations and summit focus groups). Each criterion was scored by to independent raters and conflicts were resolved through discussion.

To compute the qualitative evidence scores, we scored the preliminary themes rather than the individual preliminary constructs. This is because participants generally discussed climate issues in broader themes rather than specific constructs from the scientific literature. The literature

review was conducted at the same time as the focus groups and stakeholder conversations, so the preliminary constructs from the literature review were not identified prior to the development of the protocols and participants were not promoted to consider specific constructs. However, participants were asked to discuss broadly what factors they felt contributed to command climate. For example, Service members were more likely to talk about the preliminary theme “Hostile Climate” than any of the more focused preliminary constructs such as “Perceived Social Norms About Violence” or “Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment.” Therefore, if a Service member indicated that a “Hostile Climate” contributes to a negative command climate, then all preliminary constructs under the “Hostile Climate” theme met that Service member qualitative evidence criterion and received a +1.

Each preliminary theme and their related preliminary constructs received only one score for each of these criteria. That is, each construct had only one score for commander, one score for Service members, and one score for stakeholders. We did not score by STO because the information we collected from Service members, commanders, and stakeholders was not necessarily focused on the preliminary themes relationship to an STO. Instead, commanders, Service members, and stakeholders tended to discuss preliminary themes as important aspects of positive and negative command climate overall, and/or as important aspects of climate to measure on the DEOCS. We describe each of the three qualitative evidence scoring criteria below.

***Service Members (+1).*** This criterion captures whether there was qualitative evidence based on focus groups with Service members that links the preliminary theme to positive or negative command climate. One example of a preliminary theme that met this criterion is “Justice Climate.” In the focus groups, when asked what aspects are important to command climate, Service members indicated that “a fair work environment” was very important and impacted their command climate. This description aligned with the preliminary theme “Justice Climate.” As a result and shown in Table 13, the preliminary theme, “Justice Climate” and its six corresponding preliminary constructs, which included “Workgroup Fairness,” received +1.

***Commander (+1).*** This criterion captures whether there was qualitative evidence based on focus groups with commanders that links the preliminary theme to positive or negative command climate. For example, in focus groups, some commanders noted that higher incidences of alcohol abuse among the unit was indicative of a broader “culture problem.” Therefore, the preliminary theme “Substance Use” and its eight corresponding preliminary constructs, including “Alcohol Misuse,” received a +1.

***Stakeholder (+1).*** This criterion captures whether there was qualitative evidence based on stakeholder conversations and summit focus groups that links the preliminary theme to positive or negative command climate. An example of a preliminary theme that met this criterion is “Work-Life Balance.” Several stakeholders noted the importance of work-life balance and how that can impact the overall command climate. One stakeholder noted that his unit is “always at work and they don’t have time to pursue other opportunities and spend time with family.” Therefore, the preliminary theme for “Work-Life Balance” and its two preliminary constructs received a +1 for qualitative evidence from stakeholders.



**Total Preliminary Construct Scores**

The total scores for both scientific and qualitative evidence were combined into the total preliminary construct score. To see all scored preliminary themes and construct, please go to the Preliminary Scoring tab of the Table of Content Evidence located on OPA’s website at www.opa.mil.<sup>58</sup> Once the scores were compiled, they were distributed to the redesign team to individually review and consider for inclusion in the revised DEOCS 5.0. All selections were discussed by the team during the set selection meeting which is described further in Step 3– Initial Construct Selection.

**Preliminary Theme Construct Scoring Example**

This section walks through an example using the preliminary construct “Workgroup Fairness.”<sup>59</sup> “Workgroup Fairness” is defined as the “shared perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures, both formal and informal, related to fairness regarding information sharing, job opportunities and promotions being based on merit, inclusion, equal and respectful treatment” (David et al., 2019; Oberfield, 2016). Below we provide the scientific and qualitative evidence scores for this preliminary construct.

Scientific Evidence Score. We found two studies that discussed “Workgroup Fairness” and how it relates to two STOs – racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and retention. Table 12 below shows that “Workgroup Fairness” received a scientific evidence score of 2 for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and 2 for retention. Therefore, the total scientific evidence score for the preliminary construct “Workgroup Fairness” is 4.

**Table 12.**  
*Scientific Evidence Scoring for the Preliminary Construct “Workgroup Fairness” by Strategic Target Outcomes (STO)*

Scoring Criteria	Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination	Retention	Readiness	Sexual Assault	Sexual Harassment	Suicide
Scientific Evidence	1	1	0	0	0	0
Rigor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Time Variable Empirical	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longitudinal Correlation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Group Variable Empirical	1	1	0	0	0	0
Group Correlation	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Score by STO</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>58</sup> This table is based on the preliminary themes and constructs identified during the initial literature review. As a result, some final constructs (i.e., “Toxic Leadership”) do not appear on this table and were not scored.

<sup>59</sup> “Workgroup Fairness” is called “Fairness” in the final version of the survey instrument.

As shown above, there is scientific evidence supporting the association between “Workgroup Fairness” and experiences of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (Oberfield, 2016) and retention (David et al., 2019). The literature that provides evidence for these links is not rigorous and therefore it did not receive a score for rigor for either STO. Additionally, the scientific evidence does not include a demonstration that “Workgroup Fairness” changes over time (time variable empirical) or that it precedes discrimination or retention longitudinally (longitudinal correlation). There is scientific evidence that the association between “Workgroup Fairness” and experiences of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and retention can differ at a group or unit level (group variable empirical). Finally, the scientific evidence does not include a demonstration that group-level differences in “Workgroup Fairness” are associated with group-level differences in the STO for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination or retention (group correlation). Moving through the remaining STOs, our initial literature review did not identify scientific evidence supporting “Workgroup Fairness” as a risk or protective factor for readiness (0), sexual assault (0), sexual harassment (0), or suicide (0).<sup>60</sup>

**Qualitative Evidence Score.** As discussed above, the qualitative evidence score is based on military and summit focus groups and stakeholder conversations and is scored at the preliminary theme level. The score is also separated by population and includes (1) Service members, (2) commanders, and (3) stakeholders. For example, the preliminary construct “Workgroup Fairness” is under the preliminary theme “Justice Climate.” Therefore, as noted in Table 13 below, if the preliminary theme “Justice Climate” received a score of +1 for Service members, all corresponding preliminary constructs under the “Justice Climate” theme also received a score of +1.

More specifically, looking at the qualitative data for “Workgroup Fairness,” Service members noted that units that have an “unfair or inconsistent” work environment are associated with a negative command climate. Additionally, commanders noted that it takes “one bad leader” to not hold others accountable to have a negative impact on the command. Finally, stakeholders noted that unequal treatment within a unit can have a significant negative impact on a variety of our STOs, including sexual harassment and discrimination. These three qualitative findings showed that the preliminary theme “Justice Climate” was important and impacted a command climate. Therefore, the preliminary theme “Justice Climate” and the corresponding preliminary constructs, which include “Workgroup Fairness,” were given a score of +1. The total qualitative score for the preliminary construct “Workgroup Fairness” was +3 which is one point for each of the qualitative populations scored.

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<sup>60</sup> While the initial literature review was extensive, it is possible that there are existing scientific evidence to link a preliminary theme or construct to an STO that was not identified.

**Table 13.**  
*Qualitative Evidence Scoring for the Preliminary Construct "Workgroup Fairness"*

	Preliminary Theme/ Construct	Service Members	Commanders	Stakeholders	Total Qualitative Score
Justice Climate	Preliminary Theme	1	1	1	3
Perceived Organizational Justice	Construct	1	1	1	3
Promotion Equality	Construct	1	1	1	3
Supervisor Fairness	Construct	1	1	1	3
Workgroup Fairness	Construct	1	1	1	3
Reporting Climate	Construct	1	1	1	3

Total Preliminary Construct Score. The scientific evidence score for “Workgroup Fairness” was 4 and the qualitative evidence score was 3. Therefore, the total score for “Workgroup Fairness” was 7.

**Summary**

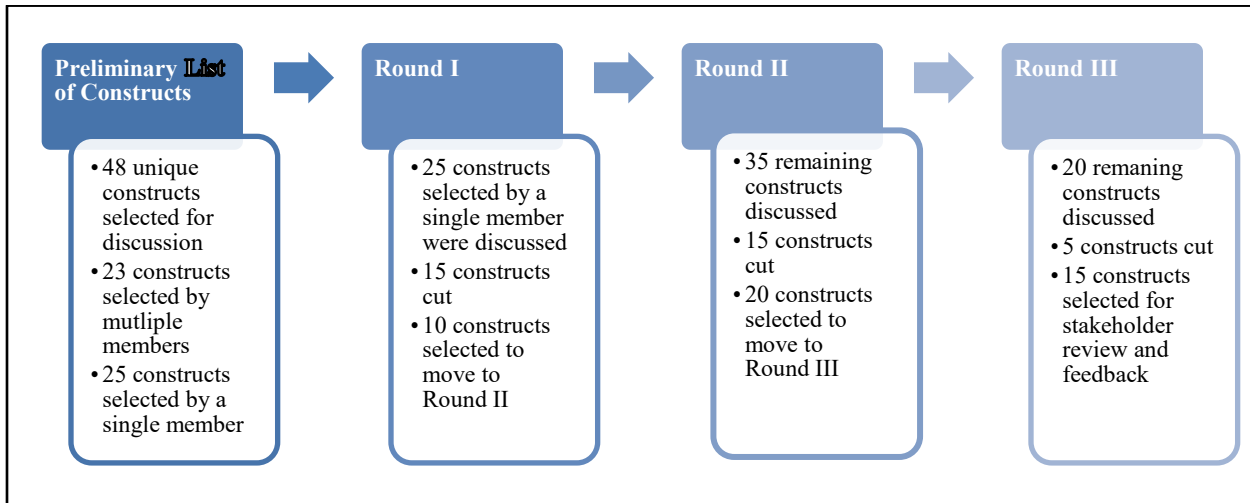
The redesign team assigned scientific and qualitative evidence scores to each preliminary construct that met the minimum criteria described in Step 1. The scientific evidence score is based on the initial literature review and only the preliminary constructs were scored. The qualitative evidence was scored for preliminary themes and were based on DEOCS focus groups and stakeholder conversations described in [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 4](#) respectively. If a preliminary theme received a qualitative score, all corresponding preliminary constructs under that theme received the same score. The scientific and qualitative evidence scores were then distributed to the redesign team to individually review and make an initial selection of 15 constructs to be considered for initial construct selection that is described further below.

**Method Step 3: Selecting Initial Constructs**

Once all the preliminary themes and constructs were scored, the DEOCS redesign team participated in a one-day meeting to make an initial selection of 15 constructs to include on the DEOCS 5.0. To balance the need for sufficient coverage of each STO while ensuring minimal survey burden on the participant, and in anticipation that our stakeholders might want to add constructs, we limited the final number of constructs selected during the survey construct set selection meeting to a total of 15.<sup>61</sup> As shown in Figure 16, the meeting consisted of a preliminary list of constructs followed by three rounds of discussion and voting. The survey construct set selection meeting was also overseen by an independent moderator who gathered and organized the selected constructs, facilitated the discussion, and managed the days’ agenda.

<sup>61</sup> The construct count of 15 was expanded to a total of 19 final constructs in the DEOCS 5.0.

**Figure 16.**  
*Structure of the Initial Construct Selection Meeting*



Before the meeting, the redesign team individually reviewed the highest-performing constructs and selected 15 they would recommend for inclusion on the core DEOCS 5.0. While making their individual selection, each member also considered a checklist of questions to ensure their set of constructs covered all STOs, was supported by the literature, and met the needs of stakeholders. The moderator then gathered all selected constructs, identified constructs that included at least one vote, and sorted the constructs by most endorsed to least endorsed. The final preliminary list included 48 unique constructs, 25 of which had multiple members selecting the construct for inclusion, and 23 constructs that received a single vote. Table 14 lists the checklist questions that each redesign team member considered while selecting their set of constructs prior to the survey construct set selection meeting and Table 15 presents the preliminary list of constructs selected by the redesign team.

**Table 14.**  
***Preliminary Construct Set Selection Checklist***

<b>Preliminary Construct Set Selection Checklist</b>
Does the set of constructs provide results that help leaders understand their unit/organizational climate related to the strategic target outcomes (STOs) and to take effective action if needed?
Are each of the STOs sufficiently covered so that leaders are sufficiently equipped to understand the climate in their unit and take effective action if needed?
What was mentioned by stakeholders (including Service members and commanders) that is not here? Is there good justification for excluding the construct?
Is this set of constructs important to stakeholders such as commanders, Service members, and other DoD leaders?
Does the set of constructs allow DoD policymakers to achieve their goals with respect to risk and protective factors related to the six STOs?
Does the set of constructs allow the Services to achieve their goals?
Is the set of constructs appropriate for informing high-stakes decisions?
Does the set of constructs sufficiently leverage the DEOCS as a valuable tool for DoD leaders to gain new knowledge about a unit or organization’s climate?

**Table 15.**  
***Selected Constructs for Inclusion by Round***

<b>Preliminary List of Constructs</b>	<b>Round I Constructs</b>	<b>Round II Constructs</b>	<b>Round III Constructs</b>
Administratively Reported Sexual Assault	<del>Administratively Reported Sexual Assault</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Affective Climate</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Affective Climate</del>	Not Applicable
<b>Alcohol Use</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Alcohol Use	<b>Alcohol Use</b>
Burnout	Burnout	<del>Burnout</del>	Not Applicable
Cognitive Climate	<del>Cognitive Climate</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Cohesion</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Cohesion	<b>Cohesion</b>
<b>Cohesion/Leader Support</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Cohesion/Leader Support</del>	Not Applicable
<b>Connectedness</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Connectedness	<b>Connectedness</b>
<b>Coworker Satisfaction</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Coworker Satisfaction</del>	Not Applicable
Cynicism toward Organizational Sexual Harassment Change & Perceived Unit Ethical Climate	<del>Cynicism toward Organizational Sexual Harassment Change and Perceived Unit Ethical Climate</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Depression	<del>Depression</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Different Perspective Climate</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Different Perspective Climate	<b>Different Perspective Climate</b>
<b>Experienced Sexual Harassment</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Experienced Sexual Harassment	<b>Experienced Sexual Harassment</b>
Frequency of Drinking to Blacking Out	<del>Frequency of Drinking to Blacking Out—Men and Women</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Job Satisfaction	Not Applicable

<b>Preliminary List of Constructs</b>	<b>Round I Constructs</b>	<b>Round II Constructs</b>	<b>Round III Constructs</b>
Lack of Public Recognition	Lack of Public Recognition	<del>Lack of Public Recognition</del>	Not Applicable
Lack of Support for Career Development	Lack of Support for Career Development	<del>Lack of Support for Career Development</del>	Not Applicable
Leadership and Unit Sexual Harassment Climate	<del>Leadership and Unit Sexual Harassment Climate</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Loss of Legitimacy of the Mission	Task Significance (formally Loss of Legitimacy of the Mission)	<del>Task Significance</del>	Not Applicable
Mental Health	<del>Mental Health</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Morale</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Morale	<b>Morale</b>
<b>Nonsexual Workplace Aggression</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Nonsexual Workplace Aggression	<b>Nonsexual Workplace Aggression</b>
<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Organizational Commitment	<b>Organizational Commitment/Work Engagement</b>
Organizational Effectiveness	<del>Organizational Effectiveness</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Organizational EO Climate</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Organizational EO Climate</del>	Not Applicable
<b>Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment</del>	Not Applicable
Overall Stress	<del>Overall Stress</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Passive Leadership</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Passive Leadership	<b>Passive Leadership</b>
Perceived Organizational Justice	<del>Perceived Organizational Justice</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Perceived Stress</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Perceived Stress	<b>Perceived Stress</b>
<b>Psychological Voice Climate</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Psychological Voice Climate	<del>Psychological Voice Climate</del>
<b>Role Clarity and Conflict</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Role Clarity and Conflict	<del>Role Clarity and Conflict</del>
Sexist Environment	Sexist Environment	<del>Sexist Environment</del>	Not Applicable
Sexual Assault Reporting Climate	<del>Sexual Assault Reporting Climate</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Social Support	<del>Social Support</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Suicidal Ideation	<del>Suicidal Ideation</del>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Supervisor Fairness</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Supervisor Fairness</del>	Not Applicable
Supervisor Satisfaction	Supervisor Satisfaction	<del>Supervisor Satisfaction</del>	Not Applicable
Supervisor Support	Supervisor Support	Supervisor Support (with Career Development)	<b>Supervisor Support (with Career Development)/Trust in Chain of Command</b>
<b>Teamwork Effectiveness</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Teamwork Effectiveness	<del>Teamwork Effectiveness</del>
<b>Thwarted Belongingness</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	<del>Thwarted Belongingness</del>	Not Applicable
Toxic Leadership	Toxic Leadership	Toxic Leadership	<b>Toxic Leadership</b>
Transformational Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Transformational Leadership	<b>Transformational Leadership</b>

Preliminary List of Constructs	Round I Constructs	Round II Constructs	Round III Constructs
<b>Trust in Chain of Command</b> <b>Sexual Harassment</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Trust in Chain of Command	<b>Trust in Chain of Command</b>
<b>Work Engagement</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Work Engagement	<del>Work Engagement</del>
Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance	<b>Work-Life Balance</b>
<b>Workgroup Fairness</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Workgroup Fairness	<b>Workgroup/Supervisor Fairness</b>
<b>Workplace Hostility</b>	No Vote—Moved to Round II	Workplace Hostility	Not Applicable

*Note.* Bolded constructs in the Preliminary List of Constructs column notes constructs that had multiple redesign team members selecting them for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0. Crossed out constructs in each round of voting notes constructs that were not selected for inclusion.

To begin the survey construct set selection meeting, each redesign member outlined their process for, and evidence to support, their proposed set of selected 15 constructs. Once all members presented their initial set of constructs to the group, they were then asked to begin the rounds of voting and discussions. Each of the three rounds are described below. Table 15 also presents the results of each round of voting.

**Round I.** For Round I, the moderator presented the 23 constructs that received a single vote for inclusion during the preliminary selection. Each redesign member was asked to use the list of 23 constructs to select 10 constructs for inclusion and 10 constructs to cut based on the discussion and evidence presented. During Round I discussion, the redesign team also consolidated or removed highly similar constructs to reduce redundancies and renamed constructs to align with their definition provided in the literature review. For example, “Loss of Legitimacy of the Mission” was renamed “Task Significance” to better align with the proposed items to measure. There was also significant discussion on the “Toxic Leadership” construct, which was not identified through the literature review but instead identified by a variety of stakeholders as a construct that would be important to measure on the revised DEOCS ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#)). The 10 constructs that were selected for inclusion during Round I and moved to Round II discussion and voting are presented in Table 15.

**Round II.** Prior to Round II, the moderator combined the 10 constructs that were kept during Round I with the remaining 25 constructs that received multiple votes during the preliminary selection. Each redesign member was asked to select 15 constructs to keep and 10 constructs to cut and present evidence for their decision to the group. Like the Round I discussions, the redesign team consolidated or removed constructs that closely overlapped and renamed constructs to better align with their definition and items to be measured. For example, the team combined “Supervisor Fairness” with “Workgroup Fairness” to create “Workgroup/Supervisor Fairness.” The group also combined “Lack of Support for Career Development” with “Supervisor Support” because they closely overlapped. The 15 constructs that were selected for inclusion during Round II and moved to Round III for discussion and voting are presented in Table 15.

**Round III.** For Round III, the moderator compiled the remaining 20 constructs and asked the team to select 15 constructs to keep and 5 constructs to cut. During Round III discussions, the team removed “Psychological Voice” since it was a sub-component for “Different Perspective Climate,” which has a broader focus on inclusion. “Supervisor Support” was also combined with

“Trust in Chain of Command” because they closely overlapped. For example, one item that measured “Trust in Chain of Command” was “I feel comfortable talking with supervisor about personal problems,” which is captured in the items under “Supervisor Support.” The final list of 15 constructs selected at the end of the survey construct set selection meeting are presented in Table 15.

Once the constructs were selected, the team met to review the initial constructs list. During these internal discussions, the team renamed several constructs to ensure the construct more closely described the concept to be measured and could be most readily understood by DEOCS users. For example, “Different Perspective Climate” was changed to “Diversity Climate” (later changed to be called “Inclusion” based on stakeholder feedback), “Experienced Sexual Harassment” was changed to “Sexually Harassing Behaviors,” “Nonsexual Workplace Aggression” was changed to “Workplace Hostility,” “Organizational Commitment/Work Engagement” was changed to “Engagement and Commitment,” “Supervisor Support/Trust in Chain of Command” was changed to “Leadership Support,” and “Workgroup/Supervisor Fairness” was changed to “Fairness.”

Additionally, there is a purposeful increase in the proportion of survey content devoted to measuring different aspects of leadership as noted by the four constructs focused on leadership: “Leadership Support,” “Passive Leadership,” “Transformational Leadership,” and “Toxic Leadership.” These considerations resulted in perhaps one of the more significant shifts from DEOCS 4.1 to the DEOCS 5.0 which is to not only capture problematic leadership behaviors, but also provide ways of measuring leadership style. To capture this information, we took a multifaceted approach to capturing leadership to provide clear and actionable feedback on a breadth of important aspects of leadership to leaders. [Chapter 7](#) has more information on the individual items and survey structure surrounding the leadership constructs, and Table 16 presents the list of the initial set of constructs that was sent to stakeholders to review in June 2020.



**Table 16.**  
*Initial Constructs Selection for Inclusion*

Initial Constructs
Alcohol Misuse
Cohesion
Connectedness
Diversity Climate
Engagement and Commitment
Fairness
Leadership Support
Morale
Passive Leadership
Sexually Harassing Behaviors
Stress
Toxic Leadership
Transformational Leadership
Work-Life Balance
Workplace Hostility

**Method Step 4: Selecting Final Construct**

This section describes the steps taken to identify and support the final constructs after the initial set selection was completed. The final 19 constructs selected to be included in the revised DEOCS 5.0 evolved from the initial 15 constructs described above. The transformation of these initial constructs occurred during the survey coordination process and was based on (1) stakeholder feedback and (2) the redesign teams’ survey development expertise. Once the final set of constructs was identified, the redesign team conducted a secondary scientific and qualitative evidence review that was targeted towards the constructs identified after the initial literature reviews. Table 17 presents the 15 initial constructs as well as the 19 final constructs selected for inclusion on the revised DEOCS 5.0 in alphabetical order. The following Results section provides additional detail on each construct and how that construct relates to one or more of the STOs.

**Table 17.**  
**List of Initial and Final Constructs Selected for Inclusion on the Revised DEOCS 5.0**

Initial Constructs Selected	Final Constructs Selected
Alcohol Misuse	Alcohol Impairing Memory*
	Binge Drinking*
Cohesion	Cohesion
Connectedness	Connectedness
Engagement and Commitment	Engagement and Commitment
Fairness	Fairness
Diversity Climate	Inclusion**
Leadership Support	Leadership Support
Morale	Morale
Passive Leadership	Passive Leadership
	Racially Harassing Behaviors*
	Safe Storage of Lethal Means*
	Sexist Behaviors*
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	Sexually Harassing Behaviors
Stress	Stress
Toxic Leadership	Toxic Leadership
Transformational Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Work-Life Balance	Work-Life Balance
Workplace Hostility	Workplace Hostility

\*Indicates constructs added after initial selection.

\*\*Indicates a name change from the initial construct selected to the final.

**Stakeholder Feedback.**

The feedback from stakeholders and DoD policy offices on the initial constructs selected as well as during the informal and formal survey coordination process was immensely helpful in refining the DEOCS 5.0.<sup>62</sup> While most stakeholder feedback was centered on individual item modifications ([Chapter 7](#)), the Defense Suicide Prevention Office requested the inclusion of the “Safe Storage for Lethal Means” construct during informal coordination. Through our secondary scientific and qualitative evidence search – which is discussed further below – we found a variety of scientific evidence that linked this construct as a protective factor for suicide. More specifically, individuals who are more likely to safely store “lethal means” are less likely to attempt suicide (Stanley et al., 2016). The redesign team also added the constructs “Sexist Behaviors” and “Racially Harassing Behaviors”<sup>63</sup> based on stakeholder feedback that noted the important impact these constructs had on command climate. The construct “Diversity Climate”

<sup>62</sup> All documents provided to stakeholders for feedback as well as the feedback received at each stage of the survey development process and OPA’s responses, can be accessed on OPA’s CAC-enabled SharePoint site: [https://dhra.deps.mil/sites/OPA/opa-survey/DEOCS\\_Redesign/Forms/AllItems.aspx](https://dhra.deps.mil/sites/OPA/opa-survey/DEOCS_Redesign/Forms/AllItems.aspx).

<sup>63</sup>Initially, the redesign team added the constructs “Gender Discrimination” and “Racism” based on stakeholder feedback, but this eventually changed to “Sexist Behaviors” and “Racially Harassing Behaviors,” respectively, to most accurately reflect the survey items.

was also edited to “Inclusion” based on stakeholder feedback that it more closely aligned with the Department’s policies and initiatives in that topic area.

### ***Survey Development.***

Based on insights from OPA’s lead survey methodologist and industry best practices, the redesign team adjusted several constructs to assist with readability and measurement. For example, the redesign team felt it was more appropriate to split “Alcohol Misuse” into two separate constructs: (1) “Alcohol Impairing Memory” and (2) “Binge Drinking.” The redesign team also originally added the construct “Racism” after the initial construct selection; however, this changed to “Racially Harassing Behaviors” to better align with the individual items that were selected to measure this construct ([Chapter 7](#) has more information on individual item selection). Similarly, the construct entitled “Gender Discrimination Behavior” was added after the initial construct selection and evolved to the final construct, “Sexist Behaviors,” during the coordination process.

### ***Secondary Scientific and Qualitative Evidence Review.***

Once the 19 constructs were identified, the redesign team conducted a secondary scientific and qualitative evidence review. This included a secondary literature review that focused on the specific constructs that were not identified during the initial literature review and subsequently not scored. The redesign team also reviewed the qualitative data from the focus groups and stakeholder conversations to identify qualitative evidence for “Inclusion.” The methods approach for both the secondary scientific and qualitative evidence approach was the same as discussed above; however, these constructs were not scored. The evidence described below in the Results section contains evidence from both the initial and secondary scientific and qualitative evidence reviews, and also incorporates evidence for all closely-related constructs.

### ***Summary***

The final 19 constructs selected to be included in the revised DEOCS 5.0 evolved during the survey coordination process based on (1) stakeholder feedback and (2) the redesign teams’ survey development expertise. Once the final set of constructs was identified, the redesign team conducted a secondary scientific and qualitative evidence search that was targeted towards the newly identified constructs. The information captured during this process was used to (1) provide scientific and qualitative evidence that links the construct to at least one of the STOs, and (2) ensure the construct aligned with the goal of the revised DEOCS – accurate and data drive, user friendly, and actionable. The next section discusses the construct and STO alignment as well as provides definitions and scientific and qualitative evidence to support the selection of each of the final 19 constructs (hereafter referred to as factors).

## **Results**

In this section, we describe the final 19 constructs or factors that were selected for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0. For each factor, these results present the definition, scientific evidence to support the aligns with the STOs, and qualitative evidence supporting the final selection. The factors are organized alphabetically and grouped as risk and protective factors. Risk factors are

attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative outcomes in units whereas protective factors are associated with positive outcomes in units.

The table below presents the final 19 factors and STO alignment alphabetically based on the (Table 18).<sup>64</sup> All but one factor is linked to multiple STOs. An STO alignment for “Connectedness,” for example, can be interpreted as aligning with two protective factors (retention and readiness) and one risk factor (suicide). Substantively, this alignment could be understood as: units that report higher “Connectedness” are more likely to have higher readiness (i.e., performance) and retention as well as lower risk of suicide. The Table of Content Evidence includes the factor and STO alignment along with a summary of the scientific and qualitative evidence that supports each alignment. The table can be found on [www.opa.mil](http://www.opa.mil).

**Table 18.**  
***Final Factors and the Strategic Target Outcome (STO) Alignment***

Factors	Factor Type	R/E H/D	REA	RET	SA	SH	SUI
Alcohol Impairing Memory	Risk						
Binge Drinking	Risk						
Cohesion	Protective						
Connectedness	Protective						
Engagement and Commitment	Protective						*
Fairness	Protective						
Inclusion	Protective						
Leadership Support	Protective						
Morale	Protective				*		
Passive Leadership	Risk						
Racially Harassing Behaviors	Risk						
Safe Storage for Lethal Means	Protective						
Sexist Behaviors	Risk						
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	Risk						
Stress	Risk						
Toxic Leadership	Risk						
Transformational Leadership	Protective						
Work-Life Balance	Protective						
Workplace Hostility	Risk	*					

\*Indicates the alignment between the factor and STO is based only on the item reduction analyses described in [Chapter 7](#) and is not reflected in the scientific evidence described in this chapter.

R/E H/D–Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination

REA–Readiness

RET–Retention

SA–Sexual Assault

SH–Sexual Harassment

<sup>64</sup> The alignments described in the Results section of this chapter reflect only the scientific evidence from our initial and secondary literature reviews. During the item selection process (described in [Chapter 7](#)), some additional alignments were discovered based on new analysis of OPA survey data.

SUI-Suicide

## Unit Risk Factors

As described above, risk factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative outcomes in units. Below, these results focus first on the final nine factors that were selected as risk factors. Generally, for risk factors, higher scores indicate greater risk of negative outcomes. More specifically, our scientific and qualitative evidence shows that the high use or presence of these risk factors within a unit is associated with poorer performance or readiness; higher attrition from the military; and higher rates of sexual assault, suicide, sexual harassment, and racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

### ***“Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking”<sup>65</sup>***

**Definition.** “Alcohol Impairing Memory” is defined as the inability to recall events that occurred while consuming excessive amounts of alcohol (Rose & Grant, 2010). This occurs when an individual drinks enough alcohol to temporarily block the transfer of memories from short-term to long-term storage—known as memory consolidation—in a brain area called the hippocampus (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), 2019).

“Binge Drinking” is defined as a pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent, or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter, or higher. For a typical adult, this generally includes consuming four or more drinks for a woman or five or more drinks for a man in a 2-hour period (NIAAA, 2020).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research has consistently shown the detrimental impact that “Binge Drinking” and “Alcohol Impairing Memory” can have on an individual’s work and personal life. More specifically, higher incidences of alcohol misuse and abuse among military members has been identified as a risk factor for sexual assault and sexual harassment victimization and perpetration as well as suicidal ideation (Marquis et al., 2017; Van Brunt et al., 2018; Russell & Oswald, 2016; Basile et al., 2016; Conley et al., 2017). The DoD’s gender relations surveys of military personnel consistently demonstrate that approximately half or more of sexual assaults involving Service member and Academy student victims, including both male and female victims, involve alcohol at the time of the assault (Breslin et al., 2019; Breslin et al., 2020; Davis et al., 2019). More specifically, the *2018 Workplace and Gender Relations (WGR)* survey of active duty members identified alcohol use, defined as the frequency that men and women drink to the point of blacking out, as an important risk factor associated with an installation or ship’s estimated sexual assault and sexual harassment rates. In fact, “Alcohol Impairing Memory” was more predictive of installation-level risk for sexual assault than all other climate or location-based factors examined in this study (Samuelson et al., 2021).

Several studies have also linked alcohol misuse with suicidal ideation (Stone et al., 2017; HHS, 2012; Saxena et al., 2014). Specifically, a 2018 study of U.S. active duty soldiers found that substance abuse, including alcohol misuse, was linked to an increase in suicidal behaviors and

<sup>65</sup> Because there is significant overlap between “Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking,” we have combined the scientific and qualitative evidence for these two factors.

less mental health resiliency (Hourani et al. 2018). Additionally, the 2018 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) report demonstrated that military members' use of alcohol represents a significant risk for both suicidal behavior and ideation.

**Qualitative Evidence.** The redesign team reviewed the preliminary theme “Substance Use” which included preliminary constructs closely related to the final factors “Binge Drinking” and “Alcohol Impairing Memory,” and was touched upon by focus group participants and stakeholders. For example, alcohol use within a unit was identified by Service members as a common stress release activity. One commander also noted that increased alcohol use within a unit was linked to problematic behaviors, which they felt could be an indicator of a bigger command climate problem. Similarly, during stakeholder conversations, several stakeholders asked for the revised DEOCS to measure alcohol use within the unit because they felt it was an important construct that related to a unit’s overall command climate. Finally, in the redesign survey, numerous participants indicated that alcohol is a topic that should be covered on the DEOCS and noted the correlation between alcohol abuse and problematic behaviors within a unit.

### **“Passive Leadership”**

**Definition** “Passive Leadership,” also known as laissez-faire leadership, is defined as an individual’s perception that their leader avoids decisions, does not respond to problems, fails to follow up, hesitates to act, and is absent when needed (Bass, 1990; Lee, 2018).

**Scientific Evidence.** Studies have shown a link between “Passive Leadership” and lower readiness and retention, and higher risk of sexual harassment. For example, “Passive Leadership” has been associated with multiple negative outcomes such as reduced performance, increased burnout, and, ultimately, increased turnover (Fosse et al., 2019). Similarly, a 2016 study found that firefighters who demonstrate “Passive Leadership” had detrimental impacts on subordinates’ perception of safety climate which was correlated with lower safety behaviors, lack of compliance and diminished participation in safety (Smith et al., 2016; Kelloway et al., 2006). A study of platoon leaders also found that passive-avoidant leadership was negatively related to platoon performance and negatively impacted group cohesion. The authors concluded that being a passive leader and waiting for problems to arise was counterproductive in terms of enhancing unit performance (Bass et al., 2003). Finally, a survey of full-time working employees in various U.S. organizations found that “Passive Leadership” was positively related to observed “Workplace Hostility,” which was positively related to increased incidences of sexual harassment. The authors concluded that leaders who demonstrate a “Passive Leadership” style leave subordinates at higher risk for sexual harassment, particularly for female employees who work in a male-dominated organization (Lee, 2018).

**Qualitative Support.** Most military focus group participants agreed that “Passive Leadership” contributed to a negative command climate. In fact, Service members and commanders used the term “inaccessible” most frequently to describe a negative command climate – which aligns with “Passive Leadership.” For example, Army EOAs gave examples of how absent leaders have created a poor climate in which productivity has been negatively impacted. Additionally, to some Service members, having a passive leader can create unnecessary confusion and frustration which ultimately negatively impact overall unit performance. Finally, several stakeholders also

commented on the need to understand “Passive Leadership” and the impact it has on a unit. More specifically, stakeholders and commanders requested that the revised DEOCS highlight problematic leadership, such as “Passive Leadership,” so commanders can be more proactive in addressing the issues before it negatively impacts their unit’s command climate.

### **“Racially Harassing Behaviors”**

**Definition.** “Racially Harassing Behaviors” are characterized by an individual’s perception that behaviors within their workplace include unwelcome or offensive conduct such as intimidation, ridicule, and insults that are based on race, color, religion, and/or national origin (Daniel et al., 2019; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021a; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021b). While this construct closely aligns with the STO for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, it is not the same. The STO for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination measures a wider range of harassing behaviors in addition to discriminatory behaviors.<sup>66</sup>

**Scientific Evidence.** Research consistently shows that individuals who experience “Racially Harassing Behaviors” have decreased readiness and retention and are at risk for experiencing racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and suicide. For example, a 2014 study of U.S. military personnel found that workgroup discrimination was negatively related to workgroup performance (Boehm et al., 2014). The 2017 WEOA aligns with this finding and found that individuals who experience racial/ethnic discrimination/harassment have reduced retention intents and readiness (Daniel et al., 2019). This same study has found that many members often experience more than one racially harassing behavior indicating pervasive or permissive culture of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (Daniel et al., 2019). Similarly, experiencing ethnic harassment has been associated with lower organizational commitment, lower job satisfaction, and greater turnover intentions (Raver & Nishii, 2010; Antecol & Cobb-Clark, 2009).

Experiencing “Racially Harassing Behaviors” can lead to the continued experience of stressful life events, including rejection, stigmatization, and violence that may evoke suicidal behavior. Suicide rates have also been known to be higher among minorities who experience discrimination (Saxena et al., 2014). For example, a U.S. study found that immigrant’s suicide rates were positively correlated with the negative valence of the words used by the majority to describe their ethnic group (Ratkowska & De Leo, 2013; Mullen & Smyth, 2004).

There is also evidence that women of color experience “double jeopardy” and are at risk of harassment based on race and sex simultaneously. Several studies have found that women who report more sexual harassment also report more racial harassment (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Buchanan et al., 2009; Moradi & Subich, 2003). In one study that examined both workplace

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<sup>66</sup> Racial/ethnic discrimination refers to experiences of being treated unfairly because of a person’s race/ethnicity, or treating someone of a different race/ethnicity better. To be counted in the Department’s official estimated past year prevalence rates of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination as measured in the Workplace Equal Opportunity Surveys (e.g., Daniel et al., 2019); a person must report experiencing at least one of 12 inappropriate workplace harassment behaviors and/or at least one of 12 unfair workplace discriminatory behaviors in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

sexual and ethnic harassment, minority women experienced more harassment overall than majority men, minority men, and majority women (Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

**Qualitative Evidence.** Military focus group participants reported that “Racially Harassing Behaviors” generally can contribute heavily to a negative command climate. One commander noted that because leadership can often consist of mostly white men, there is a concern that racism and “Racially Harassing Behaviors” may be more easily brushed aside or “swept under the rug.” This individual also noted that by allowing those negative behaviors, there was an increased risk for lower morale and overall workgroup performance. Additionally, during stakeholder conversations, several participants noted that identifying and addressing “Racially Harassing Behaviors” was a strategic priority for the Services and this construct should be measured on the revised DEOCS 5.0.

### **“Sexist Behaviors”**

**Definition.** “Sexist Behaviors” are an individual’s perceptions that behaviors and/or opinions within their workplace are prejudicial, stereotypical, or negative against a person or group based on their perceived sex or gender. “Sexist Behaviors” also include verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, offensive, or condescending attitudes based on the gender of the participant (Fitzgerald et al., 1988).<sup>67</sup>

**Scientific Evidence.** Studies show that the presence of “Sexist Behaviors” is linked to lower readiness and retention and higher risk of sexual assault and sexual harassment. A 2019 study of women firefighters found that women who experienced the most severe work discrimination-harassment reported difficulty performing their job and were significantly less likely to report wanting to spend the rest of their career with their fire department (Jahnke et al., 2019). Additionally, perceptions of unfair treatment among clusters of employees, such as women, has been shown to negatively impact workgroup performance (Boehm et al., 2014). Additionally, the 2018 WGR survey of active duty members found that a large portion of Service members who experienced “Sexist Behaviors” responded that they intended to take steps to leave the military. It was not, however, clear how closely these intentions of separation align with actual separation (Breslin et al., 2019).

Numerous studies have also linked “Sexist Behaviors” to an increased risk of experiencing sexual harassment and sexual assault (Tinkler & Zhao, 2019). For example, a study examining female federal law enforcement officers found that women who reported working in a gender inclusive organizational culture were less likely to experience pervasive negative attitudes from their male colleagues or occurrences of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination (Yu & Lee, 2019). Similarly, Harris and colleagues (2018) found that a sexist environment was related to a higher probability of experiencing sexual harassment at both the individual and unit level. Additionally, holding sexist beliefs and attitudes is associated with an increased tolerance of

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<sup>67</sup> “Sexist Behaviors” resemble DoD’s definition of gender discrimination, but do not necessarily meet the threshold of persistence or severity to be considered gender discrimination, which requires that the behavior in question limit or harm the victim’s career (e.g., a statement that “women don’t belong in combat” would not be considered gender discrimination in and of itself if there is no clear harm to career, but it is an example of a sexist behavior). These types of behaviors can escalate and lead to or be indicative of gender discrimination (e.g., if repeated comments about women not belonging in combat impact the victim’s career trajectory).



sexual harassment (Russel & Oswald, 2016) and an increased likelihood of accepting rape attitudes (Anderson et al., 1997). Finally, a 2018 DoD contextual analysis found that “Sexist Behaviors” were associated with a higher risk to an installation or ship’s estimated sexual assault and sexual harassment rates (Samuelson et al., 2021).

**Qualitative Evidence.** Military focus group and stakeholder conversation participants reported that “Sexist Behaviors” can negatively impact command climate. During focus group discussions, one Service member mentioned a perceived “glass ceiling,” or barrier to professional advancement, for females in the military that they felt negatively impacted their command climate. Other Service members noted that certain military bases and units are run on a “good old boys’ system,” meaning that power and connections are frequently held by men. During conversations with stakeholders, it was also noted that attitudes about “gender bias” contribute to a positive or negative command climate.

### **“Sexually Harassing Behaviors”**

**Definition.** “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” are an individual’s perception that behaviors within their workplace include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature and are distinct from the STO for sexual harassment. The STO for sexual harassment is defined as behaviors that are either persistent or pervasive (i.e., the person continues even when you asked them to stop) or severe (i.e., the reasonable person standard), whereas the construct “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” does not necessarily meet this threshold. For example, one off-collar sexual joke would not be considered sexual harassment in and of itself, but it is an example of a sexually harassing behavior (Breslin et al., 2019).

**Scientific Evidence.** Numerous studies show that the presence of “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” is associated with lower readiness and retention (Chan et al., 2008; Wellness et al., 2007; Lapierre et al., 2005; Raver and Nishii, 2010) and increased risk for suicide (Griffith, 2019). A study of 13,001 U.S. Service women found that women who reported sexual harassment or assault were more likely to report poorer mental and physical health as well as difficulties completing their daily work activities. Overall, this report suggested that recent sexual harassment or assault represents a serious potential threat to military operations and readiness (Millegan et al., 2015). Similarly, more severe “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” result in greater reported stress and are more likely to impede on an individual’s ability to complete their work effectively (Brown et al., 2018). Additionally, a study examining the U.S. military Armed Forces, found that experiencing sexual harassment predicts reduced intention to reenlist for both men and women (Firestone et al., 2012). Additionally, the 2018 WGR survey of active duty members found that a large portion of Service members who experienced sexual harassment responded that their experience made them take steps to leave the military. However, it is not clear how closely these separate intentions align with actual separation. (Breslin et al., 2019).

The literature also indicates that the presence of sexually harassing behavior(s) is one of the best statistical predictors of individual risk for sexual harassment (Tinkler & Zaho, 2019). For example, DoD’s 2018 WGR survey of active duty members reported that 79% of women and 68% of men reported experiencing more than one instance of sex-based military equal

opportunity (MEO) violation<sup>68</sup> suggesting a persistent and permissive sexual harassment environment (Breslin et al., 2019; Breslin et al., 2020). This coincides with several studies that found a strong positive correlation between perceived organizational tolerance to sexual harassment and higher frequency of perceived occurrence of more serious sexual harassment (Murdoch et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2018; Brown et al., 2018).

Furthermore, military studies have found that individuals who experience sexual assault experienced sexual harassment perpetrated by the same alleged offender(s) prior to the assault (Davis et al., 2017). Beyond the individual-level, U.S. military installation- and ship-level sexual harassment are among the top three predictors of installation and ship sexual assault rates (Samuelson et al., 2021). Similarly, military-specific research also supports the connection between unwanted experiences such as sexual harassment (both sexual quid pro quo and sexually hostile work environment) and a significant increase in the likelihood of rape (Sadler et al., 2003). Additionally, as discussed in the evidence for “Racially Harassing Behaviors,” several studies have found a positive correlation between sexual harassment and racial harassment (Buchanan & Fitzgerald, 2008; Buchanan et al., 2009; Moradi & Subich, 2003; Berdahl & Moore, 2006).

Finally, the presence of “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” is also linked to an increased risk of suicidal ideation and suicide. For example, a 2019 study found that experiencing sexual harassment was one of the strongest predictors of suicidal ideation among women veterans (Khan et al., 2019). Similarly, a study of soldiers in the U.S. military found that, at the individual-level, sexual harassment was associated with a fivefold increase of risk for suicide. At the group-level, units or companies having higher levels of sexual harassment also had soldiers three times more at risk for suicide (Griffith, 2019).

***Qualitative Evidence.*** During our focus group and stakeholder conversations, many participants felt that “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” had a negative impact on command climate. For example, commanders noted that sexual harassment within a unit is linked to a negative command climate and loss of mission. Service members also reported that a higher incidence of sexual harassment can precipitate within units and negatively impact command climate. To address these negative behaviors, summit and military focus group participants stressed the importance of strong leaders to set an example. Several Service members also stressed the importance of unit leaders addressing sexual harassment quickly. If not taken seriously, focus group participants felt that sexual harassment can become a pervasive issue which can lead to problematic behaviors such as sexual assault. Additionally, during stakeholder conversations, several participants requested that the revised DEOCS include items to measure sexual harassment.

Finally, Service members who participated in the DEOCS redesign survey identified sexual harassment behavior questions as one of the top three most important issues measured by the DEOCS. Support for this construct was also particularly strong among Service and OSD policymakers. One of the Services emphasized its zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment

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<sup>68</sup> The sex-based MEO violations measure was designed to align with military law and policy that outline criteria for an MEO violation; the measure incorporates behaviors and follow-up criteria to derive rates. The categories of behaviors include sexual harassment (i.e., sexually hostile work environment and sexual quid pro quo) and gender discrimination.

and the importance of this measure on the DEOCS. Another Service linked the importance of tracking “Sexual Harassment Behavior” responses over time to track trends in negative command climate. A different Service linked “Sexual Harassment Behaviors” with other negative climate outcomes like suicide and poor leadership, while members of another Service linked sexual harassment with risk for sexual assault. Different Service stakeholders linked “Sexual Harassment Behaviors” with deployment and readiness and emphasized that this is an area of climate that commanders can improve. Finally, OSD policy officials linked “Sexual Harassment Behaviors” to other negative climate measures like sexual assault and described these behaviors as being crucial to track.

### **“Stress”**

**Definition.** “Stress” is defined as an individual’s perception or feeling of emotional strain or pressure—an experience associated with feeling unable to predict or influence valued and prominent aspects of life (Cohen & Williamson, 1991).

**Scientific Evidence** Research has shown that “Stress” within a military environment can cause significant health hazards in the military work environment which can cause poor performance, increased turnover intentions, and greater likelihood of suicidal ideation (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018). A survey focused on U.S. military personnel found that work “Stress” was significantly related to poor work performance, more days of missed work, and poorer physical health. These results support accumulation of “Stress,” indicating that work “Stress” is a significant occupational health hazard in the routine military work environment (Pflanz & Ogle, 2006). “Stress” is also associated with lower worker retention (Griffeth et al., 2000; O’Neill & Davis, 2011). More specifically, DeTienne et al. (2012) found that certain types of workplace stressors—such as interpersonal or those pertaining ethical conflicts—are associated with increased turnover intentions.

Numerous studies also link “Stress” to suicidal ideation (NATO, 2018; Stone et al., 2017); Lebares et al., 2018). For example, a 2017 study of National Guard soldiers returning from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan found that increased levels of perceived “Stress” were a contributing factor to increased risk of suicide (Kim et al., 2017). Similarly, a 2011 study examined stressors related to readjustment post-deployment predicted higher risk of suicidal ideation among Army reserve veterans returning from Iraq (Kline et al., 2011).

**Qualitative Support.** During our focus groups, commanders reported that understanding the stressors present in the lives of their unit members was important to understanding the pulse of their command climate. Commanders also noted that increased “Stress” can contribute to lower retention. Additionally, some Service members indicated that certain types of “Stress” can build camaraderie and increase engagement; however, too much job “Stress” can increase burnout and impact retention negatively. They also reported that consistent and clear communication with leadership can help manage “Stress.” On the DEOCS redesign survey, “Stress” was indicated as both one of the most important issues for the chain of command to know about as well as one of the constructs they would like to be included on revised DEOCS. Service stakeholders also expressed support for the construct. During our conversations with one Service, they expressed the significance of commanders being able to deal with issues related to “Stress” immediately before it contributes to other negative climate outcomes.

## **“Toxic Leadership”**

**Definition.** “Toxic Leadership” is defined as an individual’s perception that their leader has a disregard for subordinate input, defiance of logic or predictability, and self-promoting tendencies (Reed, 2004). “Toxic Leadership” behavior includes demeaning/marginalizing, degrading, coercion, deception, and angry/acts of aggression (Pelletier, 2010).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research has shown that “Toxic Leadership” behaviors create negative climates in the military (Reed, 2004) and other civilian workplaces (Pelletier, 2010). This type of negative leadership can reduce organizational commitment, decrease respectful behaviors between unit members, lead to poor performance, and decrease retention (Gallus et al., 2013; Steele, 2011). For example, the Annual Survey of Army Leadership continues to find that leaders who engaged in “Toxic Leadership” have an adverse effect on command climate, including work quality, engagement, and morale of their subordinates (Riley et al., 2017). The findings suggest that this type of negative leadership has contributed to increased turnover in the military (Reed & Bullis, 2009). “Toxic Leadership” has also been correlated with tolerance of sexual assault. The study found that these “Toxic Leadership” styles, as perceived by Service women, were strongly associated with the Service women’s risk of, or protection from, sexual assault in non-deployed settings. In fact, negative leader behavior was associated with at least doubling Service women’s odds of sexual assault in the military (Sadler et al., 2016).

In extreme circumstances, “Toxic Leadership” styles can contribute to suicidal ideation. An investigation of U.S. soldiers in Iraq who had committed, or attempted suicide found that while the soldiers had other issues in their personal lives, the victims also had in common at least one leader (sometimes more) who made their lives “a living hell.” The author notes that the evidence did not show that there is a direct link of “Toxic Leadership” styles to committed or attempted suicide, but they do argue that leader support, or lack thereof, was a common issue that contributed to the suicide or suicide attempt (Erickson et al., 2015).

**Qualitative Support.** Most summit and military participants we spoke with linked “Toxic Leadership” to a negative command climate. In fact, the term “toxic” was one of the top five terms used most frequently to describe a negative command climate. Focus group participants also reported that “Toxic Leadership” styles can perpetuate a culture of tolerance surrounding problematic behaviors such as racial/ethnic discrimination, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Additionally, focus group participants linked “Toxic Leadership” to an intention to leave the military. Our Service and OSD policymaking stakeholders also weighed in on “Toxic Leadership” and agreed that it was important to measure on the revised DEOCS. One Service office commented that eliminating toxic leader behaviors was a priority for them in improving unit climate. Another Service policy office linked “Toxic Leadership” with bullying behaviors and suicide.

## **“Workplace Hostility”**

**Definition.** “Workplace Hostility” is an individual’s perception that others within their workplace act in an angry or hostile manner towards other personnel. It includes behaviors such as insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate a member as well as perception of others interfering with an individual’s work performance or not providing assistance when needed (Breslin et al.,

2019). “Workplace Hostility” can also include behaviors typical of incidents of bullying and hazing, although “Workplace Hostility” is broader than the definitions of bullying and hazing as outlined in DoD policy.<sup>69</sup>

**Scientific Evidence.** Studies consistently find that the presence of “Workplace Hostility” is associated with lower performance and readiness as well as an increase in turnover intentions (Lapierre et al., 2005; Lewis & Malecha, 2011; Raver & Nishii, 2010). For example, a study that looked at healthcare workers found that “Workplace Hostility” has been proven to lower performance, increase absenteeism, and contributed to greater employee turnover rate and intentions (Mete & Sokmen, 2016; Zapf & Gross, 2001).

In addition, the presence of “Workplace Hostility” is associated with an increased risk of sexual harassment (Brown et al., 2018; Tinkler & Zhao, 2019). DoD research consistently finds that military personnel who experience “Workplace Hostility” are at significantly greater likelihood of also experiencing sexual harassment and sexual assault at the individual level (Breslin et al., 2019; Breslin et al., 2020). Beyond the individual level, levels of “Workplace Hostility” at an installation/ship emerged among the top 10 statistical predictors of installation-level sexual assault rates, out of more than 20 climate and location-based risk factors (Samuelson et al., 2021).

**Qualitative Support.** DEOCS stakeholders supported including measures of aggressive and hostile behaviors, including ones identified in our “Workplace Hostility” measure. In our focus groups with commanders, they argued for the importance of measures that are linked to problematic aggressive and hostile behaviors, including bullying and hazing, that can negatively impact a unit’s readiness and retention. Service members also associated general “Workplace Hostility” with poor leadership, low morale, increased suicide and sexual assault risk, and higher intention to leave the military. Service members also described how hostile work environments can normalize problematic behaviors like racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination. Policy offices and the Services also discussed the necessity of “Workplace Hostility” measures. One Service identified reducing “Workplace Hostility” as being a strategic priority for the Service in upcoming years.

## Unit Protective Factors

Unit protective factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with better outcomes in units. The factors below are protective factors, meaning that higher scores indicate lower risk of negative outcomes, and specifically, better performance or readiness, less attrition from the military, and lower rates of sexual assault, suicide, sexual harassment, and racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

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<sup>69</sup> Further research is needed to understand the overlap between workplace hostility, hazing, and bullying in DoD. We might expect that “Workplace Hostility” is a less severe, more pervasive set of behaviors that may escalate into bullying, or may take on the character of hazing if there is an element of group initiation. Future research could leverage “Workplace Hostility” in units as measured via the DEOCS and hazing and bullying metrics developed by RAND and currently included on the Department’s Workplace Equal Opportunity Surveys to further understand how these behaviors are related cross-sectionally and longitudinally.

## “Cohesion”

**Definition.** “Cohesion” is an individual unit member’s perception that unit members care about each other, share the same mission and goals, and work together effectively and is commonly referred to as camaraderie (Jones et al., 2012; Wai et al., 2014).

**Scientific Evidence.** Unit “Cohesion” is a well-studied topic, particularly as it relates to the military (Jones et al., 2012). Specifically, there are several studies that have looked at unit “Cohesion” and its relation to mental health resilience and better overall military readiness (Reed-Fitzke & Lucier-Greer, 2020). For example, a study of U.K. Armed Forces examined personnel deployed to high optempo locations in Afghanistan, found that individuals who reported strong unit “Cohesion” were more likely to have lower levels of self-reported PTSD symptoms which the authors argued contributed to better mental health and helped promote military readiness (Jones et al., 2012). “Cohesion” has also been found to be a protective factor associated with lower turnover intentions (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018; Wai et al., 2014). This coincides with a study that examined the military status of active duty Army soldiers 12 months following a return from Iraq deployment. The study found that while Service members are prone to military attrition early in their career, individuals reporting lower levels of unit support (i.e., “Cohesion”) were more than twice as likely to separate from Service as those reporting higher levels of support from their peers and leaders (Vasterling et al., 2015).

Research also shows that unit “Cohesion” within a military setting is a protective factor against sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicidal ideation (Stanley et al., 2016; Hourani et al., 2018; Saxena et al., 2014; Brooks & Greenberg, 2018). For example, a study that looked at Army National Guard Service members who reported at least one deployment found that that greater unit “Cohesion” and support was associated with decreased likelihood of experiencing sexual assault and sexual harassment (Walsh et al., 2014). A study that looked at U.S. Army soldiers found that while combat exposure was a significant risk factor for suicidal ideation, unit “Cohesion” was a significant protective factor. More specifically, the authors found significant interaction between the two factors (i.e., combat exposure and unit “Cohesion”) indicating that soldiers who experienced greater combat exposure but also had higher levels of unit “Cohesion” had relatively lower levels of suicidal ideation while those who had higher levels of combat exposure and lower unit “Cohesion” were most at risk for suicidal ideation. (Mitchell et al., 2012).

**Qualitative Support.** There was robust qualitative support for including a “Cohesion” measure on the revised DEOCS. Additionally, most summit and military focus group as well as stakeholder participants agreed that stronger “Cohesion” can positively impact a command climate and increase retention intentions. For example, one commander explained that one of the first things he thinks of when thinking of a positive command climate is “unit “Cohesion.” The team working together as a unit.”

## “Connectedness”

**Definition.** “Connectedness” is defined as the closeness or belongingness to a group or organization, as well as the satisfaction with one’s relationship to and support from others in that group or organization (McLean et al., 2017; Selby et al., 2010). This factor also includes

organizational identification which is the degree to which an individual views themselves as a member of the organization and to what extent they experience a sense of oneness with the organization's values, brand, and methods (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam, 2004; Schuh et al., 2016).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research has shown that “Connectedness” or belongingness is associated with an increase in work performance and lower turnover intentions (Van Dick et al., 2004; Mulki & Jaramillo, 2011). For example, one study found that strong organizational identification was correlated with lower turnover intentions as well as greater trust and commitment to the organization (Barattucci et al., 2021). Similarly, “Connectedness” was associated with increased effort-related performance among civilian workers while ostracism at work was associated with worse self-rated performance (O’Reilly & Robinson, 2009).

“Connectedness” is also well studied and has been shown to be a significant protective factor for suicidal ideation, particularly in military populations (Anestis et al., 2015; Saxena et al., 2014; Chu et al., 2016; NATO, 2018; Khazem et al., 2015). A study that looked at suicide rates in the U.S. military found that hopelessness and perceived burdensomeness were risk factors more often communicated in suicide notes but not verbally. Thwarted belongingness was the risk factor most often communicated verbally in the suicide note (Cox et al., 2011). Additionally, a study to determine the intensity of combat exposure as it relates to suicidal ideation among active duty Air Force personnel found that suicidal ideation was more severe among Airman above the age of 29 years with high combat exposure and low levels of belongingness (Bryan et al., 2013). Interpersonal social support—as indicated by availability to speak with someone about problems, perception of identification and ability to socialize with a group, and perceived availability of material aids—was also associated with reduced risk of suicidal ideation among treatment-seeking active duty personnel with posttraumatic stress disorder after deployments in or nearby Iraq or Afghanistan (McClellan et al., 2017). Finally, a study by the World Health Organization also found a significant link between hopelessness and suicidal ideation among younger adults (Sisask et al., 2008).

**Qualitative Support.** “Connectedness” received broad support from a variety of users who discussed its importance for inclusion on the DEOCS. For example, Service stakeholders described how important it is for the Services to use measures like “Connectedness” as a protective measure against suicide and bullying. Commanders articulated the importance of Service members feeling connected to their unit as an element of positive command climate. Service members noted how general “Connectedness” fosters a positive work environment and assists in new member integration. “Connectedness” was also described as valuable for consideration in the DEOCS redesign by several OSD policy offices.

### **“Engagement and Commitment”**

**Definition.** “Engagement and Commitment” is defined as the extent to which individuals find their work fulfilling and are committed to their job and organization (Lee et al., 2017). Engaged and committed individuals demonstrate enthusiasm for, dedication to, and absorption in the work they do (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research shows that “Engagement and Commitment” is linked to higher retention and readiness in both military environments and civilian workplaces (Mendes & Stander, 2011; Carr et al., 2003; Griffith et al., 2000). For example, in a sample of Canadian Armed Forces, one study found that greater engagement was associated with greater retention intentions and indicators of readiness. The authors defined indicators of readiness as trust in teammates, greater willingness to deploy, and less psychological distress (Ivey et al., 2015). Committed individuals also feel a sense of obligation to the organization, feel connected with their work activities, believe themselves to be able to deal with demands of their job, and have stronger intentions to stay with an organization (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

**Qualitative Support.** A variety of users expressed a desire to have work “Engagement and Commitment” items appear on the next iteration of the survey. Commanders expressed that engagement measures provide valuable feedback for their command, and that understanding their Service members’ willingness to engage was an important metric for unit success. Service members described how a lack of “Engagement and Commitment” can produce negative climate outcomes like low morale. Service stakeholders also found this construct compelling, and these constructs are part of and/or planned for as a component of prevention efforts.

### **“Fairness”**

**Definition.** “Fairness” is defined as an individual’s perception that organizational policies, practices, and procedures, both formal and informal, regarding information sharing, recognition, job opportunities, and promotions are based on merit, inclusion, equality, and respect (Colquitt, 2001).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research finds that perceptions of organizational “Fairness” are associated with increased readiness, retention, and likelihood of reduced risk for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and sexual harassment. Studies consistently show that employee’s positive or negative perceptions of their workgroup and organization depends on their perception of whether their own treatment is the same as those extended to members of other groups. If employees feel they are being treated unfairly, they are more likely to develop a feeling of being undervalued and may withdraw. This can then lead to poor performance and turnover intentions (Gutek et al., 1996; Snape & Redman, 2003). Similarly, a 2014 study found that perceptions of unfair treatment among clusters of employees, such as aging workers or those with disabilities, has been shown to negatively impact workgroup performance and decrease turnover intentions (Boehm et al., 2014; Sawyer et al., 2018). Finally, a study of organizational justice in the federal workplace found that organizational justice was linked to employee satisfaction, loyalty to senior leadership, and cooperation (Cho & Sai, 2013), which highlights links to increased work performance and lower risk of turnover intentions.

A broad set of literature finds that perceived organizational “Fairness” climate is correlated with incidences of sexual harassment (Benavides-Espinoza & Cunningham, 2010; Tinker & Zhao, 2019). An employee’s perception that their organization is procedurally just and will fairly deal with unacceptable behavior are more likely to have fewer incidences of sexual harassment. As shown in a study of U.K. police officers, participants who reported higher levels of perceived organizational tolerance to harassment and lower perceptions of organizational justice reported experiencing more frequent sexual harassment (Brown et al., 2018). Additionally, in a study of



military members, when greater value is placed on justice climates there are lower incidences of sexual harassment. The authors suggest that justice climate, when managed successfully, is a protective factor against incidences of sexual harassment (Rubino et al., 2018).

**Qualitative Support.** A variety of users expressed support for the inclusion of “Fairness” items in the DEOCS redesign effort. Commanders associated fair and equal treatment to accountability and positive climate outcomes. Similarly, in focus groups and the DEOCS redesign survey, Service members identified fair treatment as a key component to a positive command climate and the lack of fair treatment (in promotions or punishments) to be evidence of a negative command climate. At the Service and policy levels, one Service expressed concerns over favoritism effecting unit climate. Finally, OSD policymakers discussed the negative impact that unequal treatment can have on a variety of our STOs, including sexual harassment and discrimination.

### **“Inclusion”**

**Definition.** “Inclusion” is defined as an individual’s perception that others within their work environment are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization’s success. “Inclusion” also includes ensuring that different opinions and perspectives are accepted in an organization. As a result, a key aspect of “Inclusion” is individual’s perception that it is safe for them to voice suggestions (Parks et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2017).

**Scientific Evidence.** Prior research finds that inclusive work environments are linked to reduced risk of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and turnover intentions as well as increased readiness (Oberfield, 2016; Lindsey et al., 2017; McKay et al., 2007). For example, when employees perceive that their organizations are committed to “Inclusion” and diversity, they are likely to be more satisfied, have strong attachments to their organizations, perform better overall, and have reduced turnover intentions (Buttner et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2011). Similarly, when members of an organization feel safe to voice suggestions and feel listened to, they are more adaptable to changes in the organization (Lee et al., 2017), a fundamental aspect of military readiness. For example, a 2014 study of U.S. military personnel found that workgroups that have a positive perception of diversity climate within their organizations also had increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover intentions, and were less at risk of experiencing incidences of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (Boehm et al., 2014).

**Qualitative Support.** Nearly all summit and military focus group participants mentioned the importance of having a command climate that is inclusive and tolerant. These participants agreed that these inclusive units are generally more positive and have fewer incidents of racial and ethnic discrimination. Conversely, commanders and other military participants expressed that a non-inclusive unit that is intolerant and does not respect or is open to different perspectives generally has lower morale. Commanders also said that commands that are less inclusive negatively impacted the work performance of their unit members, specifically minorities. Additionally, many summit and military focus group participants agreed that military and organizational leaders had an impact on the level of inclusiveness of their unit. For example, one summit participant explained that a leader may not have “control over his or her diversity [within their unit], but they do have control over creating a climate of “Inclusion.”” Stakeholders who

participated in the semi-structured interviews also felt that “Inclusion” was an important construct to measure in the revised DEOCS 5.0 and would increase buy-in among commanders and other leaders.

### **“Leadership Support”**

**Definition.** “Leadership Support” is defined as an individual’s perception that their leader builds trust, encourages goal attainment and professional development, promotes effective communication, and supports teamwork (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research consistently shows that “Leadership Support” has an influence on readiness (Jones et al., 2012) and retention (Wai et al., 2014; Griffeth et al., 2000; Bucklin et al., 2014). A systematic narrative review of 50 studies showed that that lack of “Leadership Support” can cause a significant health hazard in military work environment which can negatively impact performance and increased turnover intentions (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018). Similarly, a study of military employees found that supervisor support had a direct impact on the employee’s mental health and turnover intentions. More specifically, increased supervisor support was linked to lower mental health issues (i.e., headaches, mental confusion) and higher retention intentions (Dupre & Day, 2007). This coincides with a study that examined the military status of active duty Army soldiers 12 months following a return from Iraq deployment. The study found that while Service members are prone to military attrition early in their career, individuals reporting lower levels of leader support were more than twice as likely to separate from Service as those reporting higher levels of support from their peers and leaders (Vesterling et al., 2015).

Research also links “Leadership Support” as a protective factor against sexual harassment, sexual assault, and suicidal ideation. For example, a study looking at harassment by leaders found that perceived positive “Leadership Support” was associated with establishing an ethical organizational climate which was associated with promoting formal sexual harassment policies through action (Offermann & Malamut, 2002). Similarly, a lack of perceived “Leadership Support” was shown to be associated with an increased risk for sexual assault within the unit and sexual harassment at the individual level (Sadler et al., 2016). “Leadership Support” was also noted as a protective factor against suicidal behaviors. A study of Army National Guard soldiers found that perceiving unit leaders as those who the soldier might trust and confide was associated with reduced suicidal behaviors (Griffith, 2019).

**Qualitative Support.** Summit and military focus group as well as stakeholders’ conversation participants agreed that “Leadership Support” is directly tied to a positive command climate. In fact, Service member and summit participants described a strong command climate as one that has leaders who support and encourage career development and advancement. Commanders also described how showing concern and care for individuals within their unit creates a more productive work environment and increases retention. The DEOCS redesign survey also noted that Service members asked that “Leadership Support,” particularly regarding career development, as a key construct to be included in the revised DEOCS. Service stakeholders pointed to questions about leadership being some of the most important measures on the current survey, and described how important tracking trends in “Leadership Support” and trust is for evaluating leaders and giving them the skills to succeed.

## “Morale”

**Definition.** “Morale” is defined as an individual’s confidence, enthusiasm, collective pride, and willingness to persist in the activities of the group. “Morale” also includes an individual’s perception that members of their workplace are confident, enthusiastic, have collective pride, and are willing to persist in the activities of their workplace (Banyard, 2008; Manning, 1994; McMahon & Farmer, 2009).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research has shown that higher “Morale” is linked with increased readiness and retention within military environment. For example, among members of the armed forces from the United Kingdom, higher “Morale” was related to better mental health (i.e., fewer symptoms of PTSD, less psychological distress), which in turn suggests improved military readiness. The study examined Service members deployed to high optempo locations at war and found that self-reported greater levels of unit cohesion, “Morale,” and perceived good leadership were associated with lower levels of common mental disorder and PTSD and help to promote military readiness and reduced sickness absence (Jones et al., 2012). Similarly, a 2015 study of Canadian armed forces found “Morale” to be a predictor of trust in teammates, willingness to deploy and lower turnover intentions. The study concluded that “Morale” is highly relevant and important to military organizations (Ivey et al., 2015).

**Qualitative Support.** Our conversations with DEOCS stakeholders highlighted broad support for “Morale” as a construct and the importance of “Morale” measures for inclusion on the DEOCS redesign. In our focus groups with commanders, they linked low “Morale” to problematic behaviors and poor unit climate. Service members linked “Morale” to retention, a culture of pride, and identified “Morale” as a sort of “meta indicator” of other negative climate and behavior measures. Service members cited “Morale” as one of the most important climate measures not currently on the DEOCS in our DEOCS redesign survey. In fact, it was the single most mentioned climate construct in the short answer responses to the DEOCS redesign survey. The Services and OSD policy offices also described “Morale” as an important measure to include on the DEOCS. Service stakeholders described “Morale” as being linked to other indicators of poor unit climate. Another Service described how they often use the current locally developed questions (LDQ) or short answer questions (SAQ) section of the DEOCS to ask more specific “Morale” questions. Finally, Service stakeholders commented on the importance of “Morale” measures and connecting the “mission” component of climate to “the human” component.

## “Safe Storage of Lethal Means”

**Definition.** “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” is defined as the limitation of access to lethal means through appropriate storage such as storing medications (prescription and over-the counter) and poisons in a locked cabinet and storing firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition stored separately (Yip et al., 2012).

**Scientific Evidence.** Research shows that access to lethal means places individuals at higher risk for suicide (Yip et al., 2012). For example, data has shown that risk of suicide is 5 to 6 times greater in households with firearms (Shenassa et al., 2004; Simon, 2007). In a review exploring suicide risk, Stanley and colleagues (2016) theorized that one reason first responders—and

police officers, specifically—may be at higher risk for suicide is because of their increased access to lethal means, such as firearms. Service members may also be at increased risk in part due to easy access to firearms. While about 50% of all suicide deaths in the U.S. are by firearm (CDC, 2020), this percentage is greater in the military, with 64% of suicide deaths in the military by firearm (DoD Annual Suicide Report, 2020).

Accordingly, safe storage of firearms can reduce the risk of suicide and accidental death that are associated with owning a firearm (HHS, 2012; Nock et al., 2014; Saxena et al., 2014; Stone et al., 2017). While some individuals have longer durations of suicidal crisis, many suicide attempts are impulsive (Klonsky & May, 2010; Swann et al., 2020), therefore limiting access to lethal means and putting time and space between suicidal impulses and lethal means is an effective way of preventing suicide (Grossman et al., 2005; NATO, 2018).

**Qualitative Evidence.** This construct was not prominent in our qualitative research; notably, it was not discussed by commanders or Service members in focus groups when discussing command climate. However, stakeholder feedback during coordination urged the inclusion of this construct, as it is one of the best predictors of suicide, as well as highly actionable. Therefore, “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” was added to the final set of constructs.

### **“Transformational Leadership”**

**Definition.** “Transformational Leadership” is an individual’s perception that their leader encourages, inspires, and motivates others to meet new challenges and accomplish tasks beyond what the individual felt was possible (Avolio, 1999). Characteristics of a transformational leader include idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Smith et al., 2016).

**Scientific Evidence.** Extensive research has shown that “Transformational Leadership” is linked to positive outcomes such as increased readiness at the individual and unit level (Ng, 2017; Judge & Piccolo, 2004) as well as reduced turnover intentions (Suliman et al., 2020). A study of full-time professional US firefighters found that safety-specific “Transformational Leadership” was positively associated with safety climate perceptions and safety compliance behaviors (Smith et al., 2016). Similarly, transformation leadership used by surgeons in the operating room contributed to improved team behavior and suggested that “Transformational Leadership” development “has the potential to improve the efficiency and safety of operative care,” thus positively impacting performance (Hu et al., 2016). A study of 72 light infantry rifle platoon leaders and found that “Transformational Leadership” ratings of platoon leaders and sergeants to be positively predictive of unit performance, particularly those operating in challenging and uncertain conditions (Bass et al., 2003). Additionally, a study of nursing professionals found that “Transformational Leadership” was found to increase job satisfaction, staff well-being, decrease burnout and overall stress, thus improving staff retention (Weberg, D., 2010).

**Qualitative Support.** Summit and military participants agreed that leadership has a direct impact on a unit’s command climate and several linked transformation leadership qualities to high unit retention. Many participants gave examples of positive leaders who motivated and collaborated with their unit, noting that they had a productive working environment with high morale.

Summit focus group participants also articulated a desire for a metrics that would identify strong leaders who enable positive climates.

### **“Work-Life Balance”**

**Definition.** “Work-Life Balance” is defined as the perception that the demands of an individual’s work life and personal life are compatible (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Personal life often refers to one’s family responsibilities but can also entail any activities or obligations outside of work, including friends, study, recreation, hobbies, religious practices, travel, community service, and other personal interests. “Work-Life Balance” can be affected not only by how much time overall is required to be spent at work, but also schedule flexibility and regularity; shiftwork; commuting time; telework and leave policies; child and dependent care resources; resources, programs and allowances for recreation, stress relief, physical and mental healthcare, exercise, healthy diet, sleep, socialization, family and marriages issues, financial well-being, and legal support.

**Scientific Evidence.** Studies have shown that poor “Work-Life Balance” is associated with lower readiness and retention as well as an increased risk for suicide (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018; Sachau et al., 2012). The balance between work and nonwork can be particularly precarious for military personnel as their jobs may require frequent moves that uproot their spouse or partner and children, may involve long deployments away from family and friends, and thereby disrupt their social networks. As a result, a study of military personnel found poor “Work-Life Balance” to be associated with poor health symptoms such as headaches, mental confusion, and increased the turnover intentions (Dupre & Day, 2007; Brooks & Greenberg, 2018). Similarly, a 2017 study of the U.S. Air Force Community supports this claim finding that “Work-Life Balance” was the second most reported challenged facing both Air Force Personnel and their spouse. “Work-Life Balance” challenges included finding enough time for sleep, a healthy diet, or physical exercise (62%), finding time for recreation, stress relief, or family (59%), and many competing commitments, such as work, school, and childcare (57%). This study found that airman working 50 or more hours a week was associated with decreased satisfaction with military life or treatment of families and was linked to an increased desire to leave the military (Sims et al., 2019). Lastly, a study of active duty U.S. soldiers found that work-family conflict was associated with increased risk of suicidal ideation (Hourani et al., 2018). Similarly, a study of active duty U.S. Air Force members found that higher weekly hours worked was associated with higher rates of suicide ideation (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2011).

**Qualitative Support.** There was strong support to include a “Work-Life Balance” measure on the revised DEOCS from focus group participants and other stakeholders. For example, nearly all participants we spoke with across populations were very concerned with “Work-Life Balance” and how it impacts their unit’s command climate. Additionally, focus group participants associate poor “Work-Life Balance” with decrease workplace safety, lower morale, increased intention to leave, and increased risk for suicide. In the DEOCS redesign survey, “Work-Life Balance” emerged as a top theme when Service members were asked about what was missing on the current survey. Finally, our stakeholder conversations requested that the revised DEOCS include items to measure “Work-Life Balance” as it was essential in achieving positive command climate and promoting readiness.

## Discussion

OPA took a ground-up approach to selecting content for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0. We started by defining the goals of the DEOCS—to serve as a tool for commanders and leaders that produces accurate assessments of climate risks and informs targeted and appropriate follow-on actions—and designed a process to select survey content that would best facilitate meeting those goals. Following the principles that the DEOCS should be data driven and actionable, our rigorous method for selecting preliminary constructs and final factors to include in the DEOCS prioritized providing commanders/leaders with actionable information on empirically supported, modifiable risk and protective factors, empowering change at the unit level that will ultimately serve to bolster readiness and retention while mitigating racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicide.

Because the DEOCS is one of many military surveys, and survey burden is a serious concern among stakeholders and OPA researchers alike, we employed a rigorous and systematic selection process for factors that eliminated most preliminary constructs from the final set, while retaining those preliminary constructs with the strongest evidence and the strongest support from Service members, commanders, and other stakeholders. The result is a user-friendly set of 19 factors that are empirically grounded, cross-cutting risk and protective factors. These are the key constructs that function as metrics for understanding unit climate for unit commanders and senior leaders and are reported via the DEOCS dashboard ([Chapter 9](#)).

There are multiple limitations to our construct selection approach that are important to acknowledge. First, it is important to note that our ability to select the best constructs for inclusion on the survey was dependent on the existing scientific literature. Many of the potential associations between factors and STOs have not been examined in prior work, to our knowledge, and therefore it is entirely possible that some factors that are excellent leading indicators simply have not been studied or discovered to date. As the body of knowledge regarding climate continues to grow, the DEOCS must remain open to enhancements. However, we also recognize the importance of maintaining stability in DEOCS survey factors, to enable trending of metrics over time first and foremost, but also because of all of the training associated with the survey and the expertise that develops in the DEOCS community around survey content. Thus, any changes to the DEOCS survey factors in the future will be handled incrementally, with an eye toward maintaining stability but also recognizing that new emerging research may highlight important new constructs to consider. Furthermore, future research with the DEOCS 5.0 will serve to significantly bolster our understanding of unit climate within the military. For example, we will be able to examine all possible associations between factors and STOs (many of which have never been documented), as well as the complex interplay between factors in the prediction of STOs (e.g., moderation, mediation). We expect our understanding of how these climate risks relate to the STOs will grow substantially as a result of systematic studies in the coming years and will allow us to build a comprehensive empirical model of DoD climate as it relates to the STOs.

Despite these limitations, we are confident that the 19 factors included in the DEOCS 5.0 represent a major step forward in the Department's ability to provide unit-level leaders with actionable data on empirically supported risk and protective factors. After we finalized the list of factors, we turned our attention to selecting the specific items (i.e., survey questions) and scales

(i.e., sets of survey questions) to measure these factors ([Chapter 7](#)), and putting these items together to design a complete survey instrument from end to end ([Chapter 8](#)). This process is described in the following chapters.





## Chapter 7: Defense Organizational Climate Survey 5.0 Item Selection

*Dr. Julia Dahl, Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Ron Vega, Dr. Rugile Tuskeviciute, Dr. Jon Schreiner, Dr. Rachel Trump-Steele, Clancy Murray, Amanda Barry, Dr. Austin Lawhead*

### Introduction

Although the construct selection process identified the key risk and protective factors to measure in the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS; [Chapter 6](#)), the item selection process identified the specific questions (i.e., items) and sets of questions (i.e., scales) used to measure these factors. Two of the overarching DEOCS redesign principles were most salient in designing the process for selecting the items: data-driven selections and a user-friendly survey experience.

### Accurate and Data Driven

First, to ensure our selections were data driven, we implemented a rigorous item selection and design process, which involved systematic testing of items to ensure their linkage to the specific strategic target outcomes (STO) of interest. To do so, we leveraged the Office of People Analytics' (OPA) survey data holdings to select items that are quantitatively linked with the STOs. OPA surveys capture the official DoD prevalence rates for multiple STOs (sexual assault, sexual harassment, and race/ethnic harassment/discrimination) and include high-quality measures of the rest. OPA surveys also include many of the risk and protective factors selected for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0. Thus, existing OPA survey data include all of the outcomes and many of the risk and protective factors necessary to test linkages between specific items measuring risk and protective factors and the STOs.

Because having access to this amount of relevant existing survey data is unusual when developing a new survey, our outcome-driven and inductive approach to item selection differs from traditional approaches (including previous versions of the DEOCS). Traditional approaches to item selection prioritize the goal of measuring a survey construct with fidelity, but generally without respect to the relationship with outcomes (Furr, 2011; Hinkin, 1995; Hinkin et al., 1997). These traditional methods aim to select items that most precisely and fully capture the construct or constructs of interest.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, our approach prioritizes the goal of predicting the STOs. Therefore, we selected items primarily based on their associations with STOs, while also ensuring that the items reliably measured the constructs of interest.

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<sup>70</sup> This is typically accomplished using factor analyses and reliability scores, which indicate whether the items within a scale are all measuring the same thing. A traditional approach to items selection involves selecting items that best estimate scores on the other items that are already in the scale. For example, a traditional approach to selecting items for workplace hostility experiences would write and select items based on their correlation with other workplace hostility items. This produces scales that assess workplace hostility at best, with a different item, and at worst using more similar items. This process can create redundancy and repetitiveness in survey questions, which increases well-documented burden and frustration for participants, and may not provide any additional benefit in terms of predicting an outcome.

## User Friendly

Second, in focus groups, Service members often said that DEOCS 4.1 was too long and attributed this to seemingly repetitive questions. Indeed, a common measurement technique is to ask several questions to measure the same construct in order to fully capture the meaning of the construct and account for effects of wording differences on responses. However, in a survey like the DEOCS that is taken often and by many people, efficiency is essential to keep the survey user friendly for participants, thereby minimizing survey burden and potentially boosting response rates. Through our analyses, we sought to minimize the number of items needed to measure each construct by identifying the items with the strongest predictive power. These item reduction analyses were a key factor in the item selection process, which also took into account conceptual coverage of the constructs as well as stakeholder feedback.

We begin this chapter with a description of our procedure for selecting data sources and a description of the data sources themselves. Next, we detail our item reduction analyses, in which we performed a five-step procedure to identify the items with the most predictive power. Next, we briefly explain how the item reduction analysis and other factors informed our final selection procedure. Finally, we report the results of these item reduction analyses and the final selected items. We end this chapter by describing the subsequent steps for refining the items and rewording them for optimal use in the DEOCS 5.0 ([Chapter 8](#)).

## Methods

Following the DEOCS redesign principle of data-driven decisions, the primary tool used to select items was a quantitative item reduction analysis. This analysis ranked potential items for a given construct or factor by the strength of their relationship with one or several of the STOs. The steps of this analysis are described below.

### Identification of Data Sources

First, we identified existing survey data within OPA's data holdings that contained items measuring at least one STO (Table 19) and items measuring at least one of the core constructs selected for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0 (Table 20 is a reminder of the constructs selected in [Chapter 6](#)). OPA surveys include validated measures that are already in use with a military population, and thus represented a logical starting point for identifying items to measure each of the 19 DEOCS factors.

**Table 19.**  
***Defined Strategic Target Outcomes***

<b>Strategic Target Outcome</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Racial/Ethnic Harassment/ Discrimination	Unfair treatment and/or behavior that is unwelcome or offensive to a reasonable person and is based on race, color, religion, and/or national origin (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021a, 2021b).
Readiness	The capability of a unit or organization to perform the mission or function for which it is organized or designed. Readiness also includes overall work performance and deployability (DoD, 2020a).
Retention	The individual's voluntary decision to stay with their unit or organization after their obligated term of service has ended (i.e., as determined by their enlistment contract) or until the completion of the mission or project (Congressional Research Service, 2020; Das & Baruah, 2013; Knapp, 1993).
Sexual Assault	Intentional and unwelcome sexual contact characterized by use of force, threats, intimidation, abuse of authority, or when the victim does not or cannot consent (DoD, 2017; Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018).
Sexual Harassment	Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and deliberate or repeated offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature. These behaviors are so severe and pervasive that a reasonable person would perceive, and the victim does perceive, the environment as hostile or offensive (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018).
Suicide	The act, or an attempt, of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

**Table 20.**  
***DEOCS 5.0 Final Factors***

<b>Final Factors</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Alcohol Impairing Memory	The inability to recall events that occurred while consuming excessive amounts of alcohol (Rose & Grant, 2010). This occurs when an individual drinks enough alcohol to temporarily block the transfer of memories from short-term to long-term storage—known as memory consolidation—in a brain area called the hippocampus (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), 2019).
Binge Drinking	A pattern of drinking alcohol that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08 percent—or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter—or higher. For a typical adult, this generally includes consuming four or more drinks for a woman or five or more drinks for a man in about 2 hours (NIAAA, 2020).
Cohesion	An individual's perception that members of the unit or organization care about each other, share the same mission and goals, and work effectively together (Jones et al., 2012; Wai et al., 2014).
Connectedness	An individual's closeness or belongingness to their unit or organization, and their satisfaction with their relationship to, and support from, others in that unit or organization (McLean et al., 2017; Selby et al., 2010). This also includes organizational identification which is the degree to which an individual views themselves as a member of the organization and to what extent they experience a sense of oneness with the organization's values, brand, and methods (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam, 2004; Schuh et al., 2016).
Engagement and Commitment	The extent to which individuals find their work fulfilling and are committed to their work and unit or organization (Lee et al., 2017). Engaged and committed

Final Factors	Definition
	individuals demonstrate enthusiasm for, and dedication to, the work that they do (Schaufeli et al., 2002).
Fairness	An individual's perception that formal and informal unit or organizational policies, practices, and procedures regarding information sharing, job opportunities, and promotions are based on merit, inclusion, equality, and respect (Colquitt, 2001).
Inclusion	An individual's perception that others within their unit or organization are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the unit or organization's success. Inclusive work environments also ensure that it is safe for an individual to voice their different opinions, perspectives, and/or suggestions (Lee et al., 2017; Parks et al., 2008).
Leadership Support	An individual's perception that their leader builds trust, encourages goal attainment and professional development, promotes effective communication, and supports teamwork (Brooks & Greenberg, 2018).
Morale	An individual's own confidence, enthusiasm, collective pride, and willingness to persist in the activities of the unit or organization. Also, an individual's perception that members of their unit or organization are confident, enthusiastic, have collective pride, and are willing to persist in the activities of the unit or organization (Banyard, 2008; Manning, 1994; McMahon & Farmer, 2009).
Passive Leadership	An individual's perception that their leader avoids decisions, does not respond to problems, fails to follow up, hesitates to act, and is absent when needed. Also known as laissez-faire leadership (Bass, 1990; Lee, 2018).
Racially Harassing Behaviors	An individual's perception that behaviors within their unit or organization include unwelcome or offensive conduct such as intimidation, ridicule, and insults that are based on race, color, religion, and/or national origin (Daniel et al., 2019; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2021a, 2021b).
Safe Storage for Lethal Means	The limitation of access to lethal means through appropriate storage such as storing unloaded firearms in a locked cabinet or gun safe and separately from ammunition. This also includes storing medications (i.e., prescription and over-the counter) in a locked safe space (Yip et al., 2012).
Sexist Behaviors	An individual's perception that behaviors and/or opinions within their unit or organization are prejudicial, stereotypical, or negative against a person or group based on their perceived sex or gender. This includes verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, offensive, or condescending attitudes (Fitzgerald et al., 1988).
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	An individual's perception that behaviors within their unit or organization include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature (Breslin et al., 2019).
Stress	An individual's perception or feeling of emotional strain or pressure—experience associated with feeling unable to predict or influence valued and prominent aspect of life (Cohen & Williamson, 1991).
Toxic Leadership	An individual's perception that their leader disregards subordinate input, is unpredictable, and self-promotes (Reed, 2004). Toxic leadership also include behaviors that are demeaning, marginalizing, degrading, coercive and/or deceptive. Toxic leaders are also prone to acts of aggression (Pelletier, 2010).
Transformational Leadership	An individual's perception that their leader encourages, inspires, and motivates others to meet new challenges and to accomplish tasks beyond what the individual felt was possible (Avolio, 1999). Characteristics of a transformational leader include idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Smith et al., 2016).
Work-Life Balance	An individual's perception that the demands of their work life and personal life are compatible (Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

Final Factors	Definition
Workplace Hostility	An individual's perception that others within their unit or organization act in an angry or hostile manner which includes behaviors such as insults, sarcasm, or gestures that humiliate a group or individual. This also includes an individual's perception that others interfere with their work performance and/or do not provide assistance when needed (Breslin et al., 2019).

**Data Sources, Constructs, and Strategic Target Outcomes**

Below, we describe the OPA data sources we used for item selection and the STOs and constructs that we assessed with the source. When multiple surveys contained the construct items, we prioritized the survey data that had the STO most directly relevant to the Department’s prevention strategy, and if multiple STOs were related to the DoD Instruction (DoDI), we prioritized the most severe form of harm or violence. Within a survey (e.g., within the *Workplace and Gender Relations survey of Active Duty Members [WGRA]*); we prioritized the most recent fielding that included the relevant constructs. Also, because the largest user base for the DEOCS is active duty military members, sources that captured the active duty military population were prioritized. When this was not possible, sources capturing Reserve component members were considered as well. Civilian survey data were not used for these purposes.

As a result of this identification process, the following OPA survey data sources were used: (1) the *Longitudinal Suicidal Ideation Survey (LIS)*, (2) the *2018 Status of Forces Surveys of Active Duty Members (2018 SOFS-A)*, (3) the *2017 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Active Duty Members (2017 WEOA)*, (4) the *2019 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Reserve Component Members (2019 WEOR)*, (5) the *Workplace and Gender Relations Surveys of Active Duty Members (2012 WGRA)*, and (6) the *2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Surveys of Active Duty Members (2018 WGRA)*.

**Longitudinal Suicidal Ideation Survey.** The *Longitudinal Suicidal Ideation Survey (2020 LIS)* is a planned 5-year longitudinal study that began in 2020. The *LIS* measures constructs such as “Job Satisfaction,” “Deployment Experience,” “Behavioral Health,” and “Stress Management” among active duty Service members. For the purpose of item analysis, we leveraged *LIS* data from the first year of survey fielding<sup>71</sup> and included the following control variables: deployment, marital status, relationship status, paygrade, Service, sex, and race/ethnicity.<sup>72</sup>

The *LIS* was used to assess one construct, “connectedness,” and its relationship to suicide attempts. To assess suicide attempts, one item was selected from *2020 LIS* that asked if the participant had a made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months (Table 21 below). Results from the item reduction analysis for the construct of “connectedness” and its relationship to suicide attempts are described in the results section.

<sup>71</sup> Year 1 of the survey fielded between April 6, 2020, and June 1, 2020; 11,510 members were sampled. Of those sampled, 3,443 completed the questionnaire, reflecting a 29.9% response rate.

<sup>72</sup> This survey is unweighted.

**Table 21.**  
***Longitudinal Suicidal Ideation Survey Strategic Target Outcomes (STO) Variable Name and Item Text***

STO Variable Name	Item Text
Suicide Attempt	Did you make a suicide attempt during the following periods?

*Note.* The response option “Within the past 12 months” was used as a binary outcome indicating a suicide attempt within the past 12 months.

### **Status of Forces Surveys**

These surveys assess the attitudes and opinions of the military member community on a wide range of personnel issues (including satisfaction, retention, readiness, stress). The *Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members (SOFS-A)* is administered annually to members of the active duty, while the *Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members (SOFS-R)* is administered annually to members of the Reserve component.

**2018 Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members (2018 SOFS-A).** For our item reduction analysis, we used the 2018 fielding of the *SOFS-A*, which was the most up-to-date final weighted *SOFS-A* data set available at the time.<sup>73</sup> Our item reduction analysis for constructs assessed in the 2018 *SOFS-A* included the following control variables: gender, age, Service, paygrade, marital status, deployment in the past 2 years, years of Service, Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score, and living off base.<sup>74</sup>

The 2018 *SOFS-A* survey was used to assess the performance of items measuring four constructs—“Cohesion,” “Engagement and Commitment,” “Leadership Support,” and “Perceived Stress”—and their predictive power in relation to three STOs: readiness, retention, and suicide attempt. The STO for readiness was assessed using the sum of four items while retention and suicide attempts were assessed using a single item from the 2018 *SOFS-A*. We present all items used to assess the three STOs in Table 22 and discuss the item reduction analysis for all four constructs in the Results section.

<sup>73</sup> The 2018 *SOFS-A* was administered from December 5, 2018, through February 18, 2019; 115,080 DoD active duty members were sampled, and 13,361 eligible DoD participants completed the survey, resulting in a 15% response rate. All participants completed Module A. Modules B and C were each completed by half of the participants.

<sup>74</sup> The survey is weighted using industry-standard weighting methodology. All regression analyses with *SOFA* use this survey weighting methodology. For more information on weighting and survey content and methodology consult 2018 *SOFS-A Statistical Methods Report*.

**Table 22.**  
**2018 Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members Strategic Target Outcomes (STO)**

STO	Item Text
Readiness <sup>1</sup>	Overall, how well prepared are you to perform your wartime job?
Readiness <sup>1</sup>	Overall, how well prepared is your unit to perform its wartime mission?
Readiness <sup>1</sup>	How well has your training prepared you to perform your wartime job?
Readiness <sup>1</sup>	How well has your training prepared you to perform your wartime job in support of joint operations?
Retention <sup>2</sup>	Suppose that you have to decide whether to stay on active duty. Assuming you could stay, how likely is it that you would choose to do so?
Suicide Attempt <sup>2</sup>	Did you make a suicide attempt during the following periods?

<sup>1</sup> These items were asked of all participants and had good reliability:  $\alpha = 0.83$

<sup>2</sup> These items were asked of all participants.

### **Workplace and Equal Opportunity Surveys**

The purpose of the congressionally mandated *Workplace and Equal Opportunity Surveys (WEO)* is to assess positive and negative trends in racial/ethnic relations in the Armed Forces, including assessing experiences of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, diversity and inclusion climate, policy effectiveness, and effectiveness of the complaints process. The survey population includes both active duty and Reserve members (in alternate years, quadrennially). For this item reduction analysis, surveys assessing active duty Service members (*WEOA*) were prioritized. However, when relevant survey items were only available from Reserve component surveys (*WEOR*), those items were used. The *WEO* surveys were used to assess “Fairness,” “Inclusion,” “Workplace Hostility,” and “Inclusive Leadership”—and their relationship to the STO of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

Racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination was assessed using a constructed variable that captures whether the participant has experienced one or more of 12 harassing and/or one or more of 12 discriminatory behaviors on the basis of their race/ethnicity within the past 12 months. This variable is used to calculate the official DoD estimate for past-year experiences of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (Daniel et al., 2019). We provide brief descriptions of the *WEOA* and *WEOR* surveys, along with the respective constructs that were assessed, below.

**2017 Workplace Equal Opportunity Survey of Active Duty Members (2017 WEOA).** The 2017 *Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Active Duty Members (2017 WEOA)* sampled members from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force who were below flag rank.<sup>75</sup> For the purpose of the DEOCS item selection analyses, the 2017 *WEOA* was used to assess “Fairness,” “Inclusion,” and “Workplace Hostility,” and their relationship to racial/ethnic

<sup>75</sup> The survey is weighted using industry standard weighting methodology. All item reduction regressions use this survey weighting. For more information on weighting and survey content and methodology refer to 2019 *WEOR* Statistical Methodology Report.

harassment/discrimination. We also identified items to measure “Racially Harassing Behaviors” using a subset of items from the racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination metric.<sup>76</sup>

***2019 Workplace Equal Opportunity Survey of Reserve Component Members.*** The *2019 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Reserve Component Members (2019 WEOR)* sampled members from the Selected Reserve in Reserve Units, Active Guard/Reserve, or Individual Mobilization Augmentee programs from the Army National Guard, U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, and U.S. Air Force Reserve who were below flag rank.<sup>77</sup> The *2019 WEOR* was used to assess one construct, “inclusive leadership,” and its relationship to racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.<sup>78</sup>

### ***Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members***

The *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (WGRA)* is a congressionally mandated survey that measures the prevalence of sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual assault. The *WGRA* also serves as a method by which to monitor the progress of DoD’s programs and policies in place to prevent and respond to unwanted gender-related behaviors. Information about the experience of reporting these behaviors and perceptions of unit/workplace culture and climate are also measured. In support of our DEOCS item reduction analysis, we relied upon two administrations of the *WGRA*: *2012 WGRA* and the *2018 WGRA*.

***2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (2012 WGRA).*** The *2012 WGRA* was administered to active duty members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force who were below flag rank.<sup>79</sup> The *2012 WGRA* survey was used to assess one construct—“Morale”—and its relationship to unwanted sexual contact (a proxy measure for sexual assault that was one the *WGRA* prior to 2014).<sup>80</sup>

***2018 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (2018 WGRA).*** The *2018 WGRA* was administered to active duty members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and

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<sup>76</sup> The *2017 WEOA* was fielded from November 16, 2017 to February 09, 2018; 88,096 members were sampled, and 9,926 eligible DoD participants completed the survey, resulting in a 15.9% response rate. For more information, consult the *2017 WEOA* Overview Report for the items and computation of the official racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination prevalence rate (Daniel et al., 2019).

<sup>77</sup> The survey is weighted using industry-standard weighting methodology. All item reduction regressions use this survey weighting. For more information on weighting and survey content and methodology consult the *2019 WEOR* Statistical Methodology Report (in preparation).

<sup>78</sup> The *2019 WEOR* fielded from August 19, 2019, to November 26, 2019 and sampled 203,697 members. Of those sampled, 18,142 (9,484 National Guard and 8,658 Reserve component members) eligible participants completed the survey, resulting in an 11.6% response rate. For more information, consult the *2019 WEOR* Overview Report for the items and computation of the official racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination prevalence rate (Daniel et al., 2021).

<sup>79</sup> The survey is weighted using industry-standard weighting methodology. All item reduction regressions use this survey weighting. For more information on weighting and survey content and methodology refer to the *2012 WGRA* Statistical Methodology Report.

<sup>80</sup> The *2012 WGRA* fielded from September 17, 2012, to November 7, 2012, and sampled 108,478 active duty members. Of those sampled, 22,792 eligible DoD participants completed the survey, resulting in a 24% weighted response rate. Please consult the *2012 WGRA* Overview Report for the items and computation of unwanted sexual contact (Rock, 2013).



Air Force who were below flag rank.<sup>81</sup> The 2018 WGRA survey was used to examine scales for five constructs—“Alcohol Misuse,” “Respect and Cohesion,” “Sexist Behaviors,” “Sexually Harassing Behaviors,” and “Workplace Hostility”—and their relationship to two STOs: sexual assault and sexual harassment.<sup>82</sup> Each of these STOs were assessed using constructed variables that are used to generate the official DoD prevalence estimates.<sup>83</sup>

### **Research Block Data Collection**

There was also a small number of constructs selected for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0 for which scales and items had not been included on previous OPA surveys and thus could not be tested using existing data. To measure these constructs in relation to a STO, we collected data by adding the candidate scales and items to the DEOCS 4.1 research block.

The DEOCS 4.1 research block is a voluntary module placed at the end of the DEOCS 4.1 survey that asks participants to answer additional questions. For the purpose of our item selection data collection, this research block was fielded for two weeks in summer 2020 and was limited to active duty Service members. We used the DEOCS 4.1 research block to measure the relationship of three constructs—“Transformational Leadership,” “Passive Leadership,” and “Toxic Leadership”—to two STOs: readiness and retention. We also used the research block to test face validity for our military population of “engagement” and commitment items derived from a civilian scale.

On the research block, readiness was assessed using the sum of two items asking about the member’s and their unit’s preparedness to perform their wartime mission, and retention was assessed using a single item asking how likely the participant is to stay on active duty (consistent with other OPA surveys). We list the items used to assess the STOs in Table 23 and discuss the item reduction analysis for all constructs in the Item Reduction Analysis section below.

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<sup>81</sup> Coast Guard members were surveyed for the 2018 WGRA, but are not routinely included in all DoD surveys, so they were excluded in these analyses to maintain consistency across data sources. The survey is weighted using industry-standard weighting methodology and all regression analyses described herein used this survey weighting; the 2018 WGRA Statistical Methodology Report has details.

<sup>82</sup> Not all constructs were analyzed in association with both STOs. Namely, “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” and “Sexist Behaviors” were examined in relation to sexual assault but not sexual harassment.

<sup>83</sup> The 2018 WGRA fielded from August 24, 2018, to November 5, 2018, and sampled 735,645 active duty members. Of those sampled, 115,884 eligible participants completed the survey, reflecting a 15.8% response rate. Breslin et al. (2019) contains a full description of the survey content and sampling and weighting methodology.

**Table 23.**  
**DEOCS 4.1 Research Block Strategic Target Outcomes (STO) and Item Text**

STO	Item Text
Retention	Suppose that you have to decide whether to stay on active duty. Assuming you could stay, how likely is it that you would choose to do so?
Readiness	Overall, how well prepared are you to perform your wartime job?
Readiness	Overall, how well prepared is your unit to perform its wartime mission?

### Item Reduction Analyses

First, following industry best practices (Furr, 2011), we examined descriptive statistics for all items, including frequencies and item missingness. As discussed above, our primary models were designed to inform item selection by assessing the association between items and STO(s) of relevance. Thus, we employed regression techniques (logistic regression for binary outcomes, linear regression for non-binary outcomes) to examine associations between candidate items and one or more STOs.<sup>84</sup> For example, we assessed the strength of the association between each item measuring “Workplace Hostility” and the likelihood of having experienced racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (using data from the *WEO* Survey) and the likelihood of having experienced sexual assault (using data from the *WGR* Survey). In this way, we identified the specific forms of “Workplace Hostility” that are most strongly associated, and thus our best candidates as “leading indicators” for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and for sexual assault.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to these regression models, we reviewed the items that were selected through this process for consistency with prior findings. In some cases, when only a few of the items were selected from a longer scale, we compared the longer scale with input from stakeholder experiences. If an item captured an aspect or feature that a group of stakeholders said was particularly important, then we sometimes retained that item.

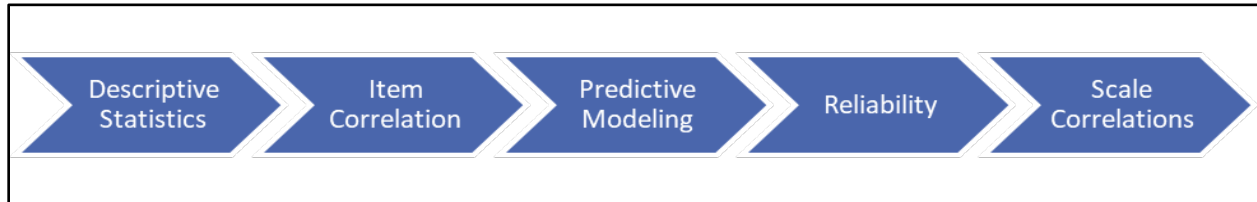
This section discusses the item reduction analysis approach, which consists of five steps presented in Figure 17 below. This approach focused on examining responses to each item within a given construct and understanding the contribution of each item to the overall scale

<sup>84</sup> We lacked “official” metrics of retention, and the data for suicide deaths. We approximated these with a high fidelity retention intention question(s) developed by OPA in prior years (which has been shown to successfully predict actual retention behavior), and survey data for recent suicide attempts, respectively. With respect to readiness, there is no official DoD-wide survey metric. That is, there is no official metric for individual or unit readiness for all of DoD to base our item selection upon. Therefore, we used the readiness metric from the *Status of Forces* Survey, as it is one of the most widely familiar and accepted at the OSD level.

<sup>85</sup> We note that a limitation of this approach is the cross-sectional nature of the data. In the example above, we cannot differentiate whether the “Workplace Hostility” preceded the harassment or assault, we can only establish which forms of hostility are most likely to co-occur with harassment and assault. Future longitudinal analysis of the DEOCS will allow us to further examine and refine our understanding of the temporal nature of these associations and increase our ability to discern leading versus lagging indicators.

score, while prioritizing the predictive power of the items. Specifically, our approach prioritized retaining items that were statistically significant predictors of at least one of the six STOs.

**Figure 17.**  
*Item Reduction Analysis Process*



### **Step 1: Descriptive Statistics**

The first step in our item reduction analysis was to identify items that were not providing the survey unique information about each survey participant. For example, if every participant was providing the same answer to a question, then that question is unnecessary because it does not differentiate and therefore does not need to be asked for all participants. However, for more severe but uncommon forms of violence and harm, items were not excluded due to low endorsement because of the importance of capturing these harmful, though relatively rare, experiences. To accomplish this step, we produced descriptive statistics for all items under consideration and identified items that had low variance.

First, we examined the frequency with which the item's response options were endorsed as well as which items were frequently skipped (i.e., a refusal to respond). In the first table for each scale, we provide the sample size and percentage. Second, we examined the item's mean and standard deviations to identify whether new information is being obtained by each additional participant. Items that were frequently skipped or items that showed little variation in responding were considered good candidates for removal from the scale. It is important to note that items that correspond to sensitive constructs (e.g., sexual harassment) are likely to be endorsed less frequently or skipped more frequently altogether. Thus, we took this into account when identifying items for potential deletion.

Note that we did not apply weights to any descriptive statistics because we were trying to understand patterns of responses to specific items within the sample (e.g., % missing) rather than generalize to the population. We did apply weights to the regression analyses when weights were available for a given survey because we were trying to understand the general predictive power of each item within a population.

### **Step 2: Item Correlations**

Next, we identified items that were redundant to other items within the same scale. For example, when an item had a high correlation ( $r > 0.50$ ) with another item, or items, then some of those items would be examined to identify whether or not the item could be removed to create a

shortened version of the scale (S. Cohen, 1988).<sup>86</sup> To do this, we examined the correlations between items within each scale. If items were highly correlated, then we considered removing one of them from the scale. However, it was possible that there might be some other rationale for keeping the highly correlated item (e.g., the content of the item has a stronger correlation with the STO). Because of that consideration, when items were highly correlated, we retained the items to examine the relationship with the STOs.

We did not apply weights to any correlations because we were trying to understand patterns of responses to specific items within the sample rather than generalize to the population.

### **Step 3: Item Modeling**

In Step 3, we identified the survey items that had a significant relationship with the STOs. For each scale, we ran a regression analysis predicting the STO of interest (e.g., attempted suicide in the last 12 months). For all population-based weighted surveys (*WGRA*, *WEOA*, *WEOR*, and *SOFA*), survey weights were applied to account for the key demographic factors that could impact the relationships between a scale and the STO of interest. Additionally, all items were assessed in the presence of control variables, based on the standard set of control variables used for each of the survey data sources. These control variables are listed in each of the construct analyses.

We first regressed the STO variable onto the construct items of interest and control variables. Items that did not statistically significantly predict the STO of interest (i.e.,  $p \geq 0.05$ ) were removed. When necessary (i.e., when at least one item was retained), we repeated the regression analysis with the smaller subset of items. We did this for two reasons. First, we wanted to ensure that the smaller subset had the comparable amount of predictive power as the larger scale. Second, we wanted to ensure that the remaining items were still statistically significant after removing the variables in the first step.<sup>87</sup>

### **Step 4: Reliability**

Next, we tested to make sure that the information that was being obtained with a longer version of the scale was still sufficiently being obtained with the shorter version. To do this, we examined the correlation between the mean of each original scale and the mean of the shortened scale. If the two scores were highly correlated (i.e.,  $r > 0.7$ ), then it suggested that there was a high level of overlap in content. Thus, we were confident that we were capturing the same or similar information as the original scale with the shortened scale.

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<sup>86</sup> Consistent with common practice in psychological research, we use J. Cohen's (1988) conventions to interpret effect size. A correlation coefficient of 0.10 is thought to represent a weak or small association; a correlation coefficient of 0.30 is considered a moderate correlation; and a correlation coefficient of 0.50 or larger is thought to represent a strong or large correlation.

<sup>87</sup> To confirm that keeping the scale with a smaller subset of items did not degrade the scales' association with the relevant STO, we also examined the change in model fit between the two regression models. However, this analysis was not needed as a deciding factor on item selection, so results are not reported.

## Step 5: Scale Correlations

To ensure that the scales were still psychometrically sound from a classical testing theory perspective (Furr, 2011), we then calculated the reliability of the abbreviated scale created in Steps 3 and 4, when there were more than three items in the scale. The alpha statistic ( $\alpha$ ) reports the internal consistency reliability of a scale for reflecting a latent factor and is considered an important component of psychometric adequacy. In particular, alpha is important because it is considered the lower bound reliability estimate for a scale reflecting a single latent factor. We followed psychometric convention by using 0.7 as a cutoff for an acceptable level of alpha (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, if the reliability was sufficient (i.e.,  $\alpha \geq 0.7$ ), then the shortened scale was retained for potential use in the DEOCS 5.0.

## Final Item Selection Process

Although item reduction analysis provides important empirical evidence on which items to include in the DEOCS, it was not the sole factor used to select final survey items. In some instances, we were unable to examine the association between items and an STO due to limitations in the data we have available.<sup>88</sup> In other cases, further reduction after the item reduction analysis was necessary to reduce the survey length. To provide actionable information to commanders and leaders, survey items also need to provide conceptual coverage of the topics measured. Items selected by item reduction analysis may not provide this coverage in a way that is actionable for commanders. To provide conceptual coverage and cogent results to commanders to understand protective and risk factors facing their units, additional items were sometimes added beyond those that we tested.

Another goal of the DEOCS redesign was to reduce survey burden and create a user-friendly survey instrument. A user-friendly survey needs to be efficient and only ask questions that are needed. To reduce burden, we sometimes dropped questions selected by our analysis if they were conceptually redundant and would increase the burden of the survey on a participant. Questions should also have “face validity” to participants. This means that a participant taking the survey should feel each item is appropriate, sensible, and relevant (Holden, 2010). To be user friendly, a survey instrument needs to have items presented in a logical way, so that all items presented in context of the survey can be seen as relevant, and face valid, to the participant (Dillman et al., 2014). Single-item measures can reduce the number of questions, but surveys that ask single-item measures only can jump from topic to topic, creating a jarring, or confusing experience for the participant. It was sometimes necessary to add additional questions beyond those tested to create a more user-friendly, face-valid experience for participants.

Finally, multiple versions of the survey were shared with stakeholders, whose feedback led to additions, deletions, or changes in items. In the next section, we discuss the item reduction analysis results and all decisions that led to the final selection of DEOCS items.

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<sup>88</sup> As these data become available via the new DEOCS, these analyses are a high priority for completion and may inform whether further adjustments are needed to improve precision and utility.

## Results

The sections below describe the results for each step of analysis and final selection considerations for each of the DEOCS 5.0 factors.

### Unit Risk Factors

Risk factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative outcomes in units. Below we describe the process for selecting items for each of the risk factors selected for inclusion in DEOCS 5.0 as part of the construct selection process. For definitions and a summary of the research supporting each construct consult [Chapter 6](#).

#### **“Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking” (Alcohol Misuse)<sup>89</sup>**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence ([Chapter 6](#)), we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of alcohol misuse and measures of suicide or sexual assault. We identified the *2018 WGRA* as containing measures for alcohol misuse<sup>90</sup> and sexual assault, but not alcohol misuse and suicide.

**Item Reduction Analysis: Alcohol Misuse and Sexual Assault.** There are two items from the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), which assesses harmful alcohol consumption, that were used in the *2018 WGRA*. Developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the AUDIT is the most widely used and well-validated instrument to screen for unhealthy alcohol use (Higgins-Biddle & Babor, 2018; Bush et al., 1998). We analyzed the two AUDIT items included in the *2018 WGRA* data set to assess the alcohol misuse construct and its relationship with sexual assault.<sup>91</sup> These items are presented in Table 24.

**Table 24.**  
***2018 WGRA Alcohol Misuse Variable Name and Item Text***

Variable Name	Item Text
NUMDRNK	How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when drinking? Mark one.
DRNKMED	During the past year, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking? Mark one.

As a first step, we examined how frequently each of the response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). Item DRNKMED was endorsed relatively infrequently—80.17% indicated “Never” in response to the item and the standard deviation was

<sup>89</sup> Because there is significant overlap between “Alcohol Impairing Memory” and “Binge Drinking,” we have combined the two factors and refer to them as “Alcohol Misuse.”

<sup>90</sup> The *2018 WGRA*, *2019 WGRR*, and *2018 SAGR* all contain relevant items; we prioritized the *WGRA* given our prioritization of the active duty population for the purpose of these analyses.

<sup>91</sup> These two items are part of a longer scale AUDIT. Not all scale items were included on *2018 WGRA*.

also relatively low (0.40)—suggesting little variation in responses. We present the frequencies in Table 25 and the means and standard deviations in Table 26.

**Table 25.**  
*Frequencies (N) and Percentages of Responses (%) to Alcohol Misuse Items*

Items and Responses	N	%
<b>NUMDRNK</b>		
No Response	5,171	5.06
None, I do not drink alcohol	26,275	25.73
1 or 2	47,753	46.77
3 or 4	12,189	11.94
5 or 6	2,421	2.37
7 to 9	620	0.61
10 or more	501	0.49
<b>DRNKMEN</b>		
No Response	5,404	5.29
Never	81,864	80.17
Once a month or less	6,465	6.33
2 to 4 times a month	783	0.77
2 to 3 times a week	163	0.16
4 or more times a week	251	0.25

*Note.* 7.03% of WGRA participants did not see these items because they completed the survey on paper (these items were web only). Recall that these descriptive statistics are not based on survey weights (Method sections).

**Table 26.**  
*Mean and Standard Deviations (SD) of Alcohol Misuse Items*

Item	Mean	SD
NUMDRNK	1.94	0.83
DRNKMEN	1.11	0.40

Next, we examined the correlation between the items, which was moderate ( $r = 0.32$ ), suggesting low content overlap between the two items.

We then examined the relationship between each of the items and the STO of interest, in this case experience of sexual assault in the past year, in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As reported in Table 27, both NUMDRNK (OR = 1.13,  $p = 0.001$ ) and DRNKMEN (OR = 1.73,  $p < 0.001$ ) were significantly associated with past-year experience of sexual assault.

**Table 27.**  
**Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Alcohol Misuse Predicting Sexual Assault**

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
NUMDRNK	1.13	0.04	0.001
DRNKMED	1.73	0.08	<0.001

Note. Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.15; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Because the original scale used on the *WGRA* comprised only two items, we did not examine the reliability of the scale. However, we calculated the correlation between the original 2-item scale and each alcohol misuse item. To compute the mean of the scale, we rescaled item DRNKMED to be on a 5-point scale to match NUMDRNK. The original scale was highly correlated with NUMDRNK (r = 0.90), but the correlation between the original scale and DRNKMED (r = 0.69) was not high enough to suggest sufficient content overlap. Based on the full set of analyses for the alcohol misuse construct, we retained both NUMDRNK and DRNKMED (Table 28), because both are significantly associated with risk for sexual assault. However, we did not combine these items into a single alcohol misuse scale because results suggest they are capturing distinct constructs.

**Table 28.**  
**Alcohol Misuse Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
DRNKMED	During the past year, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?
NUMDRNK	How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when drinking?

**Final Selection.** In addition to the AUDIT items from the *2018 WGRA*, we considered additional AUDIT items. The full scale contains items related to alcohol intake, potential alcohol dependence, and experience of alcohol-related harm.

In line with the literature review findings, and in accordance with the outcomes of the item reduction analysis, we sought to include two items for alcohol misuse, one capturing how often someone drinks to the point of blackout (“Alcohol Impairing Memory”) and one capturing how often someone drinks an excessive amount of alcohol at one time (“Binge Drinking”). The *2018 WGRA* item for “Alcohol Impairing Memory” was nearly identical to the correspondent item in the AUDIT and was selected for the final instrument (Table 29).

However, the *2018 WGRA* item NUMDRNK captures the amount of alcohol consumed on a typical day when drinking, which is not a measure of binge drinking frequency. Indeed, the *2019 WGRR* was updated to include another AUDIT item specifically capturing the frequency of binge drinking for this very reason. Moreover, when OPA briefed the findings from the *2018 WGRA*, audiences repeatedly expressed confusion regarding what NUMDRNK is measuring, and



concern regarding whether the item text is sufficiently clear. For example, although the item asks about alcohol consumption “on a typical day when drinking,” this was often confused by audiences as referring to “on a typical day.” Ensuring that items and results are clearly interpretable is particularly important for the DEOCS. We therefore elected to use a different item from the AUDIT that directly asks about the frequency of “Binge Drinking:” “How often do you have four or more drinks (if you are a woman) or five or more drinks (if you are a man) on one occasion?” This item was also included on the 2019 WGRR. Future analyses will seek to confirm this “Binge Drinking” item’s relationship to the STOs.

**Table 29.**  
*Selected Alcohol Misuse Items*

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Alcohol Impairing Memory	During the past year, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?	AUDIT
Binge Drinking	How often do you have four or more drinks (if you are a woman) or five or more drinks (if you are a man) on one occasion?	AUDIT

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items were edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### “Passive Leadership”

**Data Source.** Unfortunately, no prior OPA survey included a measure of “Passive Leadership.” To assess “Passive Leadership” items and their relationship to retention ([Chapter 6](#) contains a review of the evidence linking “Passive Leadership” with STOs), we collected pilot data that included these items and two outcomes of interest—retention and readiness—by leveraging the DEOCS 4.1 research block. Although the relationship between “Passive Leadership” and readiness was not based in the research review, we included this STO in our analyses as we hypothesized there may be an association between “Passive Leadership” and readiness, though it has not been previously reported.

**Item Reduction Analysis.** There were no open-access “Passive Leadership” scales to select.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, the DEOCS redesign team, which included experienced survey methodologists and an industrial-organizational (I-O) psychologist with expertise in leadership, developed five items to measure “Passive Leadership.” These were based on the published literature and Service member focus group discussions regarding aspects of leadership that are important. The “Passive Leadership” items that were fielded in the research block are presented in Table 30.

<sup>92</sup> Given resource considerations, we ruled out purchasing access to proprietary survey scales. Typically, for-purchase survey scales do not offer an unlimited-use license; rather, costs are based on the number of uses, which for DEOCS are quite substantial.

**Table 30.**  
***“Passive Leadership” Variable Name and Item Text***

Variable Name	Item Text
Q1	My current supervisor is available when I need him/her.
Q2	My current supervisor is reactive, rather than proactive.
Q3	My current supervisor intervenes before issues become bigger problems.
Q4	My current supervisor takes early action in addressing problems
Q5	My current supervisor does not address problems brought to their attention.

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for “Passive Leadership,” we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not remove any items based on these descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 31. In addition, we also examined the means and standard deviations for each item, which are presented in Table 32.

**Table 31.**  
***Frequencies (N) and Percentage of Responses (%) to “Passive Leadership” Items***

Item	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q1	33	1.74	92	4.86	335	17.69	568	29.99	866	45.72
Q2	181	9.56	440	23.23	589	31.10	343	18.11	341	18.00
Q3	76	4.01	134	7.07	426	22.49	616	32.52	642	33.90
Q4	71	3.75	151	7.97	411	21.70	595	31.41	666	35.16
Q5	755	39.86	517	27.30	349	18.43	155	8.18	118	6.23

**Table 32.**  
***Mean and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Passive Leadership” Items***

Item	Mean	SD
Q1	4.13	0.98
Q2	3.12	1.23
Q3	3.85	1.09
Q4	3.86	1.10
Q5	2.14	1.21

As a next step in the item reduction analyses, we reverse-coded items Q1, Q3, and Q4 so that higher numbers on each item correspond to higher levels of “Passive Leadership.” We then

examined correlations between the “Passive Leadership” items (Table 33). Items Q1 and Q4 ( $r = 0.72$ ), Q1 and Q3 ( $r = 0.69$ ), and Q3 and Q4 ( $r = 0.84$ ) had strong correlations, suggesting content overlap between items. It is thus feasible that some of these correlated items could be removed from the survey. However, we included all items into the logistic regression analysis predicting retention intentions.

**Table 33.**  
*Correlations Between "Passive Leadership" Items*

Item	1	2	3	4
Q1				
Q2	0.07			
Q3	0.69	0.06		
Q4	0.72	0.08	0.84	
Q5	0.34	0.25	0.32	0.32

We then examined the relationship between each of the “Passive Leadership” items and retention intentions and readiness in a series of linear regressions. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. First, we examined retention. Only items Q3 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.17,  $p = 0.043$ ) and Q4 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.17,  $p = 0.048$ ) significantly predicted retention intentions. The results are presented in Table 34.

**Table 34.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for "Passive Leadership" Predicting Retention*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q1	-0.08	0.07	0.242
Q2	-0.02	0.04	0.663
Q3	-0.17	0.08	0.043
Q4	-0.17	0.09	0.048
Q5	0.01	0.04	0.899

Note.  $R^2 = 0.14$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

We thus removed items Q1, Q2, and Q5 from the analyses which were not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) and re-ran the regression. As shown in Table 35, both Q3 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.19,  $p = 0.017$ ) and Q4 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.21,  $p = 0.009$ ) remained significant predictors of retention intentions. Because only two items remained, we did not calculate the reliability of the revised scale. The revised 2-item scale had a strong correlation with the 5-item original version of the scale ( $r = 0.85$ ), suggesting content overlap between original and revised scales.

**Table 35.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for "Passive Leadership" Predicting Retention*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q3	-0.19	0.08	0.017
Q4	-0.21	0.08	0.009

Note.  $R^2 = 0.14$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Next, we examined associations with readiness. As shown in Table 36, only item Q5 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.06,  $p = 0.040$ ) significantly predicted readiness. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 36.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for "Passive Leadership" Predicting Readiness*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q1	-0.09	0.05	0.074
Q2	0.04	0.03	0.146
Q3	-0.07	0.06	0.249
Q4	-0.06	0.06	0.307
Q5	-0.06	0.03	0.040

Note.  $R^2 = 0.10$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 37, item Q5 (Unstandardized Coef. = -0.10,  $p < 0.001$ ) continued to significantly predict readiness.

**Table 37.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for "Passive Leadership" Predicting Readiness*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q5	-0.10	0.03	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.06$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Because only a single item remained, we did not calculate the reliability of the revised scale. Item Q5, however, was not particularly highly correlated with the original version of the scale ( $r = 0.65$ ). We thus retained it at this stage, along with items Q3 and Q4 (Table 38).

**Table 38.**  
***"Passive Leadership" Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis***

Variable Name	Item Text
Q3	My current supervisor intervenes before issues become bigger problems.
Q4	My current supervisor takes early action in addressing problems.
Q5	My current supervisor does not address problems brought to their attention.

**Final Selection.** All three items retained in the item reduction analysis were included in the first draft of the survey that was shared with stakeholders. Several stakeholders noted that Q3 and Q4 had a high degree of conceptual overlap and recommended choosing only one of the two for inclusion in the final instrument. This observation is supported by the fact that these two items had the strongest correlation ( $r = 0.84$ ) in our analyses. Two factors led us to choose Q4: (1) the leader must intervene, and (2) that intervention must prevent a problem from becoming a bigger problem. Q4 is more straightforward, because it only asks a participant if their leader takes early action, regardless of any assessment of the outcomes of that action. For these reasons, we chose Q4 for the final survey instrument (Table 39).

**Table 39.**  
***Selected "Passive Leadership" Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Passive Leadership	My current supervisor takes early action in addressing problems	Written by OPA for the DEOCS
	My current supervisor does not address problems brought to their attention.	Written by OPA for the DEOCS

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items were edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### ***"Racially Harassing Behaviors"***

**Data Source.** For a measure of “Racially Harassing Behaviors” that has been validated in a military population, we turned to DoD’s *Workplace Equal Opportunity (WEO)* surveys. Specifically, we examined the metric for racial/ethnic harassment from the *2017 WEOA*, the most recent *WEOA* survey conducted with an active duty military population. Because these items are used to construct the racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination rate that is one of our STOs, it did not make sense to test individual items in relation to this STO, due to the way the “rate” variable for racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination is constructed. In short, a “yes” to any of these behaviors is included in the past-year racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination rate,<sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Daniel et al., 2019 has a description of how the racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination rate variable is constructed.

which equates to “perfect” prediction. Therefore, we did not test these items in terms of their strength of association with racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

**Final Selection.** To identify items for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0, we selected the five racial/ethnic harassment behaviors that were most frequently experienced by racial/ethnic minorities (Table 40). Based on the representative, generalizable data generated by the *WEOA*, we can be confident that these are the types of racial/ethnic harassing behaviors that occur most frequently in the active duty force and are thus highly relevant for individual units to be aware of. The selected items are presented in Table 41. Future analyses will seek to confirm these items’ relationships to the STOs.

**Table 40.**  
***Selected "Racially Harassing Behaviors" Item***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Racially Harassing Behaviors	In the past 12 months, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by telling racial/ethnic jokes?	2017 WEOA
	In the past 12 months, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by using a stereotype about your racial/ethnic group? Stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics of group members – for example, that they tend to be cheap, aggressive, or shy?	2017 WEOA
	In the past 12 months, has someone used an offensive racial/ethnic term that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	2017 WEOA
	In the past 12 months, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by insulting your racial/ethnic group?	2017 WEOA
	In the past 12 months, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity?	2017 WEOA

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items were edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**Table 41.**  
**2017 WEOA Experienced Racial/Ethnic-Related Harassment Behavior in the Past 12 Months by Someone From Work**

	Total DoD	White	Total Minority
Used a stereotype about your racial/ethnic group	8.3	4.7	12.9
Told racial/ethnic jokes	7.9	4.7	12.0
Used an offensive racial/ethnic term	7.7	5.4	10.5
Insulted your racial/ethnic group	6.0	3.8	8.7
Showed you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity	6.0	3.3	9.4
Made a comment about the way people in your racial/ethnic group talk	5.0	2.4	8.2
Claimed that his/her race/ethnicity is better than others	4.9	4.0	6.1
Made a comment about a physical characteristic of your racial/ethnic group	4.5	2.9	6.5
Directed an offensive action or comment at another person because of his/her race/ethnicity	3.9	3.2	4.9
Displayed something that threatens or insults a racial/ethnic group	3.0	2.0	4.1
Excluded you from an activity because of your race/ethnicity	2.2	1.6	3.1
Threatened or physically assaulted you because of your race/ethnicity	0.6	0.5	0.7

Note. Margins of error range from ±0.4% to ±6.6%.

**“Sexually Harassing Behaviors” and “Sexist Behaviors”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence ([Chapter 6](#)), we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of the relevant constructs (“Sexually Harassing Behaviors” and “Sexist Behaviors”) and measures of suicide, sexual assault, or readiness. We identified the 2018 WGRA as containing measures for sexist and sexually harassing behaviors and a measure of sexual assault, but not suicidal behaviors or readiness (OPA, 2019b).

**Item Reduction Analysis.** The Gender-Related Experiences in the Military scale is used in the OPA WGR surveys to generate the official prevalence rates of sexual harassment and gender discrimination (Breslin et al., 2019). The scale comprises a set of behavior items that align with sexual harassment and gender discrimination behaviors (13 sexual harassment behaviors and two gender discrimination behaviors), followed by a set of follow-on criteria items that assess whether the behavior(s) experienced meet the thresholds set in policy for persistence and severity to be considered sexual harassment, or harm to career to be considered gender discrimination, respectively.<sup>94</sup>

We leveraged the behavior items in this scale, without their follow-on criteria, as metrics for “Sexually Harassing Behaviors”<sup>95</sup> (i.e., behaviors in line with sexual harassment that do not necessarily meet the threshold of persistence and severity to be considered sexual harassment)

<sup>94</sup> Breslin et al., 2019 contains more details on the complex rate construction for sexual harassment and gender discrimination prevalence rate variables.

<sup>95</sup> We use the term “sexually harassing behaviors” to describe these items for the purpose of the DEOCS to distinguish these items from sexual harassment because these behaviors do not necessarily meet the threshold of persistence and severity to be considered sexual harassment.

and for “Sexist Behaviors”<sup>96</sup> (i.e., behaviors in line with gender discrimination that do not necessarily meet the threshold of harm to career to be considered gender discrimination) in the OPA data set for the *2018 WGRA*. We examined these 15 behavior items (Table 42) and their relationship to sexual assault. By using the behaviors alone without the follow-up criteria, we are casting a wider net in terms of experiences of potentially problematic behaviors that may or may not meet the definition for sexual harassment or gender discrimination and thus may function as precursors or leading indicators for more severe forms of unwanted gender-related behaviors that are prohibited by policy.

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<sup>96</sup> We use the term “Sexist Behaviors” to describe these items for the purpose of the DEOCS to distinguish these items from gender discrimination because these behaviors do not necessarily meet the threshold of harm to career to be considered gender discrimination.



**Table 42.**  
**2018 WGRA Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
MEOBEHA (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly tell sexual "jokes" that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHB (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work embarrass, anger, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a [man] [woman] is supposed to? For example, by calling you [a woman, a fag, or gay] [a dyke or butch].
MEOBEHC (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly make sexual gestures or sexual body movements (for example, thrusting their pelvis or grabbing their crotch) that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHD (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work display, show, or send sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? Do not include materials you may have received as part of your professional duties (for example, as a criminal investigator).
MEOBEHE (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly tell you about their sexual activities in a way that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHF (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHG (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHH (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work either take or share sexually suggestive pictures or videos of you when you did not want them to?
MEOBEHI (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you? These could range from repeatedly asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a "hookup."
MEOBEHJ (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to? This could include touching your genitals, breasts, buttocks, or touching you with their genitals anywhere on your body.
MEOBEHK (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly touch you in any other way that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? This could include almost any unnecessary physical contact including hugs, shoulder rubs, or touching your hair, but would not usually include handshakes or routine uniform adjustments.
MEOBEHL (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work made you feel as if you would get some workplace benefit in exchange for doing something sexual? For example, they might hint that they would give you a good evaluation/fitness report, a better assignment, or better treatment at work in exchange for doing something sexual. Something sexual could include talking about sex, undressing, sharing sexual pictures, or having some type of sexual contact.
MEOBEHM (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work made you feel like you would get punished or treated unfairly in the workplace if you did not do something sexual? For example, they hinted that they would give you a bad evaluation/fitness report, a bad assignment, or bad treatment at work if you were not willing to do something sexual. This could include being unwilling to talk about sex, undress, share sexual pictures, or have some type of sexual contact.
MEOBEHN (Sexist)	Since [X Date], did someone from work say that [men] [women] are not as good as [women] [men] at your particular job, or that [men] [women] should be prevented from having your job?
MEOBEHO (Sexist)	Since [X Date], did someone from work mistreat, ignore, exclude, or insult you because you are a [man] [woman]?

Note. Sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity were used as controls.

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for the Gender-Related Experiences in the Military scale, we examined how frequently each of the items were endorsed by participants (response of “yes”) as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). As shown in Table 43, the following three items were very rarely endorsed: MEOBEHH (0.62%), MEOBEHL (0.63%), and MEOBEHM (0.53%). In addition, due to skip patterns in the survey as well as refusals, 2.72% of responses were missing for the item MEOBEHK, which was considerably higher compared with the other items, for which the “no response” category ranged between 0.10% and 0.43%. We thus removed these four items in subsequent regression analyses because they are not ideal candidates for capturing variance between units on the DEOCS 5.0.

**Table 43.**  
*Frequencies (N) and Percentages of Responses (%) to Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Items*

Item	No Response		Incomplete Grid		Not applicable		No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MEOBEHA	107	0.10	1	<0.01			95,364	93.39	6,637	6.50
MEOBEHB	203	0.20					96,751	94.75	5,155	5.05
MEOBEHC	325	0.32					99,398	97.34	2,386	2.34
MEOBEHD	303	0.30	1	<0.01			99,747	97.69	2,058	2.02
MEOBEHE	399	0.39					97,816	95.80	3,894	3.81
MEOBEHF	385	0.38					98,194	96.17	2,058	2.02
MEOBEHG	404	0.40					98,308	96.28	3,397	3.33
MEOBEHH	359	0.35					101,116	99.03	634	0.62
MEOBEHI	293	0.29					98,762	96.72	3,054	2.99
MEOBEHJ	444	0.43	1	<0.01			100,161	98.09	1,503	1.47
MEOBEHK <sup>a</sup>	1,279	1.25			1,504	1.47	97,096	95.09	2,230	2.18
MEOBEHL	367	0.36					101,095	99.01	647	0.63
MEOBEHM	401	0.39					101,167	99.08	541	0.53
MEOBEHN	348	0.34	1	<0.01			93,991	92.05	7,769	7.61
MEOBEHO	348	0.34					90,769	88.89	10,992	10.76

<sup>a</sup>MEOBEHK was not seen by participants who indicated “yes” on MEOBEHJ.

Next, we examined correlations between the items in the Gender-Related Experiences in the Military scale (Table 44). Correlations ranged from small to large, 0.07 and 0.55, respectively.

**Table 44.**  
*Correlations Between Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. MEOBEHA													
2. MEOBEHB	0.35												
3. MEOBEHC	0.37	0.26											
4. MEOBEHD	0.29	0.21	0.27										
5. MEOBEHE	0.42	0.30	0.33	0.31									
6. MEOBEHF	0.37	0.33	0.31	0.25	0.45								
7. MEOBEHG	0.36	0.32	0.31	0.23	0.34	0.44							
8. MEOBEHH	0.12	0.10	0.13	0.21	0.13	0.14	0.13						
9. MEOBEHI	0.25	0.19	0.21	0.17	0.24	0.33	0.37	0.12					
10. MEOBEHK	0.26	0.19	0.21	0.16	0.22	0.24	0.26	0.08	0.24				
11. MEOBEHL	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.12	0.16	0.18	0.18	0.08	0.21	0.12			
12. MEOBEHM	0.11	0.12	0.15	0.11	0.14	0.16	0.17	0.07	0.17	0.11	0.45		
13. MEOBEHN	0.31	0.31	0.20	0.16	0.26	0.25	0.28	0.09	0.25	0.20	0.14	0.10	
14. MEOBEHO	0.30	0.29	0.19	0.15	0.23	0.23	0.27	0.08	0.24	0.21	0.13	0.11	0.55

Note. Correlations are not reported for MEOBEHJ due to listwise deletion.

We then examined the relationship between each of the remaining items in the Gender-Related Experiences in the Military scale, and sexual assault in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 45, the items MEOBEHC, MEOBEHE, and MEOBEHN were not significant predictors of sexual assault ( $p > 0.05$ ). We thus removed them from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 45.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Predicting Sexual Assault*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
MEOBEHA	1.39	0.16	0.005
MEOBEHB	1.49	0.18	0.001
MEOBEHC	1.16	0.16	0.292
MEOBEHD	1.47	0.22	0.009
MEOBEHE	1.13	0.14	0.324
MEOBEHF	1.43	0.20	0.013
MEOBEHG	1.74	0.23	<0.001
MEOBEHI	3.05	0.37	<0.001
MEOBEHJ	21.13	2.44	<0.001
MEOBEHN	0.86	0.11	0.255
MEOBEHO	1.51	0.19	0.001

Note. Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.40$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 46, all eight of the remaining items (two sexism behavior items and six sexually harassing behavior items) in the final model remained significant predictors of sexual assault ( $p < 0.05$ ). We also computed Cronbach’s alpha for the 8-item revised scale as well as the correlation between the revised scale and the 15-item original version of the scale. The revised scale demonstrated sufficient internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ) and had a strong correlation with the prior version of the scale ( $r = 0.96$ ), suggesting high content overlap between the two scales.

**Table 46.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Items Predicting Sexual Assault*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
MEOBEHA	1.45	0.17	0.001
MEOBEHB	1.49	0.17	0.001
MEOBEHD	1.54	0.23	0.004
MEOBEHF	1.44	0.20	0.009
MEOBEHG	1.85	0.24	<0.001
MEOBEHI	3.00	0.36	<0.001
MEOBEHJ	21.48	2.39	<0.001
MEOBEHO	1.43	0.16	0.001

Note. Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.40$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Based on the item reduction analyses for the Gender-Related Experiences in the Military scale, we retained eight of the 15 original items. Table 47 shows the items retained after item reduction analysis.

**Table 47.**  
***Gender-Related Experiences in the Military Scale Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis***

Variable Name	Item Text
MEOBEHA (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly tell sexual "jokes" that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHB (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work embarrass, anger, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a [man] [woman] is supposed to? For example, by calling you [a woman, a fag, or gay] [a dyke or butch].
MEOBEHD (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work display, show, or send sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? Do not include materials you may have received as part of your professional duties (for example, as a criminal investigator).
MEOBEHF (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHG (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
MEOBEHI (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you? These could range from repeatedly asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a "hookup."
MEOBEHJ (Sexually harassing)	Since [X Date], did someone from work intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to? This could include touching your genitals, breasts, buttocks, or touching you with their genitals anywhere on your body.
MEOBEHO (Sexist)	Since [X Date], did someone from work mistreat, ignore, exclude, or insult you because you are a [man] [woman]?

**Final Selection.** All eight items identified in the item reduction analysis (seven “Sexually Harassing Behavior” items and one “Sexist Behavior” item) were selected for inclusion in the final survey, given all items were significantly associated with sexual assault. The items for both “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” and “Sexist Behaviors” are presented in Table 48.

**Table 48.**  
***Selected "Sexually Harassing Behaviors" and "Sexist Behaviors" Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly tell sexual "jokes" that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work embarrass, anger, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a [man] [woman] is supposed to? For example, by calling you [a woman, a fag, or gay] [a dyke or butch].	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work display, show, or send sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? Do not include materials you may have received as part of your professional duties (for example, as a criminal investigator).	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work repeatedly ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work make repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you? These could range from repeatedly asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a "hookup."	2018 WGRA
	Since [X Date], did someone from work intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to? This could include touching your genitals, breasts, buttocks, or touching you with their genitals anywhere on your body.	2018 WGRA
Sexist Behaviors	Since [X Date], did someone from work mistreat, ignore, exclude, or insult you because you are a [man] [woman]?	2018 WGRA

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. Chapter 8 has a description of how the final set of items were edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### **“Stress”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Stress” and measures of suicidal behaviors, and identified the 2018 SOFS-A.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Stress” and Suicidal Behavior.** The 2018 SOFS-A included items measuring perceived “Stress” that were originally adapted from the perceived stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983; S. Cohen, 1988). We analyzed this data set to assess “Stress” in relation to attempted suicide. These items are presented in Table 49.

**Table 49.**  
**2018 SOFS-A Perceived "Stress" Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
PSFRQSA	In the past month, how often have you, felt nervous and stressed?
PSFRQSB	In the past month, how often have you, felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
PSFRQSC	In the past month, how often have you, been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
PSFRQSD	In the past month, how often have you, been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
PSFRQSE	In the past month, how often have you, felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
PSFRQSF	In the past month, how often have you, found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do?

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not remove any items from consideration based on descriptive statistics. We present frequencies in Table 50 and examined the means and standard deviations for each item in Table 51.

**Table 50.**  
**Frequencies (N) and Percentages of Responses (%) to "Stress" Items**

Item	Never		Almost Never		Sometimes		Fairly Often		Very Often		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PSFRQSA	1079	8.08	2528	18.92	5407	40.47	3045	22.79	1285	9.62	17	0.13
PSFRQSB	3216	24.07	4029	30.15	3437	25.72	1595	11.94	920	6.89	164	1.23
PSFRQSC	2411	18.05	4039	30.23	4492	33.62	1565	11.71	776	5.81	78	0.58
PSFRQSD	2494	18.67	3612	27.03	4282	32.05	1821	13.63	1041	7.79	111	0.83
PSFRQSE	4848	36.28	4179	31.28	2675	20.02	1001	7.49	609	4.56	49	0.37
PSFRQSF	6450	48.27	3786	28.34	2029	15.19	639	4.78	432	3.23	25	0.19

**Table 51.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of "Stress" Items*

Item	Mean	SD
PSFRQSA	3.07	1.06
PSFRQSB	2.47	1.18
PSFRQSC	2.57	1.09
PSFRQSD	2.65	1.16
PSFRQSE	2.12	1.12
PSFRQSF	1.86	1.05

Next, we examined correlations between the perceived “Stress” items. Table 52 shows the correlation matrix between the perceived “Stress” items with a range of 0.54 to 0.79, suggesting that all items have strong correlations ( $r > 0.5$ ).

**Table 52.**  
*Correlations Between "Stress" Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
PSFRQSA	1.00					
PSFRQSB	0.66	1.00				
PSFRQSC	0.63	0.67	1.00			
PSFRQSD	0.61	0.65	0.74	1.00		
PSFRQSE	0.61	0.70	0.65	0.63	1.00	
PSFRQSF	0.54	0.64	0.58	0.56	0.79	1.00

Next, we examined the relationship between each of the perceived “Stress” items and a suicide attempt in the past 12 months, in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT score, and living off base. As shown in Table 53, the only significant predictor of attempted suicide was item PSFRQSF (OR = 1.64,  $p = 0.020$ ). We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression with only PSFRQSF.



**Table 53.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for "Stress" Predicting Attempted Suicide*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
PSFRQSA	1.07	0.33	0.823
PSFRQSB	0.89	0.24	0.655
PSFRQSC	0.858	0.18	0.448
PSFRQSD	1.19	0.33	0.522
PSFRQSE	1.36	0.27	0.110
PSFRQSF	1.64	0.35	0.020

Note. Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.17$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

As shown in Table 54, the remaining item was still a significant predictor of attempted suicide (OR = 2.06,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 54.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for "Stress" Predicting Attempted Suicide*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
PSFRQSF	2.06	0.29	<0.001

Note. Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.17$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

Because the analyses only recommended retaining a single item from the perceived “Stress” scale, no reliability coefficient was able to be calculated. The single item (PSFRQSF; Table 55) had a strong correlation with the sum of all six perceived “Stress” items ( $r = 0.81$ ).

**Table 55.**  
*Perceived "Stress" Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis*

Variable Name	Item Text
PSFRQSF	In the past month, how often have you, found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do?

**Final Selection.** Given the importance of measuring “Stress” to Service members in particular (Chapter 3), we were concerned that a single “Stress” related item would not provide sufficient opportunity for participants to report on their stress levels. Thus, in order to identify potential additional stress-related items for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0, although “Stress” did not emerge as a risk factor for readiness and retention in our literature review, we also ran the same analyses as reported above with the “Stress” scale items predicting readiness and retention, respectively. Three of the “Stress” items were significantly associated with either retention or readiness in the

linear regression results. Therefore, we included these three additional items in the final set of “Stress” items (Table 56).

**Table 56.**  
***Selected “Stress” Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Stress	In the past month, how often have you felt nervous or stressed?	Perceived Stress Scale
	In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	Perceived Stress Scale
	In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	Perceived Stress Scale
	In the past month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do?	Perceived Stress Scale

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items were edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

***“Toxic Leadership”***

Unfortunately, no prior OPA survey included a measure of “Toxic Leadership.” To assess “Toxic Leadership” items and their relationship to retention ([Chapter 6](#) has a review of the evidence), we turned to the “Toxic Leadership” scale (Schmidt, 2008), which was developed for a military population, and collected pilot data that included these “Toxic Leadership” items and retention by leveraging the DEOCS 4.1 research block. This item reduction analysis resulted in two items that were significantly associated with retention intentions (Table 57). The results of this analysis are presented in [Appendix R](#).

**Table 57.**  
***“Toxic Leadership” Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis***

Variable Name	Item Text
Q8	My current supervisor allows his/her current mood to define the climate of the workplace.
Q14	My current supervisor does not permit subordinates to approach goals in new ways.

However, these items did not make it into the final survey.

***Final Selection.*** Because this was an important construct to stakeholders, we originally looked for an additional item to supplement the two items retained in the item reduction analysis in order to assess a broader range of “Toxic Leadership” behaviors. In the initial draft of the survey, an additional item was added: “My immediate supervisor determines all decisions in my unit whether they are important or not.” However, stakeholders reported dissatisfaction with all three items, arguing they did not adequately cover all dimensions of “Toxic Leadership,” were not face valid, and were difficult to understand. Because there were no remaining items that had

been tested that were predictive of an STO, we returned to the original scale, which contained five dimensions of “Toxic Leadership.” We selected one item from each dimension that was judged by the team to have the highest amount of face validity for a military participant and corresponded to themes heard in focus groups and stakeholder conversations. Future analyses will examine the association of these items with the STOs. Those items are listed in Table 58.

**Table 58.**  
***Selected “Toxic Leadership” Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Toxic Leadership	My current supervisor ridicules subordinates	Toxic Leadership Scale-Abusive Supervision
	My current supervisor has explosive outbursts	Toxic Leadership Scale-Unpredictability
	My current supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement	Toxic Leadership Scale-Narcissism
	My current supervisor acts only in the best interest of his/her next promotion	Toxic Leadership Scale-Self-Promotion
	My current supervisor will ignore ideas that are contrary to his/her own	Toxic Leadership Scale-Authoritarian Leadership

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### ***“Workplace Hostility”***

***Data Source.*** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of workplace hostility and measures of readiness, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, and identified the *2018 WGRA* and *2017 WEOA*.<sup>97</sup>

***Item Reduction Analysis: “Workplace Hostility” and Sexual Assault.*** Nine items from the *2018 WGRA* measuring experiences of workplace hostility from coworkers, which were items adapted from Selden & Downey (2012), were assessed in relation to experiences of sexual assault. These items are presented in Table 59.

***Item Reduction Analysis: “Workplace Hostility” and Sexual Harassment.*** The same items and data set were used to assess workplace hostility from coworkers in relation to experiences of sexual harassment.

<sup>97</sup> Other OPA surveys including the *2019 WGRR* and the *2018 WGRC* could also be used for this purpose, but we focused our analyses on the active duty population.

**Table 59.**  
**2018 WGRA “Workplace Hostility” Variable Name and Item Text**

	Item Text
WRKBEHCA	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers intentionally interfered with your work performance?
WRKBEHCB	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers did not provide information or assistance when you needed it?
WRKBEHCC	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers were excessively harsh in their criticism of your work performance?
WRKBEHCD	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers took credit for work or ideas that were yours?
WRKBEHCE	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers gossiped/talked about you?
WRKBEHCF	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?
WRKBEHCG	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers yelled when they were angry with you?
WRKBEHCH	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers swore at you in a hostile manner?
WRKBEHCI	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers damaged or stole your property or equipment?

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for “Workplace Hostility,” we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). Items WRKBEHCH and WRKBEHCI were the least likely to be endorsed—75.89% indicated “Never” in response to WRKBEHCH and 83.77% indicated “Never” in response to WRKBEHCI. These items also had the smallest standard deviations (WRKBEHCH SD = 0.70; WRKBEHCI SD = 0.42), suggesting little variation in responses. We thus removed these two items from consideration as they do not capture enough variation to meet the goals of the DEOCS 5.0. Frequencies are presented in Table 60 and means and standard deviations are presented in Table 61.

**Table 60.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Workplace Hostility” I Items*

Item	No Response		Never		Once or Twice		Sometimes		Often		Very Often	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
WRKBEHCA	4,980	4.88	71,762	70.28	9,237	9.05	5,696	5.58	1,920	1.88	1,335	1.31
WRKBEHCB	5,402	5.29	61,000	59.74	13,376	13.10	9,056	8.87	3,772	3.69	2,324	2.28
WRKBEHCC	5,374	5.26	69,367	67.93	9,910	9.710	5,772	5.65	2,479	2.43	2,028	1.99
WRKBEHCD	5,468	5.36	62,233	60.95	12,766	12.50	7,875	7.71	3,757	3.68	2,831	2.77
WRKBEHCE	5,891	5.77	55,613	54.46	13,941	13.65	10,586	10.37	4,581	4.49	4,318	4.23
WRKBEHCF	4,963	4.86	72,013	70.53	9,358	9.16	4,909	4.81	1,943	1.90	1,744	1.71
WRKBEHCG	4,964	4.86	71,704	70.22	10,372	10.16	4,756	4.66	1,559	1.53	1,575	1.54
WRKBEHCH	5,063	4.96	77,491	75.89	6,759	6.62	3,281	3.21	1,060	1.04	1,276	1.25
WRKBEHCI	5,198	5.09	85,533	83.77	2,381	2.33	1,142	1.12	206	0.20	470	0.46

Note. For 7,179 (7.03%) participants, these items were not on the version of the questionnaire they took.

**Table 61.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Workplace Hostility” I Items*

Item	Mean	SD
WRKBEHCA	1.35	0.81
WRKBEHCB	1.58	1.00
WRKBEHCC	1.41	0.90
WRKBEHCD	1.57	1.03
WRKBEHCE	1.74	1.15
WRKBEHCF	1.36	0.84
WRKBEHCG	1.34	0.80
WRKBEHCH	1.24	0.70
WRKBEHCI	1.08	0.42

Next, we examined correlations between the “Workplace Hostility” items (Table 62). Items WRKBEHCG and WRKBEHCH strong correlation ( $r = 0.79$ ). However, we had already identified WRKBEHCH for removal based on the descriptive analyses and did not include it in subsequent regression analyses.

**Table 62.**  
*Correlations Between “Workplace Hostility” I Items*

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. WRKBEHCA								
2. WRKBEHCB	0.69							
3. WRKBEHCC	0.68	0.67						
4. WRKBEHCD	0.58	0.60	0.60					
5. WRKBEHCE	0.59	0.62	0.65	0.63				
6. WRKBEHCF	0.59	0.54	0.66	0.51	0.62			
7. WRKBEHCG	0.52	0.49	0.61	0.48	0.52	0.66		
8. WRKBEHCH	0.51	0.46	0.57	0.46	0.49	0.65	0.79	
9. WRKBEHCI	0.40	0.32	0.37	0.32	0.30	0.42	0.42	0.48

We then examined the relationship between each of the “Workplace Hostility” items and sexual harassment and sexual assault, respectively, in a series of weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 63, items WRKBEHCB (OR = 0.93, p = 0.103), WRKBEHCC (OR = 0.96, p = 0.402), and WRKBEHCG (OR = 1.01, p = 0.888) were not significant predictors of sexual assault. We thus removed the non-significant items and re-ran the regression.

**Table 63.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” I Predicting Sexual Assault*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKBEHCA	1.14	0.06	0.011
WRKBEHCB	0.93	0.04	0.103
WRKBEHCC	0.96	0.05	0.402
WRKBEHCD	1.08	0.04	0.034
WRKBEHCE	1.30	0.05	<0.001
WRKBEHCF	1.28	0.06	<0.001
WRKBEHCG	1.01	0.04	0.888

Note. Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.18; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 64, WRKBEHCA (OR = 1.08, p = 0.064) and WRKBEHCD (OR = 1.06, p = 0.129) were no longer significant. We thus removed these items and re-ran the regression.

**Table 64.*****Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” I Predicting Sexual Assault***

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKBEHCA	1.08	0.05	0.064
WRKBEHCD	1.06	0.04	0.129
WRKBEHCE	1.26	0.05	<0.001
WRKBEHCF	1.27	0.05	<0.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.18$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 65, items WRKBEHCE (OR = 1.32,  $p < 0.001$ ) and WRKBEHCF (OR = 1.32,  $p < 0.001$ ) remained significant predictors of sexual assault. Because the revised scale was comprised of only two items, we did not examine the reliability of the scale. The revised scale, however, was highly correlated with the 9-item original version of the scale ( $r = 0.90$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the original scale and the revised scale.

**Table 65.*****Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” I Predicting Sexual Assault***

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKBEHCE	1.32	0.04	<0.001
WRKBEHCF	1.32	0.05	<0.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.18$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

We next examined the association between “Workplace Hostility” and sexual harassment. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 66, items WRKBEHCB, WRKBEHCC, and WRKBEHCG were not significant predictors of sexual harassment ( $p > 0.05$ ). We thus removed these non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 66.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” I Predicting Sexual Harassment*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKBEHCA	1.11	0.03	<0.001
WRKBEHCB	0.99	0.03	0.782
WRKBEHCC	1.01	0.03	0.807
WRKBEHCD	1.06	0.02	0.005
WRKBEHCE	1.36	0.03	<0.001
WRKBEHCF	1.55	0.04	<0.001
WRKBEHCG	0.99	0.02	0.628

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.21$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 67, all four of the remaining items were significant predictors of sexual harassment ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 67.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” I Predicting Sexual Harassment*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKBEHCA	1.11	0.03	<0.001
WRKBEHCD	1.07	0.02	0.002
WRKBEHCE	1.35	0.03	<0.001
WRKBEHCF	1.55	0.03	<0.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.21$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

We also computed Cronbach’s alpha for the 4-item revised scale as well as the correlation between the revised scale and the 9-item original version of the scale. The revised scale demonstrated sufficient internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ) and was highly correlated with the original version of the scale ( $r = 0.96$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the original and revised scales.

Based on the item reduction analyses, we recommend retaining items WRKBEHCE and WRKBEHCF. However, we would also recommend considering retaining items WRKBEHCA and WRKBEHCD. Even though these were not significant predictors of sexual assault, they did significantly predict sexual harassment. Table 68 shows the 2018 WGRA “Workplace Hostility” items retained after item reduction analysis.



**Table 68.**  
**“Workplace Hostility” Items Retained in Item Reduction Analysis with WGRA**

Variable Name	Item Text
WRKBEHCA	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers intentionally interfered with your work performance?
WRKBEHCD	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers took credit for work or ideas that were yours?
WRKBEHCE	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers gossiped/talked about you?
WRKBEHCF	During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?

**“Workplace Hostility” and Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination.**

“Workplace Hostility” items were also included in the 2017 WEOA (for the purpose of this section, this is referred to as “Workplace Hostility” II because the items used on the WEOA are a subset of the items used on WGRA and, hence, not identical). To build on the analyses described in the prior section, we also examined the performance of “Workplace Hostility” items in relation to racial/ethnic harassment discrimination using the WEOA in order to form a more complete understanding of the role of “Workplace Hostility” as a cross-cutting risk factor and to ensure all relevant facets of “Workplace Hostility” were considered for the DEOCS 5.0. Table 69 has the “Workplace Hostility” items and their text from the WEOA. Note that this is an abbreviated version compared to what was included in the WGRA, but also adapted from the scale by Selden and Downey (2012).

**Table 69.**  
**2017 WEOA “Workplace Hostility” II Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
WRKPROBA	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors did not provide you with information or assistance when needed?
WRKPROBB	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors were excessively harsh in their criticism of your work performance?
WRKPROBC	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors took credit for your work or ideas?
WRKPROBD	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors gossiped/talked about you?
WRKPROBE	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?
WRKPROBF	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors yelled when they were angry with you?

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in

responding between items. Thus, we did not remove any items from consideration based on the descriptive statistics. We present the frequencies in Table 70 and the means and standard deviations in Table 71.

**Table 70.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Workplace Hostility” II Items*

Item	Never		Once or Twice		Sometimes		Often		Very Often		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
WRKPROBA	3378	34.03	2827	28.48	2145	21.61	984	9.91	555	5.59	37	0.37
WRKPROBB	5913	59.57	1873	18.87	1134	11.42	490	4.94	432	4.35	84	0.85
WRKPROBC	5921	59.65	1657	16.69	1200	12.09	569	5.73	514	5.18	65	0.65
WRKPROBD	5096	51.34	1862	18.76	1439	14.50	687	6.92	720	7.25	122	1.23
WRKPROBE	6893	69.44	1271	12.80	876	8.83	399	4.02	427	4.30	60	0.60
WRKPROBF	6746	67.96	1663	16.75	840	8.46	282	2.84	344	3.47	51	0.51

**Table 71.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations of “Workplace Hostility” II Items*

Item	Mean	SD
WRKPROBA	2.24	1.18
WRKPROBB	1.75	1.12
WRKPROBC	1.79	1.17
WRKPROBD	1.99	1.27
WRKPROBE	1.60	1.09
WRKPROBF	1.56	1.00

Next, we examined correlations between the “Workplace Hostility” items. As noted in Table 72, a number of the items were highly correlated (i.e.,  $r \geq 0.65$ ), suggesting content overlap between items. However, we included all items into the weighted logistic regression analysis predicting racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination.

**Table 72.**  
**Correlations Between “Workplace Hostility” II Items**

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. WRKPROBA	1.00					
2. WRKPROBB	0.59	1.00				
3. WRKPROBC	0.56	0.58	1.00			
4. WRKPROBD	0.58	0.65	0.60	1.00		
5. WRKPROBE	0.49	0.67	0.55	0.70	1.00	
6. WRKPROBF	0.44	0.62	0.48	0.55	0.65	1.00

We then examined the relationship between each of the “Workplace Hostility” items and racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 73, only items WRKPROBA (OR = 1.23,  $p < 0.001$ ), WRKPROBC (OR = 1.10,  $p = 0.039$ ), WRKPROBD (OR = 1.36,  $p < 0.001$ ), and WRKPROBF (OR = 1.14,  $p = 0.014$ ) significantly predicted racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 73.**  
**Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” II Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination**

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKPROBA	1.23	0.06	<0.001
WRKPROBB	0.99	0.06	0.878
WRKPROBC	1.10	0.06	0.039
WRKPROBD	1.36	0.07	<0.001
WRKPROBE	1.12	0.07	0.051
WRKPROBF	1.14	0.06	0.014

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.16$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 74, the remaining four items continued to significantly predict racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination ( $p < 0.05$ ). The reliability of the 4-item revised scale was sufficiently high ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). Additionally, the revised scale and the original 6-item scale were very highly correlated ( $r = 0.98$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the revised and original scales.

**Table 74.**  
**Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Workplace Hostility” II Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination**

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
WRKPROBA	1.23	0.06	<0.001
WRKPROBC	1.10	0.05	0.028
WRKPROBD	1.42	0.06	<0.001
WRKPROBF	1.19	0.06	<0.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.15$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

Based on these analyses, we recommended including items WRKPROBA, WRKPROBC, WRKPROBD, and WRKPROBF in the new scale. Table 75 shows the retained from the item reduction analysis on the 2017 WEOA “Workplace Hostility” items.

**Table 75.**  
**Summary of “Workplace Hostility” II Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
WRKPROBA	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors did not provide you with information or assistance when needed?
WRKPROBC	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors took credit for your work or ideas?
WRKPROBD	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors gossiped/talked about you?
WRKPROBF	How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors yelled when they were angry with you?

**Final Selection.** We retained all items that were significantly associated with sexual assault, sexual harassment, and/or racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination (six items total). The seven items were selected for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0 and are listed below in Table 76.

**Table 76.**  
**Selected “Workplace Hostility” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Workplace Hostility	How often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers intentionally interfered with your work performance?	2018 WGRA
	How often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers took credit for work or ideas that were yours?	2018 WGRA; 2017 WEOA
	How often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers gossiped/talked about you?	2018 WGRA; 2017 WEOA
	How often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?	2018 WGRA
	How often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers intentionally interfered with your work performance?	2018 WGRA
	How often have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors did not provide you with information or assistance when needed?	2017 WEOA
	How often have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors yelled when they were angry with you?	2017 WEOA

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

## Unit Protective Factors

Unit protective factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with better outcomes in units. Below we describe the process for selecting items for each of the protective factors selected for inclusion in DEOCS 5.0.

### “Cohesion”

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of cohesion and measures of readiness, retention, and sexual assault, and identified the 2018 WGRA and 2018 SOFS-A.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Cohesion” and Retention.** Four “Cohesion” items developed for the DEOCS 4.0 and then adapted for use in the 2018 SOFS-A were assessed in relation to retention intentions (OPA, 2019a). All four items are presented in Table 77.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Cohesion” and Readiness.** The same four “Cohesion” items from the 2018 SOFS-A were assessed in relation to readiness items.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Cohesion” and Suicide Attempts.** The same four “Cohesion” items from the 2018 SOFS-A were assessed in relation to suicide attempts items.

**Table 77.**  
**2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
MEMUNITA	Service members in your unit really care about each other.
MEMUNITB	Service members in your unit work well as a team.
MEMUNITC	Service members in your unit pull together to get the job done.
MEMUNITD	Service members in your unit trust each other.

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for “Cohesion,” we examined how frequently each of the item response options was endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). In addition, we also examined the means and standard deviations for each item. There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not remove any items based on descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 78 and means and standard deviations are presented in Table 79.

**Table 78.**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Items**

Items	No response		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MEMUNITA	195	1.46	237	1.77	622	4.66	1,345	10.07	3,059	22.89	1,213	9.08
MEMUNITB	209	1.56	180	1.35	515	3.85	1,217	9.11	3,339	24.99	1,211	9.06
MEMUNITC	209	1.56	152	1.14	342	2.56	926	6.93	3,498	26.18	1,544	11.56
MEMUNITD	205	1.53	338	2.53	680	5.09	1,582	11.84	2,808	21.02	1,058	7.92

Note. 6,690 (50.07%) participants did not see these items as they were on a different module.

**Table 79.**  
**Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Items**

Item	Mean	SD
MEMUNITA	3.68	1.00
MEMUNITB	3.76	0.94
MEMUNITC	3.92	0.89
MEMUNITD	3.55	1.05

Next, we examined correlations between the “Cohesion” items. As shown in Table 80, all items were highly correlated ( $r \geq 0.69$ ), suggesting content overlap between items. It is thus feasible that some of these highly correlated items can be removed from the scale. However, we included all four items into the weighted logistic regression analysis predicting the STO of interest so that

items with the highest association with the STO(s) could be prioritized for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0.

**Table 80.**  
*Correlations Between 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Items*

Item	1	2	3
1. MEMUNITA			
2. MEMUNITB	0.77		
3. MEMUNITC	0.69	0.80	
4. MEMUNITD	0.78	0.79	0.72

We then examined the relationship between “Cohesion” items and retention intentions, readiness, and suicide attempts in a series of weighted linear regressions. In all regressions, we controlled for the following demographic variables: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

First, we examined the relationship between each of the “Cohesion” items and retention intentions. As shown in Table 81, only item MEMUNITA (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.21,  $p < 0.001$ ) was significantly associated with retention intentions. We thus removed the non-significant items and re-ran the regression.

**Table 81.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Retention*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
MEMUNITA	0.21	0.05	<0.001
MEMUNITB	0.06	0.07	0.331
MEMUNITC	0.05	0.06	0.412
MEMUNITD	0.06	0.05	0.277

*Note.*  $R^2 = 0.15$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

Item MEMUNITA remained a significant predictor of retention intentions (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.34,  $p < 0.001$ ), and the association was in the expected direction (i.e., higher “Cohesion” was associated with greater retention intentions). Results are presented in Table 82. Additionally, because only a single item remained, it was not possible to calculate the reliability of the revised scale. The item MEMUNITA was, however, highly correlated with the original 4-item version of the scale ( $r = 0.90$ ), suggesting content overlap between the original scale and the item MEMUNITA.

**Table 82.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Retention*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
MEMUNITA	0.34	0.03	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.15$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

Next, we examined the association between each of the “Cohesion” items and readiness. Items MEMUNITB (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.12,  $p < 0.001$ ), MEMUNITC (linear reg Coef. = 0.11,  $p = 0.001$ ), and MEMUNITD (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.12,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly predicted readiness, whereas MEMUNITA was not a significant predictor of readiness ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results are presented in Table 83.

**Table 83.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Readiness*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
MEMUNITA	-0.01	0.03	0.806
MEMUNITB	0.12	0.03	<0.001
MEMUNITC	0.11	0.03	0.001
MEMUNITD	0.12	0.03	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.22$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

We removed item MEMUNITA from the analyses and re-ran the regression. Items MEMUNITB, MEMUNITC, and MEMUNITD remained significant predictors of readiness ( $p < 0.05$ ), and all associations were in the expected direction. Results are presented in Table 84.

**Table 84.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Readiness*

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
MEMUNITB	0.12	0.03	<0.001
MEMUNITC	0.11	0.03	0.001
MEMUNITD	0.12	0.02	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.22$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

Next, we computed Cronbach’s alpha for the 3-item revised scale as well as the correlation between the revised scale and 4-item prior version of the scale. The revised scale demonstrated sufficient internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ) and was highly correlated with the prior version of the scale ( $r = 0.99$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between scales.



Finally, we examined the association between each of the "Cohesion" items and suicide attempt. Items MEMUNITB (OR = 0.53, p = 0.038) and MEMUNITD (OR = 0.56, p = 0.033) significantly predicted suicide attempt. The results are presented in Table 85.

Of note, two of the items were marginally significant predictors in the unexpected direction. That is, we found that higher scores on MEMUNITA and MEMUNITC were associated with greater risk of suicide attempts. Given the complications for interpreting these items, we removed these two items from consideration for the DEOCS 5.0.

**Table 85.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Suicide Attempt*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
MEMUNITA	1.45	0.31	0.080
MEMUNITB	0.53	0.16	0.038
MEMUNITC	1.67	0.47	0.065
MEMUNITD	0.56	0.15	0.033

*Note.* Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.23; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

We thus removed items MEMUNITA and MEMUNITC and re-ran the regression. Items MEMUNITB (OR = 0.79, p = 0.505) and MEMUNITD (OR = 0.76, p = 0.364) were no longer significant predictors of suicide attempt. Results are presented in Table 86.

**Table 86.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Predicting Suicide Attempt*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
MEMUNITB	0.79	0.28	0.505
MEMUNITD	0.76	0.23	0.364

*Note.* Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.20; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, age, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, AFQT, and living off base.

Following this series of analyses, we concluded that none of these items should be removed as all items were significant predictors of either readiness or retention. We thus retained all four items after item reduction analysis. We present all four items in Table 87 below.

**Table 87.**  
**2018 SOFS-A “Cohesion” Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
MEMUNITA	Service members in your unit really care about each other.
MEMUNITB	Service members in your unit work well as a team.
MEMUNITC	Service members in your unit pull together to get the job done.
MEMUNITD	Service members in your unit trust each other.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Cohesion” and Sexual Assault.** “Cohesion” items were selected from the 2018 WGRA and assessed in relation to sexual assault. This scale was examined as a potential alternative to, or complement to, the “Cohesion” scale from the 2018 SOFS-A (described in the prior section). The nine items are presented in Table 88.

**Table 88.**  
**2018 WGRA “Cohesion” Variable Names and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
UNITCLIMA	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding unit cohesion?
UNITCLIMB	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding respect from the chain of command?
UNITCLIMC	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding respect for the chain of command?
UNITCLIMD	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding respect Service members have for others from diverse backgrounds?
UNITCLIME	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding how women and men treat each other?
UNITCLIMF	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding providing help to one another when personal problems arise?
UNITCLIMG	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding dealing effectively with adversity or conflict when it occurs?
UNITCLIMH	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding support for male victims of sexual assault?
UNITCLIMI	How would you rate the climate in your unit regarding support for female victims of sexual assault?

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for the “Cohesion and Respect” items, we examined how frequently each of the response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). The proportion of refusals (“No response”) was fairly high across all items, ranging between 11.43% and 12.24%. However, there were no noticeable differences in refusal between items. We also examined the means and standard deviations of each item, and these also did not indicate any noticeable differences in responding to each item (i.e., standard deviations ranged between 0.95 and 1.23). Thus, we did not remove any items from consideration based on descriptive statistics. We present the frequencies in Table 89 and means and standard deviations in Table 90 below.

**Table 89.**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of 2018 WGRA “Cohesion” Items**

Items	No Response		Poor		Fair		Good		Very good		Excellent	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
UNITCLIMA	11,692	11.45	5,325	5.22	8,396	8.22	16,695	16.35	20,539	20.11	32,283	31.62
UNITCLIMB	12,152	11.90	4,755	4.66	7,141	6.99	13,820	13.53	19,837	19.43	37,225	36.46
UNITCLIMC	12,267	12.01	4,412	4.32	7,209	7.06	14,858	14.55	20,688	20.26	35,496	34.76
UNITCLIMD	12,275	12.02	1,779	1.74	3,797	3.72	12,548	12.29	22,111	21.65	42,420	41.54
UNITCLIME	12,495	12.24	1,697	1.66	4,078	3.99	12,907	12.64	22,262	21.80	41,491	40.63
UNITCLIMF	11,675	11.43	2,711	2.66	4,934	4.83	12,716	12.45	20,938	20.51	41,956	41.09
UNITCLIMG	11,823	11.58	3,190	3.12	5,561	5.45	13,558	13.28	20,960	20.53	39,838	39.02
UNITCLIMH	12,045	11.80	2,152	2.11	4,293	4.20	13,671	13.39	19,142	18.75	43,627	42.73
UNITCLIMI	12,217	11.96	1,208	1.18	3,066	3.00	12,304	12.05	19,777	19.37	46,358	45.40

Note. For 7,179 (7.03%) participants, these items were not on the version of the questionnaire they took. Response options go from 1 = Poor to 5 = Excellent.

**Table 90.**  
**Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of 2018 WGRA “Cohesion” Items**

Items	Mean	SD
UNITCLIMA	3.79	1.23
UNITCLIMB	3.94	1.21
UNITCLIMC	3.92	1.20
UNITCLIMD	4.20	1.00
UNITCLIME	4.19	1.00
UNITCLIMF	4.13	1.08
UNITCLIMG	4.07	1.12
UNITCLIMH	4.18	1.05
UNITCLIMI	4.29	0.95

Next, we examined correlations between the “Cohesion and Respect” items (Table 91). Items were highly correlated ( $r \geq 0.65$ ), with correlations as high as .91, suggesting some conceptual overlap between items. It is feasible that a number of these highly correlated items could be removed from the scale. However, we included all items into the weighted logistic regression analysis predicting sexual assault. We controlled for the following demographic variables: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity, and present the results in Table 92.

**Table 91.**  
*Correlations Between 2018 WGRA “Cohesion” Items*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. UNITCLIMA								
2. UNITCLIMB	0.82							
3. UNITCLIMC	0.81	0.88						
4. UNITCLIMD	0.71	0.72	0.72					
5. UNITCLIME	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.85				
6. UNITCLIMF	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.76	0.77			
7. UNITCLIMG	0.78	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.91		
8. UNITCLIMH	0.66	0.68	0.67	0.73	0.76	0.76	0.77	
9. UNITCLIMI	0.65	0.67	0.67	0.76	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.87

**Table 92.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for 2018 WGRA “Cohesion” Predicting Sexual Assault*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
UNITCLIMA	1.18	0.08	0.010
UNITCLIMB	0.98	0.06	0.713
UNITCLIMC	0.91	0.07	0.188
UNITCLIMD	1.15	0.07	0.022
UNITCLIME	0.70	0.04	<0.001
UNITCLIMF	0.92	0.07	0.259
UNITCLIMG	1.06	0.09	0.521
UNITCLIMH	0.62	0.04	<0.001
UNITCLIMI	1.05	0.09	0.562

Note. Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.20; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

The regression in Table 92 showed that five items—UNITCLIMB, UNITCLIMC, UNITCLIMF, UNITCLIMG, and UNITCLIMI—were not significant predictors of sexual assault ( $p > 0.05$ ), whereas items UNITCLIMA (OR = 1.18,  $p = 0.010$ ), UNITCLIMD (OR = 1.15,  $p = 0.022$ ), UNITCLIME (OR = 0.70,  $p < 0.001$ ), and UNITCLIMH (OR = 0.62,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly predicted sexual assault. We thus removed the five non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression. All four of the remaining "Cohesion" and respect items in the final model remained significant predictors of sexual assault, including UNITCLIMA (OR = 1.10,  $p = 0.046$ ), UNITCLIMD (OR = 1.12,  $p = 0.048$ ), UNITCLIME (OR = 0.69,  $p < 0.001$ ), and UNITCLIMH (OR = 0.62,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Of note, two of the items were in the unexpected direction. That is, for items UNITCLIMA and UNITCLIMD, higher scores were associated with greater risk of experiencing sexual assault. By

contrast, the other two items were in the predicted direction such that higher scores on UNITCLIME and UNITCLIMH predicted lower risk of experiences of sexual assault. Given the complications with interpreting these items, we decided not to include these items in the DEOCS 5.0.

**Final Selection.** Given the limitations with the respect and "Cohesion" *WGRA* items described above, we selected from the four 2018 *SOFS-A* "Cohesion" items. To reduce survey burden and minimize repetitiveness, two of the four items were selected for inclusion in the final survey instrument. The final two items selected were predictive of readiness and retention (Table 93).

**Table 93.**  
**Selected “Cohesion” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Cohesion	Service members in your unit work well as a team.	2018 SOFS-A
	Service members in your unit trust each other.	2018 SOFS-A

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other consideration to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### “Connectedness”

**Data Source.** Given the evidence ([Chapter 6](#)), we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Connectedness” and measures of suicidal behavior or readiness, and identified the 2020 *LIS*.

**Item Reduction Analysis: “Connectedness” and Suicidal Behavior.** We used 13 items from the 2020 *LIS* that we assessed in relation to suicide attempts. These items and their text are presented in Table 94. This list of items included 10 items from the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (INQ-10) (Hill et al., 2015), which measures two subscales related to “Connectedness”: “Perceived Burdensomeness” and “Thwarted Belongingness” (BURDENBELONG). The last three items (ORGCOMMIT) were drawn from items asked on the DEOCS 4.1 (note that these three items were eventually moved to the “Engagement and Commitment” construct due to better conceptual alignment).

**Table 94.**  
**2020 LIS “Connectedness” Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
BURDENBELONGA	These days, the people in my life would be better off if I were gone.
BURDENBELONGB	These days, the people in my life would be happier without me.
BURDENBELONGC	These days, I think my death would be a relief to the people in my life.
BURDENBELONGD	These days, I think the people in my life wish they could be rid of me.
BURDENBELONGE	These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.
BURDENBELONGF	These days, I feel like I belong.
BURDENBELONGG	These days, I am fortunate to have many caring and supportive friends.
BURDENBELONGH	These days, I feel disconnected from other people.
BURDENBELONGI	These days, I feel like an outsider in social gatherings.
BURDENBELONGJ	These days, I am close to other people.
ORGCOMMITA	I feel like “part of the family” in my unit.
ORGCOMMITB	This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me.
ORGCOMMITC	I feel a strong sense of belonging to this unit.

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for “Connectedness,” we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). Items BURDENBELONGA, BURDENBELONGB, BURDENBELONGC, and BURDENBELONGD all had fairly low standard deviations (ranging between 0.41 and 0.50), suggesting little variation in responding. Almost 90% of participants indicated “Not at all true of me” in response to these items as well. We thus removed these four items in subsequent regression analyses. The frequency results are presented in Table 95 and we examine the means and standard deviations for each item in Table 96.

**Table 95.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Connectedness” Items*

Items	Refused		Not at All True for Me		A Little True for Me		Somewhat True for Me		True for Me		Very True for Me	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
BURDENBELONGA	111	3.22	3,032	88.06	186	5.4	83	2.41	17	0.49	14	0.41
BURDENBELONGB	110	3.19	3,005	87.28	223	6.48	74	2.15	17	0.49	14	0.41
BURDENBELONGC	111	3.22	3,160	91.78	97	2.82	52	1.51	14	0.41	9	0.26
BURDENBELONGD	113	3.28	3,069	89.14	179	5.20	58	1.68	12	0.35	12	0.35
BURDENBELONGE	113	3.28	2,841	82.52	307	8.92	117	3.4	41	1.19	24	0.70
BURDENBELONGF	110	3.19	259	7.52	316	9.18	685	19.9	1,124	32.65	949	27.56
BURDENBELONGG	114	3.31	226	6.56	382	11.09	628	18.24	978	28.41	1,115	32.38
BURDENBELONGH	112	3.25	1,376	39.97	821	23.85	575	16.7	347	10.08	212	6.16
BURDENBELONGI	113	3.28	1,368	39.73	815	23.67	542	15.74	365	10.6	240	6.97
BURDENBELONGJ	111	3.22	335	9.73	628	18.24	760	22.07	893	25.94	716	20.80
Items	Refused		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ORGCOMMITA	2	0.06	325	9.44	543	15.77	734	21.32	1,259	36.57	580	16.85
ORGCOMMITB	3	0.09	418	12.14	603	17.51	872	25.33	965	28.03	582	16.90
ORGCOMMITC	2	0.06	431	12.52	622	18.07	829	24.08	1,005	29.19	554	16.09

**Table 96.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Connectedness” Items*

Item	Mean	SD
BURDENBELONGA	1.14	0.50
BURDENBELONGB	1.14	0.50
BURDENBELONGC	1.08	0.41
BURDENBELONGD	1.11	0.45
BURDENBELONGE	1.23	0.64
BURDENBELONGF	3.66	1.20
BURDENBELONGG	3.71	1.23
BURDENBELONGH	2.16	1.25
BURDENBELONGI	2.19	1.28
BURDENBELONGJ	3.31	1.27
ORGCOMMITA	3.36	1.20
ORGCOMMITB	3.20	1.26
ORGCOMMITC	3.18	1.26

Next, we reverse-coded the following items, so that higher scores on those items correspond to higher levels of “Connectedness”: BURDENBELONGA, BURDENBELONGB, BURDENBELONGC, BURDENBELONGD, BURDENBELONGE, BURDENBELONGH, and BURDENBELONGI. We then examined correlations between the “Connectedness” items. As shown in Table 97, items BURDENBELONGA, BURDENBELONGB, BURDENBELONGC, BURDENBELONGD were highly correlated with each other ( $r > 0.6$ ), although we had already established that these are not good candidates for the DEOCS 5.0 based on the descriptive statistic results. Items ORGCOMMITA, ORGCOMMITB, and ORGCOMMITC were also highly correlated ( $r > 0.7$ ), suggesting conceptual overlap between questions. It is thus feasible that two out of the three of these highly correlated items could be removed from the survey. However, we included all three of these items into the weighted logistic regression analysis predicting the STO of interest.

**Table 97.**  
**Correlations Between “Connectedness” Items**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. BURDENBELONGA												
2. BURDENBELONGB	0.74											
3. BURDENBELONGC	0.73	0.70										
4. BURDENBELONGD	0.61	0.68	0.68									
5. BURDENBELONGE	0.65	0.60	0.58	0.61								
6. BURDENBELONGF	0.37	0.36	0.29	0.31	0.40							
7. BURDENBELONGG	0.31	0.31	0.23	0.26	0.33	0.69						
8. BURDENBELONGH	0.34	0.32	0.27	0.31	0.42	0.57	0.54					
9. BURDENBELONGI	0.33	0.31	0.26	0.30	0.40	0.53	0.50	0.75				
10. BURDENBELONGJ	0.30	0.29	0.23	0.26	0.35	0.67	0.72	0.62	0.57			
11. ORGCOMMITA	0.18	0.17	0.15	0.16	0.17	0.45	0.35	0.31	0.30	0.36		
12. ORGCOMMITB	0.16	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.40	0.32	0.28	0.26	0.31	0.78	
13. ORGCOMMITC	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.14	0.16	0.46	0.35	0.32	0.30	0.37	0.84	0.87

We then examined the relationship between each of the “Connectedness” items and having had a suicide attempt within the past 12 months, in a logistic regression. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, dependents, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 98, items BURDENBELONGE (OR = 0.54,  $p = 0.020$ ) and ORGCOMMITB (OR = 0.20,  $p = 0.005$ ) were the only significant predictors of suicide attempt. We thus removed all other non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.



**Table 98.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Connectedness” Predicting Suicide Attempt*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
BURDENBELONGE	0.54	0.14	0.020
BURDENBELONGF	0.77	0.22	0.363
BURDENBELONGG	1.19	0.36	0.560
BURDENBELONGH	0.89	0.33	0.746
BURDENBELONGI	1.69	0.64	0.166
BURDENBELONGJ	0.52	0.23	0.134
ORGCMMITA	1.20	0.50	0.663
ORGCMMITB	0.20	0.11	0.005
ORGCMMITC	2.87	1.61	0.061

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.29$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, dependents, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 99, items BURDENBELONGE (OR = 0.57,  $p = 0.002$ ) and ORGCMMITB (OR = 0.59,  $p = 0.027$ ) remained significant predictors of suicide attempt.

**Table 99.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Connectedness” Predicting Suicide Attempt*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
BURDENBELONGE	0.57	0.10	0.002
ORGCMMITB	0.59	0.14	0.027

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.23$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, marital status, dependents, and race/ethnicity.

The revised scale comprised only two items, so we did not examine the reliability of the scale. The revised scale, however, was highly correlated with the prior 13-item version of the scale ( $r = 0.85$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the two scales. Based on the item reduction analyses, we retained BURDENBELONGE and ORGCMMITB from the item reduction analysis, which are presented in Table 100 below.

**Table 100.**  
*“Connectedness” Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis*

Variable Name	Item Text
ORGCMMITB	This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me.
BURDENBELONGE	These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.

**Final Selection.** As mentioned above, one of the items retained in the item reduction analysis had significant conceptual overlap with another survey construct, “Engagement and Commitment.” This item and a second non-significant item were moved to the “Engagement and Commitment” construct items.

The other item was also included in the measure of “Connectedness” in the previous version DEOCS 4.1 and was developed by Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) in coordination with the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO). To ensure a complete measure of “Connectedness,” OPA selected this item and one non-significant item and added the two non-tested items from the DEOCS 4.1 “Connectedness” measure (Table 101). Future analyses will seek to confirm these items’ relationships to the STOs.

**Table 101.**  
**Selected “Connectedness” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Connectedness	These days, I feel like I belong.	Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire
	These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.	Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire
	My future seems dark to me.	DEOCS 4.1: Beck’s Hopelessness scale (Beck, 1988; Beck et al., 1974)
	These days, I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.	DEOCS 4.1

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other consideration to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**“Inclusion”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence ([Chapter 6](#)), we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Inclusion” and measures of discrimination or readiness. The 2017 WEOA included a measure 6-item of “Inclusion” (Daniel et al., 2019).

The 2019 WEOR included a 15-item measure of “Inclusive Leadership,” which focuses on the behaviors that leaders enact to create and sustain an inclusive climate (Ratliff et al., 2018).

**Final Selection.** In our item reduction analysis of the “Workgroup Inclusion” scale from the 2017 WEOA, six of these items were significantly associated with racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination ([Appendix S](#) has the results of this analysis). Five of the items lacked face validity as a scale measuring “Inclusion.” Two items instead had better conceptual overlap with “Fairness” (“Outcomes [e.g., training opportunities, awards, recognition] are fairly distributed among members of my workgroup”) and “Leadership Support” (I believe I can use my chain of command to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation or reprisal). Thus, these items were included in the DEOCS 5.0 due to their predictive significance, but were realigned to the “Fairness and Leadership Support” constructs (both described in more detail in subsequent sections of this chapter). One of the Workgroup Inclusion items (“Racial slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.”) overlapped significantly with other

items chosen for the “Racially Harassing Behaviors” scale (“In the past 12 months, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by telling racial/ethnic jokes” and “In the past 12 months, has someone used an offensive racial/ethnic term that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”), and was not selected to maintain the conceptual distinction between these two scales. Still two more items measure the general quality of relationships among coworkers, which was not a selected construct, rather than “Inclusion” characterized by fair treatment and respect of all individuals regardless of personal relationships (“There is very little conflict among your workers.” and “You are satisfied with the relationships you have with your coworkers.”). The final “Workgroup Inclusion” item that was predictive of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination was “I feel excluded by my workgroup because I am different.” This item was the best candidate, but still did not capture the entire conceptual definition of “Inclusion.” Thus, we sought to examine additional potential items.

Next, we conducted an item reduction analysis using the “Inclusive Leadership” scale from the 2019 WEOR; however, only two of the 15 items were significantly associated with racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination. Moreover, the literature review and particularly stakeholder feedback regarding this construct was not focused on leader behaviors specifically, but rather focused on the inclusive environment more broadly throughout the unit. Therefore, we decided that the “Inclusive Leadership” scale did not capture inclusion as we intended to measure it on the DEOCS 5.0.

Given the limitations with the existing OPA “Inclusion” scales described above, we reviewed the literature for “Inclusion” scales, prioritizing those that had been developed and validated for a military population. Ultimately, in consultation with stakeholders, we chose items from the climate for “Inclusion” measure that was developed specifically to evaluate inclusive climates in the U.S. military (Brown et al., 2018). The measure was validated across three studies with over 700 U.S. Army soldiers. The five items in Table 102 below were selected to represent all dimensions of “Inclusion” and address themes heard in focus groups and stakeholder conversations about what elements of climate are important. Future analyses will seek to confirm these items’ relationships to the STOs.

**Table 102.**  
***Selected “Inclusion” Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Inclusion	Soldiers believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of the groups with which they identify.	Climate for Inclusion
	Soldiers are given voice in decision-making processes.	Climate for Inclusion
	Soldiers speak up if someone is being excluded.	Climate for Inclusion
	The quality of ideas matter more than who expressed them.	Climate for Inclusion
	Communication goes both up and down the chain of command.	Climate for Inclusion

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other consideration to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**“Engagement and Commitment”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Engagement and Commitment” and measures of readiness and retention, and identified the 2018 SOFS-A and the 2020 LIS. The 2020 LIS items are described in the section on “Connectedness” because these items have also been conceptualized as part of “Connectedness.” In addition to the items from the SOFA and the LIS, items from civilian literature were fielded on the DEOCS research block.

**Item Reduction Analysis.** “Engagement and Commitment” items were selected from 2018 SOFS-A and assessed in relation to readiness and retention. These nine items and their text are presented in Table 103.

**Table 103.**  
**2018 SOFS-A “Engagement and Commitment” Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
ORGCOMA	I enjoy serving in the military.
ORGCOMB	Serving in the military is consistent with my personal goals.
ORGCOMD	I would feel guilty if I left the military.
ORGCOME	Generally, on a day-to-day basis, I am happy with my life in the military.
ORGCOMI	I would have difficulty finding a job if I left the military.
ORGCOMK	If I left the military, I would feel like I had let my country down.
ORGCOML	I continue to serve in the military because leaving would require considerable sacrifice.
ORGCOMN	One of the problems with leaving the military would be the lack of available alternatives.
ORGCOMO	I am committed to making the military my career.

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Although some items were slightly skewed either positively or negatively, these distributions were not so severe that they warranted further investigation. Thus, we did not remove any items based on descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 104. In addition, we also examined the means and standard deviations for each item. These are presented in Table 105.

**Table 104.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Engagement and Commitment” Items*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ORGCOMA	199	1.49	584	4.37	1157	8.66	6017	45.03	5394	40.37	10	0.07
ORGCOMB	391	2.93	998	7.47	1966	14.71	5599	41.91	4308	32.24	99	0.74
ORGCOMD	3035	22.72	3593	26.89	3075	23.01	2439	18.25	1117	8.36	102	0.76
ORGCOME	545	4.08	1512	11.32	2299	17.21	6503	48.67	2329	17.43	173	1.29
ORGCOMI	5663	42.38	3959	29.63	2157	16.14	1024	7.66	441	3.30	117	0.88
ORGCOMK	5546	41.51	4462	33.40	1916	14.34	1005	7.52	420	3.14	12	0.09
ORGCOML	3652	27.33	4449	33.30	2837	21.23	1816	13.59	584	4.37	23	0.17
ORGCOMN	4688	35.09	4344	32.51	2118	15.85	1692	12.66	484	3.62	35	0.26
ORGCOMO	1145	8.57	1036	7.75	2666	19.95	4273	31.98	4217	31.56	24	0.18

**Table 105.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Engagement and Commitment” Items*

Item	Mean	SD
ORGCOMA	4.19	0.87
ORGCOMB	3.94	1.02
ORGCOMD	2.62	1.25
ORGCOME	3.65	1.03
ORGCOMI	1.99	1.10
ORGCOMK	1.97	1.07
ORGCOML	2.34	1.14
ORGCOMN	2.17	1.15
ORGCOMO	3.70	1.23

Next, we examined correlations between the “Engagement and Commitment” items (Table 106). Interestingly, there was quite a bit of variance on the correlations between the “Engagement and Commitment” items. Only the correlation between ORGCOMN and ORGCOMI was above 0.7 ( $r = 0.72$ ). This pattern in a correlation matrix suggests that the items are either not reflecting the same latent construct, or each item is contributing a unique characteristic of the construct and all items should thus be retained. Based on this, we did not identify any items for removal.

**Table 106.**  
***Correlations Between “Engagement and Commitment” Items***

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. ORGCOMA								
2. ORGCOMB	0.67							
3. ORGCOMD	0.31	0.31						
4. ORGCOME	0.65	0.59	0.30					
5. ORGCOMI	0.03	0.02	0.21	0.04				
6. ORGCOMK	0.19	0.19	0.62	0.16	0.25			
7. ORGCOML	0.07	0.07	0.31	0.08	0.44	0.37		
8. ORGCOMN	0.03	0.01	0.24	0.03	0.72	0.29	0.62	
9. ORGCOMO	0.52	0.52	0.30	0.53	0.13	0.20	0.22	0.15

We then examined the relationship between each of the “Engagement and Commitment” items and readiness and retention, using weighted linear regression. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base. As shown in Table 107, items ORGCOMA, ORGCOMB, ORGCOME, and ORGCOMI were all significant predictors of readiness ( $p < 0.05$ ). We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 107.**  
***Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Engagement and Commitment” Predicting Readiness***

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
ORGCOMA	0.10	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMB	0.07	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMD	0.00	0.01	0.886
ORGCOME	0.20	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMI	-0.04	0.02	0.007
ORGCOMK	0.02	0.01	0.216
ORGCOML	-0.01	0.01	0.538
ORGCOMN	-0.02	0.02	0.268
ORGCOMO	0.02	0.01	0.160

*Note.*  $R^2 = 0.21$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

As shown in Table 109, all four of the remaining items after the original linear regression were still significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). We then ran the models predicting retention intentions.

**Table 108.**  
***Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Engagement and Commitment” Predicting Readiness***

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
ORGCOMA	0.11	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMB	0.08	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOME	0.20	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMI	-0.05	0.01	<0.001

*Note.*  $R^2 = 0.21$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

As shown in Table 110, the only items that were not significant predictors of retention intentions were ORGCOMA ( $p = 0.07$ ) and ORGCOMN ( $p = 0.72$ ). We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 109.**  
***Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Engagement and Commitment” Predicting Retention Intention***

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
ORGCOMA	0.04	0.02	0.065
ORGCOMB	0.08	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMD	0.04	0.01	0.002
ORGCOME	0.25	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMI	0.06	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMK	-0.05	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOML	0.05	0.01	0.002
ORGCOMN	0.01	0.02	0.721
ORGCOMO	0.63	0.02	<0.001

*Note.*  $R^2 = 0.63$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

Table 110 shows the remaining seven items that were all still significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 110.**  
**Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Engagement and Commitment” Predicting Retention Intention**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
ORGCOMB	0.10	0.02	<0.001
ORGCMD	0.05	0.01	0.001
ORGCOME	0.27	0.02	<0.001
ORGCOMI	0.06	0.01	<0.001
ORGCOMK	-0.05	0.02	0.001
ORGCOML	0.05	0.01	<0.001
ORGCOMO	0.64	0.02	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.63$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

The results of these analyses suggest that nearly all of the “Engagement and Commitment” items contribute uniquely to the prediction of retention intentions and readiness. The only item that was not a predictor of either outcome was ORGCOMN. Therefore, we removed that item. The remaining eight items have a sufficient degree of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ). The correlation between the new scale and the old scale also shows a very strong correlation ( $r = 0.98$ ). In light of these analyses, we removed ORGCOMN from after item reduction analysis but retained the other items.

Of note, two of the items were in the unexpected direction. That is, greater agreement with the item ORGCOMI was associated with less readiness (Table 108) and ORGCOMK was associated with lower retention intentions (Table 110). Given the complications with these findings, we dropped these two items from consideration for the DEOCS 5.0 (Table 111).

**Table 111.**  
**“Engagement and Commitment” Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
ORGCOMA	I enjoy serving in the military.
ORGCOMB	Serving in the military is consistent with my personal goals.
ORGCMD	I would feel guilty if I left the military.
ORGCOME	Generally, on a day-to-day basis, I am happy with my life in the military.
ORGCOML	I continue to serve in the military because leaving would require considerable sacrifice.
ORGCOMO	I am committed to making the military my career.

**Final Selection.** Although our analysis described above pointed to six items to measure “Engagement and Commitment” from the *SOFA*, we had also identified an item from the *LIS* during our “Connectedness” analyses that is conceptually more closely aligned with “Engagement and Commitment.” This item, “This workgroup has a great deal of personal



meaning to me,” was a significant predictor of suicide attempts, and thus we prioritized this item for inclusion on the DEOCS.

Finally, because there is a robust civilian literature from I-O psychology and other related disciplines regarding “Engagement and Commitment” in the workplace, we also examined the most frequently used civilian scales to ensure we were leveraging the most up-to-date research on this topic. We collected data on the DEOCS 4.1 research block for items from well-established scales in the civilian literature, and we tested for clarity and relevance with a military population. Specifically, we asked participants to answer the following short answer questions (SAQ):

6. Is the meaning of the above questions clear to you; why or why not?
7. Do the questions above ask about important aspects of your life as a military member or DoD civilian; why or why not?

The research team then read through the responses to these SAQs and rejected any items if multiple participants indicated problems with them.

Based on this combination of considerations, we ultimately retained one item from the *SOFA* scale (I am committed to making the military my career), one item from the *LIS* (This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me) and two additional items from civilian scales that performed well on the research block (I am proud of my work; I feel like “part of the family” in my unit; Table 112). Future analyses will seek to confirm these items’ relationships to the STOs.

**Table 112.**  
***Selected “Engagement and Commitment” Items***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Engagement and Commitment	I am committed to making the military my career.	2018 <i>SOFS-A</i>
	This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	2020 <i>LIS</i>
	I feel like “part of the family” in my unit.	Measurement of Work Engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006)
	I am proud of my work.	Measurement of Work Engagement

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### **“Fairness”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Fairness” and measures of retention or discrimination and identified the 2017 *WEOA*.

A “Fairness” item was identified from within an “Inclusion” scale included on the 2017 WEOA, specifically “Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, recognition) are fairly distributed among members of my unit.” We had considered the larger “Inclusion” scale on the 2017 WEOA to measure inclusion on the DEOCS but ultimately opted for a different scale (refer to the section on “Fairness” item selection). However, in considering and testing items to measure “Inclusion” from the 2017 WEOA, we noted that one item specifically focused on “Fairness” that is a significant predictor of past-year experiences of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination. Because this “Fairness” item worked as significant predictor of one of our STOs on the 2017 WEOA, it was a good candidate for a single-item measure of “Fairness” on the DEOCS 5.0.

**Final Selection.** As described above, we initially only selected the WEOA 2017 item related to “Fairness” in outcomes in the original draft of the survey shared with stakeholders. During their review, several stakeholders noted that “Fairness” related to disciplinary outcomes was also an important component of “Fairness” generally, and so we added an item from the “Inclusive Leadership” scale that aligns to this concept (Table 113). Future analyses will seek to confirm the latter item’s relationships to the STOs.

**Table 113.**  
**Selected “Fairness” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Fairness	Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, recognition) are fairly distributed among members of my unit.	WEOA 2017
	Discipline is administered fairly among members of my unit.	ARI Inclusive Leadership Scale (Ratcliff et al., 2018)

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. Chapter 8 has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**“Leadership Support”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Leadership Support” and measures of readiness, retention, or suicide, and identified the 2018 SOFS-A.

**Item Reduction Analysis.** The 2018 SOFS-A was used to assess 10 items assessing “Leadership Support” in association with two outcomes: attempted suicide and readiness. These items and their text are presented in Table 114.

**Table 114.**  
**2018 SOFS-A “Leadership Support” Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
SUPVA	My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.
SUPVB	My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.
SUPVC	Discussions with my supervisor about my performance are worthwhile.
SUPVD	My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.
SUPVE	My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.
SUPVF	Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.
SUPVG	My supervisor listens to what I have to say.
SUPVH	My supervisor treats me with respect.
SUPVI	In the last 6 months, my supervisor has talked with me about my performance.
SUPVJ	I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). After reviewing the descriptive statistics, the pattern between the items were similar in distribution between the response options. Thus, we did not remove any items based on descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 115. In addition, we also examined the means and standard deviations for each item. These are presented in Table 116.

**Table 115.**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Leadership Support” Items**

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Don’t know/No basis to judge		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
SUPVA	305	2.28	343	2.57	885	6.62	2052	15.36	1996	14.94	120	0.90	989	7.40
SUPVB	251	1.88	274	2.05	877	6.56	2216	16.59	1962	14.68	110	0.82	1000	7.48
SUPVC	352	2.63	383	2.87	1094	8.19	2010	15.04	1669	12.49	180	1.35	1002	7.50
SUPVD	224	1.68	193	1.44	1108	8.29	2021	15.13	1822	13.64	299	2.24	1023	7.66
SUPVE	370	2.77	450	3.37	1083	8.11	2011	15.05	1566	11.72	146	1.09	1064	7.96
SUPVF	212	1.59	311	2.33	922	6.90	2350	17.59	1793	13.42	100	0.75	1002	7.50
SUPVG	272	2.04	279	2.09	846	6.33	2269	16.98	1934	14.47	92	0.69	998	7.47
SUPVH	185	1.38	184	1.38	752	5.63	2323	17.39	2144	16.05	85	0.64	1017	7.61
SUPVI	358	2.68	449	3.36	919	6.88	2074	15.52	1699	12.72	180	1.35	1011	7.57
SUPVJ	371	2.78	264	1.98	961	7.19	2042	15.28	1949	14.59	95	0.71	1008	7.54

Note. 6,671 (49.9%) participants did not see these items as they were not on the module they received.

**Table 116.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Leadership Support” Items*

Item	Mean	SD
SUPVA	3.91	1.12
SUPVB	3.96	1.05
SUPVC	3.77	1.14
SUPVD	3.94	1.03
SUPVE	3.72	1.16
SUPVF	3.93	1.02
SUPVG	3.95	1.06
SUPVH	4.08	0.97
SUPVI	3.78	1.16
SUPVJ	3.88	1.14

Next, we examined correlations between the “Leadership Support” items. As shown in Table 117, with the exception of the correlations between SUPVI and most of the other items, all of the items are highly correlated ( $r > 0.65$ ). The correlations between SUPVI and the other items range from 0.55 to 0.71. Although these correlations are slightly lower than the others, the correlations are still medium to strong correlations for the social sciences. We therefore retained this item in the regression analyses.

**Table 117.**  
*Correlations Between “Leadership Support” Items*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. SUPVA									
2. SUPVB	0.70								
3. SUPVC	0.72	0.79							
4. SUPVD	0.72	0.77	0.80						
5. SUPVE	0.68	0.75	0.86	0.78					
6. SUPVF	0.71	0.75	0.76	0.77	0.77				
7. SUPVG	0.73	0.77	0.79	0.79	0.77	0.81			
8. SUPVH	0.72	0.76	0.75	0.79	0.73	0.78	0.88		
9. SUPVI	0.55	0.60	0.67	0.63	0.71	0.66	0.64	0.62	
10. SUPVJ	0.73	0.76	0.82	0.81	0.80	0.79	0.85	0.84	0.68

Next, we examined the relationship between each of the “Leadership Support” items and the STOs of interest, in this case attempted suicide, and readiness, in a weighted logistic and linear regression, respectively. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base. As shown in Table 118, the only

item that predicted attempted suicide was SUPVB. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression with the only remaining variable.

**Table 118.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Leadership Support” Predicting Attempted Suicide*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
SUPVA	1.50	0.34	0.075
SUPVB	0.45	0.14	0.008
SUPVC	0.90	0.36	0.794
SUPVD	1.09	0.35	0.777
SUPVE	0.89	0.26	0.692
SUPVF	1.23	0.36	0.474
SUPVG	1.45	0.57	0.337
SUPVH	0.61	0.28	0.283
SUPVI	1.11	0.25	0.624
SUPVJ	0.69	0.22	0.242

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.29$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

As shown in Table 119, the overall model fit for these two models was similar, which is noteworthy given the number of items that were dropped from the analysis. Based on these models predicting suicide attempts in the past 12 months, SUPVB was the only item we recommended to be retained ( $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that, based on the regression model predicting attempted suicide, only item SUPVB should be retained to the next step.

**Table 119.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Leadership Support” Predicting Attempted Suicide*

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
SUPVB	0.47	0.09	<0.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.24$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

Next, we examined associations between the “Leadership Support” items and readiness. As shown in Table 120, the only items that predicted readiness was SUPVF ( $p < 0.001$ ) and SUPVJ ( $p = 0.002$ ). We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 120.**  
**Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Leadership Support” Predicting Readiness**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
SUPVA	0.01	0.03	0.694
SUPVB	0.01	0.04	0.822
SUPVC	0.07	0.04	0.073
SUPVD	-0.00	0.04	0.948
SUPVE	-0.05	0.04	0.172
SUPVF	0.17	0.04	<0.001
SUPVG	0.00	0.04	0.945
SUPVH	-0.05	0.05	0.303
SUPVI	0.00	0.03	0.913
SUPVJ	0.14	0.04	0.002

Note.  $R^2 = 0.17$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

As shown in Table 121, the overall model fit did not change between the model with more variables and the model with fewer variables. Based on the regression predicting readiness, items SUPVF ( $p < 0.05$ ) and SUPVI ( $p < 0.05$ ) were retained for the next step of the analysis.

**Table 121.**  
**Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Leadership Support” Predicting Readiness**

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
SUPVF	0.17	0.03	<0.001
SUPVJ	0.12	0.03	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.16$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, age, marital status, years of Service, AFQT, and living off base.

Based on this series of analyses, we retained SUPVB, SUPVF, and SUPVJ. These three items demonstrate strong reliability ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ). The correlation between the recommended scale and the original scale also shows a very strong correlation ( $r = 0.97$ ). Finally, each is significantly associated with an STO. We present the three inclusion items retained from the item reduction analysis Table 122 below.

**Table 122.**  
**“Leadership Support” Items Retained in Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
SUPVB	My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.
SUPVF	Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.
SUPVJ	I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.

**Final Selection.** The three items retained from the item reduction analysis were included in the final survey instrument. In focus groups and reviews of the survey, some stakeholders expressed a desire for expanded coverage relevant to “Leadership Support.” Responding to this feedback, we included three additional items from the 2018 SOFS-A “Leadership Support” section, one item from the 2017 WEOA,<sup>98</sup> and two additional items capturing “Servant Leadership” (per stakeholder feedback) resulting in the final list of nine items shown in Table 123. Future analyses will seek to confirm the untested items’ relationships to the STOs.

**Table 123.**  
**Selected “Leadership Support” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Leadership Support	My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.	2018 SOFS-A
	Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.	2018 SOFS-A
	I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.	2018 SOFS-A
	My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.	2018 SOFS-A
	My supervisor listens to what I have to say.	2018 SOFS-A
	My supervisor treats me with respect.	2018 SOFS-A
	I believe I can use my chain of command to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation or reprisal.	WEOA 2017
	My supervisor cares about my personal well-being.	Servant Leadership Scale (Liden et al., 2008)
	My supervisor puts the interests of subordinates and subordinates’ families above their personal interests.	Servant Leadership Scale

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**“Morale”**

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Morale” and measures of readiness, retention, or sexual assault, and identified the 2012 WGRA.

**Item Reduction Analysis.** “Morale” was assessed based on two items from the 2012 WGRA and assessed in relation to unwanted sexual contact (a proxy measure of sexual assault used on OPA surveys until 2014; hereafter referred to as “sexual assault” in this section for simplicity). Table 124 below presents the item text for “Morale.”

<sup>98</sup> This was analyzed as part of an inclusion scale that was not ultimately selected, but this item was a significant predictor of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination and is conceptually consistent with “Leadership Support,” and was thus selected for inclusion as part of the “Leadership Support” construct.

**Table 124.**  
**2012 WGRA “Morale” Variable Name and Item Text**

Variable Name	Item Text
MORALEA	Overall, how would you rate your current level of morale?
MORALEB	Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale in your unit?

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for “Morale,” we examined how frequently each of the response options was endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not recommend removing items based on descriptive statistics. We present the frequencies in Table 125 and the means and standard deviations from each item in Table 126.

**Table 125.**  
**Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Morale” Items**

Variable	No response		Very low		Low		Moderate		High		Very high	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
MORALEA	142	0.62	1,624	7.13	2,622	11.5	7,511	32.95	6,900	30.27	3,993	17.52
MORALEB	90	0.39	1,637	7.18	3,416	14.99	9,121	40.02	6,058	26.58	2,470	10.84

**Table 126.**  
**Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Morale” Items**

Variable	Mean	SD
MORALEA	3.40	1.12
MORALEB	3.19	1.05

Next, the correlation between the “Morale” items was high ( $r = 0.71$ ), suggesting content overlap between items. We then examined the relationship between each of the “Morale” items and sexual assault, in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 127, MORALEA ( $OR = 0.78, p = 0.050$ ) was a marginally significant predictor of sexual assault, while MORALEB ( $OR = 0.81, p = 0.053$ ) was not.



**Table 127.**  
**Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for “Morale” Predicting Sexual Assault**

Predictor	OR	SE	p-value
MORALEA	0.78	0.10	0.050
MORALEB	0.81	0.09	0.053

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.13$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, deployment, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Because the original scale comprised only two items, we did not examine the reliability of the scale. However, we calculated the correlation between the 2-item original scale and each “Morale” item. The original scale was highly correlated with MORALEA ( $r = 0.93$ ) and MORALEB ( $r = 0.92$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the scale and each item. Both items were retained from the item reduction analysis (Table 128).

**Table 128.**  
**“Morale” Items Retained in Item Reduction Analysis**

Variable Name	Item Text
MORALEA	Overall, how would you rate your current level of morale?
MORALEB	Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale in your unit?

**Final Selection.** Both “Morale” items retained in the item reduction analysis were included in the final survey instrument (Table 129).

**Table 129.**  
**Selected “Morale” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Morale	Overall, how would you rate your current level of morale?	2018 SOFS-A
	Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale in your unit?	2018 SOFS-A

*Note.* The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

### “Safe Storage of Lethal Means”

**Data Source.** Given the evidence, we reviewed OPA survey data to identify any data sets that contained measures of “Safe Storage” and measures of suicide. No existing data were available to support our analysis.

**Final Selections.** Due to the timing of when this construct was added during the survey development process, we were unable to test items on the DEOCS research block. Therefore, we worked with subject matter experts and our stakeholders to understand the concept, and the

constraints associated with measuring “Access to Lethal Means” on a government survey.<sup>99</sup> With this information, we developed a single-item measure for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0 (Table 130). Future analyses will seek to confirm this item’s relationship to the STOs.

**Table 130.**  
***Selected “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” Item***

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Safe Storage of Lethal Means	In general, the hazards in my living space that may be deliberately or accidentally used to harm others or myself, such as poisons, medications, and firearms, are safely stored (for example, locked in a cabinet, unloaded).	Developed by OPA in coordination with stakeholders

***“Transformational Leadership”***

**Data Source.** “Transformational Leadership” has not been measured on prior OPA surveys. Therefore, we reviewed the literature for candidate scales.

**Item Reduction Analysis.** We selected the 7-item Global Transformational Leadership (GTL) Scale as a candidate scale (Carless et al., 2000). This scale was chosen because it is a validated measure of “Transformational Leadership,” and has a strong relationship with other commonly used measures of “Transformational leadership.”<sup>100</sup> We collected pilot data on the seven GTL items by leveraging the DEOCS research block and assessed these items in relation to retention and readiness. These items and their text are presented in Table 131.

<sup>99</sup> Prior legal consultation on OPA surveys has limited our ability to include any questions that could be used to establish who, among members of the DoD population, has a personal firearm. Thus, although firearms are the most frequent means of committing suicide among military members and are the primary focus of means safety research and practice as a way to prevent suicide, the DEOCS cannot focus specifically on firearm ownership and firearm safety practices among those who own personal firearms.

<sup>100</sup> Many “Transformational Leadership” scales are proprietary, which was not an option given budgetary considerations and the volume of DEOCS conducted every year (most licenses are per-use). Another benefit of the GTL is that it is freely available.

**Table 131.**  
***“Transformational Leadership” Variable Name and Item Text***

Variable Name	Item Text
Q6	My current supervisor communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.
Q7	My current supervisor treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development.
Q8	My current supervisor gives encouragement and recognition to staff.
Q9	My current supervisor fosters trust, involvement, and cooperation among team members.
Q10	My current supervisor encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions.
Q11	My current supervisor is clear about his/her values and practices which he/she preaches.
Q12	My current supervisor instills pride and respect in others and inspires me by being highly competent.

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not remove items from consideration based on descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 132 and the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 133.

**Table 132.**  
***Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to “Transformational Leadership” Items***

Item	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q6	102	5.39	155	8.18	397	20.96	569	30.04	671	35.43
Q7	73	3.85	111	5.86	339	17.9	501	26.45	870	45.93
Q8	77	4.07	151	7.97	351	18.53	540	28.51	775	40.92
Q9	102	5.39	120	6.34	339	17.9	543	28.67	790	41.71
Q10	90	4.75	144	7.6	413	21.81	556	29.36	691	36.48
Q11	89	4.7	116	6.12	344	18.16	565	29.83	780	41.18
Q12	106	5.6	145	7.66	354	18.69	530	27.98	759	40.07

**Table 133.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of “Transformational Leadership” Items*

Item	Mean	SD
Q6	3.82	1.16
Q7	4.05	1.10
Q8	3.94	1.13
Q9	3.95	1.15
Q10	3.85	1.14
Q11	3.97	1.12
Q12	3.89	1.18

Next, we examined correlations between the “Transformational Leadership” items. As shown in Table 134, all items were highly correlated ( $r \geq 0.75$ ), suggesting content overlap between the items. However, we included all items into the weighted linear regressions.

**Table 134.**  
*Correlations Between “Transformational Leadership” Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Q6						
2. Q7	0.78					
3. Q8	0.77	0.84				
4. Q9	0.78	0.84	0.83			
5. Q10	0.75	0.78	0.77	0.79		
6. Q11	0.76	0.79	0.78	0.80	0.78	
7. Q12	0.77	0.81	0.80	0.84	0.78	0.82

Next, we examined the relationship between each of the “Transformational Leadership” items and retention intentions and readiness, in a series of linear regressions. We controlled for sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 135, only item Q10 (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.28,  $p < 0.001$ ) significantly predicted retention. We thus removed all the non-significant items from the model and re-ran the regression.

**Table 135.**  
***Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Transformational Leadership” Predicting Retention***

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q6	0.06	0.07	0.445
Q7	-0.01	0.10	0.913
Q8	0.02	0.09	0.841
Q9	0.04	0.10	0.674
Q10	0.28	0.08	<0.001
Q11	0.16	0.08	0.055
Q12	-0.11	0.08	0.202

Note.  $R^2 = 0.16$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 136, item Q10 (Unstandardized Coef. = 0.40,  $p < 0.001$ ) continued to significantly predict retention intentions.

**Table 136.**  
***Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Transformational Leadership” Predicting Retention***

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q10	0.40	0.04	<0.001

Note.  $R^2 = 0.15$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Because only a single item remained, it was not possible to calculate the reliability of the revised scale. Item Q10 was, however, highly correlated with the 7-item original version of the scale ( $r = 0.89$ ), suggesting content overlap between the original scale and item Q10.

Next, we examined the association between “Transformational Leadership” items and readiness. As shown in Table 137, none of the items significantly predicted readiness ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 137.**  
**Linear Regression Analysis Summary for “Transformational Leadership” Predicting Readiness**

Predictor	Unstandardized Coef.	SE	p-value
Q6	-0.02	0.05	0.655
Q7	-0.03	0.07	0.697
Q8	0.07	0.06	0.304
Q9	0.06	0.07	0.349
Q10	0.06	0.06	0.246
Q11	0.08	0.06	0.181
Q12	0.05	0.06	0.447

Note.  $R^2 = 0.10$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

Based on the item reduction analyses, only item Q10 was retained as it was the only significant indicator of an STO, specifically retention. None of the items significantly predicted readiness. Table 138 shows the final item retained.

**Table 138.**  
**Summary of “Transformational Leadership” Items Recommended for Inclusion**

Variable Name	Item Text
Q10	My current supervisor encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions.

**Final Selection.** The single item retained from item reduction analysis was selected. To ensure conceptual coverage of “Transformational Leadership,” three additional items were chosen from the same scale. These items were selected to represent aspects of a positive climate that were reported in the focus groups and stakeholder interviews (Table 139).

**Table 139.**  
**Selected “Transformational Leadership” Items**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Transformational Leadership	My current supervisor encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions.	Global Transformational Leadership Scale
	My current supervisor communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.	Global Transformational Leadership Scale
	My current supervisor is clear about his/her values and practices which he/she preaches.	Global Transformational Leadership Scale
	My current supervisor treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development.	Global Transformational Leadership Scale

Note. The final DEOCS 5.0 items may differ slightly in wording from what was selected at this stage. [Chapter 8](#) has a description of how the final set of items was edited for tense, time periods, response options, and other considerations to ensure that the entire set of selected survey items work together in a single DEOCS survey instrument.

**“Work-Life Balance”**

**Data Source.** No OPA surveys measure “Work-Life Balance.” So, we selected a measure that had previously been tested within the U.S. Air Force (Sachau et al., 2012), because it is brief (single item), aligned with feedback from focus groups and the DEOCS redesign survey, and developed for use with a military population (Table 140).

**Table 140.**  
**Selected “Work-Life Balance” Item**

Construct Name	Item Text	Item Source
Work-Life Balance	In this unit, members can easily balance their work and their home lives.	Work to Family Conflict and Family to Work Conflict Scales

**Discussion**

In selecting items for the DEOCS 5.0, we employed a data-driven approach, while considering user experience (including reducing the length of scales where possible). Our approach prioritized predictive validity, or the ability of items to provide meaningful information about risks for the STOs. In this way, we strove to ensure the data collected by the DEOCS 5.0 are of sufficient quality to be truly actionable.

Thus, to measure each of the 19 DEOCS risk and protective factors selected in [Chapter 6](#), we prioritized items that are associated with one or more of the DEOCS STOs, based on quantitative analysis. In other words, when a survey participant answers these items, it provides data-driven insight into the participant’s likelihood of having experienced sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, suicidal thoughts, readiness impacts, and changes in their retention intentions. To accomplish this unconventional approach to scale development, we leveraged OPA’s existing survey data. This allowed us to start with scales that have already been successfully used with military members and to identify opportunities to streamline and shorten these scales by prioritizing those items associated with one or more STO.

We note that a limitation of this approach is the cross-sectional nature of the data. For example, we cannot differentiate whether the “Workplace Hostility” preceded the sexual harassment or sexual assault; we can only establish which forms of hostility are most likely to co-occur with harassment and assault. Future longitudinal analysis of the DEOCS will allow us to further examine and refine our understanding of the temporal nature of these associations and increase our ability to discern leading versus lagging indicators.

There were some constructs for which we were unable to leverage existing survey data, so we modified our approach. In some cases, we collected data via the DEOCS research block and then followed the same analytic process as with existing OPA survey data to examine associations with one or more STOs. In other cases, we relied upon existing published literature and stakeholder feedback to guide selections. As data become available via the new DEOCS, scales that were not tested in association with STO(s) are a high priority for further analysis,

although we will also conduct analyses to confirm all expected predictive relationships. A key milestone on the way to the success of the DEOCS will be to test the predictive validity of the survey at the unit level. That is, we will need to be able to confirm that the DEOCS can do what we need, and what it has been designed to do, and accurately capture risk of STOs. These analyses will be reported in subsequent OPA reports and may inform whether further adjustments are needed to improve precision and utility.

In the next chapter, we discuss how the OPA team applied survey methodology best practices to construct the final DEOCS survey.



## Chapter 8: DEOCS 5.0 Survey Instrument Development

*Dr. Jon Schreiner, Dr. Rachel Clare, Clancy Murray, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Hunter Peebles, Brittany Owen, Dr. Julia Dahl*

With Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) final factors and survey items selected ([Chapter 6](#); [Chapter 7](#)), the DEOCS redesign team began the process of constructing the final DEOCS 5.0 instrument. To do so, we could not simply copy and paste the selected survey items from their source surveys into the DEOCS 5.0 instrument. As described in [Chapter 7](#), the DEOCS 5.0 survey items come from disparate sources. As a result, the selected DEOCS items were not designed to be used in a single survey. Consider the following five questions selected for inclusion on the DEOCS 5.0 (Table 141):

**Table 141.**  
*Differences in Example DEOCS Source Items*

Question Text	Response Options
Q1. Since {XDATE}, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by telling racial/ethnic jokes?	<i>Yes, No</i>
Q2. During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers... Intentionally interfered with your work performance?	<i>Never, Once or Twice, Sometimes, Often, Very Often</i>
Q3. My team leader... Encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions.	<i>Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always</i>
Q4. Service members in your unit work well as a team.	<i>Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree</i>
Q5. I can rely on my immediate supervisor to act in my organization’s best interest.	<i>Strongly Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree</i>

Multiple inconsistencies exist within these five questions that would be problematic if included together in a single survey instrument. For example:

- Q1 is programmed to insert the exact date 12 months prior, whereas Q2 references the time frame differently.
- Q4 references “Service members” (a term appropriate for those serving in the military), whereas Q2 references “coworkers” (a more generic or civilian term).
- Q4 references the participant working in a “unit” whereas Q5 references the participant working in an “organization.”
- Q4 asks the participant to think in terms of “in **my** organization,” and Q5 asks the participant to think in terms of “in **your** unit.”

- Q1 and Q2 are in the past tense, whereas Q3, Q4, and Q5 are in the present tense.
- The phrase “my team leader” in Q3 does not apply across all DoD work settings.
- Q4 uses a 5-point agree/disagree response scale and Q5 uses a 7-point agree/disagree response scale.
- Q2 and Q3 both ask about the frequency of an event occurring using a 5-point scale, but the scales have different words. Although both use the same low point (“Never”), the high point of the scales are different (Q2: “*Very Often*” vs. Q3: “*Always*”).

Our goal was to create an accurate and data-driven survey that produces actionable information for commanders and organization leaders. For results from the DEOCS to be useful to commanders and leaders and be both accurate and data driven, the survey instrument must properly collect information in a way that limits measurement error. Table 141 does not mention all of the inconsistencies across these five items, let alone all of the inconsistencies found across all items selected for the final DEOCS instrument, that could potentially lead to measurement error. Moreover, inconsistencies in how a survey item is asked can lead to inconsistencies and problems in reporting data. To produce accurate data that commanders and leaders find accessible and actionable, the source items need to be standardized and edited to work as a single, cohesive, survey instrument.

Our goal was to create a user-friendly survey instrument that keeps the burden of responding the same, or less, compared to the previous DEOCS 4.1 instrument. A well-constructed, user-friendly survey should feel like a seamless conversation between the survey and the participant (Dillman, Christian, and Smyth 2014). This means using plain, easy-to-understand language that is consistently understood by survey participants. If terms, phrases, or language in the survey is not understood in the same way by all participants, it can lead to measurement error and increased survey burden. DEOCS participants include active duty military Service members, Reserve and Guard Service members, DoD civilians, and Service Academy cadets and midshipmen. These populations use different vernacular (e.g., commander vs. leader, unit vs. organization vs. Service Academy), which can impact how survey items should be worded and ordered to ensure they are clear and interpretable.

This chapter explains the process by which the Office of People Analytics (OPA) applied best practices from survey methodology to construct the DEOCS 5.0 instrument into a single, cohesive survey instrument that serves the needs of multiple distinct populations across DoD. This chapter covers:

1. Selecting and standardizing response scales
2. Writing the DEOCS instrument
3. Discussion

## Selecting and Standardizing Response Scales

There are countless ways a survey can ask participants questions. Because not everything on a survey is asked as a question, we refer to each “question” on the survey as a “survey item.” Survey items can ask participants how much they agree or disagree with a statement, how frequently an event or feeling occurs, use true/false or yes/no binary-style questions, factor-specific response options customized to each item or Likert-style response scales with four, five, or seven response options, or provide a rating on scales of 1 to 10 or 1 to 100. Response scales can be nominal or ordinal with unipolar options going from a low score in one direction to higher scores, or bipolar with a neutral or nonexistent midpoint with positive and negative reporting options going out in either direction.

Using different types of “response scales” is necessary to collect different types of data. Different scales are used for different types of measurement needs, and a survey should use the type of response scale (or scales) necessary for the measurement purposes of each item on a survey. It is a best practice to use factor-specific response scales that measure items directly on the factor it is measuring (Saris et al., 2010; Dillman et al., 2014). However, using customized, factor-specific response scales is not a good solution for the DEOCS for two reasons. First, one goal of the DEOCS is to be data driven by using validated items from previous surveys. Most questions selected for the DEOCS were not previously measured using factor-specific response scales. To keep the items as close to their original measurement style as possible, it was necessary to keep the items on their original, non-factor-specific response scales. Second, we are driven by the need to provide actionable data for DEOCS data users, and using fewer response scales can provide a more streamlined and digestible way to provide this DEOCS information.

If we used the questions selected for the DEOCS as they were written for their original surveys, then the items selected for the DEOCS would have used over a dozen different response scales and response scale variations. Few of these responses are factor-specific. Most were slight variations of questions asked on two types of scales: agree/disagree scales and frequency-style scales. Surveys should limit such slight variations in how items are presented because they can go unnoticed by participants and lead to reporting errors (Israel, 2013; Schwartz, 1996). To add consistency to DEOCS measurement, we decided to standardize the response scales and measure the vast majority of questions using two primary scales:

1. A 4-point *Frequency* scale with four response options: *Never*, *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, and *Often*.
2. A 5-point *Agree/Disagree* scale with five response options: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*.

In this section, we describe how we decided on these two response scales for most DEOCS 5.0 items and how scales were assigned to each item. We also highlight a few items that did not work on these two scales and the scales we chose for those items.

## Frequency Response Scale

One common type of survey response scale is the frequency scale. Frequency items ask participants to report how often a situation occurs or a feeling is felt from a list of response options that each represent a level of frequency, usually organized from low (*Never*) to high (*Always*). DEOCS source items used three similar, but different, frequency response scales (Table 142).

**Table 142.**  
***Frequency Response Scales from Source Items***

Response Scale Type	Response Options
5-point, <i>Never/Very Often</i>	<i>Never</i> <i>Once or Twice</i> <i>Sometimes</i> <i>Often</i> <i>Very Often</i>
5-point, <i>Never/Very Often, with NA option</i>	<i>Never</i> <i>Almost Never</i> <i>Sometimes</i> <i>Fairly Often</i> <i>Very Often</i> <i>NA</i>
5-point, <i>Never/Always</i>	<i>Never</i> <i>Rarely</i> <i>Sometimes</i> <i>Often</i> <i>Always</i>

Using three similar, but different, response scales to measure frequency on different items in a single survey would be confusing for participants and could potentially introduce reporting errors and confusion. To lessen confusion, burden, and chance of errors, all questions asking for participants to report frequency should use the same response scale. There is not a standard or an agreed-upon best practice response style for ordinal frequency items, and different reporting options can work for different purposes (Dillman et al., 2014).

The DEOCS team decided to use a 4-point *Frequency* scale with response categories: “*Never*,” “*Rarely*,” “*Sometimes*,” and “*Often*.” The decision to use this scale was based on a few factors.

### ***Semantic Difference***

When survey questions ask participants to report their height, the distance between response options are consistent. Someone 5 feet, 9 inches tall is one inch shorter than someone 5 feet, 10 inches tall, and that person is equally one inch shorter than someone who is 5 feet, 11 inches tall. There is no debate on the difference, or distance, between response options, because height is measured in real inches.

The DEOCS 5.0 does not ask items that can be measured with empirically consistent response options such as height. In many social science surveys, participants are asked to report how they feel something, which cannot be measured by empirically grounded numbers. Often, participants are asked to select words or phrases from an ordinal scale of phrases that are placed in a logical order, with some being lower or less than others that are higher or more. For example, *Sometimes*, *Often*, and *Very Often* are three ordinal response options used on surveys because these words represent some measure of frequency and are placed in logical order. Although *Often* is clearly less than *Very Often*, these words or phrases do not have empirically consistent distance between them. The perceived distance between words can be thought of as their “semantic difference.”

Ideally, response options in an ordinal scale should have as close to equal semantic distance between each option. Although the perceived semantic distance between ordinal response options can vary from person to person, some words or phrases may be more regularly regarded as distant or close to one another. One original DEOCS 5.0 source item used the following phrases as reporting options: *Never*, *Almost Never*, *Sometimes*, *Fairly Often*, *Very Often*. Although little research has been done to scientifically understand semantic differences, we felt the difference between *Never* and *Almost Never* was much smaller than the difference between *Almost Never* and *Sometimes*, or between *Sometimes* and *Fairly Often*. Also, *Fairly Often* and *Very Often* may not be seen as similarly different to all participants. In short, this scale didn’t pass our evaluation for reasonable and consistent semantic difference.

The more ordinal response options that a scale has, the more points of difference that exist between options, creating more points where semantic difference may vary between response options. Therefore, it can be harder to create scales with consistent semantic difference with more response options. This would suggest that a frequency response scale with fewer response options may be better than one with more options. However, we also want to provide participants with a range of reporting options to capture a variety of experiences. The needs of each question can differ, but in most cases, four response options are ideal for unipolar scales because they provide enough points for distinction without overwhelming participants (Krosnick & Fabrigrr, 1997; Dillman et al., 2014).

To limit differences between responses while also providing a range of response option, we decided on a *4-point Frequency* scale. This reduced the points of difference compared to 5-point response scale, while still providing a range of response options.

### ***Removing the Perceived “Midpoint”***

Some survey participants tend to want to appear average or normal and gravitate toward response option at the midpoint of a response scale (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). Therefore, many surveys use midpoints that present neutral values, so as not to bias participants toward either positive or negative reporting. For example, in a *5-point Agree/Disagree* scale, the midpoint is often a semantically neutral phrase, such as *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. This is a bipolar scale, with positive (agreement) and negative (disagreement) options that go in both directions from the neutral midpoint.

Frequency items are often measured on a unipolar scale with response options starting at a low or zero point (i.e., *Never*) with each option signaling more frequent occurrence (i.e. *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, *A lot*, *All the Time*, or *Often*). Technically, there is not a midpoint on unipolar scales in the same way that bipolar scales have a clear midpoint. However, response scales with an odd number of responses will always visually display a response option in the “middle” of the available responses. Research has shown that the visual representation of survey items matters in how items are interpreted and answered (Tourangeau et al., 2000; Christian & Dillman, 2004) and particularly that the visual presentation of a midpoint matters more than the conceptual midpoint (Tourangeau et al., 2004). Each of the frequency scales from source DEOCS 5.0 items were 5-point frequency unipolar scales with the “middle” response option being *Sometimes*. This can be problematic because the scale presents *Sometimes* as the middle response option, which may suggest to some that *Sometimes* is the neutral or normal response, and potentially inflate response rates of this non-neutral option (Tourangeau et al., 2004).

This tendency can also be referred to as fence sitting, because when a participant feels incapable or unable to make a decision, the easiest answer (not the most accurate) may be to “sit on the fence” in the middle (this is more pronounced concern in bipolar designs with neutral midpoints). Sometimes it is necessary and appropriate to provide participants with this option. Other times, it is more appropriate to remove the fence. Rather than a 5-point scale, we decided to use a 4-point scale, as the even number of response options remove the perceived midpoint.

### ***Balanced Response Options***

Response scales should always present a balance of response options (Dillman & Christian, 2003). Consider an example from items selected for the DEOCS 5.0 with the following response options: *Excellent*, *Very Good*, *Good*, *Fair*, and *Poor*. Although “balance” is often a term used in bipolar scales (with the neutral point as the fulcrum of balance), it can be argued that this unipolar, going from *Poor* to *Excellent* is also “unbalanced” because it clearly includes three semantically “positive” response options (*Excellent*, *Very Good*, and *Good*), one possibly neutral or ambiguous response option (*Fair*), and only one clearly negative response option (*Poor*). By presenting more ways for a participant to report a “positive” experience, the question can bias participants to report more favorably than they would on a more balanced scale with equal numbers of positive and negative terms (if possible). In addition, reiterating the previous argument regarding neutral midpoints, placing the term *Good* as the central option will likely bias responses that want to appear “normal” and instead of reporting neutral will report positively to this item.

### ***Four-Point Frequency Scale***

Using a 4-point scale using *Never*, *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, and *Often* present response options to a participant that mitigate the above-mentioned risks. The four options have more clear and consistent semantic difference, use an even number of responses that removes the perception of a midpoint, and present a more balanced set of positive and negative reporting options to select from.

## Frequency Scale Options

In this section, we discuss which items on the final DEOCS 5.0 are measured on the standardized *4-point Frequency* scale.

First, any question that originally used a frequency response scale were reworked to use the standardized 4-point frequency scale. This includes items measuring the factors “Workplace Hostility,” “Stress,” “Passive Leadership,” and “Transformational Leadership.” Because these questions were originally asked on a frequency scale, they did not require substantial edits to make them work on our *4-point Frequency* scale.<sup>101</sup>

Second, factors that were previously asked using a *Yes/No* format were also converted to the frequency scale, including “Sexually Harassing Behaviors,” “Sexist Behaviors,” and “Racially Harassing Behaviors.” Converting these questions into the frequency scale required some slight editing to the question text. For example, one source question was:

- “Since one year ago today, do you think someone from work mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted you because of your gender?”

To convert the question into the *4-point Frequency* scale, we rewrote the question to read:

- “How often does someone from your unit mistreat, ignore, exclude, or insult you because of your gender?”

Converting *Yes/No* questions to the *4-point Frequency* scales provides greater variability and gradation of experiences. Instead of asking for a *Yes/No* response, the new item asks for how often an event occurs. A response of *Never* is akin to responding “*No*” to the original item. The frequency format adds three ways to respond “*Yes*” by selecting either *Rarely*, *Sometimes*, or *Often*.

We also chose to use the *4-point Frequency* scale for one question that was originally asked using an *Agree/Disagree* scale from the Military Service Academy (MSA) DEOCS:

- “Derogatory slurs, comments, and jokes concerning sexual orientation are not used in my company/squadron.”

This wording of the source item is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the item asks participants to agree or disagree with a negative, “not” statement, which can be confusing, especially in the double negative case of disagreeing with something not happening, (Dillman et al., 2014). Second, this item appears with other items covering similar topics (see the next sections). All items in that section are measured on the frequency scale, therefore asking a single item in the section on the agree/disagree scale would not fit with the other questions in the section. To make the question less confusing for participants and to fit the question in the proper section with other similar questions, the question was reworded:

<sup>101</sup> Other edits to these items may have been made for reasons covered in the next section.

- “How often does someone from your Military Service Academy use derogatory slurs, make comments, or tell jokes concerning sexual orientation?”

### ***Frequency Scale Instructions***

Source items for the DEOCS 5.0 also used different versions of instructions. For consistency, all DEOCS 5.0 frequency items were preceded by the following instruction:

- “In this section, please rate how often the following situations occur.”

### ***Agree/Disagree Response Scale***

The second primary response scale that was selected for DEOCS 5.0 items asked participants to report their level of agreement or disagreement with provided statements, referred to here as *Agree/Disagree* style items.

*Agree/Disagree* style survey items are very common. Although more cognitively burdensome than factor-specific reporting (Saris et al., 2014), there are also benefits of using this response scale. One benefit of using this style of question on the DEOCS 5.0 is that questions on different factors can all be measured using the same response scale, producing user-friendly reports for commanders and leaders. Most importantly, over half of the items selected for use on the DEOCS 5.0 originally used some version of an agree/disagree scale. Retaining this style of response scale for these items allowed us to retain the original text and measurement of these items.

The selected DEOCS items had seven different versions of the *Agree/Disagree* reporting format, as shown in Table 143 below:



**Table 143.**  
*Agree/Disagree Response Options*

<b>Response Scale Type</b>	<b>Response Options</b>
<i>4-point Agree/Disagree w/ NA</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Don't Know/Not Applicable</i>
<i>5-point Agree/Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree</i>
<i>5-point Agree/Disagree w/ NA</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree Don't Know/No Basis to Judge</i>
<i>5-point: Disagree Very Much/Agree Very Much</i>	<i>Disagree Very Much Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Agree Very Much</i>
<i>6-point Not True at all/Very True for me</i>	<i>Not at All True for Me, Untrue for Me Somewhat Untrue for Me Somewhat True for Me True for Me Very True for Me</i>
<i>7-point Agree/Disagree w/ neither midpoint</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree Slightly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Slightly Agree Agree Strongly Agree</i>
<i>7-point Agree/Disagree w/ "undecided" midpoint</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree Disagree Disagree Somewhat Undecided Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Agree</i>

The most commonly used style of *Agree/Disagree* scale from the source items was the 7-point scale used on the previous DEOCS with the following response options: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Slightly Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree*. Our focus groups and stakeholder interviews indicated that DEOCS users and stakeholders did not find this 7-point level of granularity useful. Response options for questions should fit the

expectations of participants and the needs of data users. For example, ranking a movie on a scale of 1 to 100 can be more cumbersome and burdensome compared to rating a movie from 1 to 5 “stars.” Sometimes, added response options can increase cognitive burden to participants by forcing them to think of more ways in which to respond. Too few options can also cause stress on participants; for example, being asked to rate a movie with either “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” might burden participants because it would not capture how they want and expect to be able to respond. When response options do not match how a participant wants to report, questions can cause burden or measurement error (Dillman et al., 2014).

One source scale had six response options, removing the midpoint. This style of reporting is useful when the data needs require participants to decide, one way or another, and not allow participants to “sit on the fence” (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997). Although this is a useful strategy to ensure certain survey items meet specific data needs, we felt that our items required that we provide participants with a neutral midpoint to respond. This may lead to some participants reporting a neutral response to avoid answering an item (Presser & Shuman, 1980), but it is more likely that some participants truly feel neutral about some DEOCS items or topics. If neutral attitudes truly exist, then providing participants an option to report their true feelings can reduce burden and increase data quality (Treubner, 2021). To reduce burden on participants and increase data quality, we decided to provide a neutral *Neither Agree nor Disagree* midpoint to our *Agree/Disagree* items.

Other source scales also had serious problems. One scale placed the response *Undecided* in the midpoint of the response scale. This is not appropriate because *Undecided* means something very different than *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. Best practices recommend that these “nonresponse” response options should appear outside of the response scale and not as the midpoint (Willits & Janota, 1996). Presenting *Neither Agree nor Disagree* in the middle of the response option is more appropriate and allows participants to acknowledge that they have thought about the issue and actively know that they do not agree or disagree with the statement provided (Van Vaerenbergh & Thomas 2013). A reporting option of *Undecided* should only be used as intended as an “opt out” akin to source items options such as *Don’t know*, *Not Applicable*, or *No Basis to Judge*, which fall outside (and not in the middle of) the response scale.

Although appropriate in some cases, presenting a deliberate “opt out” option can lead to more non-reporting (Presser & Shuman, 1980) and discourages participants from investing mental energy to form an opinion and respond accordingly (Krosnick et al., 2002). Because DEOCS participants are able to skip any question on the survey, we decided not to provide an opt-out response option in the DEOCS 5.0. Finally, response options should also be presented from positive to negative, as this meets expectations (Turangeau et al., 2004; Toepoel & Dillman, 2011) and can increase speed of reporting (Christian et al., 2009; Hohne et al., 2021).

Based on the rationale described above, and departing from the DEOCS 4.1 methodology, we decided to use a common *5-point Agree/Disagree* scale with the options: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Strongly Disagree*, and no NA option. In addition to standardizing response scales across items, this decision also reduced the number of response options that the DEOCS asks the participant to consider when responding, which may reduce cognitive burden.

### **Agree/Disagree Item Selection**

All selected items that originally used an agree/disagree format were converted to the standardized *5-point Agree/Disagree* scale on the DEOCS 5.0. The factors that had at least one source item that originally used an agree/disagree scale and retained this type of reporting scale on the DEOCS 5.0 were:

- “Cohesion”
- “Connectedness”
- “Engagement and Commitment”
- “Inclusion”
- “Fairness”
- “Leadership Support”
- “Work-Life Balance”
- “Toxic Leadership”
- MSA-specific questions from the previous MSA DEOCS

Many of the source items on leadership were originally asked on some form of an agree/disagree scale, so we decided to ask all leadership questions on the same scale so that all information on leadership was measured on a consistent scale. The two exceptions were “Transformational Leadership” and “Passive Leadership” items that originally used a version of a frequency scale. To make these questions fit in the section with other leadership questions, they were converted to the *5-point Agree/Disagree* scale, as shown in the example below from a senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) / senior enlisted leaders (SEL) item:

Original text:

- “My current supervisor takes early action in addressing problems.”
  - *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always*

DEOCS 5.0 item (example for a military Service member):

- “My unit’s senior NCO/senior enlisted leader takes early action in addressing problems.”
  - *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

Aside from the change that the question asks about a different level of leadership, the wording of these questions and others in this same section did not require much editing to work with the 5-point *Agree/Disagree* scale.<sup>102</sup>

The most interesting edit occurred when converting items from the MSA DEOCS for the DEOCS 5.0. To reduce the number of response scales on the DEOCS 5.0, and to have questions fit with other questions in a section, we decided to edit some questions that used unique response scales in order to use the 5-point *Agree/Disagree* response scale. For example, MSA cadet and midshipmen were asked additional questions on alcohol consumption using a unique response scale:

Original text:

- “From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.”
  - *Not at All, Slight Extent, Moderate Extent, Great Extent, Don't Know/Not Applicable*

DEOCS 5.0 text:

- “At the Academy, peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.”<sup>103</sup>
  - *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

As was the case with the “Transformational” and “Passive Leadership” questions, these questions also work well with the new standardized scale with no substantive changes.

The MSA DEOCS also used another unique response scale:

- “If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect (*Mark all that apply*):
  - a. Praise for speaking up
  - b. Negative academic outcomes (e.g., poor evaluations, opportunities for leadership would suffer, unfair grades)
  - c. Negative social outcomes (e.g., being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, being bullied)
  - d. No changes in treatment

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<sup>102</sup> Other changes were made for a variety of reasons unrelated to the response scale. These will be covered in a later section of this chapter.

<sup>103</sup> The front clause, “From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy” was edited to “At the Academy,” to shorten the question. This is unrelated to the response scale change.

As a “*Mark all that apply*”-style item, each response option is its own, mutually exclusive situation that a cadet or midshipman may or may not experience. Instead of “Mark all that apply,” we decided to convert this single item to two separate items, the first covering option “c. negative social outcomes, and the second covering option “b. negative academic outcomes.”<sup>104</sup> These questions are:

- If I were to report a [“cadet” | “midshipman”] for misconduct, I would expect negative social outcomes (for example, being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, or being bullied) from other [“cadets” | “midshipmen”].
  - *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*
- If I were to report the first [“cadet” | “midshipman”] in my chain of command for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations or opportunities for leadership would suffer).
  - *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

“*Mark all that apply*” formats can be problematic and lead to increased rates of item nonresponse (Smyth, Dillman, Christian, & Stern 2006; Smyth 2008). As the only non-demographic item in the survey that would use this “*Mark all that apply*” style, it is even more possible that the instruction to “*Mark all that apply*” would be skipped or missed, and participants would mark a single answer, as they have done on every other question on the DEOCS. Instead, we converted the item into two “forced choice” questions that force each participant to consider each situation, and report independently on each. Although participants can skip any DEOCS 5.0 questions they want, by framing these previous response options as two separate items, we increased the chance that participants would respond to each situation with a thoughtful response (Smyth 2008).

### ***Agree/Disagree Instructions***

All *Agree/Disagree*-style questions require a statement that instructs the participant what to do. Source items for the DEOCS contained many versions of instructions for *Agree/Disagree*-style items, including:

- “How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Mark one answer for each item.”
- “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about your unit?”
- “Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:”

<sup>104</sup> We expect MSA leadership are primarily concerned with scenarios with negative outcomes, so the presence of the positive outcome was dropped.

- “From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy:”<sup>105</sup>

The DEOCS 5.0 uses a single instruction as lead-in text for all agree/disagree questions:

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about...”

### **All Other Scales**

Although standardizing response scales was required for the DEOCS 5.0 to help us meet our goals of creating a user-friendly survey instrument, there were a few questions that required unique response scales. Each is described below:

#### **“Morale”**

Not all items are appropriately measured on frequency or agree/disagree reporting scales. Frequency scales only work when you want to know how frequently something happens. The main flaw in *Agree/Disagree*-style questions is that they do not directly measure in terms of the factor that the question is attempting to measure. Instead, these questions are more cognitively burdensome and ask the participant to do two things: first, consider a statement, and second, decide how much they agree or disagree with that statement (Dillman et al., 2014).

To reduce this burden, it is often more appropriate if the response scale is a direct reflection of the concept the item is measuring. We decided to measure “Morale” in this more direct way by keeping the originally constructed item and response scale. One “Morale” question asks a participant to rate the “Morale” in their unit, organization, or MSA, and the other asks them to rate their personal level of morale on a scale of *Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low*. Instead of agreeing with a statement about “Morale,” the item asks the participant to directly report their level of morale from high to low.

Because this question was originally worded with this unique scale, converting this question to the *5-point Agree/Disagree* scale was not an ideal option. The only way to do so would be to drastically change the question text to ask the participant if they agree or disagree that they, or their unit, have a certain level of “Morale.” For example, one way this question could be asked is “Agree or Disagree with the following statement: My current level of morale is good.” *Agree/Disagree*-style questions force participants to agree or disagree with a specific situation, and in this case, a specific level of morale. The issue is how to interpret a response of “Disagree”: In this case, would it mean that the participant disagrees with this statement because, in their opinion, morale is great (not good), or because they feel morale is neutral (not good), or because morale is terrible (not good). We actually would not know. All three proposed hypothetical interpretations (great, neutral, and terrible) are ways in which a participant can disagree with the statement that “Morale in my unit is good.” Although it is likely that disagreement to this question would indicate something “less than good,” because we don’t

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<sup>105</sup> This introduction was used for the unique “Not at all/Great extent” scale that was converted to agree/disagree for the DEOCS 5.0.

directly ask about levels of morale, we would not know just how low morale was with this style of question. To remove this issue, and to measure this factor as originally intended, we kept the original response scale that directly measures “Morale” from *Very High* to *Very Low*.

Please note that other questions in the DEOCS 5.0 have a similar problem and ask participants to agree or disagree with a level of some concept. A few examples:

- “My work has a **great deal** of personal meaning to me.”
- “Choosing the Academy was a **good** decision.”
- “The people I work with **work well** as a team.”

It could be argued that each question has the same interpretation problem discussed above, that each would be measured more accurately, and more easily, using factor-specific reporting scales. The difference with these questions is that each were originally asked, tested, and sometimes validated, as *Agree/Disagree*-type questions. Changing these items to unique response scales would therefore change how the questions were intended to measure the concept. Many, if not all, of the items on the DEOCS 5.0 could be measured using unique factor-specific response scales. This was a nonstarter based on functional limitations and also goes against our intended goal of using data-driven, scientifically validated questions and providing actionable data to commanders and unit leaders in easy-to-understand visualizations in the DEOCS 5.0 dashboard. Therefore, we decided to keep the measurement as close as possible to the original questions when possible and only use unique scales when the original question did so and when it was absolutely necessary for accurate measurement.

### “Alcohol Impacting Memory” and “Binge Drinking”

“Alcohol Impacting Memory” and “Binge Drinking” are measured on the DEOCS 5.0 using items from the widely used Alcohol Use Disorders Identification scale (Higgins-Biddle & Babor, 2018; Saunders et al., 1993). This scale is widely used in the medical field to capture alcohol abuse. We decided to keep the text from the *WGRA* version of the item that was tested and found to predict sexual assault.

- “During the past 12 months, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?”
  - *Never, Less than Monthly, Monthly, Weekly, Daily or Almost Daily*

In the public health field, binge drinking is a technical term that has a different threshold for men (five drinks on one occasion) than for women (four drinks on one occasion) (NIAAA, 2004). Some surveys that use this question are able to insert the correct text for each participant based either on administrative records or a previously asked gender or sex. This was not possible in the DEOCS 5.0 because the gender question is purposefully asked later in the survey. Therefore, the question was reworded to accommodate this limitation.

- “How often do you have four or more drinks (if you are a woman) or five or more drinks (if you are a man) on one occasion?”

- *Never, Less than Monthly, Monthly, Weekly, Daily or Almost Daily*

### **“Safe Storage of Lethal Means”**

In response to stakeholder feedback, we drafted a single-item measure for “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” ([Chapter 6](#); [Chapter 7](#)). For this question, we used a slight variation of a frequency-style reporting scale for this question. The question reads:

- “In general, the hazards in my living space that may be deliberately or accidentally used to harm others or myself, such as poisons, medications, and firearms, are safely stored (for example, locked in a cabinet, unloaded).”
  - *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always*

For this item only, the response option *Always* was added to the 4-point scale to create a *5-point Frequency* scale. This decision introduced some problems that come with using a 5-point response scale, but it was important for measurement of this question to allow participants to report that they “*Always*” safely store their lethal means.<sup>106</sup> The question appears at the end of the survey prior to the demographics.

## **Open-Ended Questions**

DEOCS stakeholders indicated that they wanted to provide participants with more opportunities to provide open-ended feedback. However, open-ended questions can be more intensive for participants to answer and can increase the burden of survey completion (Galesic, 2006). To respond to stakeholder feedback while also heeding the advice from survey experts to limit open-ended reporting, we decided to increase the number of open-ended questions on the DEOCS 5.0 from four to five items. To maximize the impact of these items, we added motivational text to each question that has been shown to increase item endorsement, engagement, and detailed reported on open-ended self-administered survey items (Smyth et al., 2009). The text and placement of open-ended items will be described later in this chapter.

## **Writing the DEOCS Instrument**

The next step in writing the DEOCS was to organize the selected DEOCS items, standardize and edit phrasing in the existing questions, and add any necessary additional items to the DEOCS, such as demographic questions and open-ended questions.

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<sup>106</sup> The response option *Always* was not necessary or appropriate for the measurement purposes of other frequency items. For example, consider the question “How often does someone from your unit ask you questions about the sex life or sexual interests that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?” The response option of *Often* will adequately capture if this happens to the participant more than sometimes. It is unlikely that someone would “always” experience this event, meaning that they experience this at all times in the day and in every interaction with everyone from their unit. Even if pervasive and frequent, *Always* is not the proper measurement term for these types of events.



## Ordering the DEOCS

When ordering survey items, survey methodologists try to limit the impact of “order effects”; that is, the impact that the order of survey items have on measurement. To some degree, order effects are inevitable because items placed early in a survey have an impact on how a participant understands all future items in the survey. The goal is to limit the negative impacts on measurement that can occur due to the order of items by following best practices in survey methodology.<sup>107</sup>

To limit negative impacts on measurement, it is a best practice to organize similar questions into a group based on topic, factor, and style (Dillman et al., 2014). Grouping questions by topic allows the survey to feel more like a natural conversation, where one topic is thoroughly discussed before moving on to another topic. Some DEOCS questions ask participants to report on the general conditions in their work area. Others ask participants to report how often negative behaviors occur in their unit. Others ask participants to directly rate the effectiveness of their immediate supervisor or unit or organization leader. Questions in each topic area were grouped together.

The DEOCS measures both protective and risk factors. Protective factors ask participants to report how often they experience or how much they agree with aspects of the unit that would be seen as a positive aspect of unit or organization climate. For example, agreeing with the statement “My immediate supervisor cares about my personal well-being” would indicate a positive aspect of “Leadership Support” in a unit. For items that measure risk factors, agreement would indicate something negative. For example, agreeing with the statement “My immediate supervisor ridicules subordinates” would indicate the presence of the risk factor “Toxic Leadership.” Because of the direction of what “agreement” means as either a positive or negative aspect of unit or organization climate, sections in the DEOCS should focus on either protective or risk factors to limit the number of instances the DEOCS shifts the direction of reporting, which can lead to unintended reporting errors (Schwartz, 1996; Israel, 2013).

Another consideration when organizing items into the DEOCS 5.0 instrument was to group items by response scale. The DEOCS 5.0 uses two main types of items: *5-point Agree/Disagree* items and *4-point Frequency* items. Rather than shifting back and forth between response scale formats, grouping questions by response scale can help create a smooth user experience.

Organizing items by topic, protective or risk factors, and by style of reporting helped us limit the number of times a participant would have to shift their frame of thinking. Most differences in reporting occur between distinct sections in the DEOCS. To announce the end of a section, each section in the DEOCS 5.0 concludes with an open-ended question regarding the content of that section. This not only inserts a break between sections, but also gives participants opportunities to provide focused, open-ended feedback.

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<sup>107</sup> The only way to truly understand and account for order effects is through rigorous survey testing (Presser et al., 2004). We did not have the resources and time to conduct such testing. By following best practice survey design principles, we are confident that we limited order effects as much as possible. However, we plan to evaluate data to determine if order effects are a problem, and can develop testing procedures to correct if needed.

## Standardization of Selected Survey Item Stems

When people are presented with a new piece of information (e.g., a survey) they go through a patterned cognitive process to understand the new information, starting with pre-attentive processing of the general organization of the presented material before focusing in on details, and ending with completing the task presented (Hoffman, 2000; Dillman et al., 2014). When processing new information or a new task, people will bring with them established norms and expectations from completing similar tasks. In this way, participants “learn” how to take a survey while in the process of taking a survey, but also bring with them expectations for the survey based on previous survey experiences (Dillman et al., n 2014). These pre-existing expectations and learned behaviors can impact how a participant reports, or misreports, on a survey instrument.

Once learned, the norms established by previous surveys and especially those learned in the course of a current survey task are difficult to unlearn (Dillman et al., 2014). This is why it is important that all visual and design elements (such as the use of bold or italic fonts) remain consistent throughout a survey (Dillman et al., 2005). This applies to non-design elements of a survey as well. For example, if a participant learns early in the survey that the survey wants them to think about their experience while at work, then that participant will answer questions in the survey thinking about their time spent at work. Once this pattern is established, it is difficult to break, and participants will think about experiences at work unless specifically told not to. Even then, special instructions that try to break already established norms in the survey can be missed, leading to reporting errors. To the extent possible, patterns established early in the survey should be maintained throughout the survey. If it is absolutely necessary to change an established norm, then the survey must highlight this change to participants. Even when doing so, the risk remains that a change in the survey will be missed, leading to misreporting, error, and potentially confusion or burden on the participant.

To avoid these issues, we first standardized the visual representation of survey items, instruction text, and response scale presentation throughout the DEOCS instrument to meet industry best practices (Dillman et al., 2005; Dillman et al., 2014). Second, standardizing survey item text is also a necessary step when combining items from multiple surveys into a new survey. When combining questions from multiple surveys into a new survey, it is important that each source item retains its original meaning and measurement ability. The items selected for the DEOCS 5.0 were intended (and in most cases demonstrated) to work as originally written. This section explains how we balanced the needed to standardize questions to work together in the new DEOCS 5.0, with the need to retain measurement ability of each item as originally written. The process of editing existing survey questions so they work together in a single survey, while not changing the meaning of the question so they still measure the factors they are measuring, is described below. We changed source items only when absolutely necessary to add consistency while keeping as much of the original text as possible to maintain the item’s original meaning. This section describes the following aspects of the survey that were edited and standardized to create the DEOCS 5.0 instrument: tense and recall period, format, and phrasing.

**Tense and Recall Period**

The tense established early in a survey can impact how participants read, comprehend, and respond to survey items. Whenever possible, survey questions should be written in a single tense. Although changes in tense are necessary for measurement purposes in the same survey, item tense should be clearly communicated and items of the same tense should be grouped together to limit the number of times the survey changes from present, to past, to future tense.

We decided to write DEOCS 5.0 items in the present tense whenever possible. The DEOCS is a commander’s tool that measures and reports information on the current climate in a unit or organization. By writing questions in the present tense, the DEOCS questions orient the participant to think about their current situation. Many questions sourced for the DEOCS 5.0 were originally worded in the present tense. Table 144 presents several examples.

**Table 144.**  
*DEOCS Item Present-Tense Edits*

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“Service members in your unit work well as a team.”	“The people I work with work well as a team.”
“Service members in your unit trust each other.”	“The people I work with trust each other.”
“I feel like part of the family in my unit.”	“I feel like part of the family among the people I work with.”
“Soldiers build on each other’s ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process.”	“The people I work with build on each other’s ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process.”

Some questions selected for the DEOCS 5.0 were written in the past tense. Past tense items are often used on surveys that aim to produce data on yearly rates for behaviors or experiences. These items reference a specific time frame to orient the participant thinking, but do so in a few different ways. Examples from DEOCS source items include:

- “During the past 12 months...”
- “During the last 12 months...”
- “How often during the past 12 months...”
- “Since [X Date]...” (A date 1 year prior was automatically inserted into these questions.)
- “Since one year ago today...”
- “While under your current senior leader and within the last 12 months...”
- “In the past month...”

Most of the source items used a 12-month recall period. This may work for the purposes of the source survey, but a one-year recall period is too long for the purpose of the DEOCS 5.0. The DEOCS 5.0 is a tool for commanders and organization leaders. Leadership in military units and DoD civilian organizations regularly change. The people within a military unit or DoD civilian organization also regularly change. For the DEOCS 5.0 to be useful to leaders, the DEOCS 5.0 instrument must orient participants to think about the situation in their current unit or organization, and not to think about conditions in previous units, organizations, or experiences working under previous leadership.

To accomplish this, we worded all questions in the present tense and edited the instructions prior to each section to further instruct participants to think about their current work situation when reporting. For example, the instructions preceding sections in the DEOCS administrated to military units were standardized to read:

- “When responding, consider only time spent [over the past three months] in your unit.”

The phrase, “over the past three months,” appears to participants who indicate earlier in the survey that they have been in their unit for longer than three months. This instruction is to further orient the participant not only to think about time in their current unit, but the current situation within their current unit. This phrase is omitted if a participant indicates that they are new to a unit. In this circumstance, we do not want participants to think of their experiences over the past three months because that would include time spent in other units or organizations under different leaders.

Unfortunately, survey instructions can be skipped or skimmed over by participants. To ensure that participants respond appropriately, we phrased all DEOCS 5.0 items in the present tense so that they can be clearly understood even when instructions are skipped. The text of each item in the present tense will suggest to participants to think of their current experience, and not all previous experiences they have had in the military or DoD.

Items chosen for the DEOCS that were originally worded in the past tense were reworded to the present tense, as shown in the examples in Table 145:

**Table 145.**  
***DEOCS Source Items Past Tense to Present Tense***

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers... Intentionally interfered with your work performance?”	“How often does someone from your unit intentionally interfere with your work performance?”
“How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors... Gossiped/talked about you?”	“How often does someone from your unit gossip or talk about you?”
“Since [X Date], did someone from work... repeatedly tell sexual ‘jokes’ that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”	“How often does someone from your unit tell sexual jokes that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”
“Since one year ago today, did someone from work display, show, or send sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”	“How often does someone from your unit display, show, or send sexually explicit materials (such as pictures or videos) that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? “
“While under your current senior leader and within the last 12 months, did someone from your workplace: Intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to?”	“How often does someone from your unit intentionally touch you in unwanted sexual ways?”

To maintain the measurement validity of original survey items, it was occasionally necessary to ask questions in a different tense or with a specific time reference. For example, items from the “Stress” scale were worded as shown in Table 146:

**Table 146.**  
***“Stress” Scale***

Stress Scale
“In the past month, how often have you felt nervous or stressed?”
“In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?”
“In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?”
“In the past month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do?”

These four items are widely used to measure “Stress.” Changing the items in this particular factor to the present tense might diminish the items’ ability to measure “Stress” as intended. We will monitor this question’s performance to see if participants notice the “one-month” reference point, or if the question can function as intended with the three-month time frame used in other questions. For now, these questions are worded as previously written and tested.

The present tense doesn’t work for all items. Some work better when phrased as hypothetical questions. For example,

- Original text:
  - “Soldiers speak up if someone is being excluded.”
- DEOCS 5.0 text:
  - “The people I work with would speak up if someone is being excluded.”

The original item is not easy to interpret. A participant reporting “disagree” to this statement could do so for different reasons; perhaps because they disagree that their coworkers speak up when people are excluded, or they disagree because people in their work are never excluded, so they have no experience to report if people would or would not speak up.

Because this item asks about a situation that may or may not occur, it is more appropriate to phrase the question as a hypothetical situation. This allows all participants the opportunity to answer the question regardless of whether they had previously experienced the situation. The revised text makes it clear that the item is asking the participant to answer based on what they expect *would* happen if the situation were ever to occur. Respondents who have experienced someone in their workplace being excluded would have an experiential reference point on which to base their response, while others could still respond based on how they believe the people they work with would respond in this situation. This phrasing provides for a cleaner interpretation.

We retained the hypothetical phrasing for the items described in Table 147.

**Table 147.**  
***Hypothetical Phrasing***

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect... negative social outcomes (e.g., being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, being bullied).”	“If I were to report a [‘cadet’   ‘midshipman’] for misconduct, I would expect negative social outcomes (for example, being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, or being bullied) from other [‘cadets’   ‘midshipmen’].”
“If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect... negative academic outcomes (e.g., poor evaluations, opportunities for leadership would suffer, unfair grades)”	“If I were to report the first [‘cadet’   ‘midshipman’] in my chain of command for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations or opportunities for leadership would suffer).”
“I feel comfortable sharing my work difficulties with my immediate supervisor.  I believe I can use my chain of command/supervision to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation/reprisal.  Retaliation and/or reprisal does not occur when an incident or complaint is reported. <sup>1</sup> ”	“If needed, I can go to my immediate supervisor to address my concerns without fear of reprisal.”

<sup>1</sup>Aspects of these three questions were combined to create the DEOCS 5.0 item.

**Format**

The DEOCS 5.0 is administered via a mobile-optimized, web-based survey instrument ([Chapter 5](#)). This survey mode offers benefits and limitations. Web instruments, including mobile-optimized instruments, allow for survey instruments to adapt based on participant characteristics. For example, a web-based instrument can add or skip questions based on demographics so that each participant only sees, and responds to, questions that are relevant to them. However, optimizing an internet survey for mobile devices places constraints on the types of question and question formats we could use. For example, some DEOCS source items come from surveys that ask questions using a “grid” format, as shown in Figure 18 below:

**Figure 18.**  
**Sample Survey “Grid” Format**

185. During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your <u>coworkers...</u> <i>Mark one answer for each item.</i>					
	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once or twice</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very often</b>
a. Intentionally interfered with your work performance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Did not provide information or assistance when you needed it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Were excessively harsh in their criticism of your work performance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Took credit for work or ideas that were yours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Gossiped/talked about you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Continued:</b> During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your <u>coworkers...</u>					
	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once or twice</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very often</b>
f. Used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Yelled when they were angry with you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Swore at you in a hostile manner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Damaged or stole your property or equipment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Although numbered as a single survey item, this grid asks nine different questions to the participant, with each line in the grid representing an item that a participant is asked to provide an answer. All items share the same lead-in text portion of the question stem displayed at the top of the grid, “During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers...” as well as an instruction, “Mark one answer for each item.” Respondents are asked to apply the text from above the grid to complete each question in the grid. For example, grid item “e” is an incomplete thought that reads: “Took credit for work or ideas that were yours?” This is a complete thought when combined with the text from the top of the grid, “During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers took credit or ideas that were yours?”

Displaying text once at the top of a grid, and asking the participant to associate that text to multiple sub-items in a grid, can sometimes be an effective way to ease their burden, reduce the amount of text needed to be read (Daniel et al., 2021), and increase speed of response (DeBell et al., 2021). However, grid formats have drawbacks and can add burden on participants or increase the chance of measurement error, especially for mobile devices (Revilla et al., 2017). Grid-style formats can be displayed differently across different devices, leading to unintended and unknown impacts. For example, this grid may appear fine on most desktop computer

screens, but it would not be the same for all survey participants and it is highly unlikely that the full grid of items and the top text would be displayed on a single mobile device screen. As mobile users scroll through the response matrix to see each question stem, some questions in the grid could be disconnected from the instruction text at the top of the grid.

Similar to paper survey instruments in which survey designers avoid placing instructions on one page that correspond to survey items on the next, this format can lead to unintended consequences for mobile users, such as skipping questions in the grid or misreading questions or response options due to the visual distance between the lead-in text (that is now off screen) and each grid sub-item. Although using a grid format may make the survey experience slightly easier for some laptop and desktop users, it could potentially ruin the experience for mobile users.

It has been a well-established finding that differences between how participants see survey items can lead to bias in reporting (DeMaio & Bates, 1992; Dillman et al., 1993), but definitive understanding of the risk of grid-style formats on mobile devices are largely unknown. We felt the small gain in functionality for some participants was not worth the risk of burden nor the error it might cause others. Therefore, we decided to rewrite all DEOCS 5.0 items as single, standalone items so that all participants see each question on an independent screen. In most cases, this change didn't functionally alter the text of the question at all, just the presentation of the item, as shown in the examples from the DEOCS in Table 148:

**Table 148.**  
*Example Items*

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where your coworkers... Mark one answer for each item “	“In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.”
“a. Intentionally interfered with your work performance?”	“How often does someone from your unit intentionally interfere with your work performance?”
“d. Took credit for your work or ideas?”	“How often does someone from your unit take credit for work or ideas that were yours?”
“g. Yelled when they were angry with you?”	“How often does someone from your unit yell when they are angry?”

**Standardizing Phrasing**

As mentioned, because the items selected for the DEOCS were not designed to be included in the same survey, the selected items had numerous inconsistencies in phrasing. For example, some questions ask a participant to think about people “in this workgroup,” “in my unit,” and “military coworkers.” These phrases are meant to orient a participant to think about the same population: the people the participant interacts with at work. Using all three phrases in the DEOCS 5.0 would be confusing to participants. Strategic changes in phrasing can be used to signal to a participant that they are supposed to think about something new. A non-strategic switch in



phrasing, like using “in this workgroup” in one question and “in my unit” in another, could suggest that these two questions are asking about different concepts or work organizations, which can lead to confusion or measurement error.

All phrases used in the DEOCS 5.0 also need to be relevant to, and easily understood by, each participant population taking the survey. Some items for the DEOCS 5.0 originally came from military surveys, and contain phrases like “military coworkers,” which is obviously not appropriate or relevant for the DoD civilian population. The DoD survey population consists of active duty Service members, Reserve and Guard members, DoD civilians, and cadets and midshipmen. These individuals can serve and work within military units, DoD civilian organizations, or at MSAs. If a single phrase worked equally well with all populations, a standardized single phrase was used. When a single phrase did not exist, we decided to use the functionality for the DEOCS web-only instrument to insert customized language depending on characteristics of the survey participant.

Consider the following example from the risk factor “Workplace Hostility”:

- “How often... have you had experiences where military coworkers or military supervisors... Gossiped/talked about you?”

Not everyone in the DEOCS survey population has military coworkers and military supervisors. Some participants work in blended organizations that consist of both military members and civilians, and it might be confusing to them why this item is only interested in gossip committed by some of the people they work with (military members) and not others (civilians). We cannot simply remove the phrase because the resulting item would be dramatically different: “How often have you had experiences where people gossiped/talked about you?” This change would create an item that included anyone in a participant’s life who may be gossiping or talking about them (such as friends, family, or neighbors). Another option would be to use a single phrase that would work equally well for Service members, civilians, and MSA participants. However, we often could not identify a single term or phrase that would work for all populations.

Thus, we decided to program the DEOCS instrument to “insert” different terms based on characteristics from the participants, creating three different “versions” of the same question. One example is provided in Table 149:

**Table 149.**  
*Example Question Versions*

Respondent	Item Version
Military unit members	“How often does someone from your <b>unit</b> gossip or talk about you?”
DoD civilian organization members	“How often does someone from your <b>organization</b> gossip or talk about you?”
MSA cadets and midshipmen	“How often does someone from your <b>Military Service Academy</b> gossip or talk about you?”

Each question captures the intent of the original question (experiences of gossip “at work”) while also making the item relevant and appropriate for each type of DEOCS participant. The phrases are also relevant to data users. Military commanders conducting a DEOCS are primarily concerned with what they can control; that is, what is happening in their unit. DoD civilian leaders may not have defined “units” in the same way as those used in the military, so the more general term “organization” was used. Cadets and midshipmen train, learn, and live on an MSA campus, and MSA leadership are concerned about the risks throughout the Academy.

We made three types of changes to the DEOCS source items to standardize phrasing. First, we used a standardize phrase across all three populations whenever possible. Second, we used the programing capabilities of the DEOCS web-instrument to insert proper terminology for each type of participant (as shown in the example above). And third, some phrasing decisions were one-time changes necessary to make specific items work in the DEOCS 5.0. Each phrasing change will be covered in this section.

## **Writing the DEOCS**

This section describes all of the items on the DEOCS 5.0, section by section (in the order they are viewed by participants), and the decisions we made to order, edit, and add questions to the DEOCS.

In the tables below, the left column contains the original text for items selected for the DEOCS 5.0. Phrases or words in bold are those that were changed or standardized from the original so the question would work in the DEOCS 5.0. When programing was used to insert a participant-specific phrase, we used brackets to show the variety of phrases that are inserted into the DEOCS based on the characteristics of the participant. From the example used above, the item would look like this: “How often does someone from your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] gossip or talk about you?”

## ***Logistic Questions***

The opening questions on a survey set a tone and expectations for the survey, and can entice participants to continue and complete a survey task. Ideally, the first bank of survey items should be interesting and draw the participant in by giving them a sense of what the rest of the survey will cover. Salient questions can help build participant commitment to the survey task, which can reduce the likelihood of dropping off when questions become less salient, more difficult, or more sensitive (Dillman et al., 2014). Questions that are relevant to only small portions of a survey population, that are highly sensitive, or that have a high degree of difficulty, should come later in a survey after the participant has answered enough questions to feel fully committed to complete the survey (or that they have completed enough of the survey to meet survey completion rules).

To the extent possible, routine demographic items should also appear last on a survey, and only demographics that are needed should be asked. However, it was necessary to include two critical logistic demographic items at the front of the DEOCS 5.0 to allow military members, DoD civilians, and MSA cadets and midshipmen to identify themselves so that the correct language could be inserted throughout the survey (Table 150).

**Table 150.**  
**MSA Piping**

Question	Response options	Rationale
<p>“What is your affiliation to the [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] conducting this DEOCS? <i>Some people may have multiple affiliations (for example, a Reservist who also works as a civilian at the DoD). We are interested in your affiliation to the organization conducting this DEOCS.”</i></p>	<p><i>Active Duty Component Military Member</i> <i>Reserve Component Military Member</i> <i>National Guard Member</i> <i>Civilian Employee</i> <i>Military Service Academy Cadet/Midshipman</i></p>	<p>This question is used to insert proper terminology to military members, DoD civilians, and MSA cadet and midshipmen.</p>
<p>“When did you join: [Unit/Organization/Academy Title]?”</p>	<p><i>Less than three months ago</i> <i>More than three months ago</i></p>	<p>This question is used to insert proper language later in the survey instrument</p>

MSA cadets and midshipmen are asked two additional questions that are used to insert language later in the survey (Table 151).

**Table 151.**  
**MSA Customization**

Initial Question	Response Options	Explanation
<p>“Which Military Service Academy do you attend?”</p>	<p><i>United States Military Academy (West Point)</i> <i>United States Air Force Academy</i> <i>United States Naval Academy</i></p>	<p>Asked to MSA cadets and midshipmen only, this question allows the DEOCS to insert the proper MSA name at specific moments in the DEOCS.</p>
<p>“What is your Class year?”</p>	<p><i>Foreign Exchange Student</i> <i>4/C (First Year)</i> <i>3/C (Second Year)</i> <i>2/C (Third Year)</i> <i>1/C (Fourth Year)</i></p>	<p>Although not used for custom piping, this conceptually is related to the prior question and so is asked in tandem</p>

Ideally, a survey wouldn’t ask any demographic questions at the start of a survey but would rather engage participants with interesting questions. A potential improvement for the DEOCS would be to use administrative data to remove the need to ask these, and other, demographic questions. This change would reduce survey burden (by reducing the total number of questions) and also allow the DEOCS to immediately start with interesting, engaging questions. We are actively pursuing this option. However, at this time, asking these items is necessary for the DEOCS instrument to work. This also represents an improvement over the previous DEOCS that asked 10 demographic items to start the survey instrument. The DEOCS 5.0 has eight fewer demographic items at the start of the survey compared to the previous DEOCS and this allows interesting DEOCS items to appear sooner.

## Section I. Work/Academy Experience—Part 1. Protective Factors

Respondents who start a survey are likely to finish, and the further participants navigate through a survey, the more likely they are to complete it (Dillman et al., 2014). To reduce the risk of breakoffs, surveys should engage participants as soon as possible with interesting, broadly applicable items. We chose the items measuring the protective factor “Morale” to begin the DEOCS. The two items that deal with “Morale” are broadly applicable to the entire DEOCS population, relate to the overall topic of the survey (organizational climate), and allow participants an immediate opportunity to praise or criticize their unit or organization—something they will be asked to do throughout the survey. The “Morale” factor was also regarded in focus groups and in the redesign survey of DEOCS participants as one of the most important elements of command climate ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#)).

“Morale” is a protective factor focused on the general condition in the unit or organization. We thus chose other protective factors that rate the overall climate of the unit or organization to follow. These factors were: “Work-Life Balance,” “Cohesion,” “Connectedness,” and “Organizational Commitment,” as well as one MSA-only question. Each factor is broadly relevant to DEOCS participants as all participants are able to respond to items on the dynamics of their working environment. These factors were endorsed in focus groups ([Chapter 2](#)), the redesign survey ([Chapter 3](#)), and in interviews with stakeholders ([Chapter 4](#)), meaning these are some of the factors that participants and leadership care about most.

Also, recall that “Morale” is one of the few factors that is asked using unique response options. This may make the start of the survey the ideal location for the “Morale” items. By starting the survey with this unique scale means that these unique response options will not have to fit in the middle of a section with other, different response options. In essence, by placing these items first, the DEOCS has one less “switch” in response options. For consistency, the rest of the questions were written to use the agree/disagree format.

At the start of the section, participants are presented the following instruction:

- “In this section, you will provide information about your experiences [‘in your unit,’ | ‘in your organization,’ | ‘at the’] [Unit/Organization/Academy Title]. Please respond by considering your own current beliefs, experiences, and feelings. There are no wrong answers. We are interested in what you think and how you feel.”

Questions in this section contained a few “work”-related phrases, including:

- In this workgroup
- In my unit
- Soldiers
- Service members in your unit
- At my organization

- In this unit

These were replaced with one of two phrases:

- Phrase 1: [“in your unit,” | “in your organization,” | “at the Academy Title”]
- Phrase 2: [“The people I work with” | “Cadets in my company” | “Midshipmen in my company” | “Cadets in my squadron”]

Table 152 describes the items and piping for this section.

**Table 152.**  
*Military Service Academy Customization*

Factor	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
Cohesion	“Service members in your unit work well as a team.”	“[‘The people I work with’   ‘Cadets in my company’   ‘Midshipmen in my company’   ‘Cadets in my squadron’] work well as a team.”
	“Service members in your unit trust each other.”	“[‘The people I work with’   ‘Cadets in my company’   ‘Midshipmen in my company’   ‘Cadets in my squadron’] trust each other.”
	“I feel like “part of the family” in this workgroup.” “I feel like “part of the family” in my unit.” “I do not feel like “part of the family” at my organization.”	“I feel like ‘part of the family’ among [‘the people I work with’   ‘cadets in my company’   ‘midshipmen in my company’   ‘cadets in my squadron’].”
Engagement & Commitment	“I am enthusiastic about my work.”	“I am proud of my work.”
	“I enjoy serving in the military.”	
	“This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me.”	“My work <sup>1</sup> has a great deal of personal meaning to me.”
Engagement and Commitment MSA-only	“I am committed to making the military my career.”	“I am committed to making the military my career.”
	“Choosing to attend the Academy was a good decision for me.”	“Choosing to attend the Academy was a good decision for me.”
Inclusion	“Soldiers believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of the groups with which they identify (e.g., MOS, demographics).”	“[“The people I work with”   “Cadets in my company”   “Midshipmen in my company”   “Cadets in my squadron”] believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of how they identify (for example, <sup>2</sup> gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identities).”
	**NOTE: This question was split into two separate questions on the DEOCS 5.0.	“[“The people I work with”   “Cadets in my company”   “Midshipmen in my company”   “Cadets in my squadron”] believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of their occupation and [“rank”   “grade”   “Class year”] <sup>3</sup> .”

	“Soldiers build on each other's ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process.”	“[“The people I work with”   “Cadets in my company”   “Midshipmen in my company”   “Cadets in my squadron”] build on each other’s ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process.”
	“Soldiers speak up if someone is being excluded.”	“[“The people I work with”   “Cadets in my company”   “Midshipmen in my company”   “Cadets in my squadron”] would speak up if someone is being excluded.”
Inclusion MSA-only <sup>6</sup>	“The quality of ideas matter more than who expressed them.”	“Among [“the people I work with”   “cadets in my company”   “midshipmen in my company”   “cadets in my squadron”] <sup>4</sup> , the quality of ideas matters more than who expresses them.”
	“In this unit, members can easily balance their work and their home lives.”	“I can <sup>5</sup> easily balance the demands of [“my work and personal life”   “Academy life”].”
	“If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect... Negative social outcomes (e.g., being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, being bullied)”	“If I were to report a [“cadet”   “midshipman”] for misconduct, I would expect negative social outcomes (for example, being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, or being bullied) from other [“cadets”   “midshipmen”].”
Morale	“Overall, how would you rate... The current level of morale in your unit?”	“Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale [‘in your unit’   ‘in your organization’   ‘at the ‘Academy Title’]?”
	“Overall, how would you rate... Your current level of morale?”	“Overall, how would you rate your own current level of morale?”

<sup>1</sup>This item changes the original text from “this workgroup” to “My work,” changing the focus from the people someone works with to the work they do. This was a deliberate change. Many DEOCS items capture dynamics between people of a unit or organization (e.g., the question “I feel like part of the family among the people I work with”). No other item measures the way someone feels about their work itself. Many people in the DoD community are proud of the work they do, even if they don’t like the people they work with, and we wanted to measure that with at least one item.

<sup>2</sup>We also updated the examples in this question from the original. MOS is a military-specific term not suitable for all DEOCS participants, such as civilians. The term “demographics” may also not be known by some participants. Instead, we listed common demographics that we were interested in (gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identities).

<sup>3</sup>Military units will be asked about discrimination based on rank, civilian DoD organizations based on grade, and MSA students based on Class year.

<sup>4</sup>Phrase was added to make the question fit with others in the section.

<sup>5</sup>Respondents may not know if others in their unit or organization can balance work and life, so it was more appropriate to ask if each individual can balance their own work and life.

<sup>6</sup>As discussed earlier, this question from the MSA DEOCS used a unique response option and was converted to two questions. One about outcomes from fellow cadets/midshipmen, the other about outcomes from leaders. The question about leadership retaliation is in the Leadership section. Because this question is asked in a different balance, we are considering editing the question and moving it to the next section on problematic behaviors in future versions of the DEOCS.

The section concludes with an open-ended question asking for general feedback on the participant’s experience.

- “It is important for us to understand your experiences [‘in your unit,’ | ‘in your organization,’ | ‘at the’] [Unit/Organization/Academy Title]. If you choose, you may use the space below to add anything else you want to say.

Senior leadership will be able to see what you write but not who wrote it. Please do not include personally identifiable information. This includes information that could

be used to identify you or others (for example, telling a story that is specific enough that someone could recognize the people involved).”

## **Section II. Work/Academy Experience—Part 2. Risk Factors**

The second half of Section I contains 19 items measuring “Workplace Hostility,” “Sexually Harassing Behaviors,” “Sexist Behaviors,” and “Racially Harassing Behaviors,” in addition to one MSA-only question on “Sexual Orientation Harassing Behaviors.” All items use the frequency scale to measure how often participants experience these problematic behaviors.

The placement of the items in this section was strategic. Similar to the items in Section I, these items involve the experience of the participant working in their unit, organization, or at their Academy. We are interested in the extent to which these risk factors are experienced by the participant from anyone they work with. The next section asks specific items about persons in a participant’s chain of command, including immediate supervisors and leaders. Our concern was that if the section on unit-wide risk behaviors came after the leadership section, participants would be primed to think about their supervisors and leaders when answering the general question. If so, we run the risk of a priming or carryover effect, leading to measurement error if some participants misinterpret our intent based on the order of the question and only respond that these risk factor occur if and only if they are committed by someone in leadership. The way we ordered the DEOCS, with the risk factor behaviors appearing before the leadership questions, produces a situation in which participants do not know we will ask about their leadership. This way, they are more likely to think more broadly about their unit (as they did in the previous section) when responding to questions about these risk factors.

Source items measuring the factors in this section included phrases that were standardized as follows:

Source item phrases:

- “Military coworkers...”
- “Military coworkers or military supervisors...”
- “Members...”
- “in the military”
- “your coworkers”
- “someone from your workplace”
- “in my workplace”
- “someone from work”

DEOCS 5.0 phrase

- “Someone from your [‘unit’ | ‘organization’ | ‘Military Service Academy’]”

Edits to these items also include the changes presented in Table 153.

**Table 153.**  
**Question Customization**

Factor	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
Racially Harassing Behaviors	“Since %%XDATE%%, has <b>someone from work</b> made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by using a stereotype about your racial/ethnic group? <i>Stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics of group members—for example, that they tend to be cheap, aggressive, or shy.</i> ”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] express stereotypes about your racial/ethnic group that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”
	“Since %%XDATE%%, has someone <b>from work</b> used an offensive racial/ethnic term that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] use offensive racial/ethnic terms that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”
	“Since %%XDATE%%, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by insulting your racial/ethnic group?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] make insults about racial/ethnic groups that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”
	“Since %%XDATE%%, has someone from work made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] show you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity?”
Racially Harassing Behaviors MSA-only	<p>“Derogatory slurs, comments, and jokes concerning sexual orientation are not used in <b>my company/squadron.</b>”</p> <p>“Derogatory slurs, comments, and jokes concerning sexual orientation are not used <b>in the academic environment.</b>”</p> <p>“Derogatory slurs, comments, and jokes concerning sexual orientation are not used <b>during team or extracurricular events.</b>”</p>	“How often does someone <b>from your Military Service Academy</b> <sup>2</sup> use derogatory slurs, make comments, or tell jokes concerning sexual orientation?”
Sexist Behaviors	“Since one year ago today, do you think <b>someone from work</b> mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted you because of your gender?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] mistreat, ignore, exclude, or insult you because of your gender?”
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	“While under your current senior leader and within the last 12 months, <b>did someone from your workplace:</b> Repeatedly <sup>3</sup> tell sexual “jokes” that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] tell sexual jokes that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”
	“While under your current senior leader and within the last 12 months, <b>did someone from your workplace:</b> Embarrass, anger, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a man/woman is supposed to? <i>For example, if</i>	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] embarrass, anger, or upset you by suggesting that you do not act how a man or a woman is supposed to act?”



Factor	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
	<p><i>you are a male being called a 'fag' or 'gay,' if you are a female being called a 'dyke' or 'butch.'</i><sup>4</sup></p>	
	<p>“Since [X Date], <b>did someone from work</b> display, show, or send sexually explicit materials like pictures or videos that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? <i>Do not include materials you may have received as part of your professional duties (for example, as a criminal investigator).</i>”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] display, show, or send sexually explicit materials (such as pictures or videos) that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? <i>Do not include materials you may have received as part of your professional duties (for example, as a criminal investigator).</i>”<sup>5</sup></p>
	<p>“Since [X Date], <b>did someone from work</b> repeatedly ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”</p>
	<p>“Since [X Date], <b>did someone from work</b> make repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] make sexual comments about your appearance or body that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?”</p>
	<p>“Since [X Date], <b>did someone from work</b> make repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you? <i>These could range from repeatedly asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a 'hookup.'</i>”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] make attempts to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships with you? <i>These attempts could range from asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a "hookup."</i>”</p>
	<p>“While under your current senior leader and within the last 12 months, <b>did someone from your workplace:</b> Intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to? <i>This could include touching your genitals, breasts, buttocks, or touching you with their genitals anywhere on your body.</i><sup>1</sup>”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] intentionally touch you in unwanted sexual ways?”</p>
Workplace Hostility	<p>“During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where <b>your coworkers</b>... Mark one answer for each item. Intentionally interfered with your work performance?<sup>6</sup>”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] intentionally interfere with your work performance?”</p>
	<p>“How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where <b>military coworkers or military supervisors</b>... Took credit for your work or ideas?”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] take credit for work or ideas that were yours?”</p>
	<p>“How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where <b>military coworkers or military supervisors</b>... Gossiped/talked about you?”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] gossip or talk about you?”</p>
	<p>“During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where <b>your coworkers</b>... Used insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?”</p>	<p>“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] use insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you?”</p>

Factor	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
	“During the past 12 months, how often have you experienced any of the following behaviors, where <b>your coworkers</b> ... Did not provide you with information or assistance when you needed it?”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] <b>not</b> <sup>7</sup> provide you with information and assistance when needed?”
	“How often during the past 12 months have you had experiences where <b>military coworkers or military supervisors</b> ... Yelled when they were angry with you? <sup>8</sup> ”	“How often does someone from your [‘unit’   ‘organization’   ‘Military Service Academy’] yell when they are angry?”

<sup>1</sup>We removed the example text because it is not helpful and some DEOCS participants have reported that they find it offensive.

<sup>2</sup>Due to survey length concerns, we wrote a single item to measure more broadly the negative behavior captured in three items from the previous MSA DEOCS.

<sup>3</sup>As noted in a previous section, the word “repeatedly” was removed from questions in this section to accommodate switching the question from a yes/no format to a frequency format.

<sup>4</sup>We decided to remove the examples from the original question. Examples can sometimes help participants but can also cause issues by suggesting to participants what to think about and not think about; that is, some participants may only consider the examples and not things similar to the examples (citation). We felt this question worked best without the examples.

<sup>5</sup>MSA cadets and midshipmen, who would never be in this situation, do not see this clarification text. The special text is inserted only for military and civilian participants.

<sup>6</sup>Many DEOCS items had multiple source items that we considered and used to formulate the DEOCS 5.0 items. Note that not all source items are listed in these tables.

<sup>7</sup>While having the word “not” in an agree/disagree question can be confusing, we kept it in our question to retain the original measurement of the source item. Doing so also maintains consistency in the section valence, where agreement with each statement in the section signals something negative going on in the participant’s workplace. If we removed the word “not” from this question, then it would be measured in the opposite direction as the other questions in this section. Also note that the word “not” is highlighted in the survey instrument with bold text.

<sup>8</sup>We decided to drop the phrase “with you” from this question. Commanders or leaders yelling at anyone in a unit or organization can create a hostile and toxic work environment for everyone. It is possible that leaders could have a single “target” in their unit that they yell at in front of others. Rather than have this participant report that they are yelled at, for this item we felt it necessary to measure the activity at a more public level, allowing for anyone in a unit to report that this behavior happens in their unit.

The section concludes with an open-ended item asking for additional feedback on the topics covered in this section:

- “It is important for us to understand your experiences with behaviors that may negatively impact you. If you choose, you may use the space below to add anything else you want to say regarding experiences either within or outside of your [“unit” | “organization” | “Military Service Academy”].

*Senior leadership will be able to see what you write but not who wrote it. Please do not include personally identifiable information (for example, a personal story containing specific details that could be used to identify you).”*

### Section III. Leadership

A main feature of the DEOCS 5.0 is the expanded attention the survey gives to rating leadership at different levels and on multiple factors. With order effect concerns (i.e., priming and carryover) addressed by asking the unit-level and general questions first, the survey can now focus directly on the experience participants have with their leadership. The third section of the

survey asks participants to evaluate various levels of leadership on “Fairness,” “Leadership Support,” “Toxic Leadership,” “Transformational Leadership,” and “Passive Leadership.”<sup>108</sup>

### ***Standardizing Leadership Phrasing and Assigning Leadership Factors***

The DEOCS survey population includes military Service members (active, Reserve, and Guard) serving in military units or DoD civilian organizations, DoD civilians serving in military units or DoD civilian organizations, as well as cadets and midshipmen at the MSAs. DEOCS stakeholders wanted information on specific levels of leadership, and not just leadership in general, or in a participant’s chain of command. Military Service members, MSA cadets and midshipmen, and to a lesser extent, DoD civilians, have complex chains of command that can involve many supervisors and leaders. As expected, the source items contained a hodgepodge of phrases referencing multiple levels of leadership, including:

- “military supervisors”
- “your current senior leader”
- “The chain of command”
- “most destructive supervisor I have experienced”
- “chain of command/supervision”
- “Your immediate supervisor”
- “Your immediate military supervisor”
- “My supervisor”
- “Supervisors”
- “My current supervisor”
- “My team leader”
- “My senior leader”
- “Leader”

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<sup>108</sup> One item from the six-item “Inclusion” factor is included in the leadership section for ease of response because the question asks about chain of command; however, the other five “Inclusion” items are included in the Work/Academy Experiences section because they focus on the unit/organization/Academy more broadly (not just leadership). These six items are combined to calculate “Inclusion.” Chapter 9 contains more details on factor calculations.

- “He/she”<sup>109</sup>

To accommodate these phrases, some surveys include lengthy sections that provide definitions for leadership and workplace terms; for example:

- “Chain of Command/Supervision: refers to the line of authority from your immediate supervisor to your senior leader (unit commander or civilian equivalent).”
- “Coworker: refers to peers within your immediate workplace.”
- “Immediate Supervisor: refers to the individual to whom you directly report.”
- “Organization: refers to the unit/agency in which you currently work and is led by your commander or civilian equivalent.”
- “Senior Leader: refers to your current unit commander or civilian equivalent.”
- “Workgroup: refers to the collective personnel with whom you work.”
- “Workplace: refers to the physical location where you perform your duties.”

Although each phrase may have worked as intended in the origin survey, not all phrases work equally well to meet the needs or purpose of the DEOCS 5.0. For example, a few phrases orient participants to think about all supervisors they have or have had. This does not work for the DEOCS 5.0 because we are focused on experiences of the participant in their current unit or organization under their current supervisor or leader. One goal of the DEOCS 5.0 is to generate actionable information about specific leadership levels. Using phrases that orient the participant to think about a single leader or leadership level in their chain of command was more appropriate to meet this goal.

It is impossible to ask about each level of leadership that interacts with a DEOCS participant in a single survey. We decided to ask items focused on up to four levels of leadership for Service members: (1) general, (2) the participants’ immediate supervisor, (3) the unit commander or organization leader that initiated the DEOCS, and (4) if applicable, the unit’s senior NCO or senior enlisted leader. Respondents also interact with each level of leadership differently. A participant can be expected to have regular interactions with their immediate supervisor, but they may not regularly interact with their unit commander or organization leader. Although an immediate supervisor has a direct impact on participants, senior commanders and leaders often have an indirect impact by setting the tone and driving the vision and mission of the larger organization. The DEOCS 5.0 tailors questions at each level of leadership based on what is most

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<sup>109</sup> To make the items more specific, we removed a few instances of gendered language. For example, a source item said: “He/She cares about others’ personal well-being,” referencing a previous instruction asking the participant to think about their supervisor. This is unnecessary and potentially ambiguous. Instead, we rewrote this item: “My immediate supervisor cares about my personal well-being.” This wording is more accurate, removes the awkward “he/she” formatting, and removes ambiguity by orienting the participant to directly think about the proper leader.

appropriate to ask at each at level. Table 154 shows which military and civilian participants are asked to evaluate each level of leadership, and which factors are measured in each section.

**Table 154.**  
***Factors by Leadership Levels***

Org type	Level of leadership	Factors
DoD Civilian	General	Fairness Leader Demographics
	Immediate supervisor	Leadership Support Toxic leadership
	Organization leader	Transformational Leadership Passive Leadership
	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer/Senior Enlisted Advisor (NCO/SEL)*	Transformational Leadership Passive Leadership Toxic Leadership
Military Unit	General	Fairness Leader Demographics
	Immediate supervisor	Leadership Support Toxic leadership
	Unit commander	Transformational Leadership Passive Leadership
	Senior Non-Commissioned Officer /Senior Enlisted Advisor (NCO/SEL)*	Transformational Leadership Passive Leadership Toxic Leadership

\*This section is only asked if the organization has a senior NCO or senior enlisted advisor in their command structure.

MSA cadets and midshipmen interact with additional leaders beyond those described above. In addition to the terms from the source items listed above, the previous MSA DEOCS contained the following terms and levels of leadership:

- Cadet/Midshipman Company/Squadron Leaders
- Senior Enlisted Leadership/Enlisted Company/Squadron Leaders
- Officer Company/Squadron Leaders
- Permanent Party leadership
- Cadet/midshipman leadership
- Academy Faculty
- Academy Staff
- Athletic Coaches/Staff
- Mentorship

Table 155 shows how we adapted the levels of leadership form the MSA DEOCS to the terms used in the DEOCS 5.0.

**Table 155.**  
***Levels of Leadership MSA***

Respondent	Items	Factors
Cadet/Midshipman Company/Squadron Leaders	USMA: “the first cadet in my chain of command” USAFA: “the first cadet in my chain of command” USNA: “the first midshipman in my chain of command”	Leadership Support Toxic leadership MSA-only leadership items
Senior Enlisted Leadership/Enlisted Company/Squadron Leaders.  Officer Company/Squadron Leaders	USMA: “My company Permanent Party Command Team” USAFA: “My Squadron Permanent Party Command Team” USNA: “My company Permanent Party Command Team”	Leadership Support Toxic Leadership Transformational Leadership Passive Leadership MSA-only leadership items
General/Other	Academy Faculty Academy Coaches and Staff Mentorship	Fairness Leader Demographics Custom items on support provided by Academy Faculty, Coaches, Staff, and mentorship.

For MSA participants, their cadet/midshipman chain of command is akin to “immediate supervisors” from military units and civilian DoD organizations. The cadet/midshipman’s permanent party command team consists of military leaders in charge of the cadet/midshipman’s military learning and training and is more akin to unit commanders and organization leaders from military units and civilian DoD organizations. These participants also receive an expanded general section of questions about their experience at their MSA with Academy faculty, coaches, staff, and mentorship.

It is imperative that participants know and understand the intended measurement purpose of each question. We chose terms that we believe are likely to be universally understood by our survey population. Because the DEOCS 5.0 asks about multiple levels of leadership, instructions were added to orient participants to think about one level of leadership at a time and definitions were added to clear up any confusion about what each level of leadership was measuring, as shown below:

***Military instructions and definitions for immediate supervisor***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your immediate supervisor. When responding, consider only time spent over the past three months serving under your immediate supervisor.

Your responses are completely confidential. No one in your command including your immediate supervisor will be able to know how you respond.

Immediate Supervisor: For the purpose of these questions, your immediate supervisor is the individual to whom you directly report in your unit, [Unit Title].”

***Civilian instructions and definitions for immediate supervisor***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about **your immediate supervisor**. When responding, consider only time spent over the past three months **working for your immediate supervisor**.

Your responses are completely confidential. No one **that you work with** including **your immediate supervisor** will be able to know how you respond.

Immediate Supervisor: For the purpose of these questions, your immediate supervisor is the individual to whom you directly report in your unit, [**Organization Title**].”

***MSA instructions and definitions for first cadet/midshipman in your chain of command***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about [**the first cadet in your chain of command | the first midshipman in your chain of command**]. When responding, consider only time spent over the past three months [**with the first cadet in your chain of command | with the first midshipman in your chain of command**].

Your responses are completely confidential. No one at your Academy, including [**the first cadet in your chain of command | the first midshipman in your chain of command**], will be able to know how you respond.

First Cadet in Chain of Command: For the purpose of these questions, the first cadet in your chain of command is the cadet immediately above you in your cadet chain of command.”

First Midshipman in Chain of Command: For the purpose of these questions, the first midshipman in your chain of command is the midshipman immediately above you in your midshipman chain of command.”

***Military unit instructions and definitions for commander***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your unit’s leader. When responding, consider only time spent [‘over the past three months’] in your unit.

Your responses are completely confidential. No one in your unit including your senior leadership, will be able to know how you respond.

Unit Leader:<sup>110</sup> For the purpose of this question, your unit's leader is the person in charge of [Unit Title]."<sup>111</sup>

### ***Civilian organization instructions and definitions for senior leader***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your organization’s leader. When responding, consider only time spent [over the past three months] in your organization.

Your responses are completely confidential. No one in your organization, including your senior leadership, will be able to know how you respond.

Organization Leader: For the purpose of this question, your organization's leader is the person in charge of [Unit/Organization/Academy Title].”

### ***MSA instructions and definitions for permanent party command team***

- “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about [your company permanent party command team | your squadron permanent party command team]. When responding, consider only time spent at the [Academy Title].

Your responses are completely confidential. No one in your [company | squadron], including your senior leadership, will be able to know how you respond.

Company Permanent Party Command Team: For the purpose of this question, your company permanent party command team is the officer and enlisted person responsible for your company.

Squadron Permanent Party Command Team: For the purpose of this question, your squadron permanent party command team is the officer and enlisted person responsible for your squadron.”

### ***Military unit and Civilian Organization instructions and definitions for Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)/Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL)***

- “In the next section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your unit’s senior NCO/SEL. Consider only time spent while serving [“over the past three months”] [in your unit | in your organization].

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<sup>110</sup> Based on consultation with military members, we elected not to use the term “commander” and instead used the more generic “unit leader.” This is because the term “commander” has different connotations for each of the Services, and because DEOCS are administered at many different levels within the military hierarchy and the term “commander” may not accurately describe the individual on whose behalf a DEOCS is being administered.

<sup>111</sup> The survey pipes in the name of the unit as input by the survey administrator when the survey is requested to further clarify which leader is referred to in this set of questions. For example, “the person in charge of the Office of People Analytics” is intended to provide participants a clear idea of the individual in question.



Your responses are completely confidential. No one in your unit, including your unit’s senior NCO/SEL, will know how you answered any questions.

Senior NCO/SEL: For the purpose of this question, your senior NCO/SEL is the highest-ranking non-commissioned officer or enlisted person in [Unit/Organization Name].”

**Writing Leadership Items**

For military and civilian participants, we decided to ask general questions first, followed by sections on immediate supervisors, unit, and organization leaders, and (if applicable) senior NCOs or senior enlisted advisors. MSA cadets and midshipmen are asked Academy and general questions first, followed by a section on the first cadet or midshipman in their cadet/midshipman chain of command, and then a section covering their permanent party command team.

**General Leadership Items**

The first three items in the Leadership section ask participants about their chain of command and leadership in general, and not about any specific leader or level of leadership. These items are presented in Table 156.

**Table 156.**  
**General Leadership Items**

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“Communication goes up and down the chain of command. <sup>1</sup> ”	“Communication goes both up and down the [company   squadron] <sup>2</sup> chain of command.”
“Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, and recognition) are fairly distributed among military members/employees of my workgroup.”	“Training opportunities, awards, recognition, and other positive outcomes are distributed fairly. <sup>3</sup> ”
“Discipline is administered fairly.”	“Discipline <b>and criticism</b> <sup>4</sup> are administered fairly.”

<sup>1</sup>As noted previously, this item is part of the “Inclusion” factor; the other five “Inclusion” items are included in the Work/Academy Experiences section because they do not focus solely on inclusion from leadership but rather on inclusion in the unit/organization as a whole.

<sup>2</sup>Because cadets and midshipmen have two chains of command, this phrase was added for clarity for the MSA population only.

<sup>3</sup>Rephrased for clarity.

<sup>4</sup>We believed “Discipline” is uniquely a military-related negative outcome, and that the word “criticism” helps make this question relevant for civilian participants.

MSA cadets and midshipmen are asked seven additional questions about support they receive from Academy faculty, athletic choices, and staff, and the MSA mentorship program (Table 157).

**Table 157.**  
***Military Service Academy Customization***

<b>Original Text</b>	<b>DEOCS 5.0 Text</b>
“I trust that <i>my academic success</i> is supported by: Academy Faculty”	“I trust that my academic success is supported by Academy faculty.”
“I trust that <i>my academic success</i> is supported by: Athletic Coaches/Staff”	“I trust that my academic success is supported by Academy coaches and staff.”
“I trust that <i>my development as a leader</i> is supported by: Academy Faculty”	“I trust that my development as a leader of character is supported by Academy faculty.”
“I trust that <i>my development as a leader</i> is supported by: Athletic Coaches/Staff”	“I trust that my development as a leader of character is supported by Academy coaches and staff.”
“I trust that <i>my well-being</i> is supported by: Academy Faculty”	“I trust that my well-being is supported by Academy faculty.”
“I trust that <i>my well-being</i> is supported by: Athletic Coaches/Staff”	“I trust that my well-being is supported by Academy coaches and staff.”
“The Academy provides Cadets/Midshipmen with an effective mentoring program.”	“The Academy provides cadets   midshipmen with an effective mentoring program.”

To determine which leadership question are appropriate to ask each participant, and to provide actionable information to data users about a participant’s leadership, participants are asked a series of leadership demographic items, presented in Table 158.

**Table 158.**  
**Leadership Demographic Items**

Participant	Item Text	Response Options
All Military & Civilian	“Your current immediate supervisor is...” <sup>1</sup>	<i>Enlisted (including non-commissioned officers [NCOs])</i> <i>A commissioned officer</i> <i>A warrant officer</i> <i>A civilian</i> <i>Don't know</i>
IF supervisor is a civilian	“What DoD civilian pay plan/category is your immediate supervisor?”	<i>General Schedule (GS)-like pay plan (GS/GG/GM/GL/GP/GR)</i> <i>Federal Wage System pay plan (WG/WS/WL/WD/WK/WU/WA/WO/WN/WQ/WR/XG)</i> <i>Senior Executive Service (SES)</i> <i>Title 10 tenured or tenure-track faculty</i> <i>Title 10 non-tenure-track faculty</i> <i>Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF)</i> <i>Demonstration/Alternative/Other pay plans</i>
IF GS Pay scale	“What is your immediate supervisor's paygrade?”	<i>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</i>
IF Wage System Pay scale	“What is your immediate supervisor's paygrade?”	<i>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19</i>
IF supervisor is Enlisted	“What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?”	<i>E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7, E-8, E-9, E-10</i>
IF supervisor is Commissioned Officer	“What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?”	<i>O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9, O-10</i>
IF supervisor is Warrant Officer	“What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?”	<i>W-1, W-2, W-3, W-4, W-5</i>
If supervisor is Title-10	“What is your immediate supervisor's position at the Military Service Academy?”	<i>AD-1: Instructor</i> <i>AD-3: Assistant Professor</i> <i>AD-5: Associate Professor</i> <i>AD-7: Professor</i> <i>AD-9: Admin Faculty</i> <i>AD-11: Supervisory/Professor Dean/Academic Dean</i>
All Military and Civilian	“Does your unit or organization have a senior NCO/senior enlisted leader?”	<i>Yes</i> <i>No</i> <i>Don't Know</i>
MSA	“What Class year is the first [‘cadet’   ‘midshipmen’] in your chain of command?”	<i>3/C (Second Year)</i> <i>2/C (Third Year)</i> <i>1/C (Fourth Year)</i>

<sup>1</sup>Items in this section also contain the following clause: “If you are not sure, please proceed to the next question.” Although DEOCS 5.0 participants can skip any question at any time, we were concerned that participants may drop off at this moment if they did not know these details about their immediate supervisor. This reminder may lead to increased item nonresponse from participants, but we would rather have an item nonresponse than a participant breaking off and leaving the survey.

This information is used for two purposes. First, it can be helpful for a commander to know where leadership risks exist, and if any are specific to levels of leadership in their unit or organization (e.g., risk factors endorsed by participants with GS-13 leaders, Service members with E-4 supervisors, or MSA participants under 3/C cadets/midshipmen).<sup>112</sup> One item is used to

<sup>112</sup> Chapter 9 reveals more details on how leadership constructs are reported by leadership level.

insert appropriate items into the DEOCS 5.0; for example, a participant must select that they have a senior NCO or senior enlisted leader in their unit/organization to receive a section of questions to evaluate this leader.

**Immediate Supervisor.** Respondents are then asked to evaluate their immediate supervisor or first cadet/midshipman in their chain of command. All participants should have direct contact with their immediate supervisor. Accordingly, we ask questions in this section that measure this direct interaction. Most source items were written with the same purpose, so little editing was needed. These items are presented in Table 159.

**Table 159.**  
**Immediate Supervisor Items**

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.”	“I have trust and confidence in [‘my immediate supervisor’   ‘the first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘the first midshipman in my chain of command’].”
“My supervisor listens to what I have to say.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] listens to what I have to say.”
“My supervisor treats me with respect.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] treats me with respect.”
“He/She cares about others' personal well-being.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] cares about my personal well-being.”
“My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.”
“My supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my performance.”
“Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] supports my career <sup>1</sup> development.”
“I feel comfortable sharing my work difficulties with my immediate supervisor.”	
“I believe I can use my chain of command/supervision to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation/reprisal.”	“If needed, I can go to [‘my immediate supervisor’   ‘the first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘the first midshipman in my chain of command’] to address my concerns without fear of reprisal. <sup>2</sup> ”
“Retaliation and/or reprisal does not occur when an incident or complaint is reported.”	
“He/She puts others' interests above his/her own.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] puts the interests of subordinates [‘and subordinates’ families’] <sup>3</sup> above their personal interests. <sup>4</sup> ”

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“The most destructive supervisor I have experienced... Publicly belittles subordinates.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] ridicules subordinates. <sup>5</sup> ”
“The most destructive supervisor I have experienced... Expresses anger at subordinates for unknown reasons.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] has explosive outbursts. <sup>6</sup> ”
“The most destructive supervisor I have experienced... Has a sense of personal entitlement.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] has a sense of personal entitlement.”
“The most destructive supervisor I have experienced... Will only offer assistance to people who can help him/her get ahead.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] acts only in the best interest of their own advancement. <sup>7</sup> ”
“My current supervisor will ignore ideas that are contrary to his/her own.”	“[‘My immediate supervisor’   ‘The first cadet in my chain of command’   ‘The first midshipman in my chain of command’] ignores ideas that are contrary to their own.”

<sup>1</sup>This question had two additional edits. First, the term “employee development” felt like it applied more to civilian sectors, whereas “career development” was felt to apply to both military and civilian populations. Second, to fit with other questions in the section that are asked at the personal level, the item was revised to as about the participants’ career development, and not supporting all employees’ career development.

<sup>2</sup>This item is written to capture what is generally intended by the three source items, but drops the narrow focus on discrimination from one of the source items. Our feeling is that if a participant felt a fear of retaliation based on bringing up discrimination, they would report it in this revised question. Others who fear possible reprisal for bringing up other issues would also report accordingly, producing a better metric on fear of reprisal.

<sup>3</sup>Stakeholders suggested the addition of “and subordinates’ families” for military and DoD civilian populations.

<sup>4</sup>We felt that “others’ interests” was vague and could include a supervisor who puts the needs of their supervisors above the needs of their subordinates. We edited the item to clarify this.

<sup>5</sup>We changed the meaning of this question to include any ridicule, not just that which is public.

<sup>6</sup>We wanted to capture the “spirit” of the source item, but had concerns with the specific text. First, we wanted a broader question that didn’t focus on subordinates being the target of the anger, but more if anger was frequent regardless of the target. Also, the part about “unknown reasons” was very narrow and would be difficult for a participant to evaluate. Regardless of whether the reasons are known or unknown, leaders shouldn’t have explosive outbursts.

<sup>7</sup>Item was rephrased to broaden the item while keeping the original intent. Rather than focus just on “offering assistance,” the new item focuses on any action a leader may engage in where the motivation is their own personal advancement. This is in line with comments and descriptions regarding toxic leadership that we heard during the DEOCS redesign focus groups.

The section concludes with two MSA-only items, presented in Table 160.

**Table 160.**  
**MSA-Only Items**

Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
“Certain students are excessively teased to the point where they are unable to defend themselves.”	
“Certain students are frequently reminded of small errors or mistakes they have made, in an effort to belittle them.”	“The first [‘cadet’   ‘midshipman’] in my chain of command allows negative behavior to occur. <sup>1</sup> ”
“Certain students are publicly humiliated in an effort to belittle them.”	
“If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect... Negative academic outcomes (e.g., poor evaluations, opportunities for leadership would suffer, unfair grades).”	“If I were to report the first [‘cadet’   ‘midshipman’] in my chain of command for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations or opportunities for leadership would suffer). <sup>2</sup> ”

<sup>1</sup>The question is a product of combining three questions from the MSA DEOCS into a single item. The revised question is less specific on the types of negative behaviors that occur, but is also more specific in that it identifies the cadet/midshipman as the cause in allowing negative behaviors to occur. We feel this item is more actionable than the previous set of questions.

<sup>2</sup>The origin of this item was addressed earlier. This item appears here because it involves negative impacts from the participant’s cadet/midshipman chain of command.

Because participants generally have the most interaction with their immediate supervisor, the DEOCS 5.0 asks an open-ended question specifically about the immediate supervisor:

- “If you have any additional comments or concerns that you would like to provide about [‘your immediate supervisor’ | ‘the first cadet in your chain of command’ | ‘the first midshipman in your chain of command’], you may share them here.

Senior leadership will be able to see what you write but not who wrote it. Please do not include personally identifiable information (for example, stating your name or your immediate supervisor’s name).”

**Unit Commanders, Organization Leaders, and Permanent Party Command Teams**

As opposed to the direct contact we assume participants have with their immediate supervisor, participants may or may not have direct contact with their commander, organization leader, or MSA permanent party command team. We decided to evaluate these more senior levels of leadership on the “Transformational Leadership” and “Passive Leadership” factors because the items focus more on broad ways in which the leader(s) shape and direct the mission of the unit or organization. MSA participants are also asked to evaluate their permanent party command team on “Transformational Leadership” and “Passive Leadership” in addition to “Leadership Support,” “Toxic Leadership,” and a few MSA-only leadership items as well.

Although some of the source items were originally written at the supervisor level, converting these items to use senior leadership phrasing required no additional revisions, with a few exceptions, covered in Table 161:

**Table 161.**  
**Commander Items**

Factor	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
Passive Leadership	“My current supervisor takes early action in addressing problems.”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] takes early action in addressing problems.”
	“My current supervisor does <b>not</b> <sup>6</sup> address problems brought to their attention.”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] addresses problems when they are brought to their attention.”
Transformational Leadership	“My team leader... Communicates a <b>clear and positive</b> vision of the future.”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] communicates a <b>clear and motivating</b> <sup>1</sup> vision of the future.”
	“My team leader... <b>Is clear about his/her values and practices which he/she preaches.</b> <sup>2</sup> ”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] <b>takes actions that are consistent with [Service Component]</b> <sup>3</sup> <b>values.</b> ”
	“My team leader... <b>Treats staff</b> <sup>4</sup> as individuals, supports and encourages their development.”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] supports and encourages the development of others.”
	“My team leader... Encourages thinking about problems in new ways <b>and questions assumptions.</b> ”	“[‘My unit’s leader’   ‘My organization’s leader’   ‘My company/squadron permanent party command team’] encourages their subordinates to think about problems in new ways. <sup>5</sup> ”

<sup>1</sup>The word “positive” was replaced with “motivating” because leaders cannot always frame issues positively, but leaders can motivate.

<sup>2</sup>Responding to stakeholder feedback, we edited this question to remove the phrase “practice what he/she preaches” and replaced it with a phrase that measures Service-specific values.

<sup>3</sup>Individual Service Component names, like “Army” or “Navy,” will be inserted here.

<sup>4</sup>The term “staff” didn’t fit the DEOCS survey population and was removed.

<sup>5</sup>Question was edited so that it is no longer double-barreled.

<sup>6</sup>To keep the question valance consistent with other questions in the section, we removed the word “not” from the item.

MSA cadet and midshipmen are asked to evaluate their permanent party command team on additional factors (“Leadership Support” and “Toxic Leadership”), as well as a few MSA-only leadership items that they also rated their immediate supervisors on. These questions are worded exactly the same, except for the switch in leadership phrasing. For example:

- MSA item on first cadet/midshipmen in the chain of command:
  - “I have trust and confidence in [‘the first cadet in my chain of command’ | ‘the first midshipman in my chain of command’].”
- MSA item on permanent party command team:
  - “I have trust and confidence in my [‘company’ | ‘squadron’] permanent party command team.

As discussed earlier, one MSA-only question was also added to this section:

- “If I were to report someone in my [‘company’ | ‘squadron’] permanent party command team for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations, decreased opportunities for leadership, become the center of gossip or rumors, ignored, or bullied).”<sup>113</sup>

### ***Senior NCO/SEL***

DEOCS 5.0 participants are asked if their unit or organization has a senior NCO or senior enlisted leader. If so, participants are presented items to rate this level of leadership on “Transformational Leadership,” “Passive Leadership,” and “Toxic Leadership.” This level of leadership was not explicitly covered in prior versions of the DEOCS, and is not often the focus of survey questions on DoD surveys. However, feedback from Service members and stakeholders as well as emerging research have highlighted the crucial role of the unit’s senior NCO in setting the tone for the unit, particularly with respect to climate issues. Thus, we aimed to capture various aspects of senior NCO leadership on the new DEOCS in order to provide actionable data for units. We’ve covered edits to the “Transformational Leadership,” “Passive Leadership,” and “Toxic Leadership” items in the previous sections, and the only difference in these items in this section are changes in phrasing that specify the level of leadership the question is measuring. For example:

DEOCS 5.0:

- “My unit’s leader takes early action in addressing problems.”
- “My unit’s senior NCO/senior enlisted leader takes early action in addressing problems.”

### ***Open-Ended Leadership Feedback***

We are aware that many individuals in the DEOCS population interact with more leaders than we can ask about on the DEOCS. This question provides a space for participants to say more about their leadership previously covered (including NCO and senior enlisted advisors) as well as anyone else that they interact with in a command or leadership role. After participants fill out the section on their unit commander, organization leader, MSA permanent party command team, and if applicable, their senior NCO or senior enlisted leader, they are asked another open-ended question:

- “To improve leadership in your [‘unit’ | ‘organization’ | ‘Military Service Academy’], it is important for us to know how your leadership interacts with you and impacts your life. If you have any comments or concerns that you would like to provide about

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<sup>113</sup> As noted earlier, this item was sourced from an MSA DEOCS question with unique reporting options: “If I reported a cadet/midshipman for misconduct, I would expect: Negative academic outcomes (e.g., poor evaluations, opportunities for leadership would suffer, unfair grades).” The new item focuses on reprisal a cadet or midshipman would expect to face if they reported the misconduct of their leadership.



any person in a leadership role that you may interact with either in or outside of your chain of command, please share them here.

*Senior leadership will be able to see what you write but not who wrote it. Please do not include personally identifiable information.”*

**Section IV. Behaviors and Personal Experiences**

Whenever possible, personal and sensitive questions should always appear near the end of a survey (Dillman et al., 2014). This way, if sensitive or personal items trigger a desire to break off from the survey, then some participants may feel indebted to the survey task because they have answered many questions already, and decide to finish. Others who do break off, however, will have already met the criteria to be considered a complete survey. [Chapter 9](#) has DEOCS completion rules.

We believed the items on “Stress,” “Connectedness,” “Alcohol Misuse,” and the “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” (Table 162) belonged near the end of the DEOCS. Although the questions in the problematic behaviors section may also be seen as sensitive and personal, these questions are related to work experiences initiated or perpetrated by others and are not about the participant’s own emotional state and private behaviors. The majority of the DEOCS 5.0 covers what happens to a participant at work. Placing these personal items earlier would set the wrong tone for the survey, because most items are not asked at this same personal level. Thus, placing these items later in the survey made the most sense.

**Table 162.**  
*Behavior and Personal Experience Items*

Factors	Original Text	DEOCS 5.0 Text
Alcohol Impairing Memory	“During the past 12 months, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?”	“During the past 12 months, how often have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?”
Alcohol <sup>1</sup> MSA-Only	“From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy: Peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.”	“At the Academy, peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.”
	“From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy: Unauthorized drinking is condoned by my sponsor”	“At the Academy, unauthorized drinking is condoned by my sponsor.”
	“To what extent does your permanent party leadership enforce the Academy's alcohol use policy?”	“My permanent party leadership enforces the Academy's alcohol use policy.”
	“To what extent does your Cadet/Midshipman leadership enforce the Academy's alcohol use policy?”	“My [‘cadet’   ‘midshipman’] leadership enforces the Academy's alcohol use policy.”
	“If you felt you needed help to control your drinking, how comfortable would you be seeking help from on-campus resources?”	“If I needed help to control my drinking, I would feel comfortable seeking help from on-campus resources.”

Binge Drinking	“How often do you have four or more drinks (if you are a woman) or five or more drinks (if you are a man) on one occasion?”	“How often do you have four or more drinks (if you are a woman) or five or more drinks (if you are a man) on one occasion?”
Connectedness	“These days, I feel like I belong.”	“These days, I feel like I belong.”
	“These days, I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.”	“These days, I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.”
	“These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.”	“These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.”
	“My future seems dark to me.”	“My future seems dark to me.”
Safe Storage for Lethal Means	NA <sup>2</sup>	“In general, the hazards in my living space that may be deliberately or accidentally used to harm others or myself, such as poisons, medications, and firearms, are safely stored (for example, locked in a cabinet, unloaded).”
Stress	“In the past month, how often have you felt nervous or stressed?”	“In the past month, how often have you felt nervous or stressed?”
	“In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?”	“In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?”
	“In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? “	“In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?”
	“In the past month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do? “	“In the past month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do?”

<sup>1</sup>These items were originally measured on the scale (Not at all, Slight extent, Moderate extent, Great extent, Don't know/Not applicable) and were converted to the standardized 5-point agree/disagree scale.

<sup>2</sup>This item does not have a source, as we wrote the item to meet stakeholder needs.

The “Stress,” “Connectedness,” and MSA-only Alcohol items are used verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from their original sources. The “Alcohol Impacting Memory” and “Binge Drinking” items measured on the DEOCS 5.0 are adapted from the widely used Alcohol Use Disorders Identification scale (Higgins-Biddle & Babor, 2018; Saunders et al., 1993). The “Safe Storage of Lethal Means” item is a new one that was written based on existing literature and is intended as a predictor of attempted and completed suicide. Stakeholders wanted to add an item to the DEOCS to track this important risk factor. No source item exists for this single-item measure, but in consultation with DEOCS stakeholders in the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO), we wrote this item and measured on an adapted frequency scale. “All Other Scales” within “Selecting and Standardizing Response Scales” in this chapter has more details on the response options.

This section concludes with one final open-ended item:

- We want to know what is important to you. If you choose, you may use the space below to add any other comments or concerns you may have regarding any topic covered or not covered in this survey. Feel free to add anything else you want to say. Senior leadership will be able to see what you write but not who wrote it. Please do not include personally identifiable information (for example, details from a specific event that only you would know).

Each open-ended question in the DEOCS 5.0 contains motivating messages that have been shown to increase response rates to and engagement with open-ended questions (Smyth et al.,2009). However, some methodologists caution that motivational messaging is most effective when used less frequently (Oudejans & Christian, 2011). Because this is the final open-ended question on the DEOCS 5.0, this question contains additional and unique motivational appeals to respond: “We want to know what is important to you” and “Feel free to add anything else you want to say.”

## **Section V. Demographics**

Aside from a few logistic questions asked early in the DEOCS 5.0 that were necessary for inserting proper questions and text into the survey instrument, all other demographic questions appear in the final section. Each demographic question requires a unique response scale and were written to meet DoD and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines (Table 163).

**Table 163.**  
**DEOCS Demographics**

Topic	Participant	Item Text	Response Options
Hispanic Origin	All	“Are you Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino?”	<i>No, not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino</i> <i>Yes, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino</i>
Race	All	“What is your race? <i>Mark one or more races to indicate what race you consider yourself to be.</i> ”	<i>White</i> <i>Black or African American</i> <i>American Indian or Alaska Native</i> <i>Asian (for example, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese)</i> <i>Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (for example, Samoan, Guamanian or Chamorro)</i>
Sex	All	“Are you?”	<i>Male</i> <i>Female</i>
Officer Status	Military	“You are...”	<i>Enlisted (including non-commissioned officers [NCOs])</i> <i>commissioned officer</i> <i>A warrant officer</i>
Pay Grade	If enlisted	“What is your paygrade?”	<i>E-1, E-2, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7, E-8, E-9, E-10</i>
	If commissioned officer	“What is your paygrade?”	<i>O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9, O-10</i>
	If warrant officer	“What is your paygrade?”	<i>W-1, W-2, W-3, W-4, W-5</i>
Service	Military	“What branch of Service are you in?”	<i>Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard</i>
Pay Plan	Civilian	“What is current pay plan/category?”	<i>General Schedule (GS)-like pay plan (GS/GG/GM/GL/GP/GR)</i> <i>Federal Wage System pay plan (WG/WS/WL/WD/WK/WU/WA/WO/WN/WQ/WR/XG)</i> <i>Senior Executive Service (SES)</i> <i>Title 10 tenured or tenure-track faculty</i> <i>Title 10 non-tenure-track faculty</i> <i>Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF)</i> <i>Demonstration/Alternative/Other pay plans</i>
	If GS	“What is your paygrade?”	<i>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15</i>
	If Wage System	“What is your paygrade?”	<i>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19</i>
	If Title 10	“What is your position at the Military Service Academy?”	<i>AD-1: Instructor, AD-3: Assistant Professor, AD-5: Associate Professor, AD-7: Professor, AD-9: Admin Faculty, AD-11: Supervisory/Professor Dean/Academic Dean</i>
Supervisor	All	“Are you a supervisor? <i>To be a supervisor, you must have at least one subordinate who directly reports to you.</i> ”	<i>No</i> <i>Yes</i>
Athletics	MSA	“Are you a member of an intercollegiate athletic team?”	<i>No</i> <i>Yes</i>

This concludes the core DEOCS 5.0.<sup>114</sup> Respondents will see a thank you message and a button to complete their survey.

## Discussion

Our goal in redesigning the DEOCS instrument was to create a data-driven, user-friendly survey instrument that would give leaders and commanders actionable information to improve their units and organizations. In this chapter, we outlined our efforts to write the final DEOCS instrument, starting with items scientifically selected for inclusion in the DEOCS to provide information on 19 protective and risk factors. Coming from over 20 disparate sources, these items were not designed to work together in a single survey instrument. To ensure proper measurement of all items and to reduce burden on participants, this chapter outlined the process we followed to edit and standardize items selected for inclusion in the DEOCS 5.0, as well as all other questions (such as demographics) that we needed to add to the DEOCS to construct a complete survey instrument.

The scientific validity of each item is covered in previous chapters ([Chapter 6](#); [Chapter 7](#)), and we believe our edits maintain or enhance the ability of each item to produce valid, data-driven information for leaders and commanders. By standardizing item text and response options, we are able to present information to leadership in easy-to-read data visualizations, making insights from the DEOCS immediately digestible and actionable.

Most importantly, our efforts covered in this chapter reduce the burden of taking a DEOCS on participants. Survey burden can be summarized as, “the product of an interaction between the nature of the task and the way it is perceived by the participant” (Bradburn, 1978). This can be difficult to calculate. We are confident that our efforts to simplify language and use the capabilities of the DEOCS web-instrument to insert participant-specific language creates a more user-friendly survey for all participants.

Although the impact of these changes may be difficult to quantify, some metrics of survey burden are more empirical. The most common metric of survey burden is survey length, measured either in number of questions, number of decision points, or the time it takes to complete a survey. A plurality of studies suggest that shorter surveys have increased response rates compared to lengthier surveys (Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Yammarino et al., 1991; Burchell & Marsh, 1992; Dillman, 2000; Galesic, 2006; Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009; Rolstad et al., 2011) and produce lower rates of drop-offs and item nonresponse. (Dillman et al., 2014). Some studies show that a majority of survey participants perceive shorter surveys as being less burdensome (Fricker et al., 2012; Yu et al., 2015; Fricker et al., 2011; Fricker et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer, or magic number of questions, for a survey. The guidance on survey length has been, and remains today, that surveys need to be as long as they

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<sup>114</sup> After the core DEOCS is complete, some participants will be provided an opportunity to answer up to 10 Service-specific items selected by their Service (e.g., Service members from the Army may see up to 10 items selected by the Army), and up to 10 agree/disagree and five open-ended items selected by their commander from a list of optional items (Chapter 5), and also participate in additional items for improvement and research purposes (Chapter 3).

need to be to answer research questions while not being “overly long”<sup>115</sup> (Blumberg et al., 1974). This adds a wrinkle to the “shorter is better” logic. A short, 10-item survey sounds ideal, but if the short survey does not achieve its goal, or is seen as frivolous or unnecessary by participants, it will be viewed as annoying and burdensome to participants. In contrast, a 50-item survey may be longer, but if the survey asks interesting question, answers important research questions, and is used to benefit participants in meaningful ways, it may be seen as less burdensome than a much shorter survey task. Thus, survey length is not the only factor in assessing participant burden (Dillman et al., 1993; Tortora, 2017). In short, the perceived quality of the survey matters as much as its empirical quantity. By using scientifically verified questions and employing thoughtful survey methodology practices and design principles, we believe leaders who use DEOCS data as well as participants will perceive the DEOCS 5.0 as a high-quality survey.

Another driver of survey burden is survey invasiveness or sensitivity, as a survey that asks difficult or sensitive questions may result in fewer responses or increased drop-offs compared to a longer but less sensitive or invasive survey (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Robins et al., 2016; Kaplan & Fricker, 2017). Any survey useful to commanders will ask about sensitive and difficult topics. The DEOCS 5.0 is no different, as it measures nine risk factors that may contain items that are seen as sensitive or personal by some participants. The DEOCS 5.0 thus asks sensitive questions when necessary, but also uses items scientifically verified to provide information on multiple STO, meaning that each sensitive item provides more meaningful information to commanders and leaders. Moreover, Service members have said the sensitive topics covered on the DEOCS 5.0 are important to include, which suggests that Service members are eager to provide this feedback to their leadership.

All of that being said, survey length is still a factor in survey burden. Our goal was not only to reduce the complexity and difficulty of the DEOCS, but to reduce the number of items on the DEOCS while providing leaders with more information. We accomplished this goal. In an “apples to apples” comparison of the number of items on each survey,<sup>116</sup> the DEOCS 4.1 asks participants between 94 and 102 items, depending on skip patterns. At most, a DEOCS 5.0 participant would respond to 97 items, and this is a rare (likely non-existent) situation of a participant in a military unit having both a senior NCO/SEL as well as a civilian supervisor while also working as a faculty member at an MSA. The vast majority of military and civilian DEOCS participants will receive between 84 and 95 items,<sup>117</sup> for roughly a 10% reduction in the number of items asked. Although both the previous MSA DEOCS and the DEOCS 5.0 that MSA cadets and midshipmen will see are longer than the military and civilian versions of the survey, this population will also experience a reduction in total items asked.

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<sup>115</sup> There isn’t a clear, agreed-upon way to know when a survey hits the breaking point of being “overly long.” The exact meaning of “overly long” was not defined in 1974, and little progress has been made since.

<sup>116</sup> As shown in Figure , the DEOCS 4.1 (and many OPA) surveys use complex grid-style questions that are numbered as a single item, but functionally ask multiple items. The DEOCS 5.0 replaced this format with single items. So on the surface, looking at “the number of questions on the survey,” it would appear that the DEOCS 5.0 asks more questions than the DEOCS 4.1. It does not.

<sup>117</sup> This is driven largely by whether or not the participant has a senior NCO or senior enlisted leader, which triggers an extra section of questions.

Another metric that we can use to compare the two DEOCS instruments is the number of decision points presented to participants. As mentioned in this chapter, the DEOCS 4.1 asked items using a 7-point agree/disagree scale with response options of *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Slightly Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Slightly Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. The gradation provided by this response scale was not seen as useful to data users, and we converted all to use a shorter, 5-point agree/disagree scale that drops the *Slightly Agree* and *Slightly Disagree* options. Reducing the scale from 7 to 5 points can reduce cognitive burden on participants because participants no longer have to tease out in their mind where they fall on a 7-point scale, but on a 5-point scale. This functionally reduces the number of decisions participants must make. We also developed a 4-point (rather than 5-point) frequency scale that removes the confusion of a non-neutral midpoint and provides more consistent semantic difference between response options. These changes, along with others to standardize items and response scales, results in the DEOCS 5.0 having 30% fewer decision points for participants compared to the DEOCS 4.1, which can reduce the cognitive task of responding to DEOCS 5.0 survey items.<sup>118</sup>

In total, we are confident that the DEOCS 5.0 is an improved survey instrument. It is data driven, participant friendly, and actionable for leaders and commanders. The next chapter discusses how the data collected via the DEOCS 5.0 are analyzed for commanders and the ways the new DEOCS reporting platform displays the results of the survey to administrators and commanders, highlighting many of the enhancements and updates already underway in developing the unit commander's dashboard.

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<sup>118</sup> Note that the DEOCS 5.0 is also designed with future improvement in mind. One of these improvements is to use available administrative data to remove the need to ask some, or all, demographic questions. This added feature may reduce the number of items presented to participants by approximately another 10%, and also significantly reduce the number of decision points that participants are asked to process and consider.





## Chapter 9: DEOCS Analysis and Reporting

*Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Abigail Moore, Dr. Jonathan Schreiner, David McGrath, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Austin Lawhead, Dr. Julia Dahl, Kimberly Hylton*

When a Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is complete and the survey window closes, the DEOCS back-end computer system compiles and analyzes the survey responses via a fully automated process. The DEOCS computer system then makes results available to the survey administrator, unit commander, and the unit commander's supervisor simultaneously, within 72 hours after the survey closes. Historically, analyses were also fully automated, and results were provided in the form of an auto-generated PDF report that the survey administrator could download from the DEOCS site. [Appendix K](#) has an example of a legacy DEOCS 4.1 report. However, feedback from focus groups ([Chapter 2](#)) and conversations with stakeholders ([Chapter 4](#)) highlighted a need for providing results in an easily digestible and more customizable format. Moreover, in response to a 2019 Secretary of Defense memorandum directing the development of new climate tools, and the resulting DEOCS Redesign Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) the Office of People Analytics (OPA) designed and launched an interactive online dashboard that displays unit DEOCS results (refer to DEOCS Redesign Action Area 3 and [Chapter 1](#) for more details on the Memorandum and POAM).

Construction and enhancement of the dashboard is ongoing, but OPA made a beta version available for DoD-wide use on July 29, 2020, displaying results from DEOCS 4.1. An updated version launched on January 4, 2021, displaying results from DEOCS 5.0. When complete, the dashboard will include (1) dynamic ways of viewing, segmenting, and comparing unit-level climate metrics; (2) interpretation of findings into implications that clearly identify how command climate issues identified in a DEOCS translate into risk and protection for strategic target outcomes (STO); and (3) easy accessibility to resources to address any areas of concern identified in a DEOCS. The beta version of the dashboard presents most of the same information that was previously available in the legacy PDF reports (with some exceptions, described further in this chapter), and allows users to download the information into a PDF report if desired.

Although the dashboard represents the most substantial change to the way DEOCS results are reported, updates were also made to the way data are analyzed and presented in comparison to the previous PDF reports. Some of these changes are the consequence of the redesigned survey content, which required new visualizations for the new risk and protective factors. Other changes are in response to previous evaluations of the DEOCS that highlighted concerns with some of the analytic methodologies used in DEOCS 4.1 reports (Alley et al., 2018). Still other changes were made to align DEOCS methods with OPA's usual survey standards and practices, and to comply with requirements of various survey approval authorities (i.e., Human Research Protections Program [HRPP], Office of the Secretary of Defense [OSD]/DoD Privacy Office, OPA Disclosure Review Board, etc.).

The following chapter describes the process for analyzing and reporting DEOCS survey results. [Chapter 5](#) contains more information on the survey administration process. The focus of the current chapter is on the analysis and reporting of DEOCS data of individual units/organizations provided directly to the same unit/organization. DEOCS data can, and increasingly are,

leveraged for purposes beyond individual unit survey reporting.<sup>119</sup> Those efforts are beyond the scope of the current DEOCS Redesign Phase 1 report and will be described in any resulting reports for those specific efforts.

The current chapter begins with an overview of the specific goals for the redesign of the DEOCS reporting, with a particular focus on the new dashboard. We will then provide a description of the statistical methods used to calculate unit DEOCS results, and then turn to an in-depth discussion of how these results are presented via the DEOCS dashboard.

## Goals for Action Area 3: Unit Commander DEOCS Dashboard

As with the previous two action areas, the goals for the third action area of the DEOCS redesign, the Unit Commander Dashboard, correspond to the three overarching redesign principles by ensuring that DEOCS results are (1) accurate and data driven, (2) user friendly, and (3) actionable. In general, our reporting redesign efforts aimed to increase trust in and reliance on DEOCS results, help users easily understand their results, focus limited time and resources on the most important survey results, and ultimately guide actions to address identified issues. These goals have informed the initial beta dashboard development, changes made to how results are analyzed and reported, and are critical for informing future planned enhancements.<sup>120</sup>

### Accurate and Data Driven

The way that DEOCS data are analyzed and reported can lead to different conclusions about the health of a unit's climate. Seemingly small decisions like how to average the items in a factor score, how to define a comparison group, and how the severity of results are communicated can have major impacts on the ultimate success of the DEOCS as a tool for commanders. All of OPA's decisions regarding how to analyze and report DEOCS data were motivated by a need to communicate accurate and data-driven results. Ensuring that our methods are valid and reliable will allow users to have more confidence in acting upon survey results. In this first phase of the redesign, OPA instituted new processes that will improve data quality, allow for more robust analyses, and improve methods going forward. However, while we implement these processes, we have suspended some functions that were previously available in DEOCS 4.1 reports. Our intention is to bring back most of these functions in new and better forms in the next phase of the redesign.

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<sup>119</sup> For example, DEOCS data are available for approved research purposes within the Army Analytics Group Person-Event Data Environment (PDE), and several Services currently have efforts underway leveraging these data. OPA is also leveraging DEOCS data in support of several active research efforts in support of various OSD components.

<sup>120</sup> Future enhancements to the DEOCS dashboard depend on the availability of resources. As of the writing of this report, no resources have been procured in support of the DEOCS dashboard. However, a request for resources is under review.

OPA understands that DEOCS users are busy and that the amount of information contained in a DEOCS report can be overwhelming. In our information-gathering efforts ([Chapter 2](#); [Chapter 3](#); [Chapter 4](#)), we repeatedly heard the need for easy ways to interpret DEOCS results; users want to be able to quickly identify where the unit is doing well and where the unit could improve. OPA believes that these decisions on what represents a “good” or “bad” score should be data driven. The risk of not having data-driven interpretations is that users may not be able to identify and act upon serious issues that would have otherwise been uncovered. For example, the recent investigative report at Fort Hood found that a different threshold for what constitutes a score “in the red” may have better alerted leaders to issues related to sexual assault and sexual harassment at the base (Department of Defense, 2020b). However, rather than setting another arbitrary threshold for severity, OPA believes that any interpretation aids should be data driven. Two objectives aim to improve the ability to quickly and accurately interpret DEOCS results.

First, we aim to provide the ability to compare DEOCS scores across units in order to provide norms and help commands understand the severity of DEOCS ratings in comparison to others (particularly in their Service), and to track progress over time. These comparisons are not currently available, but in the future, could include the ability to compare a unit’s results year to year and compare one unit’s results to similar units (such as by work function; e.g., “vs. other combat units” or Service; “vs. other Army units”). Additionally, this could include the ability to examine the impact of a commander by comparing a single unit’s results under different commanders or multiple units’ results under the same commander.<sup>121</sup>

Second, as described in [Chapter 6](#), the DEOCS is not intended to measure the prevalence of STOs, such as sexual assault or racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, but rather, to measure climate factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of the STOs (i.e., precursors or “leading indicators”). However, situating factor scores in relation to a unit’s likelihood of experiencing an STO will help users interpret their DEOCS results. Future additional analysis could allow us to develop data-driven benchmarks indicating the level of severity at which a DEOCS rating puts a unit at increased risk for an STO (e.g., “this unit’s ‘Connectedness’ score suggests a 2.5x increased likelihood of risk for suicide”). Similarly, we could develop models that combine several factor ratings to present the total risk for a unit to experience an STO (e.g., “scores across all factors for this unit suggest members in the unit are less likely to experience sexual assault compared to similar units, but are more likely to have reduced retention”). These increased analytic capabilities would help commanders understand where to focus their energy to most effectively improve command climate and provide senior leaders with more substantiated methods of conducting oversight of command climate and identifying localized climate problems for targeted prevention.

## User Friendly

The DEOCS is a rich source of data, and both unit-level stakeholders and senior leaders have expressed a need for more ways to view and analyze DEOCS data. Focus groups participants noted that the previous DEOCS 4.1 results were long and unwieldy. In response to these needs,

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<sup>121</sup> These comparisons rely on the ability to make accurate statistical comparisons between unit surveys, and in some cases rely on the ability to create accurate aggregations (e.g., Service overall) to serve as a comparison point. The challenges associated with comparisons and aggregations are discussed in further detail in the “Aggregations and Comparisons” section later in this chapter.

OPA identified several objectives related to improving data insights that the dashboard seeks to meet in its final end state. First, OPA aims to provide survey administrators and commanders with greater ability to segment their survey results (i.e., “slice and dice”) in dynamic and customizable ways through the interactive dashboard. In this sense, a dashboard can help “bring data to life” and allow users to develop a better understanding of their survey results. Second, to provide senior leaders a global view of the DoD climate, we also aim to create methods of aggregating multiple units’ results and providing the level of view and customization that senior leaders require.

## Actionable

Ultimately, the DEOCS is a tool for commanders to improve their command climate. To do so, it is important that the results be actionable—meaning the results should be clear enough that commanders have specific actions they can implement to improve command climate that are based on their survey results (i.e., “data-driven recommendations”). To this end, we aim to make action planning easier by providing easily accessible, directly relevant resources describing recommended actions for each factor rating, in partnership with relevant OSD policy offices and the Services. These recommendations and resources could be further customized to the unique characteristics of the unit (e.g., resources designed for combat units, resources designed for primarily civilian organizations, resources designed for units returning from a deployment) and/or the unique configuration of factor scores on the DEOCS that leverage a unit’s strengths in order to address their challenges (e.g., units with high “Cohesion” but also high “Workplace Hostility”). Significant research is needed to develop these sorts of data-driven recommendations and customized, evidence-based interventions, but this localized and contextualized approach also has the potential to be highly impactful in ultimately fostering healthy unit climates.

The goals described here guide both the statistical methods (described next) and the new dashboard (described later in this chapter).

## Statistical Methods

The following sections describe in detail the statistical methods used to analyze unit-level DEOCS responses and generate results for commanders.

## Eligible Respondents

All DEOCS scores are calculated and reported for eligible participants. To be considered an eligible participant on the DEOCS, a participant must complete at least 50% of the 71 base questions on the DEOCS.<sup>122</sup> Responses are included in reports based on this criterion regardless of whether the participant clicks the final submit button. After submitting their survey, participants have the option to ask for their responses to be withdrawn by contacting the DEOCS

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<sup>122</sup> Base questions are the questions that are asked of all DEOCS participants regardless of their group membership or skip patterns based on prior question responses. For example, questions that are asked only of MSA students are not considered base questions.

help desk before the survey closes. In those cases, the withdrawn response is not counted as an eligible participant.

DEOCS participants can choose not to answer individual survey questions. OPA does not impute values for these participants but instead leaves these responses as missing and the participant does not contribute to the reported estimate for that question. Because missing data rates for the DEOCS are relatively low (ranging from 1% to 8% per unit/organization), no imputation methods are conducted. Missing demographic data are not imputed using administrative data because administrative data do not currently exist for most participants.

## Response Rates

Response rates for unit surveys are calculated based on eligible participants as defined above. The response rate for the overall unit, or a subgroup, is the number of eligible survey responses divided by total number of registered participants included on the roster. It was possible in the legacy log in condition for the response rate to exceed 100% if more people take the survey than were included in the roster. This is not possible in the secure log in condition.<sup>123</sup>

Response rates for demographic groups are not shown because the OPA Disclosure Review Board determined that the information presented too great of a risk for members of small demographic groups, who may be unfairly targeted for a response rate that is disproportionate to their prevalence in the unit.

## Generalizability

DEOCS unit-level survey results are unweighted. This means the results are not representative nor generalizable to the entire unit, but rather represent only those who chose to complete the survey, and should be interpreted with caution. Failure to apply statistical weighting is consistent with the legacy survey since its inception. However, weighting is an industry-standard survey best practice that increases the accuracy and reliability of survey findings. The “Discussion” section later in this chapter has additional discussion on the topic of weighting the DEOCS.

## Calculation of Factor Scores

The creation of a factor score depends on whether it was created from a single question or multiple questions, as well as the response option scale. Each type of factor is discussed separately below. For all factors, response options are collapsed to create fewer reporting categories for the purpose of the topline DEOCS dashboard metrics, though results for the full set of response options are also available within the dashboard. Table 164 summarizes the name of each factor, the number of DEOCS questions used to create factor ratings, response options, and names of the favorable, neutral, and unfavorable ratings for each factor.

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<sup>123</sup> For more information on the differences between the secure and legacy log in methods read Chapter 5.

**Table 164.**  
**Grouped Response Options for DEOCS 5.0 Factors**

Factor	Number of Questions	Favorable		Neutral		Unfavorable	
		Name	Responses	Name	Responses	Name	Responses
<b>Multi-Item Factors</b>							
Cohesion	2	Cohesive Organization	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Non-Cohesive Organization	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Engagement & Commitment	4	Engaged & Committed	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Not Engaged & Committed	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Fairness	2	Fair Treatment	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Unfair Treatment	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Inclusion	6	Inclusive Organization	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Non-Inclusive Organization	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Leadership Support	9	Supportive Leadership	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Non-Supportive Leadership	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Transformational Leadership	4	Transformational Leadership	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Non-transformational Leadership	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Passive Leadership	2	Non-passive leadership	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Passive Leadership	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Toxic Leadership	2	Non-toxic leadership	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Toxic Leadership	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Connectedness	4	High Connectedness	Items 1 and 2: “Strongly Agree” “Agree” Items 3 and 4: “Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Low Connectedness	Items 1 and 2: “Strongly Disagree” “Disagree” Items 3 and 4: “Strongly Agree” “Agree”
Morale	2	High Morale	“Very High” “High”	Moderate	“Moderate”	Low Morale	“Low” “Very Low”
Stress	4	Low Stress	“Never” “Rarely”	N/A	N/A	Moderate/High Stress	“Sometimes” “Often”
<b>Single-Item Factors</b>							
Work-Life Balance	1	Work-Life Balance	“Strongly Agree” “Agree”	Neutral	“Neither Agree Nor Disagree”	Lack of Work-Life Balance	“Strongly Disagree” “Disagree”
Safe Storage for Lethal Means	1	Usually Safely Stored	“Always” “Often”	Sometimes Safely Stored	“Rarely” “Sometimes”	Never Safely Stored	“Never”

Binge Drinking	1	No Binge Drinking	“Never”	Some Binge Drinking	“Less than Monthly” “Monthly”	Frequent Binge Drinking	“Weekly” “Daily”
Alcohol Impairing Memory	1	No Memory Loss due to Alcohol	“Never”	Some Memory Loss due to Alcohol	“Less than Monthly” “Monthly”	Frequent Memory Loss due to Alcohol	“Weekly” “Daily”
<b>Problematic Behaviors</b>							
Racially Harassing Behaviors	5	No Presence of Racially Harassing Behaviors	“Never”	N/A	N/A	Presence of Racially Harassing Behaviors	At least one item: “Rarely” “Sometimes” “Often”
Sexually Harassing Behaviors	7	No Presence of Sexually Harassing Behaviors	“Never”	N/A	N/A	Presence of Sexually Harassing Behaviors	At least one item: “Rarely” “Sometimes” At least one item: “Often”
Sexist Behaviors	1	No Presence of Sexist Behaviors	“Never”	N/A	N/A	Presence of Sexist Behaviors	“Rarely” “Sometimes” “Often”
Workplace Hostility	6	No Presence of Workplace Hostility	“Never”	N/A	N/A	Presence of Sexually Harassing Behaviors	At least one item: “Rarely” “Sometimes” “Often”

**Multi-Item Factors**

Many of the protective and risk factors are created by aggregating responses to multiple questions. Many of these have response options on a 5-point strongly agree to strongly disagree Likert scale, as shown in Table 165 below, using the protective factor “Cohesion” as an example. For these factors, the percentage of favorable and unfavorable responses are created by averaging across response options and items.

**Table 165.**  
**Multi-Item Factor Scoring Example**

Cohesion Item Text	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
The people I work with work well as a team.	4% (1)	16% (4)	4% (1)	32% (8)	44% (11)	100% (25)
The people I work with trust each other.	4% (1)	21% (5)	8% (2)	21% (5)	46% (11)	100% (24)
	Non-Cohesive Organization		Neutral	Cohesive Organization		Total responses 49
	$(1+4+1+5) / 49 =$		$(1+2) / 49 =$	$(8+11+5+11) / 49 =$		
	22%		6%	71%		

Note. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

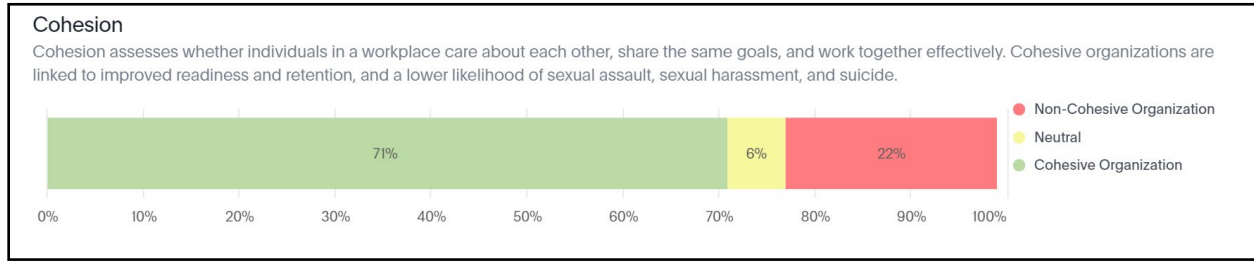
Table 165 displays the percentage of responses (and number of responses in parentheses) for each question across the five response options (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree). For the first “Cohesion” question, four people selected disagree; this represents 16% of responses to this question ( $4 / 25 = 0.16$  or 16%). Percentages are calculated based on the total number of responses to that question and not the total number of participants to the full survey. Respondents are able to skip questions, so the total responses to questions may vary from question to question. In the above example, 25 people responded to the first question, so all percentages in this row use 25 as the denominator. Only 24 people responded to the second question, so all percentages in this row use 24 as the denominator. The unfavorable, favorable, and neutral scores are created as follows:

- The unfavorable rating, named Non-Cohesive Organization, is a combination of all responses of strongly disagree and disagree from both questions in the “Cohesion” scale.
  - For this example, one person strongly disagreed with the first “Cohesion” question, while four disagreed. In addition, one person strongly disagreed with the second “Cohesion” question and five disagreed. In total, 11 responses were either strongly disagree or disagree to these two questions ( $1+4+1+5 = 11$ ).
  - To produce an overall score for Non-Cohesive Organization representing unfavorable reactions to these two questions, the total number of responses (11) is divided by the total number of people who responded to both “Cohesion” questions. Twenty-four people responded to the first question, and 25 to the second, for a total of 49 responses to both questions. This equates to a Non-Cohesive Organization rating of 22.4% ( $11 / 49 = 0.224$ ).
- To create the Neutral rating, the same process above is followed, except the score is created from only one response option. The neither agree nor disagree responses are included from both questions.
  - For this example, there are three neither agree nor disagree responses across both questions ( $1+2 = 3$ ). This total is divided by the total number of responses to the Cohesion questions ( $3 / 49 = 0.061$ ). This rounds to a Neutral rating of 6.1%.
- To create the favorable rating, named Cohesive Organization, the strongly agree and agree responses are combined.
  - For this example, that is  $8+11+5+11 = 35$  total responses of either strongly agree or agree. This total is divided by the total number of responses to each of the Cohesion questions ( $35 / 49 = 0.714$ ). This produces a Cohesive Organization rating of 71.4%.

The DEOCS dashboard displays results for “Cohesion” in a stacked bar graph split into Cohesive Organization, Neutral, and Non-Cohesive Organization ratings, as shown in Figure 19 below.



**Figure 19.**  
**Multi-Item Factor Graph Example**



Not all DEOCS factors are measured on a Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree 5-point scale. For factors on other scales, the same general method applies to create composite ratings from multiple questions. Favorable ratings are shown in green, neutral ratings in yellow, and unfavorable ratings in red. For example, the “Stress” factor is measured by four questions with response options Never, Rarely, Sometimes, and Often. In the dashboard, responses of Never and Rarely are combined into a favorable Low “Stress” rating; responses of Sometimes and Often are combined into an unfavorable Moderate/High “Stress” rating; and there is no Neutral rating.

The protective factor “Connectedness” is measured on the same agree/disagree-type scale described above, but ratings are created slightly differently. Two of the four questions that make up this factor are negatively worded, meaning that agreement with these items indicates an unfavorable response. Therefore, these two items need to be reverse coded when calculating factor ratings; they are marked with an asterisk (\*) in Table 166 below.

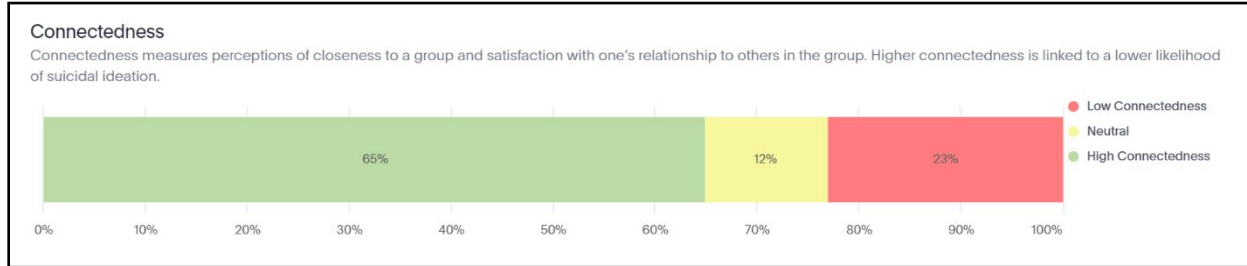
**Table 166.**  
**“Connectedness” Scoring Example**

Connectedness Item Text	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
These days, I feel like I belong	4% (1)	14% (4)	4% (1)	25% (7)	54% (15)	100% (28)
These days, I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.	11% (3)	21% (6)	14% (4)	18% (5)	36% (10)	100% (28)
These days, I think I make things worse for the people in my life.*	18% (5)	4% (1)	14% (4)	29% (8)	36% (10)	100% (28)
My future seems dark to me.*	11% (3)	11% (3)	14% (4)	21% (6)	43% (12)	100% (28)
	Low Connectedness		Neutral	High Connectedness		Total responses 112
	$(1+4+3+6+5+1+3+3) / 112 =$		$(1+4+4+4) / 112 =$	$(7+15+5+10+8+10+6+12) / 112 =$		
	23%		12%	65%		

Note. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The overall results for “Connectedness” appear in the DEOCS dashboard as shown in Figure 20.

**Figure 20.**  
**“Connectedness” Graph Example**



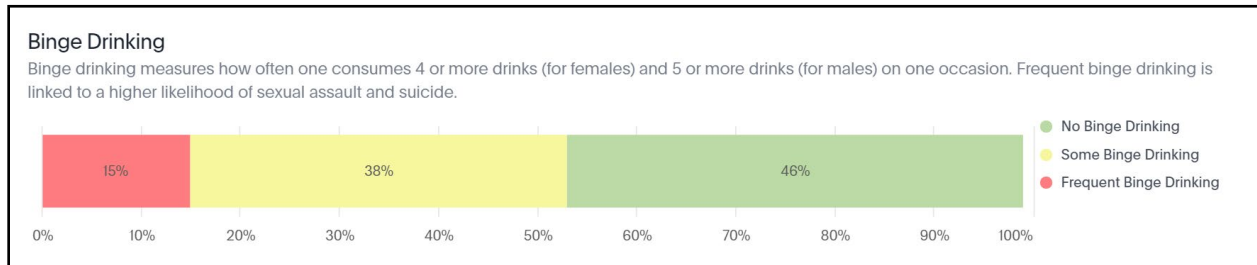
For all factors measured with multiple questions, the graphs are best interpreted as “X% of responses” (not participants). So, in the above “Connectedness” example,

- 23% of responses to the set of questions measuring “Connectedness” indicated that organization has low “Connectedness.”
- 12% of responses to the set of questions measuring “Connectedness” indicated that the organization has neither high nor low “Connectedness.”
- 65% of responses to the set of questions measuring “Connectedness” indicated that the organization has high “Connectedness.”

### **Single-Item Factors**

The process for designating favorable and unfavorable responses for single-item questions is the same as for the multi-item questions. The only difference is that favorable/unfavorable scores are created by averaging across only response categories for a single item (without averaging across multiple items). For questions based on a single question, which includes all custom multiple-choice questions (i.e., locally developed questions [LDQ]), Service-specific questions, and Academy-specific questions, percentages in the charts should be interpreted as “X% of participants.” For example, in Figure 21, 15% of participants indicated frequent “Binge Drinking,” 38% of participants indicated some “Binge Drinking,” and 46% of participants indicated no “Binge Drinking.”

**Figure 21.**  
***Single-Item Factor Graph Example***



### ***Problematic Behaviors***

There are four factors that measure specific problematic behaviors, and we employ a different method to calculate and display ratings in the dashboard for these factors. These are “Racially Harassing Behaviors,” “Sexually Harassing Behaviors,” “Sexist Behaviors,” and “Workplace Hostility.”

Based on a principle of zero tolerance for these problematic behaviors, the only “favorable” response is when a person never experiences any of the behaviors in question. Therefore, the dashboard displays two types of ratings for each of these factors:

4. The percentage of participants who did not endorse experiencing any of these behaviors (i.e., no presence of behaviors in unit/organization).
5. The percentage who endorsed experiencing these behaviors (i.e., presence of behaviors in unit/organization).

For example, there are five questions about “Racially Harassing Behaviors” on the DEOCS. Each is measured on the 4-point never, rarely, sometimes, and often scale. The questions are:

- Q1: How often does someone from your work tell racial/ethnic jokes that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
- Q2: How often does someone from your work express stereotypes about your racial/ethnic group that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
- Q3: How often does someone from your work use offensive racial/ethnic terms that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
- Q4: How often does someone from your work make insults about racial/ethnic groups that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?
- Q5: How often does someone from your work show you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity?

Table 167 below displays how 10 different participants answered each of the five “Racially Harassing Behavior” questions. It is important to note that survey participants can choose not to answer some or all of these questions. A participant is given a rating of “No Presence of Behavior” if they answered at least half of the questions in this set and answered never to all of questions they answered. Respondents are given a rating of “Presence of Behavior” if they answered rarely, sometimes, or often to at least one of the behaviors. Only one affirmative response (rarely, sometimes, or often) is required to be coded as “Presence of Behavior,” even if all other behaviors were left blank (i.e., missing).

**Table 167.**  
***Problematic Behaviors Rating Example***

Racially Harassing Behaviors						
Item Text	How often does someone from your work...					Rating
Survey Respondents	Q1: tell racial/ ethnic jokes?	Q2: express stereotypes?	Q3: use offensive racial/ethnic terms?	Q4: make insults about racial/ethnic groups?	Q5: show you a lack of respect?	
Respondent 1	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	No presence
Respondent 2	Rarely	Never	Never	Never	Never	Presence
Respondent 3	Rarely	Never	Never	Sometimes	Never	Presence
Respondent 4	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Presence
Respondent 5	Never	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	Never	No presence
Respondent 6	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	No presence
Respondent 7	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	[missing]
Respondent 8	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Presence
Respondent 9	[no answer]	Rarely	[no answer]	[no answer]	[no answer]	Presence
Respondent 10	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	No presence

Note that Respondent 7 is marked as “Missing” and therefore not included in the factor ratings because they only responded never to two questions, and they did not respond to at least half of the questions in this set. Respondent 9 is included, because they reported the presence of a single behavior, and it is not required they answer at least half of the questions in this set to report the presence of a behavior.

To calculate the total unit/organization rating for “Presence of Racially Harassing Behaviors,” five participants reported a “presence of behavior” to at least one question in the set, and this is divided by the number of total eligible participants ( $5 / 9 = 0.556$  or 55.6%).

To calculate the total unit/organization rating for “No Presence of ‘Racially Harassing Behaviors,’” four participants reported “no presence of behavior” because they answered “never” to at least half of the behaviors, and this is divided by the number of total eligible participants ( $4 / 9 = 0.444$  or 44.4%).

The overall results for “Racially Harassing Behaviors” appear in the DEOCS dashboard as shown in Figure 22.

**Figure 22.**  
***Problematic Behaviors Graph Example***



## Demographic Reporting Categories

For all factor ratings, results are produced both overall and separately by demographic category. These reporting categories, termed “breakouts,” allow users to view survey results separately for each of the following demographic reporting categories:

- Race/ethnicity: Non-Hispanic White and minority
- Sex: men and women
- Status: military and civilian
- Military paygrade: junior enlisted (E1-E6), senior enlisted (E7+), junior officer (O1-O3; W1 to W5), senior officer (O4+); also enlisted overall and officer overall
- Civilian paygrade: junior civilian (GS1-GS12) and senior civilian (GS13-SES)
- Supervisory status: non-supervisor and supervisor
- Faculty status: faculty and non-faculty
- Faculty type: tenure/tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track faculty
- Class year (for Military Service Academies only): first year, second year, third year, fourth year
- Athlete and non-athlete (for Military Service Academies only): athlete, non-athlete

Participants are included in these demographic groups based on their responses to the demographic questions on the survey. If a participant chooses not to answer some of the demographic questions, then it is not possible to include those responses into the demographic breakouts. However, all responses are included in the overall unit/organization numbers. For

example, if a participant chooses not to answer whether they are a man or woman, their survey data will not be included in the men and women breakouts, but will still be included in the overall numbers and in other demographic breakouts, as applicable. Of note, not all dashboard reports show all of these groups for all factors because there must be at least five participants from each group in order to display data (covered in the suppression rules below); in many units, some of these breakouts are not relevant and are not displayed.

The race and ethnicity questions are combined to be reported in accordance with the Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (1997). Table 168 below demonstrates how the breakouts for non-Hispanic White people and people of color are created using responses to the Hispanic origin and race questions.

**Table 168.**  
*Race/Ethnicity Scoring*

Response to Hispanic Origin Item	Response to Race Item	Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report
Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	White (only)	Non-Hispanic White
Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	White + any other race selection	Person of Color
Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	Any, except White (only)	Person of Color
Spanish, Hispanic or Latino	Any or all blank/missing	Person of Color
Blank/missing	White (only)	Non-Hispanic White
Blank/missing	White + any other race selection	Person of Color
Blank/missing	Any, except White (only)	Person of Color
Not Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino	All blank/missing	Not included in breakout

Table 169 below demonstrates how the breakouts for military personnel, including enlisted and officers, junior enlisted and senior enlisted, and junior officer and senior officer are created using survey responses to the military paygrade question.

**Table 169.**  
***Military Paygrade Scoring***

<b>Response to Military Paygrade Item</b>	<b>Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report: Enlisted vs. Officer</b>	<b>Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report: Junior Enlisted vs. Senior Enlisted vs. Junior Officer vs. Senior Officer</b>
E1 to E3	Enlisted	Junior Enlisted
E4 to E6	Enlisted	Junior Enlisted
E7 to E10	Enlisted	Senior Enlisted
W1 to W5	Officer	Junior Officer
O1 to O3	Officer	Junior Officer
O4 and above	Officer	Senior Officer
Blank/missing	Not included in breakout	Not included in breakout

Table 170 below demonstrates how the breakouts for civilian personnel, including junior civilian and senior civilian, non-faculty and faculty, and tenure or tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track faculty are created using survey responses to the civilian paygrade question.

**Table 170.**  
***Civilian Paygrade Scoring***

<b>Response to Civilian Paygrade Item</b>	<b>Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report: Junior Civilian vs. Senior Civilian</b>	<b>Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report: Faculty vs. Non-Faculty</b>	<b>Demographic Group Displayed in the DEOCS Report: Tenure or Tenure-Track Faculty vs. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty</b>
GS 1 to 6	Junior Civilian	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
GS 7 to 12	Junior Civilian	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
GS 13 to 15	Senior Civilian	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
Senior Executive Service (SES)	Senior Civilian	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
Federal Wage System pay plan (e.g., WG/WS/WL)	Not included in breakout	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF)	Not included in breakout	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
Demonstration/Alternative/ Other pay plans	Not included in breakout	Non-Faculty	Not included in breakout
Title 10 tenured or tenure-track faculty	Not included in breakout	Faculty	Tenure or Tenure-Track Faculty
Title 10 non-tenure-track faculty	Not included in breakout	Faculty	Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

In the demographic breakout charts, only favorable responses are shown for protective factors, and only unfavorable responses are shown for risk factors. Each category is represented by a bar. The first bar will always show the overall results, and will be the same favorable/unfavorable percentage as shown in the stacked bar graph. If not enough people respond in a category, those categories will not appear in the graph (refer suppression rules below).

**Suppression Rules**

OPA is committed to ensuring survey participants’ privacy. Therefore, a minimum number of 16 eligible participants are required in order to produce an overall DEOCS report. Furthermore, specific factors or questions are suppressed if there are fewer than five responses to the specific question(s). For factors created with multiple items, at least five individuals must have answered each item. In the example of “Engagement & Commitment” shown in Table 171 below, if just one of the four questions that comprise the factor does not have enough participants, the entire factor is suppressed.

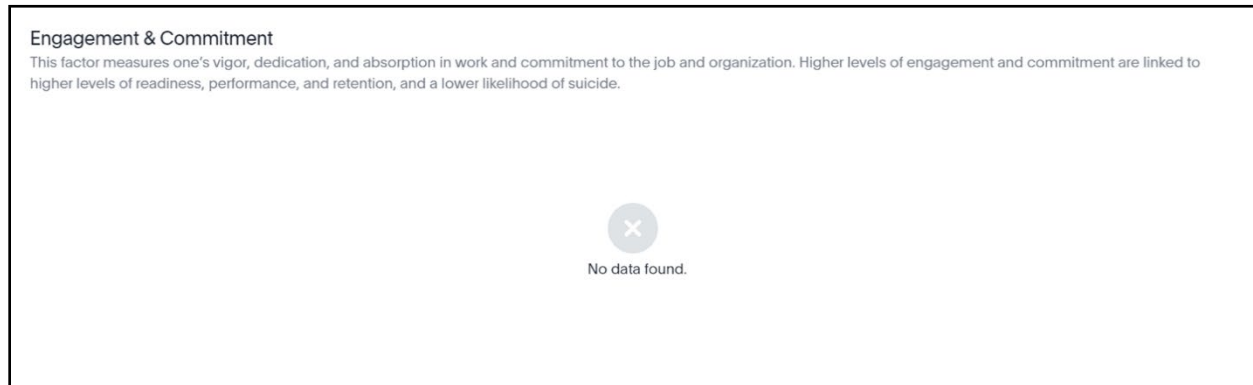
**Table 171.**  
*Total Factor Suppression Scoring Example*

Engagement & Commitment Questions	Number of Responses	Engagement & Commitment Results Reported?
I am proud of my work.	10	YES  All four questions have at least five responses, so results for the Engagement & Commitment factor are displayed.
My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	9	
I am committed to making the military my career.	10	
I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with.	9	
I am proud of my work.	10	NO  Only four people responded to the second question, so results for the Engagement & Commitment factor are not displayed.
My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	4	
I am committed to making the military my career.	10	
I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with.	9	

When data are not reportable for a certain factor, it is missing from the graph or table. For example, if “Engagement & Commitment” scores are not reportable, results for this factor are not displayed. An example of this in the dashboard is in Figure 23 below.



**Figure 23.**  
**Total Factor Suppression Graph Example**



To view a demographic breakout of a factor, consistent with the DEOCS prior to the redesign, a minimum of five participants in the category are necessary. For each dichotomy, such as men and women, or military and civilian, at least five individuals in each category must have responded to each question that make up the factor score (e.g., at least five men and five women). If there are only four responses from women, for example, then data are not reported separately for men or women.<sup>124</sup> An example using the “Engagement & Commitment” factor is shown in Table 172 below.

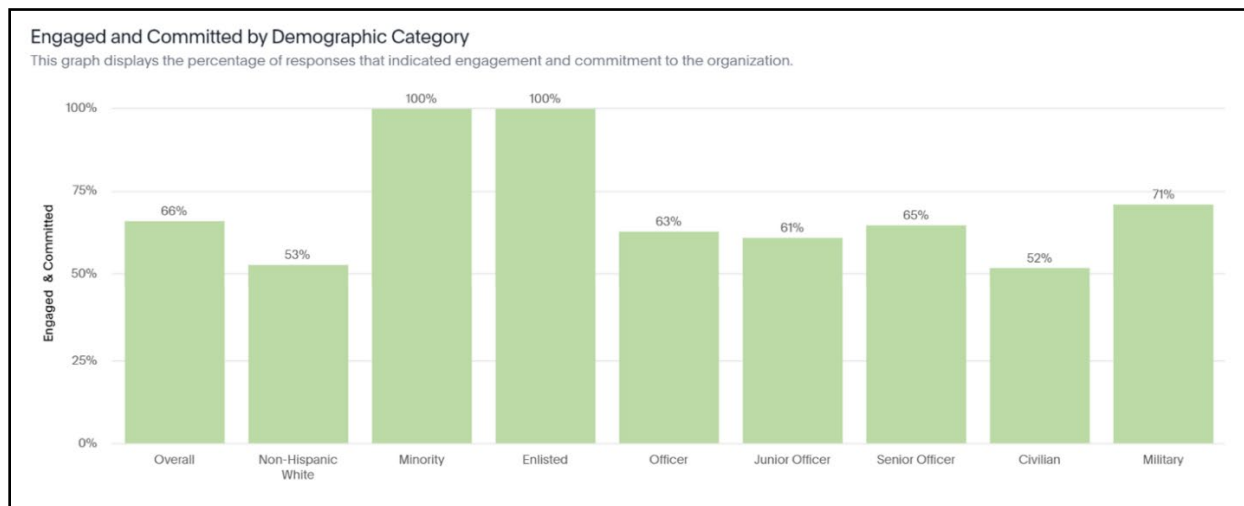
<sup>124</sup> This is a change from the legacy DEOCS, based on a decision by OPA’s Disclosure Review Board (DRB). When there are only two levels within a demographic reporting category (e.g., men and women), even if there are a sufficient number of responses from men, it is possible to extrapolate the result for women by comparing the total unit score to the men-only score. Thus, both men and women’s scores are suppressed to prevent this inadvertent circumventing of the minimum of five participants.

**Table 172.**  
**Breakout Group Suppression Scoring Example**

Engagement & Commitment Questions	Number of Responses from Men	Number of Responses from Women	Engagement & Commitment Results Reported?
I am proud of my work.	10	10	YES  All questions have at least five responses from men AND women, so data are reportable for men and women.
My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	10	10	
I am committed to making the military my career.	10	15	
I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with.	10	10	
I am proud of my work.	10	10	NO  There are only 4 responses from women for the second question, so data are not reportable for men or women.
My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	10	4	
I am committed to making the military my career.	10	15	
I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with.	10	10	

When data are not reportable for a certain demographic group, the group will not appear in the graph. An example in which data for women and men are not reportable is shown in Figure 24.

**Figure 24.**  
**Breakout Group Suppression Graph Example**



The four problematic behavior factors use slightly different suppression criteria, in line with their distinct factor scoring. In order to receive results for these factors, at least five people must have contributed to the rating score by answering never to at least half of the questions or answering

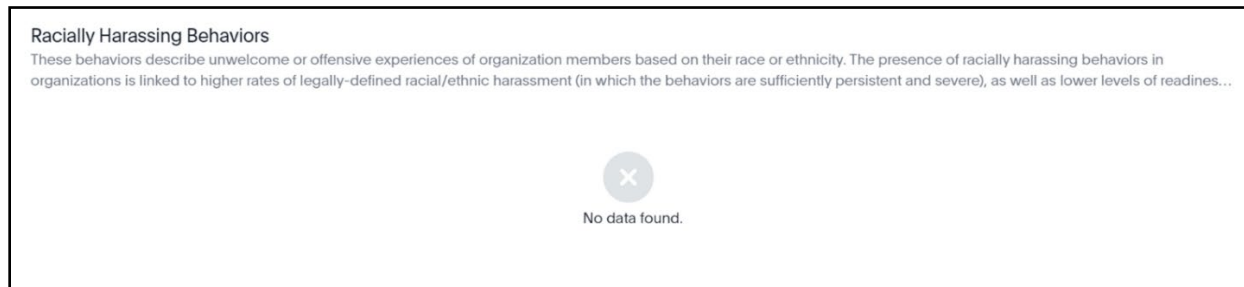
rarely, sometimes, or often to at least one of the questions. An example of a case where data are not reportable for “Racially Harassing Behaviors” is in Table 173 below.

**Table 173.**  
**Problematic Behavior Suppression Scoring Example**

Racially Harassing Behaviors						
Item Text	How often does someone from your work...					Rating
Survey Respondents	Q1: tell racial/ ethnic jokes?	Q2: express stereotypes?	Q3: use offensive racial/ethnic terms?	Q4: make insults about racial/ethnic groups?	Q5: show you a lack of respect?	
Respondent 1	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never	[missing]
Respondent 2	Rarely	Never	Never	Never	Never	Presence
Respondent 3	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	Never	[missing]
Respondent 4	Often	Often	Often	Often	Often	Presence
Respondent 5	Never	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	Never	No presence
Respondent 6	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	[missing]
Respondent 7	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	[missing]
Respondent 8	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Presence
Respondent 9	[no answer]	Never	[no answer]	[no answer]	[no answer]	[missing]
Respondent 10	[no answer]	[no answer]	[no answer]	Never	Never	[missing]

The table above displays how 10 different individuals responded to each of the five questions about “Racially Harassing Behaviors.” Individuals are given a rating of “no presence of behavior” if they answered never to at least half of the behaviors. Individuals are given a rating of “presence of behavior” if they answered rarely, sometimes, or often to at least one of the behaviors. In this example, data are not reportable for this factor because only four individuals are contributing to the scale; six individuals are considered “missing” because they did not answer enough of the questions to receive a rating. Because data are not reportable, the graph looks like Figure 25 below in the dashboard:

**Figure 25.**  
**Problematic Behavior Suppression Graph Example**



There are also suppression rules for subgroup reporting.<sup>125</sup> To receive the quantitative portion of the subgroup report (factor scores and item summaries), a minimum of five participants within a subgroup are required. The suppression rules for demographic groups still apply within subgroups. Because comments are particularly vulnerable to inadvertent disclosure of identifying information, 16 participants are necessary to receive comments broken out by subgroup.

Comments are never reported separately by demographic group.

## Reporting DEOCS Unit-Level Results

One of the major enhancements made to the DEOCS was the creation of an interactive dashboard for viewing unit-level results. This dashboard is now the primary way that DEOCS results are reported at the unit level.<sup>126</sup> As stated previously, a beta version launched on July 28, 2020, and was updated on January 4, 2021. However, there are still many possibilities for continued enhancement to make the results even more accessible and usable for commanders. These enhancements will continue through 2024. The following section provides a step-by-step walk-through of the current DEOCS dashboard, including a description of each tab and the results available to users.

When a DEOCS closes, results are automatically tabulated and provided to survey administrators, commanders, and commanders' supervisors within 72 hours of the survey end date. Each of these users receives an e-mail instructing them to log in to the DEOCS Portal to view their results in an interactive dashboard or download some or all of the results as a PDF.

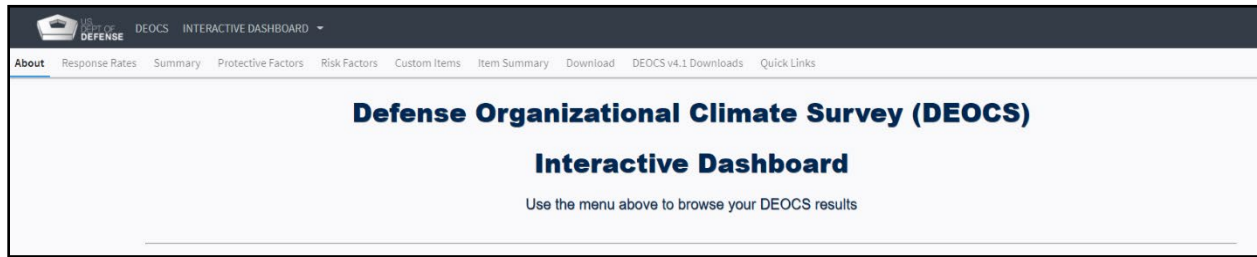
Within the DEOCS Portal, the report dashboard can be accessed by selecting "Interactive Dashboard" under the "My Applications" drop-down menu along the top banner. In the dashboard, results are displayed across tabs that users can browse (Figure 26). Each of these tabs is summarized in Table 174 and discussed in detail below. After clicking each tab, users select from drop-down filters to choose which results they want to view. The filters include the survey administration (i.e., 4.1 or 5.0), Service component, unit/organization title, and survey dates. Where applicable, there is also a filter to choose the overall unit/organization's results or a subgroup independently. Users can only access and view results for surveys for which they are in the assigned role of survey administrator, commander, or commanders' supervisor.

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<sup>125</sup> Subgroups are created by the survey administrator. Chapter 5 has details on this subject.

<sup>126</sup> Results can also be download as a PDF through the dashboard.

**Figure 26.**  
*Screenshot of the Interactive Dashboard Tabs and Filters*



Throughout the dashboard, results are organized into protective factors and risk factors. In general, organizations should strive to have higher favorable scores for protective factors and lower unfavorable scores for risk factors. The charts and color-coding of each factor are presented to clearly communicate whether results represent a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the climate. Bars representing the favorable side of a factor's scale are colored green. Bars representing the unfavorable side of a factor's scale are colored red. Bars showing results in the middle or neutral portion of a factor's scale are colored yellow. In general, when a graph only displays one side of the scale, the graph will display the favorable side of the scale (green) for protective factors and the unfavorable side of the graph (red) for risk factors.

Prior reports color-coded scores by the percentage favorability into the categories of excellent (90% and above favorable responding), adequate (between 70% and 89% favorable responding), caution (between 50% and 69% favorable responding), and improvement needed (below 50% favorable responding). This color-coding method has been discontinued.<sup>127</sup> Future analyses will seek to establish data-driven benchmarks or risk scores that can validly translate what a favorability score means for a unit's STO risk. Currently, the new color categories do not indicate a grade or level of severity of the score. More considerations in interpreting results are discussed below.

<sup>127</sup> The reason for eliminating this type of color-coding is that the cut-offs do not correspond to meaningful differences in outcomes. In other words, there is no evidence to suggest that a score of 69% favorability on any given metric leaves a unit at more risk than a favorability score of 70%.

**Table 174.**  
**Summary of Dashboard Tabs**

Tab Name	Description	Demographic Breakouts	Subgroup Breakouts	Number of Respondents Needed to View
Response Rates	Up-to-date response rates, number of completed surveys by day, and table of current and historical response rates for all surveys in the user’s account	No	Yes	None
Summary	Summary of the DEOCS results, including the final response rate and top 3 and bottom 3 protective and risk factors	No	No	16 for overall ratings 5 for subgroup breakouts
Protective Factors	Factor ratings for all of the protective factors in graphical format	Yes	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for demographic breakouts 5 for subgroup breakouts
Risk Factors	Factor ratings for all of the risk factors in graphical format	Yes	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for demographic breakouts 5 for subgroup breakouts
Custom Items	Displays item scores for all custom multiple-choice questions, Service-specific questions, and Academy-specific questions in graphical format	No	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for subgroup breakouts
Item Summary	Detailed responses to each question, including protective and risk factors, custom multiple-choice, Service-specific, and Academy-specific items, displayed in table format	No	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for subgroup breakouts
Download	PDF reports of overall unit/organization results, executive report (including overall and subgroup results), subgroup results, comments from the core open-ended survey questions, and custom short answer questions (SAQ)	If available in other tabs	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for demographic breakouts 5 for subgroup breakouts 16 for subgroup comments
DEOCS 4.1 Downloads	PDF reports for DEOCS 4.1, including overall unit results, subgroup results, and comments	If available in other tabs	Yes	16 for overall ratings 5 for demographic breakouts 5 for subgroup breakouts 16 for subgroup comments
Quick Links	PDFs on how to read and interpret results on the Summary, Protective Factors, Risk Factors, and Item Summary tabs, and a Data Overview describing how factor ratings and demographic groups are created and suppression rules	N/A	N/A	N/A

**About Tab**

The “About” tab provides an overview of the DEOCS and the interactive dashboard menu. This tab also provides some brief instructions on how to use the results and points users toward Assessment to Solutions (A2S) resources on <https://www.defenseculture.mil>. Planned enhancements will expand the resource offerings for how to address identified issues.

Enhancements will also allow the resources to be accessed within the DEOCS Portal and be more directly connected to specific results. OPA will work with relevant policy offices, Service organizations, and Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) to identify and curate these resources.

## Response Rates Tab

The “Response Rates” tab displays up-to-date information about how many people in an organization have completed the DEOCS since the start date. This tab is available while the survey is still being fielded and is an important tab for survey administrators to monitor once their survey starts. If the response rate is very low (e.g., below 30%), then survey administrators may want to change the end date to allow more time for people to complete the survey.

The data display in Figure 27 is a snapshot of the response rate. It shows the number of participants registered (the total number of individuals in the roster uploaded during the registration process), surveys returned (the number of currently completed surveys), and the response rate (the percentage of surveys returned divided by participants registered).

**Figure 27.**  
*Response Rate Display*

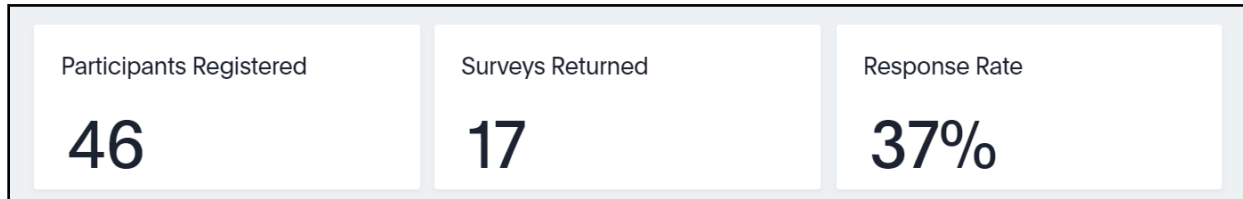


Figure 28 shows how many surveys have been returned on each day that the survey has been open. Survey administrators can use this to track the impact of their outreach efforts. Response rates may spike after the survey administrator or commander/leader sends an e-mail to the unit/organization or verbally reminds individuals that the DEOCS is available. Alternatively, if response rates begin to lag over several days, then it may be a good time to remind individuals to take the DEOCS. Survey administrators may also be able to identify certain days of the week where reminders may be most impactful. For example, perhaps because duties are lighter on Thursdays in a particular unit, more people have time to take the survey that day and a Thursday morning reminder e-mail may have a greater impact than a reminder e-mail on another day.

**Figure 28.**  
*Daily Survey Returns Graph*

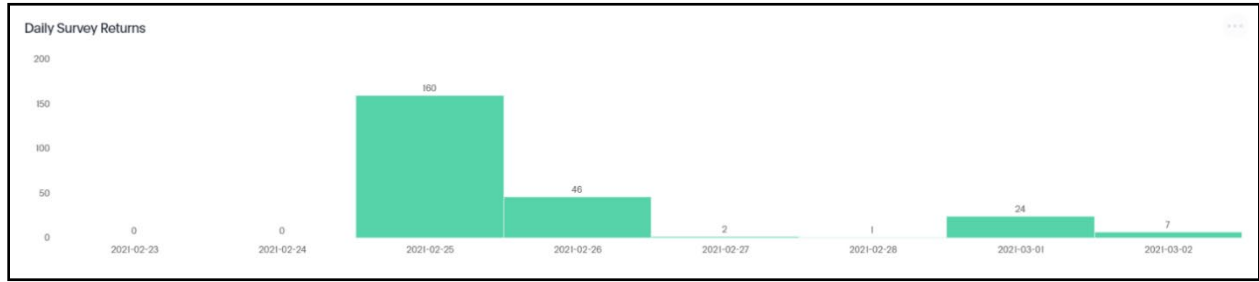


Figure 29 provides a more detailed view of the response rates for the selected survey. If the survey administrator enters subgroups on the roster, then this table would display response rates by subgroup.

**Figure 29.**  
*Current Response Rate Table*

Current Response Rate							
Registration ID	Group	Service Component	Survey Dates	Status	Number of Participants Registered	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate
59966	Overall Unit/Organization	DoD	01/25/2021-01/26/2021	survey completed	36	21	58%
59966	Catcher	DoD	01/25/2021-01/26/2021	survey completed	14	5	36%
59966	Infield	DoD	01/25/2021-01/26/2021	survey completed	8	6	75%
59966	Pitcher	DoD	01/25/2021-	survey	6	5	83%

Figure 30 displays a detailed view of response rates by unit/organization for all surveys currently and or previously (since July 28, 2020) registered to the survey administrator, commander, or commander’s supervisors. This display provides another way for survey administrators to gauge their current surveys’ participation. If their survey is nearing its end date and the response rate is significantly lower than previous surveys of that same unit/organization, then they may consider extending the end date and/or conducting more outreach.



**Figure 30.**  
**Current and Previous Response Rates Table**

Current and Previous Response Rates								
Registration ID	Overall Unit/Organization ↑	Service Component ↑	Survey Dates	Status	Number of Participants Registered	Number of Surveys Returned	Response Rate	
44227	APP-786	National Guard (Air/Army/Joint)	11/09/2020-11/10/2020	survey end - not enough responses	46	1	2.2%	
44074	DateExtension1	US Air Force Academy (USAF)	12/10/2020-12/27/2020	survey open	16	0	0%	

**Summary Tab**

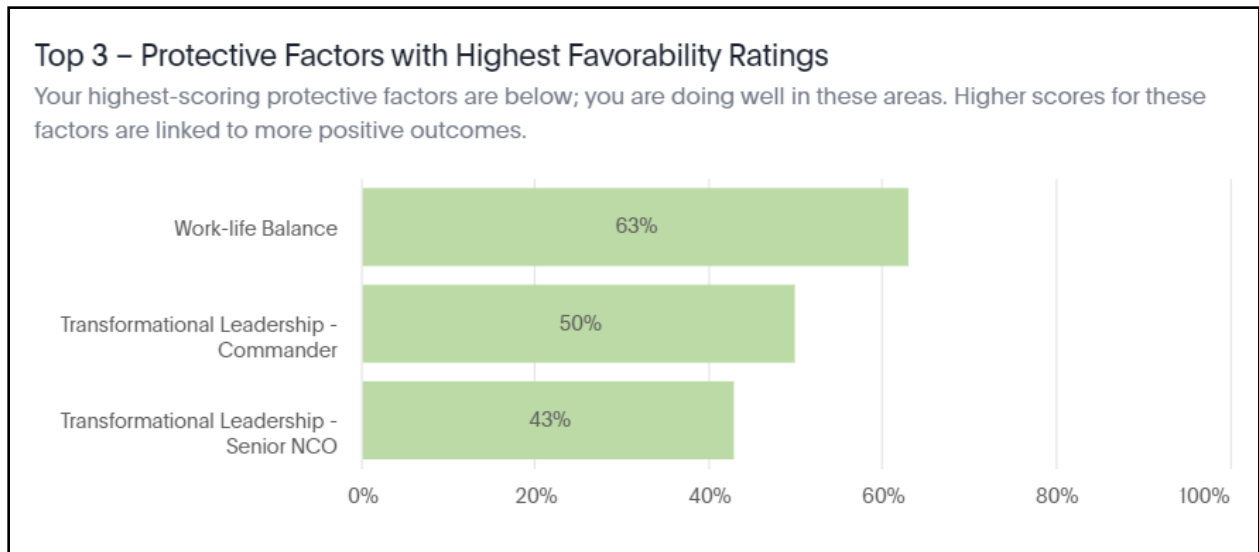
The “Summary” tab provides a quick snapshot of DEOCS results. There is a summary of the response rates (Figure 31) for the overall unit/organization as well as any subgroups. This table shows the response rate as the percentage of the number of individuals in the organization that completed a DEOCS (“Total Surveys Returned”) divided by the number of people in the unit/organization as indicated in the roster (“Total Registered”). The table also displays the number of incomplete surveys, which are surveys that were started but did not meet the standard for an eligible participant (as defined in the “Eligible Respondents” section of this chapter).

**Figure 31.**  
**Response Rate Table**

Response Rate				
Group ↑	Response Rate	Total Registered	Total Surveys Returned	Total Incomplete Surveys
Overall Unit/Organization	58%	36	21	0
Catcher	36%	14	5	0
Infield	75%	8	6	0
Outfield	56%	9	5	0
Pitcher	100%	5	5	0

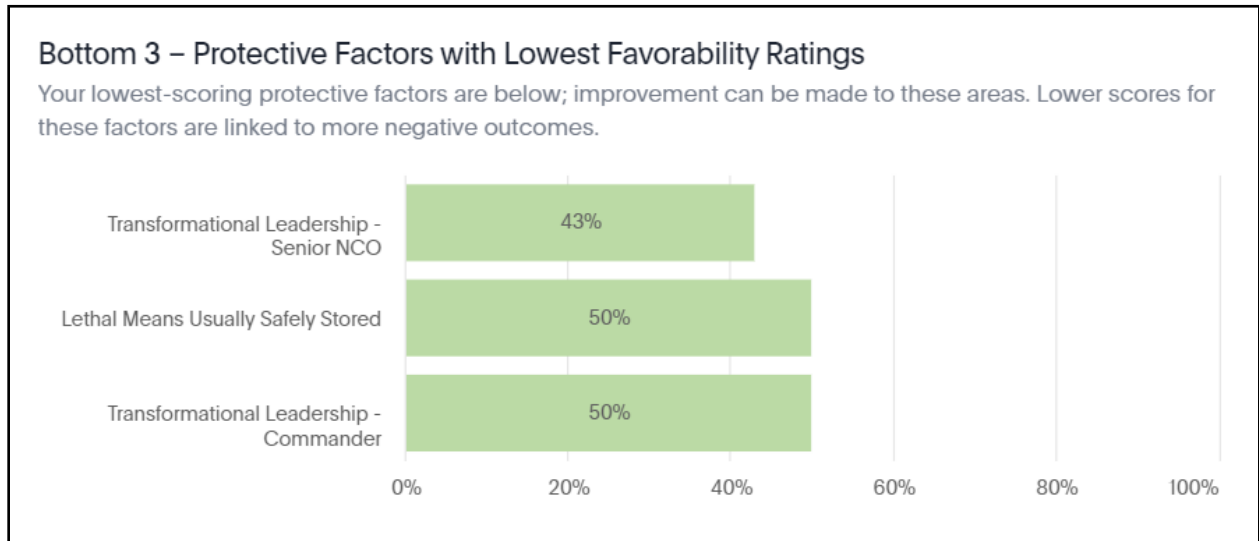
In addition to response rates, the summary table also displays a snapshot of the factor scores by displaying the top three and bottom three protective and risk factors. More detail on each protective and risk factor can be found on subsequent tabs. Figure 32 shows how the three protective factors with the highest favorability ratings are displayed. These are areas where the organization may be doing well in achieving a climate that is protective against negative outcomes. The bars of the graph are green because green represents the favorable side of each factor’s scale, regardless of whether the favorability score is “good” or “bad”; the color does not correspond to a percentage value or other meaning.

**Figure 32.**  
***Top Three Protective Factors Chart***



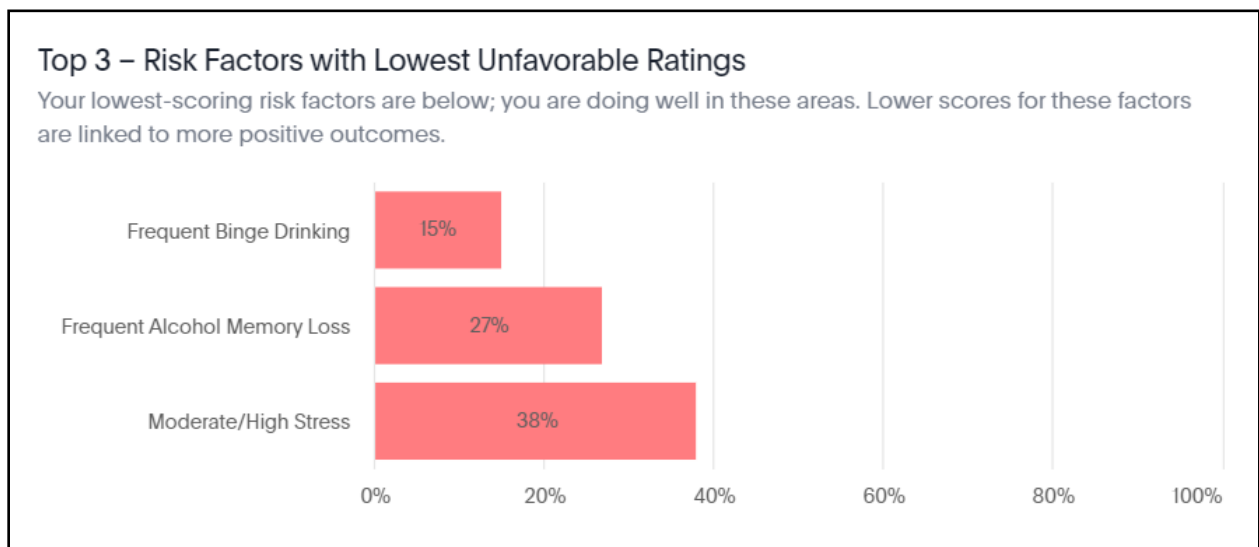
Next to the top three protective factors, Figure 33 is an example of the bottom three protective factors, which are the three protective factors with the lowest favorability ratings (Figure 33). These are areas where the organization may need to improve to increase protection against negative outcomes. Again, even though these are the lowest favorability scores, the bars of the graph are green because green represents the favorable side of each factor’s scale, not because it corresponds to a percentage value or other meaning.

**Figure 33.**  
**Bottom Three Protective Factors Chart**



The top three and bottom three charts are repeated for risk factors. The top three risk factors represent the risk factors with the lowest unfavorable ratings (Figure 34); these are areas in which the organization may be doing well to reduce factors that put them at higher risk of negative outcomes. The bars of the graph are red because red represents the unfavorable side of each factor’s scale.

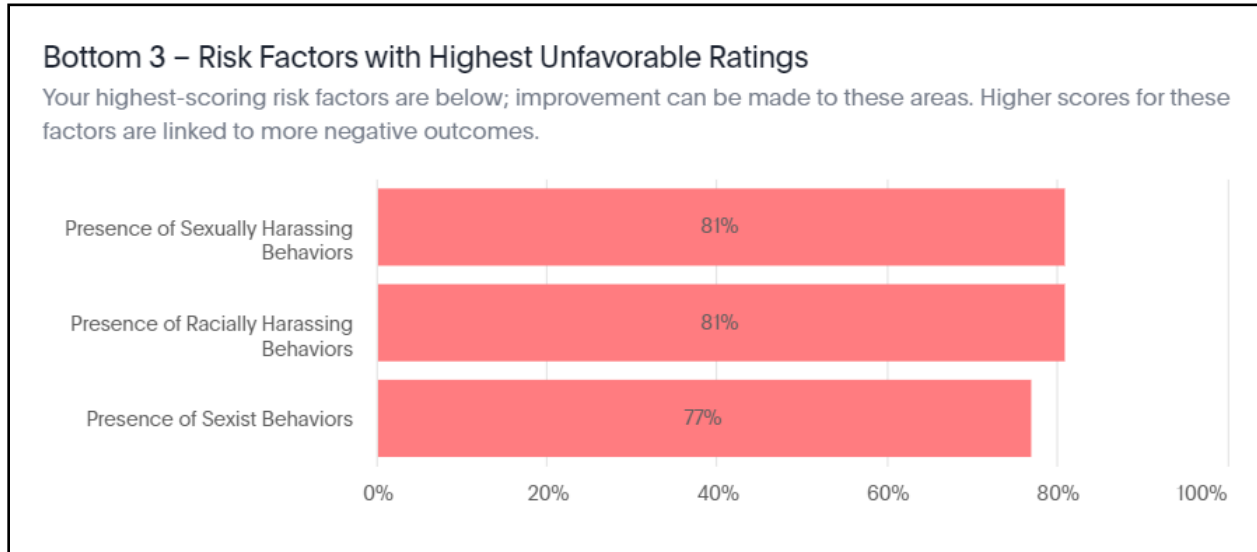
**Figure 34.**  
**Top Three Risk Factors Chart**



Finally, the last chart on the “Summary” tab displays the bottom three risk factors with the highest unfavorable ratings (Figure 35); these are areas in which the organization may need to

improve to reduce risk factors for negative outcomes. Once again, the bars of the graph are red because the red represents the unfavorable side of each factor's scale.

**Figure 35.**  
***Bottom Three Risk Factors Chart***



### Protective Factors Tab

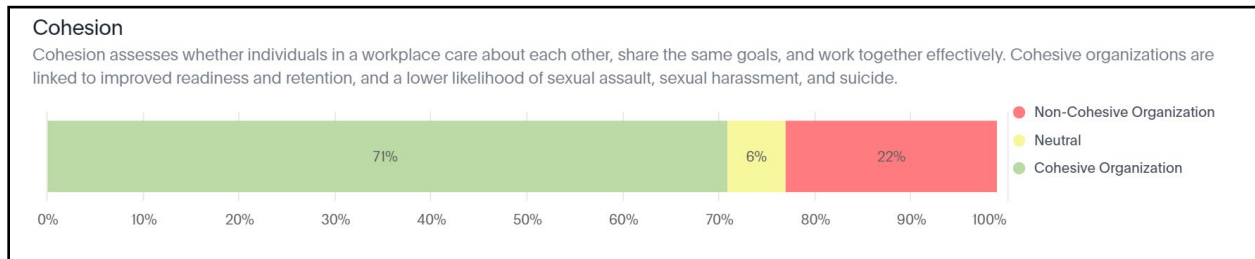
The next tab in the dashboard, “Protective Factors” displays results for every protective factor. As described in [Chapter 6](#) about the construct selection process, protective factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with positive outcomes for organizations or units. For these factors, higher favorable scores are linked to a higher likelihood of positive outcomes, such as improved performance or readiness and higher retention. They are also linked to a lower likelihood of negative outcomes, such as suicide, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. The protective factors shown in this tab are:

- “Cohesion”
- “Connectedness”
- “Engagement and Commitment”
- “Fairness”
- “Inclusion”
- “Morale”
- “Safe Storage for Lethal Means”

- “Work-Life balance”
- “Leadership Support”
- “Transformational Leadership”

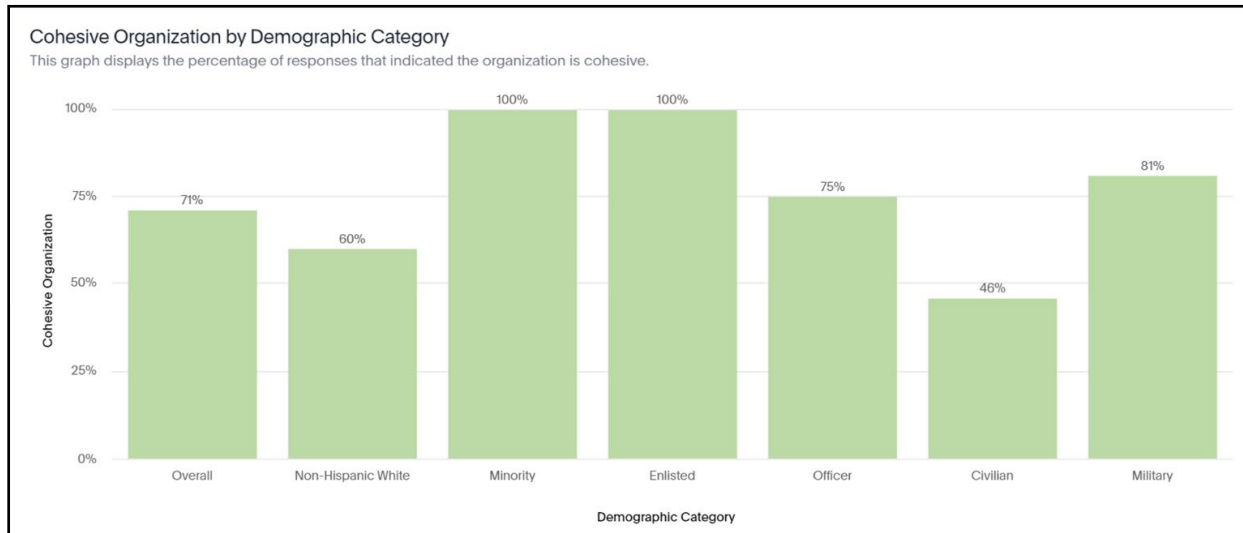
A graph is presented separately for each of the protective factors that displays the percentage of favorable responses (green), unfavorable responses (red), and neutral responses (yellow). The method for creating the factor scores and defining favorable and unfavorable responses for each factor is described in the previous sections. For each protective factor, a chart also displays the percentage of favorable responses broken out by demographic categories.<sup>128</sup> Examples of these two charts are shown below in Figure 36 and Figure 37. Using the “Report” filter, users can choose to view the scores for protective factors for the overall unit or any subgroups.

**Figure 36.**  
*Example Protective Factor Favorability Chart*



<sup>128</sup> Only one side of the scale is currently shown for demographic breakout groups to provide streamlined data visualizations. Favorable scores are shown for protective factors and unfavorable scores are shown for risk factors.

**Figure 37.**  
**Example Protective Factor Demographic Breakout Chart**



## Risk Factors Tab

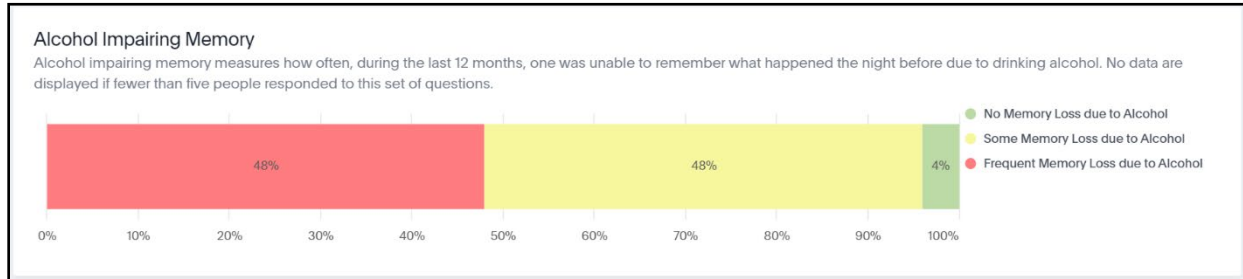
The “Risk Factors” tab is similar to “Protective Factors.” Risk factors are attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with negative outcomes for organizations or units. Higher unfavorable scores on risk factors are linked to a higher likelihood of negative outcomes, such as suicide, sexual harassment, and sexual assault, and lower likelihood of positive outcomes, such as higher performance, readiness, and retention. The risk factors shown in this tab are:

- “Alcohol Impairing Memory”
- “Binge Drinking”
- “Stress”
- “Passive Leadership”
- “Toxic Leadership”
- “Racially Harassing Behaviors”
- “Sexist Behaviors”
- “Sexually Harassing Behaviors”
- “Workplace Hostility”

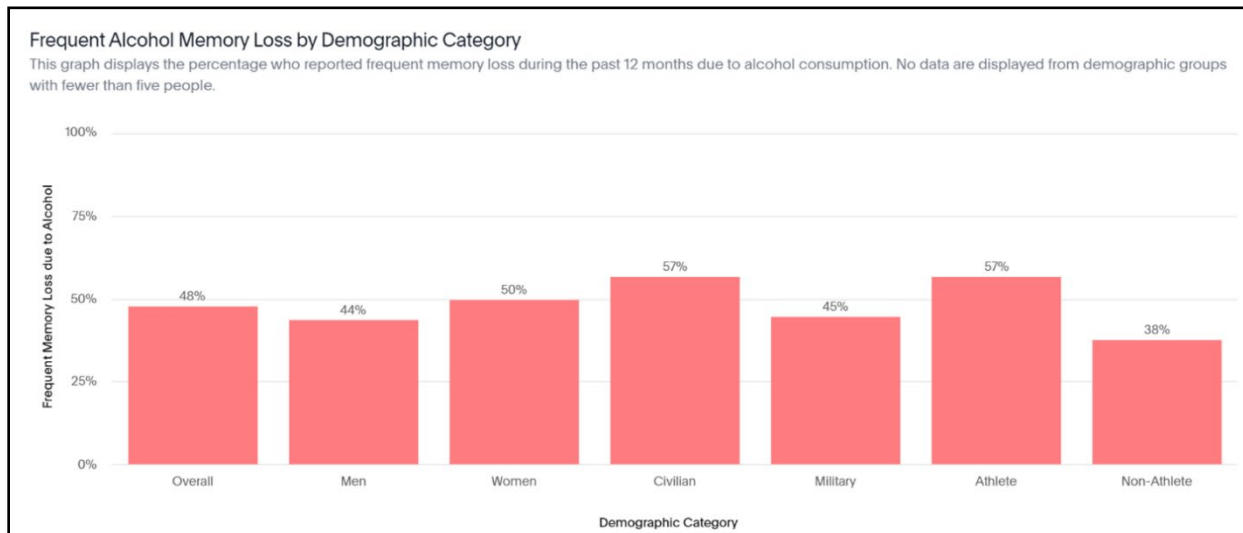
As with the protective factors, a chart is displayed for each risk factor that shows the percentage of favorable (green), unfavorable (red), and neutral (yellow) responses (Figure 38). The color of the bars corresponds to the same meaning for risk factors as it did for protective factors;

however, what is defined as unfavorable/favorable is different for risk factors versus protective factors, as explained previously. A demographic breakout for each factor is also shown for protective factors, except for risk factors, the percentage of unfavorable responses is displayed rather than percentage of favorable responses (Figure 39). Using the “Report” filter, users can choose to view the scores for risk factors for the overall unit or any subgroups.

**Figure 38.**  
*Example Risk Factor Favorability Chart*



**Figure 39.**  
*Example Risk Factor Demographic Breakout Chart*

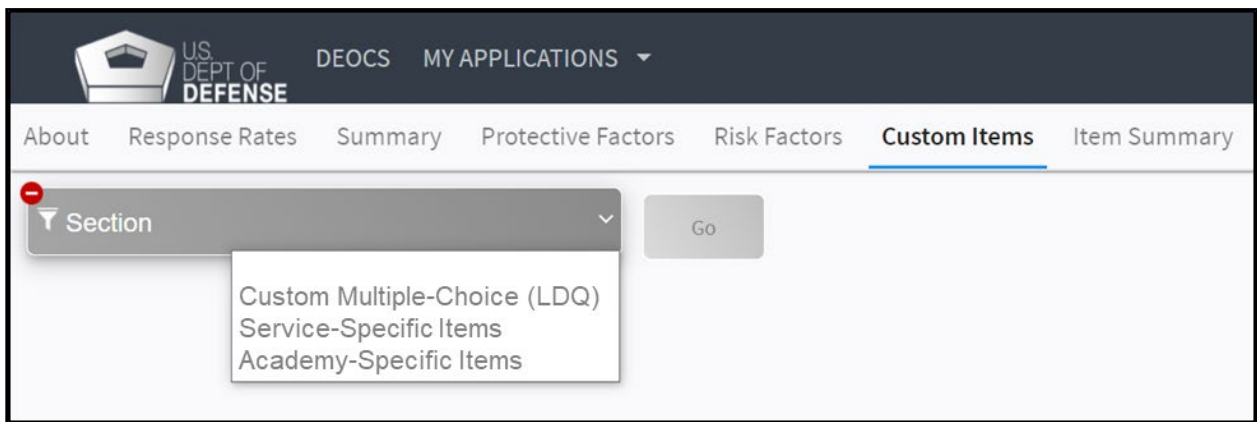


**Custom Items Tab**

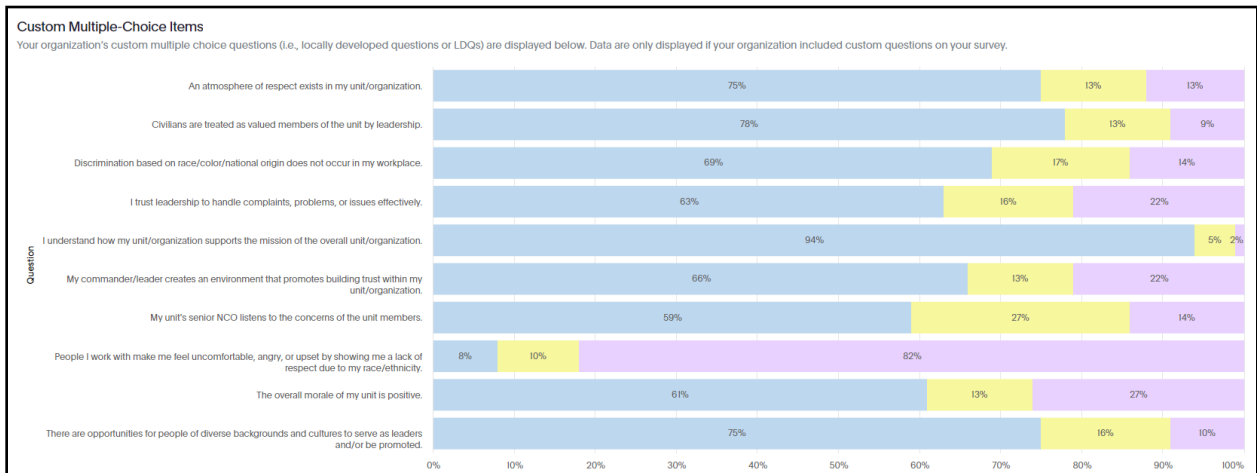
The tab “Custom Items” contains the results for all optional multiple-choice questions that may have been added to the DEOCS. Using the “Section” filter, users can view the results of any custom multiple-choice items (i.e., LDQs), Service-specific items, or Academy-specific items (Figure 40). Using the “Report” filter, users can choose to view the scores for custom items for the overall unit or any subgroups. All multiple-choice questions in these sections are on a 5-point strongly agree to strongly disagree Likert scale. Each question is represented by a chart that divides responses into three categories (Figure 41): percent disagree or strongly disagree

(blue), percent neutral (yellow), and percent agree or strongly agree (purple). It is important to note that these items are not categorized as unfavorable or favorable like the core risk and protective factors. Users must review the question text to determine if agreement or disagreement represents a favorable or unfavorable response for each question. For example, in the questions displayed below, answering strongly agree/agree to the first question, “An atmosphere of respect exists in my organization,” is favorable in that it represents a more positive climate. However, answers strongly agree/agree to the seventh question, “People I work with make me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing me a lack of respect due to my race/ethnicity,” is unfavorable in that it represents a more negative climate.

**Figure 40.**  
*Custom Item Section Filter*



**Figure 41.**  
*Custom Item Example Chart*





## Item Summary Tab

Detailed results for all questions, including risk and protective factors, custom multiple-choice items (i.e., LDQs), Service-specific items, and Academy-specific items, are displayed on the “Item Summary” tab. Using the “Report” filter, users can choose to view the item summary for the overall unit or any subgroups. These tables display the number and percentage of participants who chose each response option for each item. For factors that are created with multiple items, a table shows the item text of each item used to create the factor score and the counts and percentages for each response option for each item. More information on how the items are combined to create the factor scores is discussed in previous sections. An example item summary table is displayed below in Figure 42. These tables can also be used to see response rates for specific items (e.g., people may have skipped a particular item more than other items). It can also help focus follow-up actions by indicating whether a particular item is driving the unfavorable score in a multi-item factor score.

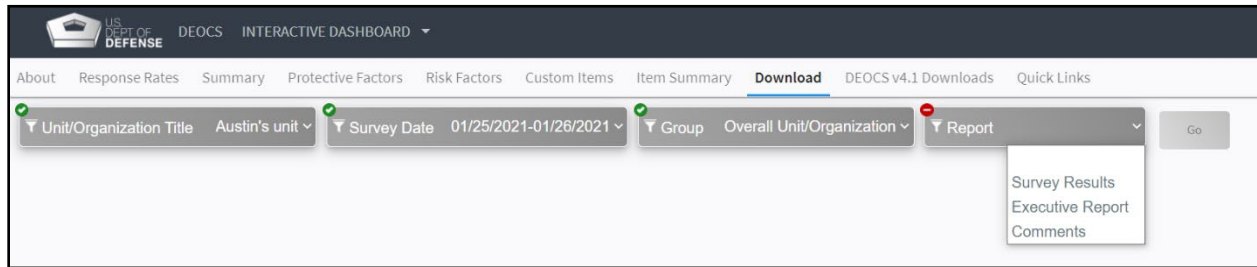
**Figure 42.**  
*Example Item Summary Table*

Protective Factor: Cohesion							⋮
Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total	
The people I work with work well as a team.	7% (2)	41% (11)	22% (6)	22% (6)	7% (2)	100% (27)	⬆️
The people I work with trust each other.	19% (5)	22% (6)	33% (9)	19% (5)	7% (2)	100% (27)	⬇️

## Download Tab

All results can be downloaded in one PDF document on the “Download” tab. Using the “Report” filter, users can choose one of three report options (Figure 43). “Survey Results” includes all of the results for the closed-ended questions for the entire unit. “Executive Report” is useful when subgroups are included. This report displays the overall and subgroup results for the risk and protective factors and overall results for any custom questions. The “Comments” report includes all of the results for the open-ended questions for the entire unit. Survey administrators and commanders should take extra precautions when briefing information gleaned from comments to ensure no individual participant or small group of participants is identifiable. The “Survey Results” and “Comments” reports can also be downloaded for each subgroup separately. Additionally, each individual graph and table on any of the tabs can be downloaded individually by clicking in the upper right-hand corner of the graph or table. This feature may be particularly useful for preparing briefs or reports on the DEOCS results.

**Figure 43.**  
*Screenshot of Download Tab*



## DEOCS 4.1 Downloads Tab

When DEOCS 5.0 was released, results for DEOCS 4.1 (specifically, those that fielded from July 28, 2020, when the beta dashboard was first released, through January 4, 2021, when the DEOCS 5.0 was released) were no longer available within the interactive dashboard.<sup>129</sup> However, users can still download PDF reports for DEOCS 4.1 that were administered in the current DEOCS Portal. On the tab “DEOCS 4.1 Downloads,” users can use the filters to select the appropriate unit and report type. For DEOCS 4.1, users can download overall unit/organization reports, subgroup reports, and comments—executive reports are not available. OPA will continue to develop the DEOCS Portal to make reports conducted prior to August 2020 available within the DEOCS Portal to select users. In the meantime, OPA can manually provide reports from the past two years via e-mailed requests, with Service approval.

## Quick Links Tab

The final tab, “Quick Links,” provides PDFs that users can download to learn more about the DEOCS results in the dashboard. These documents contain much of the same information discussed in this chapter.

- “Summary Overview” provides details about interpreting results on the Summary tab.
- “Protective & Risk Factors Overview” provides details about interpreting these results and drawing accurate and appropriate conclusions from your results.
- “Item Summary Overview” provides more information about the results on the Item Summary tab.
- “Data Overview” provides examples of how factor ratings are created, as well as more details on how demographic groups are created and when or why some data are not reportable.

<sup>129</sup> OPA was unable to maintain two dashboards simultaneously.

## Discussion

Development of the DEOCS dashboard will be ongoing over the next several years. Many of the changes described in this report present the infrastructure that will enable OPA to implement more sophisticated statistical and analytic methods. Some of the enhancements planned for the near future are described below.

### Context for Factor Scores

As discussed in the goals for dashboard, on their own, factor scores may be hard to interpret. How much “Workplace Hostility” could occur before a unit is at an appreciably higher risk for sexual assault? What is a typical level of “Engagement and Commitment”? Furthermore, differences in estimates, such as between demographic groups or between two annual administrations, may be difficult to distinguish. For example, if women provide a favorability rating of 59% for “Cohesion” and men give a favorability rating of 61%, it is hard to know based on the ratings alone if the 2% difference means women are actually experiencing the unit to be less cohesive than men in a meaningful way. The difference in scores could be due to multiple sources of error that are inherent to survey data, or it could be a real difference in perception. Furthermore, even if one were to assume it is a real difference in perception, it is hard to know how much of a difference should concern the unit leader; in other words, whether this difference is meaningful, impactful, and worthy of attention.

There are several analytic and statistical methods that could help to contextualize DEOCS factor scores. Normative approaches establish benchmarks based on how well a unit is doing compared to similar units. Criterion approaches would establish benchmarks based on a factor’s relationships to another non-DEOCS outcome. For example, DEOCS factor scores could be translated into quantified risk for STOs.<sup>130</sup> Statistical hypothesis testing or producing effect sizes could quantify if observed differences are meaningful. However, there are numerous methodological concerns that need to be resolved to ensure these approaches are scientifically sound. Changes already implemented as part of the platform redesign ([Chapter 5](#)) will provide better data quality that will enable the advanced analysis required to provide interpretations that are accurate and reliable.

### Nonresponse Bias and Representativeness of Results

Historically and currently, the DEOCS does not adjust for bias due to nonresponse or other sources of bias in the survey estimates. The results are reported “as is,” with no corrections, and the data are therefore representative of those who chose to complete the survey, but do not represent the entire population of the unit or organization of interest.

Nonresponse bias is of concern with DEOCS results (Cervantes et al., 2015). This type of bias occurs when estimates obtained from a non-random set of survey participants (i.e., those who choose to complete the survey) are different than estimates that would have been obtained if the entire unit had responded. For example, in a DEOCS unit of 100 members composed of 50 active duty members and 50 civilians, if only 10 active duty members and 40 civilians respond,

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<sup>130</sup> Criterion approaches may provide a more meaningful assessment of the true command climate rather than the relative assessment that comparative approaches allow. ARI (2014) contains more discussion.

estimates of the command climate will be grossly skewed in favor of how civilians perceive the climate, which may not correspond to how active duty members perceive it. Thus, the estimate is biased and provides a misleading assessment of the unit's climate.

Weighting is a statistical best practice to correct for nonresponse bias that is used in scientific surveys industry-wide, including within the federal government, DoD, and OPA (Office of Management and Budget, 2006). Weighting seeks to correct bias by over or underemphasizing an individual response's contribution to the overall estimate based on defined demographics so that the demographics of the final data set more accurately reflect those of the unit. Continuing the previous example, in the final estimate, each of the 10 active duty members' responses would be multiplied by 5 to represent the 40 active duty members who did not respond. This is a simplified example for explanatory purposes, and actual weighting techniques balance many variables simultaneously to achieve an estimate that best represents the unit as a whole.

Historically, the DEOCS has been limited in the ability to calculate the impact of nonresponse and quantify bias due to the fully anonymous administration and lack of a unit roster (i.e., a "population frame").<sup>131</sup> However, rosters are now collected as part of the DEOCS system ([Chapter 5](#)). These rosters, along with full implementation of the secure log in method ([Chapter 5](#)), provide the information necessary regarding the population frame and the participants (and non-respondents) to fully quantify the impact of nonresponse bias on DEOCS results, and potentially to allow for weighting. However, there are additional methodological hurdles and policy implications for weighting the DEOCS.

The DEOCS is not one probability survey, but rather hundreds of individual unit censuses being administered every week (tens of thousands per year). Typical approaches to weighting employed at OPA and other similar organizations, which take several weeks to implement for one survey, are not practical and feasible at the scale of the DEOCS. Thus, unit-level weighting presents a challenge in terms of timeliness of results and capacity.

Another area in which weighting is potentially relevant is in presenting "aggregations" or "roll-ups" of multiple unit surveys. Combining DEOCS unit-level surveys completed within a period of time (e.g., a quarter, a year) and within a certain level of aggregation (e.g., installation, Major Command, Service) into a single "survey" would theoretically allow these aggregate results to be weighted and more accurately represent the population of interest. When taking the annual vantage point, for example, theoretically, every unit in the DoD would have completed at least one DEOCS. These tens of thousands of unit surveys could be added together as a single census of DoD, which could be weighted and treated as such.<sup>132</sup> This removes the problem of volume, but presents additional considerations for policymakers and does not solve the bias problem in the unit-level results provided to commanders.

With complete population data now in hand, OPA is currently conducting a sensitivity analysis to capture the extent and impact of nonresponse bias in the DEOCS. These results will provide

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<sup>131</sup> Prior to the survey transitioning to OPA, DEOMI undertook some initial steps toward statistical weighting; however, this work was not completed nor implemented prior to the transition.

<sup>132</sup> There is complexity in dealing with units that have completed the DEOCS multiple times, and with individuals that have completed the DEOCS as part of multiple units. These are surmountable problems, but do require thoughtful consideration to develop the most appropriate, accurate, and unbiased decision rules.

important information about the reliability and validity of DEOCS data as currently presented. In addition, we are currently developing a method to weight data at the unit level using an automated process that would allow for weights to be auto-generated and applied without slowing down the availability of unit-level results for commanders. We expect to also examine methods for weighting at various levels of aggregation. The results of this work, including the sensitivity analysis and algorithm development and testing, will be presented to policy officials for consideration and next steps.

## Aggregations and Comparisons

Previous versions of the DEOCS reporting system allowed aggregations, or roll-ups, of individual DEOCS units into higher-level estimates. The previous reports also provided Service and unit-type scores to allow comparisons to like-units. However, aggregates of DEOCS data suffer from the same potential nonresponse bias as unit-level estimates, as described above, in addition to coverage error. Coverage error occurs when not all units are included in an aggregation or if a unit is included more than once. For example, in a given Service, not all units may have taken a DEOCS during the year and some may have taken it more than once. Without statistical weighting, aggregated estimates inaccurately represent the Service as a whole (ARI, 2014).

Unweighted aggregations may be inaccurate and misleading (Alley et al., 2018), and caution should be taken in making decisions based on unweighted aggregated DEOCS results. An October 2018 memo from the director of DHRA ordered the suspension of aggregation of DEOCS results until a valid aggregation method could be developed. OPA is currently developing techniques that could be used to create accurate and reliable aggregated estimates. When we are confident in those estimates, OPA plans to incorporate multiple types of comparisons into the interactive dashboard, including Service and unit-type comparisons as well as trend analysis to compare a current DEOCS administration to prior administrations in the same unit. Valid aggregation methods will also be used to create higher-level views for senior commanders to assess the climate of all of their subordinate commands more easily.

## Conclusion

The creation of the DEOCS dashboard, even in beta stage, marks a major advancement in increasing the utility of DEOCS results. When complete, the dashboard will serve as a user-friendly way for commanders and survey administrators to interact with their unit's data, glean accurate and data-driven estimates of the health of their command as it relates to STOs, and find information to increase the actionability of their results. Improvements are planned to increase the degree of interaction with the data, enable more customized data visualizations, aid interpretation, provide greater connection to resources and follow-up activities, and allow senior leader visibility. In Phase 1, OPA has improved various statistical methods to ensure DEOCS uses DoD and industry best practices for survey reporting. These improvements, combined with changes made to the administration process, will greatly enhance the quality of data, and allow OPA to connect DEOCS data to other data sources. Such connections will enable advanced research on drivers and consequences of command climate. Altogether, the completed and future work in this action area will ensure that we are maximizing the full potential of the unique and valuable data source that is DEOCS.

The next chapter will summarize the preceding chapters and will look forward to how our redesign principles will be carried into the future work on DEOCS, and we will highlight many of the lessons OPA has learned along the way.

## Chapter 10: Discussion

*Dr. Rachel Clare, Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Dr. Austin Lawhead*

The Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) is the largest voluntary personnel data collection for one of the largest employers in the world: the United States Department of Defense (DoD). More than 3 million active duty members, Reserve component members, and DoD civilians are provided the opportunity to complete the survey every year, and more than one million generally do. Despite its extensive reach, and unlike most other DoD surveys and most other surveys generally, the DEOCS is incredibly local in its impact, providing feedback directly to unit commanders regarding the climate in their unit.

The DEOCS has a rich history spanning multiple decades, and in 2021, it is more important than ever. The Department is grappling with increasing rates of violent and harmful events, including sexual harassment and sexual assault (Breslin et al., 2019, Davis et al., 2019) and suicide (DoD, 2020), along with long-standing challenges in retention and advancement of women and minority members and racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination (Daniel et al., 2019). Events such as those at Fort Hood in 2020 shine a spotlight (DoD, 2020b), but unfortunately, many of the climate problems uncovered at Fort Hood are not unique or rare (Barry et al., 2020; Samuelson et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2019). In addition to the steep human toll these problems impose on victims and their loved ones, these problems degrade unit “Cohesion” and ultimately degrade the readiness and lethality of the all-volunteer force.

A large and growing body of research clearly demonstrates the link between “lower level” climate problems and more severe violent and harmful events (Breslin et al., 2020; Schell et al., 2021). There is also growing recognition of the critical and distinct role of prevention (distinct from response efforts), and recognition of the interrelated factors that contribute to risk for various forms of violence and harm. This recognition is reflected in the recently formed Prevention Collaboration Forum within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness OUSD(P&R), the various integrated resilience programs recently stood up across the Services, and the 2020 Primary Prevention policy (DoD Instruction [DoDI] 6400.09). The DEOCS is a foundational component of the Department’s pivot to cross-cutting prevention.

The DEOCS 5.0 is well poised to meet these challenges. In recent years, the Department has undertaken numerous efforts to revitalize and modernize the DEOCS, aligned with three lines of effort. This report has described the guiding principles and research undergirding the DEOCS redesign, and the status of the redesign to date. In this final chapter, we provide a summary of the DEOCS redesign lines of efforts and discuss next steps for the DEOCS.

### DEOCS Redesign Philosophy

The DEOCS redesign was guided by the purpose of the DEOCS and the outcomes we intend for it to address. In order to achieve the ultimate purpose of the DEOCS, our redesign work was guided by three core principles. This guiding framework is summarized below. [Chapter 1](#) also has more details.

## The Purpose of the DEOCS

We defined the purpose of the DEOCS as follows:

The DEOCS is a tool for commanders, to provide reliable and actionable information on risk and protective factors that allow them to take immediate steps to improve the climate in their unit. Ultimately, this should serve to prevent problematic outcomes and bolster desirable outcomes.

All of our decision making regarding the DEOCS redesign flowed from this purpose statement. At the Office of People Analytics (OPA), we view the DEOCS as primarily a commander's tool to aid in this important type of decision making. However, we also recognize the immense value and potential DEOCS data can have for policymakers and senior leaders to serve other purposes. We view these expanded uses of the data, though potentially incredibly valuable, as secondary to the primary purpose of serving as a tool for commanders. Indeed, this is what makes the DEOCS unique from almost all other DoD and Service surveys. Ideally, the DEOCS can serve all of these audiences; but when prioritization is required, we prioritize unit commanders.

## Strategic Target Outcomes

In order to assess the effectiveness of the DEOCS program, we identified a set of strategic target outcomes (STO): readiness, retention, racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicide. If the DEOCS is working as intended, we expect to see changes in these outcomes in DoD in the long term (i.e., 5–10 years). Of course, the DEOCS is just one of many factors impacting these outcomes. However, orienting around the desired long-term impact of the DEOCS was critical for informing the work of the redesign.

## Guiding Principles

Finally, we identified three core principles to further guide our process and decision making in service of the purpose and long-term goals of the DEOCS. Namely, we sought to ensure the DEOCS is (1) accurate and data driven, (2) user friendly, and (3) actionable.

### ***Accurate and Data Driven***

Data-driven decision making is the entire premise underlying the existence of the DEOCS in the first place. In other words, the foundational assumption of the DEOCS is that providing climate data to unit commanders is useful and can spur change. Our process to redesigning the DEOCS as a data-driven tool sought to ensure that the data the DEOCS provides are relevant for commanders and the climate problems they face, as well as ensuring these data are accurate. Furthermore, our design process itself was a data-driven process, in that we collected and synthesized data and information in multiple forms (e.g., focus groups, interviews, survey data, scientific literature review) and from multiple key stakeholder groups (e.g., commanders, Service members, policymakers, and senior leaders). This information was essential for all phases of the DEOCS redesign.



## ***User Friendly***

The DEOCS is a tool that must be used by various audiences in order to be successful, including survey administrators, Service members, and commanders. If any of these key constituents encounter barriers to their full use of the DEOCS, the DEOCS cannot achieve its long-term objectives. Therefore, we sought to maintain and improve the usability of the DEOCS across all lines of effort, and this work to improve usability is ongoing as we continually receive feedback from users in the field.

## ***Actionable***

High-quality data from an easy-to-use tool are not enough to drive change and to achieve the long-term objectives of the DEOCS. Translating DEOCS results into effective action is simultaneously the most important and also the most challenging element of the DEOCS as a tool for commanders. Although our redesign prioritized actionability as a core principle, there remains much work to be done. The project of making the DEOCS truly actionable and effective is one that will continue and must involve the dedicated efforts of many individuals and organizations from across DoD in order to truly be successful.

In order for the DEOCS to be truly actionable, evidence-based interventions must be easily accessible to unit commanders and personnel on the ground, ideally tailored to meet the unique needs of their unit population, and be in response to their unique constellation of risk and protective factors identified in their DEOCS results. Furthermore, commanders and other relevant personnel must have the training and support needed to implement these interventions. This work with respect to the DEOCS is in its infancy and was not part of our DEOCS redesign effort. However, we view this as a necessary end state for the DEOCS if it is to achieve its purpose. Therefore, to the maximum extent possible, we designed the new survey with the principle of actionability at the forefront to poise the DEOCS for future enhancements in this domain. Survey content was chosen on the basis of potential actionability, and creating a user-friendly dashboard is one step on the journey of making survey results come to life and ensuring that results are directly linked to recommended follow-on actions that can move the needle on critical climate issues.

## **Action Area One: New DEOCS Platform**

The survey administration system or DEOCS platform ([Chapter 5](#)) provides all of the operational infrastructure for units to request, administer, and receive results from a DEOCS. The DEOCS is unique from other DoD surveys in that, although it is a DoD-wide data collection, it is primarily administered at the unit/organization-level. OPA provides the survey infrastructure, analysis, and reporting functionalities, but the administration is carried out by units/organizations themselves. In building the new DEOCS platform, we maintained aspects of the legacy system and implemented various enhancements in line with increasing data accuracy and making the system user friendly. Key enhancements to date and next steps, in line with our three core principles, are summarized below.

## **Accurate and Data Driven**

In redesigning the DEOCS platform, we aimed to ensure that the data collected, including the survey data itself as well as any metadata regarding the unit and survey administration (e.g., data input by survey administrators when requesting a survey) facilitate the end goal of providing unit climate results that are accurate and reliable for informing decision making. To do so, we made some updates to the system compared to the legacy version.

### ***Unit Rosters***

In the legacy DEOCS system, there was no formal accounting or tracking of the survey population (i.e., who was being included in a unit's DEOCS). Unit membership for the purpose of the DEOCS is not defined in policy, and defining who is and is not part of a unit or organization is not as easy as it may sound. For example, a DoD civilian from "Organization A" may be on a year-long detail to "Organization B." During this time, both organizations field a DEOCS. It is possible this person is included in both, one, or neither of these DEOCS administrations depending on how the organization leader and survey administrator choose to define organization membership. Some leaders may use formal reporting structures to decide who to include (even if those individuals are currently detailed elsewhere), whereas others may prioritize co-location (i.e., people who are working side by side), regardless of the administrative chain of command, or perhaps some other approach. This flexibility provides commanders and leaders wide latitude in employing the DEOCS as a tool to best suit their needs. However, it comes at the cost of limited insight into the population for any given DEOCS, or for all DEOCS surveys administered within a specific time period (e.g., all DEOCS within a year).

This gap has prevented calculation and tracking of important DEOCS metrics, including whether some individuals are "falling through the cracks" and never included in a DEOCS or whether some individuals are being heavily burdened by numerous DEOCS requests annually. A lack of a clearly defined population also complicates comparing units (which might be defining who is in the unit differently) and aggregating units (which might lead to "double counting" of individuals who were included in multiple DEOCS).

With the launch of the new system, survey administrators are required to input a unit roster with their survey request. This roster must include first name, last name, and one form of contact information (preferably DoD e-mail address) for every member of the unit who is intended to be included in the DEOCS. This roster will ultimately contribute to a better understanding of coverage, nonresponse bias, and other critical issues that impact data quality and utility. Analyses leveraging these roster data are in their early stages. However, an immediately useful feature that is enabled by unit rosters is secure log in, which is described below.

### ***Secure Log-In***

As of this writing, OPA has completed testing, and is running analysis on, a new log in method for the DEOCS that is consistent with other large-scale DoD and federal surveys (e.g., the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, or FEVS). Unlike the legacy method, where a single unit passcode is distributed to all unit members, the new secure log in method requires individuals taking the survey to enter their DoD e-mail address (or other form of contact information) to

enter the survey. This information is automatically matched against all active unit rosters within the DEOCS survey system.

Secure log in ensures that only unit members can complete a survey for their unit, and that each unit member completes the survey no more than once. This removes the possibility of tampering with DEOCS results by taking the survey multiple times or by distributing the passcode to individuals outside of the unit. Ultimately, this serves to increase the accuracy of the data for commanders, and the confidence commanders can have that their survey results are reflecting the perceptions of members of their unit.

Although essential for improving DEOCS data accuracy, secure log in also has important user-friendly advantages. Specifically, secure log in allows individuals to complete the survey across multiple sittings, hence making it easier to complete the survey. Individual responses remain completely confidential, and this confidentiality is guaranteed by a Certificate of Confidentiality issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

## **User Friendly**

DEOCS users include survey administrators, survey takers, unit commanders, policy officials, and senior leaders. The DEOCS platform is most heavily used by survey administrators, who are tasked with requesting and administering the DEOCS for their unit. This is no small task, and is one of many responsibilities that Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) professionals (and others who administer surveys) must balance. Thus, we sought to make the process as user friendly as possible for survey administrators. However, the need for accurate data did result in some changes that increase burden on administrators, specifically the requirement to provide a unit roster. In adding the roster requirement, we removed the prior requirement to input unit demographic characteristics (i.e., total number of men, women, etc., in the unit) and are deriving this information via administrative data using the rosters as a way of mitigating the additional burden that collecting and inputting rosters entails for survey administrators.

In addition to survey administrators, survey takers are key users of the DEOCS platform and multiple elements of the redesign of the platform sought to improve their user experience to remove barriers to survey response and to increase the likelihood that individuals would be willing to complete the survey again.

## **One-Stop Shop**

In the previous DEOCS system, survey administrators created a new account for every new survey registration. Results were posted for several days for PDF download and then deleted. There was a separate Data Retrieval System (DRS), with a separate account, that housed legacy reports.<sup>133</sup> These separate accounts and systems were generally only accessed by survey administrators, with no access for commanders or their supervisors.

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<sup>133</sup> Based on our review of documentation, it is unclear whether all survey administrators or a subset of survey administrators and/or other professionals had access to this system, and how user access and user privileges were determined.

The new DEOCS platform combines requesting a DEOCS, viewing DEOCS results, and accessing legacy results into a single platform. Survey administrators create a single account that is an “account for life,” which eliminates the need to create a new account for every new survey registration. By reducing the number of passwords and accounts to manage and by retaining all necessary information easily accessible within the system, burden on survey administrators is substantially decreased. For example, an administrator can use a previous registration as a starting point and adjust the information as needed rather than starting with a brand new request, which may come in handy when administering the DEOCS for the same unit one year later when much of the information about the unit may not have changed. An administrator can also see response rates from all surveys they have administered side by side. As of the launch of DEOCS 5.0, all legacy reports (starting with DEOCS 5.0 reports) will be available.

In addition to providing easier access for survey administrators, the new system is also set up to provide accounts to commanders and their supervisors so that leaders can be more directly involved in viewing and approving survey requests as well as in directly accessing their survey results (past and present).

### ***Mobile Optimization***

The DEOCS redesign survey highlighted the importance of ensuring the DEOCS is easily accessible on a mobile device ([Chapter 4](#)). This consideration informed the development of new log in strategies. For example, we ruled out a Common Access Card (CAC)-enabled log in. We also ruled out sending unique URLs or unique passwords to military e-mail addresses since most Service members don’t have access to their military e-mail accounts on their mobile devices. The secure log in approach (described above) leverages log in information that members readily know (their own e-mail address or phone number) so that they can log in anytime, anywhere, via their mobile device, or on any device of their choosing.

Furthermore, we ensured that the DEOCS is designed to be easy to complete on a mobile device; in other words, “mobile friendly” or “mobile optimized.” To be mobile friendly means that a page or website performs well on a mobile device. This has implications for question type and response option layouts, as well as programming implications for the look and feel of questions on the page. The new DEOCS is easy to read and complete on a mobile device, which reduces burden on survey takers and makes it more likely that unit members who complete the survey on a mobile device will be willing to complete the survey again in the future.

### **Next Steps**

Although the new DEOCS platform is fully operational, there are a number of enhancements underway, or under consideration, for the future, in line with the principles of accuracy, usability, and actionability. We highlight some of these enhancements below.

### ***Support for Survey Administrators***

The work of a survey administrator is not easy, and yet it is crucial for the success of the DEOCS. As mentioned throughout this report, the new DEOCS platform and reporting system is markedly different than its predecessor in a number of ways ([Chapter 5](#); [Chapter 9](#)). In order to

support survey administrators through these changes, we developed a robust set of static training materials.<sup>134</sup> In addition, over the past nine months, we provided biweekly online training sessions, reaching over 1,400 survey administrators. Although these trainings were an important measure to keep the field up to date on the changes, the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) remains the center for excellence for equal opportunity (EO) training and will be the primary locus of DEOCS training moving forward.

We are developing a number of enhancements that aim to decrease burden on survey administrators. This includes expanding account access and making it easier for survey administrators to share accounts or transfer accounts as needed,<sup>135</sup> while simultaneously balancing the need to ensure that access is limited to those with a need to know (as determined by the Services). Another potential long-term enhancement is to remove the need for survey administrators to upload rosters and to rely on administrative data to identify unit membership. This solution is not imminent, given the many complexities with identifying unit membership for the purpose of the DEOCS ([Chapter 5](#)). However, we recognize the roster requirement is indeed burdensome and removing this requirement would go a long way toward reducing DEOCS workload for survey administrators. As we continue to learn from survey administrators in the field, we aim to continue to identify opportunities for enhancements to ease burden.

We look forward to partnering with DEOMI and the Services to ensure that survey administrators have the resources they need to be successful. This includes an easy request and administration process. But more importantly, it includes the training and resources EO professionals need to support commanders in taking action in response to their DEOCS results. The success of the DEOCS truly hinges on this work.

### ***Improving Communications to Increase Response Rates***

In the “secure log in” version of the survey, the DEOCS system automatically e-mails unit members an initial recruitment e-mail to announce the survey and motivate a response. If a unit member does not respond, then they are sent the same reminder e-mail up to seven times (once every six days) until a response is received, the survey closes, or the survey is extended (whichever occurs first). If a DEOCS is extended, then the reminder e-mails are converted to a slightly modified version of the reminder e-mail that adds phrasing to announce that the DEOCS was extended.

Future DEOCS recruitment e-mails will leverage insights from social exchange theory and behavioral science to improve DEOCS outreach to ultimately support and improve DEOCS response rates. There is a robust body of research demonstrating the effectiveness of varying communication and outcome strategies and of including customized language within communications (Dillman et al., 2014; Oliver et al., 2017). Particularly, e-mails that are personalized, such as addressing a person by their name rather than a generic salutation, are found to be effective at boosting response rates (Dillman et al. 2007). Currently, the DEOCS e-mails do not incorporate any personalization, and have only two instances of customization. Future e-mails will contain more customization and personalization; for example, Service-

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<sup>134</sup> <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>

<sup>135</sup> Given the mobility of military personnel, this is a highly relevant issue.

specific language (e.g., soldier, sailor), the recipient's name, and the name of their unit, organization, or Academy. Information from the registration page can also be used to insert a due date for the DEOCS, which is appreciated by participants and can increase response rates to survey requests (Henley, 1976; Edwards et al. 2009). Most importantly, we will send unique reminders, rather than sending the same reminder multiple times, which can increase the chance participants open and read them (Schreiner, 2019). By sending unique reminder e-mails, we will be able to send more evidence-based appeals to recruit participants into the DEOCS (Oliver et al., 2017; Schreiner et al., 2020).

## **Action Area Two: New DEOCS Content**

DEOCS content selection followed a rigorous and systematic process described in [Chapter 6](#), [Chapter 7](#), and [Chapter 8](#). The end result is a survey instrument that is grounded in science, designed to predict critical outcomes with actionable data.

### **Accurate and Data Driven**

Every step of the content development process was informed by existing scientific research on both command climate and general survey design. Even our content selection method itself (i.e., the process by which we went about identifying survey content) was based on research and best practices in similar contexts. This reliance on scientific evidence not only served to identify the most important topics quickly and effectively, but also expanded the range of topics beyond what might have been considered if we had only relied on the knowledge and opinions of the OPA team and stakeholders. Through our methodical selection process, we were able to identify actionable leading indicators of the STOs with the strongest scientific evidence that also resonated with stakeholders. We then used a quantitative process to identify the questions that most efficiently measured each topic, prioritizing items with the strongest links to our STOs.

### ***Data-Driven Construct Selection***

Over 500 preliminary constructs were identified through a review of scientific literature. These preliminary constructs were winnowed to the 19 risk and protective factors that are part of DEOCS 5.0 ([Chapter 6](#)) through a rigorous three-step process. First, preliminary constructs were screened for their ability to meet the minimum criteria of having scientific evidence supporting their relationship to the STOs and being hypothetically time and group variable in order to capture differences in climate across time and units. Next, preliminary constructs were scored on six criteria to rate the strength of the scientific evidence linking them to one or more of the STOs as well as their importance to stakeholders. Six independent raters iteratively selected a set of 15 initial constructs based on the scores from Step two. Key stakeholders were then given a chance to provide feedback, resulting in the final set of 19 risk and protective factors that are included on the DEOCS 5.0.

### ***Data-Driven Item Selection***

In choosing the items (i.e., questions) to measure each of the 19 DEOCS factors, OPA also relied on data and quantitative decision-making processes as much as possible. We sought items that appear on other DoD surveys, which could be linked to STOs. In cases in which this was not

possible, we prioritized scientifically validated scales from the research literature. To reduce survey burden, we sought to use the fewest number of items needed to fully measure each factor and reduced scales by prioritizing predictive validity ([Chapter 7](#)). These items were then translated into a cohesive whole survey instrument based on best practices in survey methodology ([Chapter 8](#)).

## **User Friendly**

Our efforts in constructing the DEOCS 5.0 instrument aimed to make taking the DEOCS as easy as possible for participants to increase the likelihood that participants who complete the DEOCS will be willing to take the survey again in the future.

## **Efficiency of Factors**

As demonstrated in our research literature review, there are hundreds of topics related to command climate that could be included on a survey. However, neither survey takers nor commanders would find a survey that long to be worthwhile. OPA sought to maximize the utility of the DEOCS by prioritizing factors that were related to multiple STOs. This means that commanders' actions to improve unfavorable scores will have greater impact by having broad effects on the command climate and promoting multiple positive outcomes simultaneously.

## **Survey Burden**

Surveys that are overly burdensome for participants discourage unit members from taking or finishing the survey, leading to poor response rates and incomplete data that limit the validity of the results. Thus, one of OPA's top priorities in designing DEOCS 5.0 was ensuring low survey burden. Survey burden entails not only concrete attributes like length of the survey, but also the subjective experience of participants. Previously discussed efforts like ensuring efficiency of the factors ([Chapter 6](#)), and reducing items based on their predictive validity ([Chapter 7](#)), resulted in as short a survey as possible. Additional efforts, such as simplifying language and inserting customized language also sought to make the survey easier to take ([Chapter 8](#)). Finally, the prioritization of factors that were identified by Service members themselves as important helps to reduce survey burden by making taking the survey a worthwhile experience that resonates with Service members because the topics are relevant to them and have the potential to positively impact their everyday lives.

## **Actionable**

As a commander's tool, it is imperative that the DEOCS measure topics that are not only descriptive or explanatory of the command climate, but also actionable. Commanders must be able to use the DEOCS to identify problems with their command climate and take steps to improve.

## **Actionable Risk and Protective Factors**

Actionability was a key evaluation criterion for selecting the final 19 risk and protective factors ([Chapter 6](#)). At multiple steps in the selection process, including article identification during the literature review and the considerations in the final set selection, we considered the actionability

of preliminary constructs. This was at times a subjective evaluation as to whether a construct could theoretically be changed by a commander through policies, programs, or practices, but we sought reliability of these judgments by having multiple independent raters as well as stakeholder verification. We also considered empirical evidence of actionability by scoring preliminary constructs according to whether they had been shown to vary over time or across subgroups of the same organization. These time and group variable criteria ensure that the final factors can and do change in different circumstances.

### ***Specificity of Leadership Results***

Although the DEOCS is a commander's tool, there are many people in the chain of command that can influence the climate. To target their actions more effectively, both Service members and commanders requested more specificity on ratings of leadership in the DEOCS. In DEOCS 5.0, most of the leadership factors ("Toxic Leadership," "Leadership Support," "Transformational Leadership," and "Passive Leadership") measure leaders at multiple levels, including immediate supervisors, the unit commander/organization leader, and senior NCOs/senior enlisted advisors. To avoid lengthening the survey too much and being overly repetitive, we asked subject matter experts to determine the relevance of each factor at various levels of leadership, and only asked about each factor at those specific levels. The factor ratings are reported separately for each level of leadership so that action planning can focus attention to the right levels.

### **Next Steps**

#### ***Predictive Validity of Factors***

Most of the formative research used to identify preliminary constructs was conducted at the individual level, with some exceptions.<sup>136</sup> Individual-level research can be used to examine whether an individual's ratings of climate are related to that individual's experience of the STOs. For example, research including the item analyses used to select items for the DEOCS ([Chapter 7](#)) has shown that an individual's self-reported experience of "Workplace Hostility" is related to the odds of that individual having also experienced sexual assault. Because climate is a collective subjective experience, more research is needed to determine whether unit-level aggregations of individual-level evaluations of the risk and protective factors predict unit-level prevalence of the STOs. With changes in the administration process that will improve data quality and allow linking of DEOCS data to other data sources (such as prevalence surveys and administrative records), we will be able to directly test whether the DEOCS is doing what it is supposed to be doing, and make any changes accordingly if not.<sup>137</sup> In other words, we will be able to determine if the unit-level ratings of risk and protective factors are truly leading indicators for the STOs. This analysis will also allow us to quantify the exact impacts of DEOCS scores on outcomes, which will enable richer results reporting that directly translates a factor score to risk for STOs.

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<sup>136</sup> Samuelson et al. (2021) is a notable, recent exception that factored into DEOCS construct selection.

<sup>137</sup> These analyses cannot be completed until we have collected sufficient DEOCS 5.0 data, ideally under secure log in conditions, and the necessary outcome data are also available (e.g., 2021 WGRA will provide the necessary data for sexual assault and sexual harassment STOs).



## ***Increasing Customization***

In an effort to reduce survey burden, we have already employed piping, or programming, that automatically changes words or phrases to make the survey comprehensible for specific participants. For example, participants in civilian organizations answer questions about their “organization leader” compared to participants in military units who answer questions about their “unit commander.” Future enhancements plan to increase the use of piping to further customize the survey for participants. For example, instead of “unit commander,” we could pipe in the commander’s name or instead of answering questions about “this organization,” the question can reference the organization’s name. This piping makes the survey more personal and more of a conversation, which reduces the perception of burden, and also improves accuracy because there is less room for confusion about the subject of a question. We also plan to extend these piping and customization options to the items in the custom question bank; which will allow more specificity for the unit while still ensuring the questions meet DoD standards and survey writing best practices.

## **Action Area Three: Unit Commander Dashboard**

In order to properly communicate the results of the DEOCS 5.0, OPA has developed an interactive Unit Commander Dashboard that provides the results of the survey in easy-to-understand charts and tables that also translate well into a PDF report ([Chapter 9](#)). The work on this dashboard is ongoing and enhancements to the process are put into production on a regular basis.

## **Accurate and Data Driven**

For commanders to feel confident in using DEOCS to inform their decisions, they need to trust the data. In the first phase of the DEOCS dashboard design, OPA has taken a critical look at how to accurately provide results, and ensure that interpretations and use of the results are closely connected to the STOs they are designed to address.

## ***Comparisons and Thresholds***

In the near term, a number of our changes to DEOCS reporting aligned with the principle of accuracy entailed removing rather than adding features. We recognize that removing functionality is not helpful for users, but it is important that we ensure that any results that we provide are accurate and defensible. This temporarily scaled-back functionality is most noteworthy for roll-ups and comparisons to like-units and the Service overall. We also removed color-coded thresholds denoting whether or not improvement is needed. Although these are indeed useful tools for users to interpret their results, if they are methodologically unsound, then they could lead to faulty conclusions about the health of the climate and cause commanders to miss important warning signs. To avoid important decisions being made on faulty information, OPA ceased the use of these features while we work on ensuring the methods are scientific and defensible. These features are a high-priority future enhancement.

## **User Friendly**

Even the most motivated commander has many competing demands on their time and resources. For the DEOCS to be a useful commander's tool, it must be user friendly so that important issues can be easily identified and quickly acted upon. Improvements in the first phase of the DEOCS redesign kicked off a series of planned iterations that will continue to innovate on the previous static reports to be more interactive, dynamic, and accessible.

## **Data Visualization**

Rather than a static visual representation of data, such as a PDF report, previous studies have found that people rate interactive dashboards as more useable, and are better able to find data they need to make decisions (e.g., Wu et al., 2019). For the DEOCS, this interactive capability is particularly important. Although the DEOCS is a standardized tool across all military commands, it is designed to be implemented at a local level. Individual units need flexibility to focus on the information that is most applicable to their unique circumstances and focus attention where it is most needed. Providing survey administrators and commanders the power to visualize data in a way that answers their specific questions will improve their ability to identify and respond to climate problems.

The beta version of the DEOCS dashboard creates a foundation on which more features will be built to allow commanders greater customization in viewing their DEOCS results. As we continue to build the dashboard, OPA will work with experts to employ best practices in visual communication that will ensure data are easily and accurately understood and able to highlight areas of concern or promise quickly and comprehensively.

## **Actionable**

Data visualization is key to ensuring that the results from the DEOCS are digestible, understandable, and thus, actionable. We have developed a number of approaches to increase actionability through data visualization and user access in the dashboard, with more enhancements underway and planned.

## **Drill-Down Features**

The DEOCS beta dashboard displays survey results at the topline level for the 19 DEOCS risk and protective factors. However, for users who want to dig deeper, results can be viewed by items, demographic groups, and (where relevant) for supervisors by paygrade, to allow users to home in on problem areas and develop targeted action plans. For example, units can identify the paygrade of immediate supervisors that may be driving a heightened score for "Toxic Leadership" or identify the specific form of "Workplace Hostility" that is most common in the unit, and identify who in the unit is experiencing the highest levels of "Workplace Hostility" (e.g., women vs. men, junior enlisted vs. senior enlisted).

To truly be able to leverage these capabilities, users require training and practice as well as a data visualization scheme that does not present them an impossible alchemy of results. To these ends, we will continue developing these capabilities within the dashboard, working to be able to guide

users through drill-down features and strategic callouts that advise them on where to look and how to take action based on the results presented.

## **Next Steps**

Moving forward, and in response to signals from the field, OPA has begun to implement and plan many updates and enhancements that will directly increase the ease of use for commanders and create a more profound “call to action” that makes it easier to respond to survey results quickly and effectively.

## ***Expanding User Access***

One way we plan to expand the dashboard in the future is by providing more extensive, yet targeted, user permissions. This will include “super users” at the Service level who can pull down reports and track compliance for their Service as needed. These users will be determined by the Service. We also recognize a need for levels of access somewhere between “every DEOCS within the Service” (i.e., the “super user” role) and “only my unit’s DEOCS” (i.e., the current role that most users hold). These broader, yet still targeted roles with associated user permissions, can serve many useful functions, and this functionality will ideally be built hand in hand with the Services. Finally, additional user permissions include updating how the survey administrator role is shared or held. Understandably, it is often the case that an organization would want multiple administrators with access to the unit’s results, and OPA is currently in the process of defining these “shared” or “multiple” administrator roles.

## ***Comparisons and Trends***

OPA will incorporate multiple analyses into the dashboard that will allow commanders to contextualize their results in relation to both other units and their own unit at different time points. First, we will incorporate comparisons to other units that will allow commanders to see how their scores rank next to their Service overall or to similar unit types (i.e., combat, training, medical, etc.). These comparisons were a feature of previous DEOCS 4.1 reports that we are currently working to improve to be more accurate and reliable before reintegrating into the dashboard. Users often express how helpful comparisons are in interpreting their DEOCS results. They demonstrate not only where the unit’s strengths and weaknesses lie in relation to other units, but also inform action planning by demonstrating how localized a specific unit’s issues are. For example, if a unit’s favorability scores are significantly below the Service average, the problem is likely unique to the unit and the commander may want to pursue a unit-specific course of action. However, if the entire Service’s favorability scores are low, effectively addressing the issue may require coordination at higher echelons to affect change broadly.

OPA will also incorporate trend analyses into the dashboard that will allow the commander to see how the current DEOCS results compare to previous DEOCS administrations. Trends will allow commanders to measure the impact of any actions they may have taken to address previously identified climate issues. Initially, we will be able to trend the same unit under the same commander, but ideally will be able to expand to allow trending of the same unit under different commanders and the same commander over different units. These advanced trending capabilities will be particularly useful for researchers and senior leaders to understand the impact

on command climate of particular leaders versus other features of the unit, and allow greater understanding of where policies and programs might be most effective.

### ***Benchmarks***

A consistent demand from both DEOCS users and policy officials is more assistance in interpreting results. What is a good score versus a bad score? What are the red flags? When is action needed? Given limited time and resources, what should they prioritize? The DEOCS dashboard in its existing state does not provide many answers to these questions, but with advanced analyses, OPA plans to provide data-driven benchmarks that accurately convey how factor scores translate to real-world outcomes.

Previous evaluations of the DEOCS have cautioned reliance on comparisons to other units for the purposes of benchmarking as they can impart a false sense of health (ARI, 2014); that is, they can hide issues that are pervasive throughout a Service. For example, if a unit is in the top quartile of favorability scores for their Service on a given factor, but the Service as a whole has low favorability scores, it would be inaccurate to label the command healthy. The solution to relying on relative standards is to base benchmarks on external objective criteria. For the DEOCS, the relevant external objective criteria are the STOs. Analyses linking DEOCS data to scientific prevalence survey and administrative data will allow us to create scores that translate a unit's factor scores into likelihood of problematic and positive outcomes occurring within that unit and allow the creation of criterion-based benchmarks. These criterion-based benchmarks will be a more accurate indication of the health of the command.

### ***Senior Leader Views***

An emerging need is for higher-order commanders and senior leaders within the Services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to have visibility over DEOCS results for accountability purposes as well as program assessment and improvement purposes. In conjunction with expanding user access in the DEOCS dashboard (described above), OPA will be building unique views for senior commanders to easily compare units in their chain of command. Furthermore, OPA will facilitate sharing of DEOCS data with OSD offices and Services for use in dashboard and data visualizations efforts aimed at allowing senior leaders to monitor command climate on a frequent basis and will incorporate DEOCS data with other data sources to create a holistic snapshot of the state of violence prevention progress. Some of this work may also require aggregation, or roll-ups, of units at various levels of the command hierarchy. As such, OPA will work with stakeholders to determine the appropriate levels of aggregation for accountability purposes and develop scientifically sound methods to create those aggregations.

Although OPA believes in the potential of the DEOCS data as an important piece of the accountability puzzle, we approach such efforts with caution to ensure they do not dilute the primary purpose of the DEOCS to serve as a prevention tool for commanders. If commanders and survey takers perceive that DEOCS results may trigger punitive actions, then it has the potential to have a chilling effect on responses. Commanders may have greater incentive to pressure participants into providing favorable responses, and participants may be hesitant to provide information that will get their commander in trouble. This would degrade the ability of

the DEOCS to measure the true command climate, which in turn would rob commanders of the opportunity to improve it. For this reason, OPA does not recommend making major personnel or strategic planning decisions solely based on DEOCS data. Rather, rigorous and thoughtful analysis of DEOCS data, together with additional data points, can serve as a warning sign that more serious problems may be occurring and trigger more in-depth and comprehensive evaluations to identify root causes and develop solutions.

### ***Translation to Action***

As we have repeated throughout this report, the primary purpose of the DEOCS is for commanders to use it as a tool, meaning they should be able to act on the results to improve climate. Thus, a crucial objective of the dashboard is enabling this action. When commanders get their survey results, see how they compare, see how the unit is trending over time, see what their biggest problems are, and where they may be “at risk,” the next question they should ask is “What next?” Even knowing all of the data, even with risk scores that are data driven and accurate and with excellent predictive validity, what should a leader, EOA, or command climate specialist do? Although this is perhaps one of the most important parts of the DEOCS process, it is one of the most underdeveloped.

Our hope is that the DEOCS dashboard can serve not only as a results reporting mechanism, but also as a jumping-off point for action planning. We aim to provide easy and targeted access to “tool kits,” or resources on policies, programs, and courses of action aligned to the survey content. For example, the dashboard could flag that a unit is at risk for sexual assault based on their factor scores for “Sexually Harassing Behaviors” and immediately and seamlessly direct them to ways to prevent and respond to “Sexually Harassing Behaviors.” Several Services require commanders to develop formal action plans to address issues identified in the DEOCS, and the dashboard can facilitate those requirements.

The previous DEOCS system (Assessment to Solutions, or A2S) contained recommendations for action and follow-on guidance, but updates are needed to address the new factors included in DEOCS 5.0. Additionally, stakeholder feedback suggested a need to make the resources more readily accessible and more tailored to unique needs of specific units/organizations. Although the responsibility for developing these is not clearly in OPA’s sphere of responsibility, it is in the interest of the DEOCS program in general that these toolkits are developed. OPA can serve as the curator of these resources, and ensure they are easily accessible in the dashboard through callouts, but will rely on the expertise of the OSD and Service policy and program offices with responsibility over the STOs to identify and develop them. Along these lines, OPA will seek guidance from the relevant policy offices and Services regarding what sorts of interventions have been shown to be effective in response to problematic scores related to the STOs. OPA and other research and evaluation organizations might be enlisted to assist with future evaluations to assess whether commanders implement action plans with fidelity, and, if they do, whether the expected improvements are seen in subsequent DEOCS results. These types of evaluations will allow the Department to focus its resources on the most effective programs, as well as to identify potential improvements.

## Conclusion

The DEOCS is an important tool with deep roots in the Department's mission to create an equitable and professional environment for all Service members ([Chapter 1](#)). When the needs of the Force and Service members change, so too should the DEOCS. As new or ancient prejudices emerge to influence or degrade the Department's workforce and readiness, the DEOCS itself must remain agile enough to capture these climate impacts while remaining true to its core principals and never losing sight of its ultimate purpose. To these ends, the work of the DEOCS is truly never done. Further, the state of command climate research is in its infancy, and many organizational, operational, and interpersonal factors may emerge in the coming years that highlight new and promising constructs that may be of interest on the DEOCS. Finally, feedback from the field is paramount in influencing the future of the DEOCS. Through partnerships with OSD policy offices and the Services and many touchpoints with the field, we will work to ensure that the instrument is working as intended and producing the results required for the health and resilience of the Force, as it is constituted now, and into the future.

### Continuous User Feedback

As we did in the first phase of the DEOCS redesign, OPA will continue to center the voices of DEOCS users in ongoing improvement efforts. We receive informal feedback from users and stakeholders every day that we use to identify both immediate fixes and long-term enhancements. We also plan to conduct surveys of survey takers, commanders, and survey administrators on a regular basis to evaluate already implemented changes, gather feedback on planned changes, and solicit ideas for further enhancements.

### Policy and Partnerships

The DEOCS is only one part of the larger command climate assessment process. OPA provides the survey tool to assess command climate, but many individuals and offices in the Department have an essential role in ensuring it is a useful prevention tool. DEOCS data can inform policies, but they also require clear policies that dictate who and how units administer the DEOCS. As it stands currently, some of these critical partnerships include the following entities. The Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) provides OSD-level policy guidance regarding command climate assessment. The Services have the responsibility of implementing this guidance, and also responsibility for tracking compliance, which OPA can facilitate through easier access to DEOCS request information and reports. DEOMI and the Service MEO offices train and equip the workforce not only to administer the DEOCS but also to use the survey to drive action. Without any of these important partners, the DEOCS fails to reach its full potential.

Informed by feedback from the field and DEOCS data itself, OPA will look for collaboration opportunities with all of these partners to ensure the DEOCS is meeting the ever-evolving needs of the Department. Ensuring good communication across the parties is critical, and we recognize it is a current gap. We plan to explore ways of formalizing a process for proposing, developing, and communicating changes to the DEOCS among all the various stakeholders. Ensuring active participation of all stakeholders in the evolution of the DEOCS will be key to striking the delicate balance of preserving the DEOCS as a commander's tool with the need for increased accountability and visibility.

Perhaps the biggest and most critical gap for the Department in terms of the DEOCS program and its envisioned role in prevention of violence and harm is in translating results into action. This is also the area that OPA requires the most robust support from our partners. Without a workforce that is trained and equipped to understand their survey results and act on them, the DEOCS will not lead to change. The survey itself (no matter how well visualized, scientifically accurate, accessible to senior leaders, etc.) won't solve problems; more resources and expertise are needed to make it an effective prevention tool. The development of toolkits is a critical area that will require the expertise of policy and program offices across the Department. Additionally, as the Department continues to expand violence and harm prevention efforts, prevention personnel beyond EO professionals as well as commanders themselves will likely benefit from training in how the DEOCS can be used to help create a healthy command climate.

### **Potential Future Research and Analysis**

The DEOCS is a rich data source with many research possibilities that we are just beginning to consider. As the largest DoD survey, these data should be fully leveraged to understand drivers of command climate, identify emerging personnel issues, and develop effective violence and harm prevention solutions. OPA will do some of this work but does not intend to have a monopoly on DEOCS data. OPA believes in the potential benefits that can be gained when researchers from across the Department bring their unique perspectives, questions, and methods to bear on these data. In addition to working directly with policy and program offices on identified analysis projects, OPA also plans to make data accessible for approved research purposes. DEOCS data are already available within the Army's Person-Event Data Environment (PDE), a data repository where researchers can obtain approval to conduct analyses with statistical software within a secure environment that ensures human subject protection regulations and privacy rules are followed and auditable. As other data-sharing capabilities emerge, OPA will consider the most strategic way of making DEOCS data available for broader use.

### **Conclusion**

This report describes OPA's efforts to redesign the DEOCS in three main action areas: a new administration platform, new DEOCS content that measures risk and prevention factors for STOs, and a new Unit Commander Dashboard for viewing and using results. There will be a Phase 2 report that describes the outcomes of several efforts that were begun in Phase 1, including the log in method experiment, weighting sensitivity and nonresponse bias analysis, and valid methods for creating comparisons, trends, and aggregations. The Phase 2 report will also provide further evidence on the reliability and validity of the new DEOCS content. Although this report describes a major change in the history of the DEOCS, this is not the first major change, and it almost certainly won't be the last. The DEOCS will continue to evolve in response to the needs of users and the guidance of senior leadership. The DEOCS program must remain agile while continuing to adhere to the guiding principles of ensuring the DEOCS is data-driven and reliable, prioritizing the needs of our end users, and ensuring the DEOCS is not just a survey for the sake of a survey, or a box to check in order to meet a requirement, but is used to directly drive action to foster a climate of dignity and respect for all members of the DoD community.





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# **Appendix A. 2014 Memorandum: DEOCS Usage and Data Sharing**

**DATA  
DRIVEN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR  
DECISION  
MAKERS**







**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
 4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

17 20 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
 CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
 CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES  
 CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU  
 GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute Organizational Climate Survey  
 Usage and Data Sharing

This memorandum designates the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) as the survey tool for support of the Department of Defense (DoD) command climate assessment program pursuant to section 572 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, Public Law No. 112-239, as amended by section 1721 of the NDAA for FY 2014, Public Law No. 113-66; and the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness memorandum, "Command Climate Assessments," July 25, 2013.

In addition to presenting valuable organizational information to commands, DEOCS data are provided monthly in reports to the White House, the Congress, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The decision to share DEOCS survey results in response to requests from within DoD, the White House, or Congress is the responsibility of the Military Department that received the report.

To ensure consistency of approach, the decision to share DEOCS survey results and data in response to requests from outside of DoD, other than from the White House or Congress, is the responsibility of the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO). DEOMI will work directly with the survey office within the Military Department concerned to establish a data use agreement (DUA) to support requests for data from entities outside of DoD, other than the White House and Congress. DUAs may contain requirements and responsibilities for data exchange, technical and operational specifications, and information security protections.

Mr. Clarence A. Johnson, Director, ODMEO, is the DoD point of contact.

 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Carson".
 

Brad Carson  
 Acting




**Appendix B.**  
**2018 Action Memo: DEOCS**  
**Realignment and Transfer to OPA**

**DATA  
DRIVEN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR  
DECISION  
MAKERS**





**CMD COVER SHEET**

<b>PRIORITY</b> Normal	<b>SUSPENSE DATE</b> 08-Aug-8888	<b>DATE OF CORRESPONDENCE</b> 21-Feb-2018	<b>Control Number</b> OSD002274-18  <b>Action ID</b> CMD002868-18 <b>Package View</b> <hr/> Action Memo
<b>REQUEST TYPE</b> Action Memo	<b>RESPONSE TYPE</b> I&R-Information and Retention		
<b>FROM</b> UPR  <b>TO</b> DEPSEC  <b>OPR</b> UPR			

<b>SUBJECT</b> REALIGNMENT OF FORCE RESILIENCY ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS
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DISTRIBUTION AGENCY	DISTRIBUTION TYPE
RLB	RWI
UPR	E OWI
GC	E
LA	E

OCRs

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS MAY CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFORMATION TO INCLUDE PRIVACY ACT MATERIAL - PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY  
 DATE PRINTED 3/14/2018 10:57:25 AM



PERSONNEL AND READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
 4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

FEB 21 2018

**ACTION MEMO**

FOR: DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: Robert L. Wilkie, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

SUBJECT: Realignment of Force Resiliency Elements of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

- Request that you approve actions to realign the Force Resiliency elements currently under the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness (OASD(R)) to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)).
- Because these actions affect people, billets, and other resources at and above the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense-level, and depart from OUSD(P&R) reorganization plans previously approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, your review and approval are required. Background and additional details are provided in the Information Paper at TAB A.
- The proposed realignment of Force Resiliency elements is as follows:
  - Establishment of the position of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency as a direct report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), and the transfer and reassignment of relevant elements of the OASD(R) to a new organization, redesignated as the Office of Force Resiliency, under the authority, direction, and control of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency and the USD(P&R):
    - Certain missions, functions, and authorized resources (including certain billets and personnel) associated with the current Office of Personnel Risk and Resiliency, under the OASD(R), will be transferred and reassigned as a component of the Office of Force Resiliency, under the authority, direction, and control of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency and the USD(P&R). Specifically, the missions and functions associated with Drug Demand Reduction Program, including all billets and resources to perform mission and functions; this component of the Office of Force Resiliency will be redesignated as the Office of Drug Demand Reduction.
    - The DoD/VA Collaboration Office, and all missions, functions, and authorized resources (including billets and personnel) associated therewith, will be transferred and reassigned as a component of the Office of Force Resiliency, under the authority,

SD CA		DSD SA	
SD SMA		DSD SMA	
SD MA		DSD MA	AWT 2/25
CoS		DSD CA	
SD Action Grp			
ES		ESB Rvw	8/7 2-18
ESR	HJC 2/25	ESD	



OSD002274-18/CMD002868-18



direction, and control of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency and the USD(P&R).

- Responsibility and authority for the provision of policy direction and oversight to the Defense Suicide Prevention Office and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office are transferred to the Executive Director, Force Resiliency. Both the Defense Suicide Prevention Office and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office remain components of the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), reporting directly to the Director, DHRA for purposes of operational execution and management support.
- The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO), and all missions, functions, and authorized resources (including billets and personnel) associated therewith, will be transferred and reassigned as a component of the Office of Force Resiliency, under the authority, direction, and control of the Executive Director, Force Resiliency and the USD(P&R).
- Elements to be transferred and reassigned from the OASD(R) to DHRA, a DoD Field Activity charged to serve as the “operational arm” of OUSD(P&R):
  - The missions and functions performed by the current ODMEO with regard to the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) will be transferred and reassigned as a component of the DHRA, under the authority, direction, and control of the Director, DHRA and the USD(P&R).
    - In addition, it is my intent to reestablish DEOMI as a Center of Excellence for training, education, research, and consultation in matters related to diversity and inclusion; military equal opportunity; civilian equal employment opportunity; the prevention and response to sexual harassment, harassment, and hazing and bullying across the total force. The realignment of DEOMI functions under DHRA will properly align operational programs, consistent with the law and policy governing DoD Field Activities.
  - The Director, DHRA will consult with the Department of the Air Force, in its current role as DoD Executive Agent for DEOMI, to consolidate all responsibilities and all associated resources for DEOMI in DHRA, as soon as feasible, but not later than the date of the submission of the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2020. Upon final completion of the transfer of all DEOMI resources, including program funding, the Air Force will be relieved in full of its responsibilities as DoD Executive Agent for DEOMI and all such responsibilities will have transferred to DHRA. The Department of the Air Force will work in concert with DHRA to transfer all funding programmed or budgeted in the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2019, and/or in Fiscal Year 2019 Continuing Resolutions or Appropriations Acts, for DEOMI and/or its programs, from the Department of the Air Force to DHRA, to ensure that ongoing and continuous funding for DEOMI is not interrupted.



- The missions and functions associated with developing, ordering, and analyzing the Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS), and consulting with participating DoD Components on the administration and the results thereof, are transferred and reassigned to the Office of People Analytics, DHRA, under the authority, direction, and control of the Director, Office of People Analytics, the Director, DHRA, and the USD(P&R). In placing responsibility for the DEOCS, which has proven an invaluable tool for the assessment of organizational climate in DoD, under the Department's premier survey and analytic element, it is my intent to revitalize and modernize the survey to preserve and enhance its utility and credibility into the future.

- A chart reflecting the "AS IS" structure of OUSD(P&R) is at TAB B. A chart reflecting the proposed "TO BE" structure of OUSD(P&R) is at TAB C.
- Realignment of resources (including billets and personnel) pursuant to this reorganization will be internal to OUSD(P&R); there will be no net growth in existing OUSD(P&R) resources or personnel authorizations. OUSD(P&R) remains on track to meet established Major DoD Headquarters Activities reductions and other efficiencies targets.
- Subject to your approval, I will take all necessary follow-on actions to implement this realignment of the Force Resiliency elements of OUSD(P&R). OUSD(P&R), in coordination with the Chief Management Officer will be responsible for developing a realignment implementation plan and for completing and overseeing all associated administrative actions, including the realignment of organizational structure and personnel; the documentation of position redesignations and update of position descriptions; the coordination, direction, allocation, and synchronization of the movement of equipment and changes in office space; and the update of the Fourth Estate Manpower Tracking System.
- As soon as practicable following your decision in this matter, I will advise the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and House.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the realignment of Force Resiliency elements by initialing below.

Approve   *RWS*   Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
MAR 13 2018

COORDINATION: TAB D

Attachments:  
 As stated

Prepared by: Robert L. Wilkie, 703-697-2121



**TAB**

**A**

February 14, 2018

**Information Paper on the Realignment of Force Resiliency Elements of the Office of the  
under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness**

**Purpose:** To provide further background and details on the realignment of Force Resiliency elements of the Office of the under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)).

**Overview:**

- The human resiliency of the people comprising and supporting our armed forces—both Active and Reserve Components—is a critical component of readiness and lethality. The realignment of OUSD(P&R) Force Resiliency functions under the auspices of the senior-most Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed official in OUSD(P&R) reflects appropriate leadership emphasis on these matters.
  - This realignment will uphold a commitment to Members of Congress and professional staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who believe strongly that co-mingling force resiliency functions with those of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness (OASD(R)) inappropriately diluted the Department’s focus on both resiliency and readiness, rendering it less likely that either function could be led or managed to its full potential.

**Background:**

- On November 15, 2015, then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work approved a Reorganization Implementation Plan setting forth the alignment of functions within OUSD(P&R). The Plan implemented the establishment of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, OASD(R), and the Office of the Executive Director for Force Resiliency, all of which reported directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)).
- On September 30, 2016, then-Deputy Secretary Work approved the further reorganization of OUSD(P&R), disestablishing the position and Office of the Executive Director for Force Resiliency as a direct report to the USD(P&R), and transferring its missions, functions, and resources to OASD(R).
- Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle, a career member of the Senior Executive Service (SES), was appointed as the Principal Director for Force Resiliency within OASD(R). In this capacity she reports directly to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness and exercises overall responsibility and authority for force resiliency missions and functions, including:
  - The leadership and management of the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity; the DoD/VA Collaboration Office; and the Drug Demand Reduction Program, embedded within the Office of Personnel Risk and Resiliency.
  - Providing policy direction/oversight to the Defense Suicide Prevention Office and the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, both of which are components of the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), a DoD Field Activity charged to serve as the “operational arm” of OUSD(P&R).
- On September 9, 2016, and October 17, 2016, Mr. Peter Levine, then-Acting USD(P&R), approved Phases I and II, respectively, of the DHRA Re-structure Plan. The DHRA Re-structure Plan assigned operational programs from across the OUSD(P&R) portfolio to

February 14, 2018

DHRA for execution and management, consistent with the law and policy governing DoD Field Activities.

**Key Points:**

- Based on the execution of realigning force resiliency elements, the Principal Director for Force Resiliency, the billets and personnel associated with the front office of the Principal Director for Force Resiliency will be effected as such:
  - Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle will be redesignated as the Executive Director, Force Resiliency, which will be submitted to the Office of the Chief Management Officer (CMO) for validation as a Tier 3 SES position in OUSD(P&R). The Executive Director, Force Resiliency will report directly to the USD(P&R) and will serve as senior advisor to the USD(P&R) on matters relating to the resiliency of the total force.
  - Mr. Kevin Kelly, a career member of the SES, will be appointed as the Deputy Director, Force Resiliency, which will be submitted to CMO for validation as a Tier 2 SES position in OUSD(P&R). In this capacity, Mr. Kelly will report to the Executive Director, Force Resiliency and the USD(P&R).

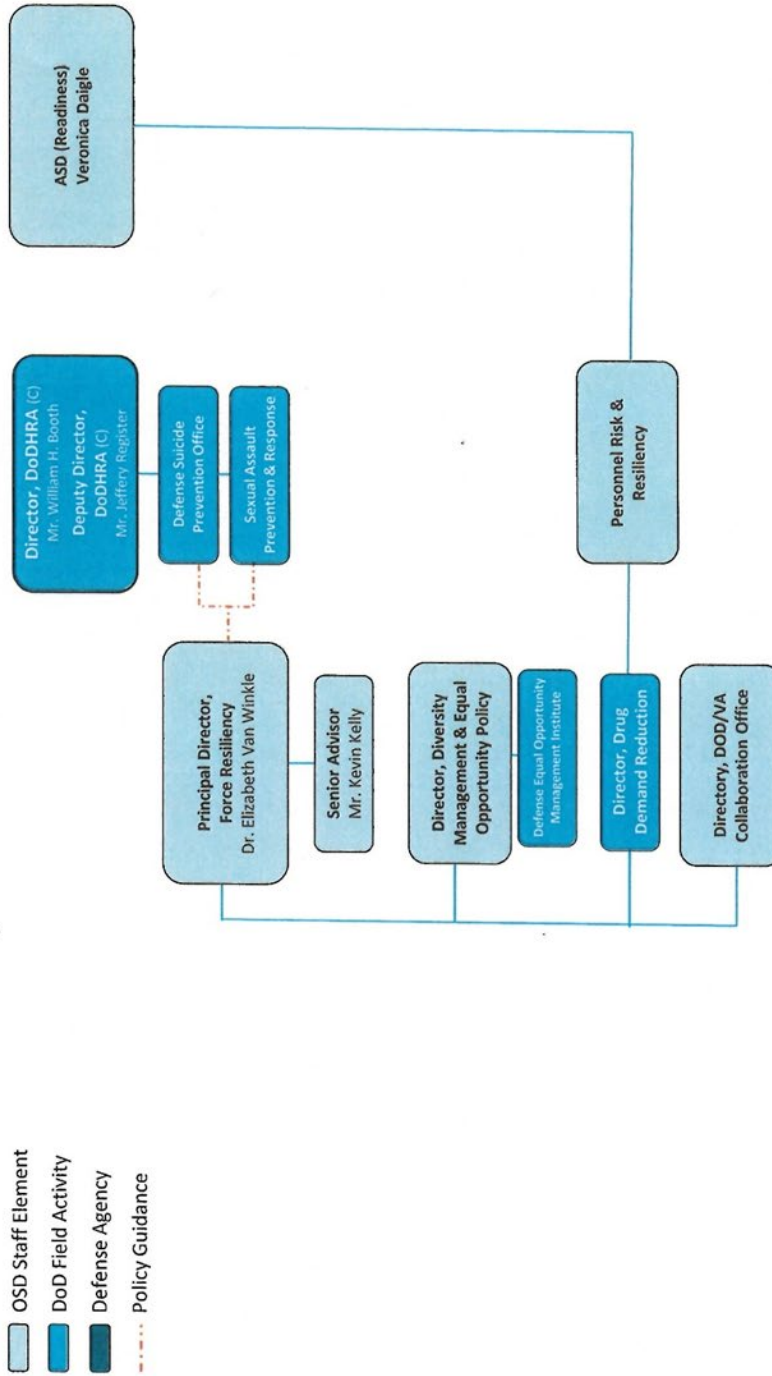
**Recommendation:** For Information only.

Prepared by: Robert L. Wilkie, (703) 697-2121

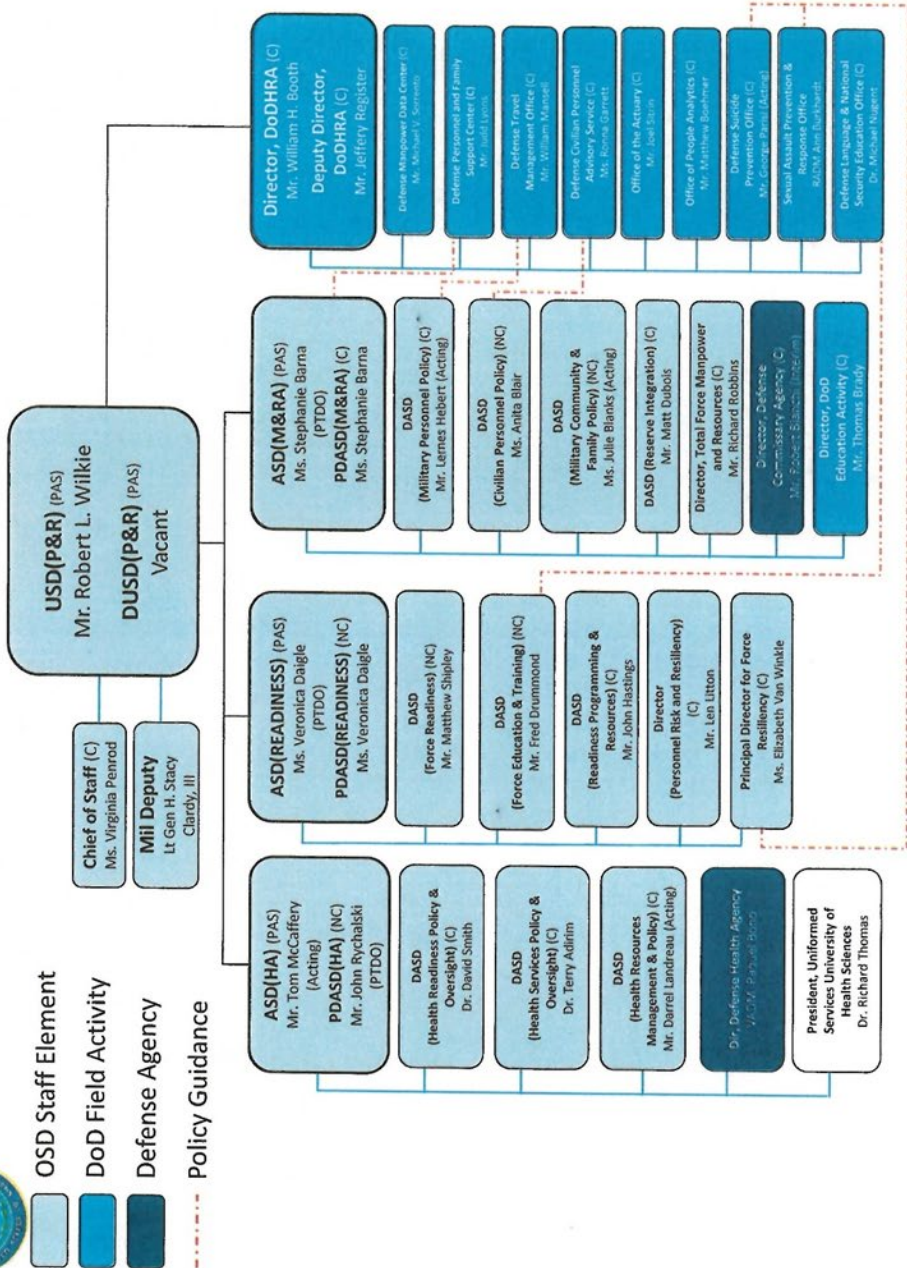
**TAB**

**B**

## OUSD(P&R) Organization and Leadership “AS IS”



# OUSD(P&R) Organization and Leadership "AS IS"

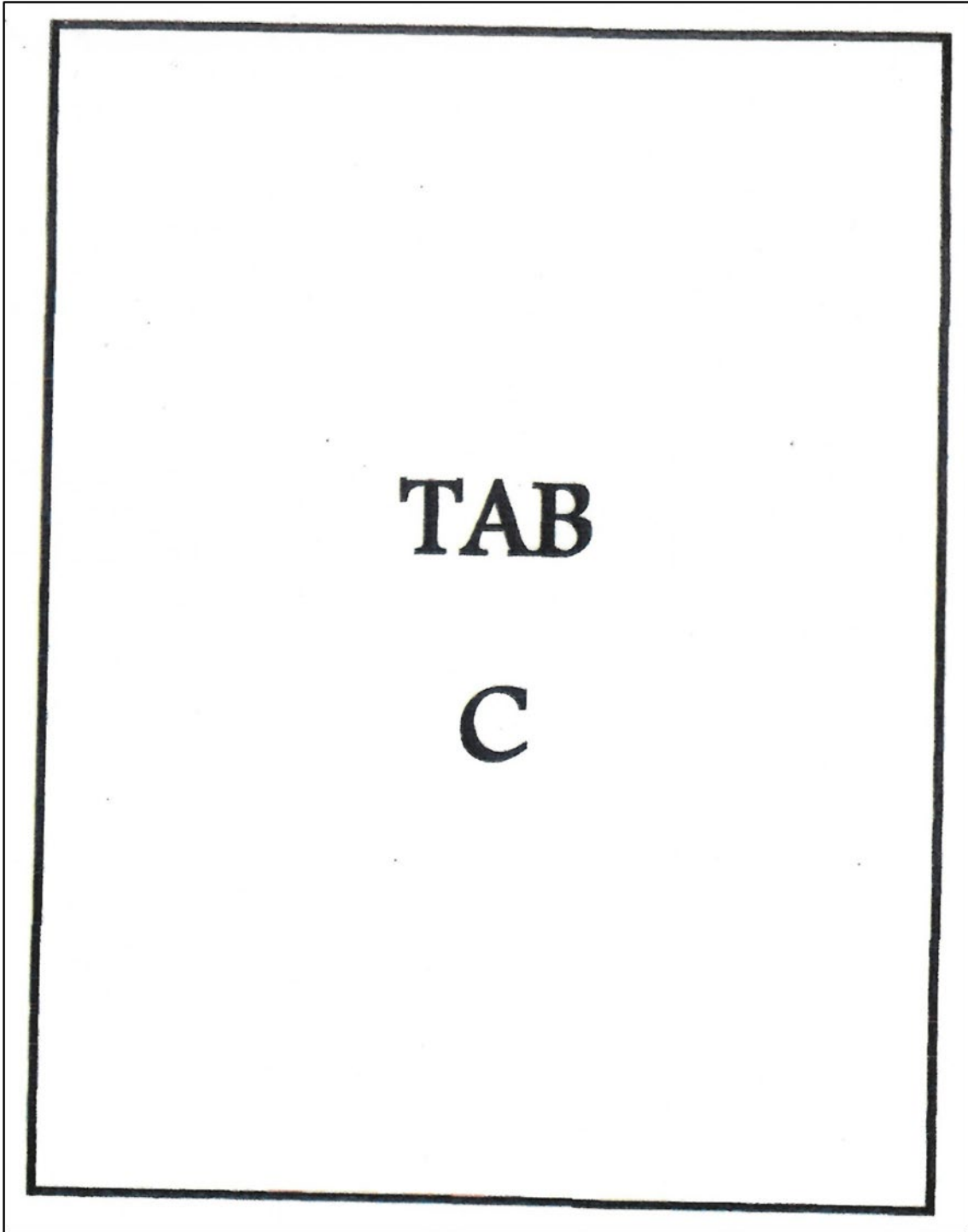


- OSD Staff Element
- DoD Field Activity
- Defense Agency
- Policy Guidance

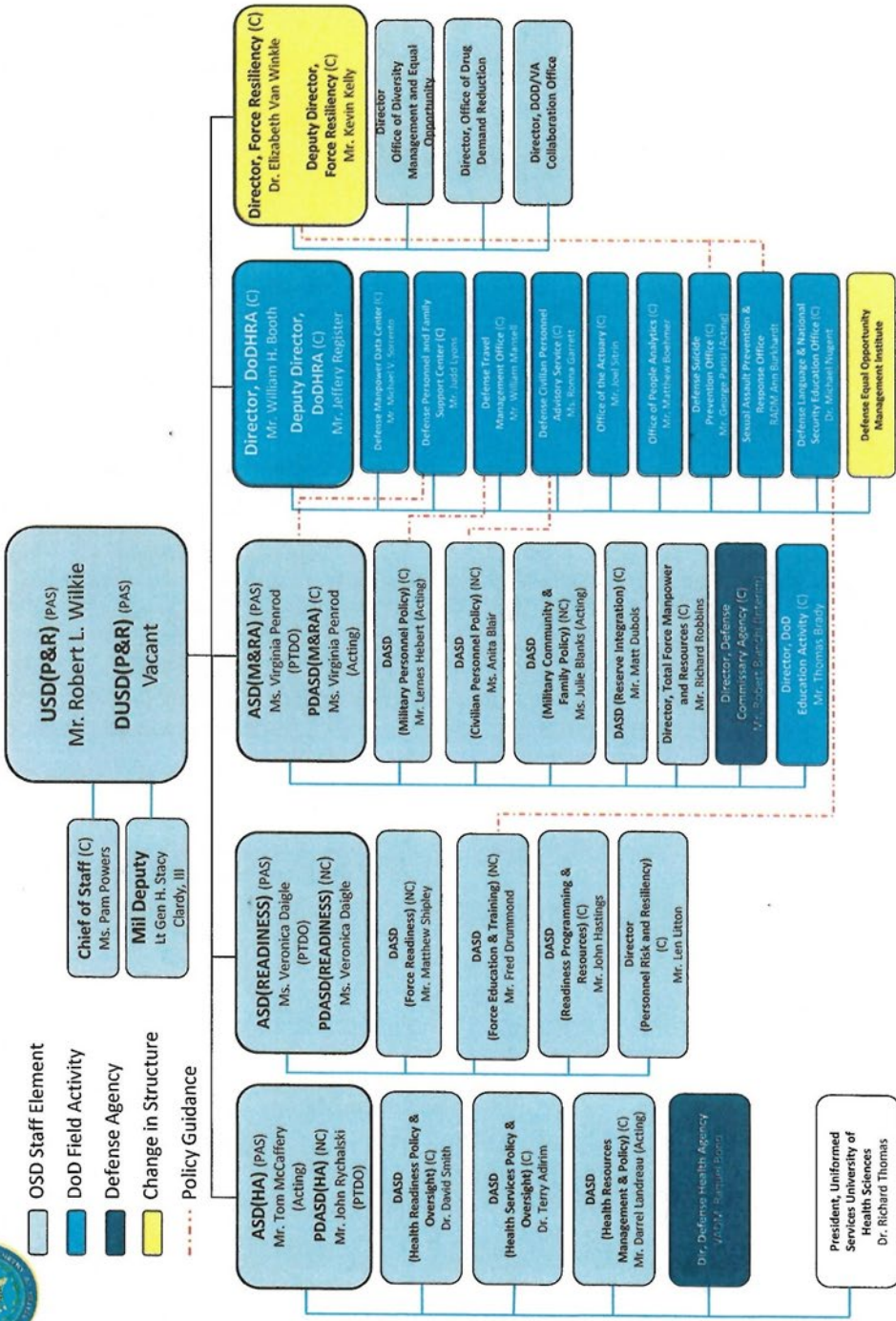
As of: December 14, 2017

FOUO





# OUSD(P&R) Organization and Leadership "TO BE"



FOUO

As of: February 9, 2018

**TAB**

**D**

**TAB D**

**COORDINATION**

**REALIGNMENT OF FORCE RESILIENCY ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF  
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

<b>General Counsel</b>	<b>Paul Koffsky</b>	<b>25 January 2018</b>
<b>Legislative Affairs</b>	<b>Robert Hood</b>	<b>1 March 2018</b>

# **Appendix C. 2019 Memorandum: Development of a New Climate Assessment Tool**

**DATA  
DRIVEN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR  
DECISION  
MAKERS**







SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAY - 1 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS  
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES  
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU  
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault in the Military

Safeguarding our Nation requires a mission-ready force. Our foundational strength rests with the men and women who volunteer to serve our country and protect our freedoms. Based on the results of the most recent reports on sexual assault at our Military Service Academies and in our active duty force, it is clear that sexual assault and sexual harassment are persistent challenges. This was reaffirmed at the National Discussion on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at America's Colleges, Universities and Service Academies, hosted by the Military Department Secretaries this past month. To put it bluntly, we are not performing to the standards and expectations we have for ourselves or for each other. This is unacceptable. We cannot shrink from facing the challenge head on. We must, and will, do better.

After reviewing this year's data from the FY 2018 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military and the findings and recommendations from the Sexual Assault Accountability and Investigation Task Force (SAITF) Report, my resolve to eliminate these crimes is stronger than ever. I am, and we all must be, committed to doing more for the women and men who serve this country and ensuring our force is the epitome of good order and discipline in everything we do. We must address how we are structured and how we resource efforts to combat this scourge. We must improve our culture to treat each other with dignity and respect and hold ourselves, and each other, more accountable. The essential elements that give rise to dignity and respect must be part of our daily repertoire of interactions. This is a call to action. To that end, I direct the following:

- **Implement the recommendations of the SAITF Report, including taking steps to seek a stand-alone military crime of sexual harassment.** Our military justice system is unparalleled and unique in that it treats behaviors counter to good order and discipline as crimes, while providing comprehensive support to victims throughout the process. Remaining unparalleled requires constant scrutiny and reevaluation to identify necessary areas for reform and improvement. The Task Force's recommendations are far-reaching and will lead to improvements at each step of the military justice process. To this end, I approve the recommendations of the SAITF Report submitted to me on April 30, 2019, and direct the Military Departments and applicable DoD Components to immediately identify needed actions, including necessary changes to structure and resourcing, to implement these recommendations. The Military Services, through their respective Military Departments, and the other concerned DoD Components will provide me, through the Under Secretary of



OSD004373-19/CMD005374-19

Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), a plan of action with milestones on the implementation of these recommendations by September 30, 2019.

- **Develop new climate assessment tools.** To identify emerging climate challenges within military units and provide critical oversight mechanisms, the USD(P&R), in collaboration with the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chiefs of the Military Services, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, will develop and provide leaders with assessment tools that help them to better understand the extent of such challenges within their units, assist them with developing an appropriate course of action from a suite of interventions, and provide them with feedback on the impact of their efforts. This will require additional resourcing to provide commanders the tools and authorities to maintain good order and discipline within the ranks. The USD(P&R) will provide me a plan of action with milestones on the development of such an assessment system by September 30, 2019.
- **Launch the Catch a Serial Offender (CATCH) Program.** To improve the identification of repeat offenders, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chiefs of the Military Services, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau will ensure necessary resourcing and structure to incorporate the CATCH Program into their respective sexual assault prevention and response programs when it comes “online” this year. The Military Services and the National Guard will ensure all response personnel, including Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates, Special Victims’ Counsel, Victims’ Legal Counsel, and military justice personnel, are trained on the CATCH Program procedures, to include notification of a match. Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Victim Advocates will offer the program to Service members making a restricted report of sexual assault. I expect you to report your plan of action and milestones for CATCH Program implementation, force education, and response personnel training to me through the USD(P&R) no later than 60 days after the program is implemented.
- **Enhance Efforts to Select Recruits of the Highest Character.** To ensure the men and women recruited into our Armed Forces are compatible with our military’s core values, the DoD Accession Policy Directorate, in collaboration with the Military Departments, Military Services, DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Office of People Analytics shall lead a working group to develop a plan to validate and implement (as applicable) measures to improve assessment of military applicant character prior to selection. The USD(P&R) will submit a plan to me by September 30, 2019, including a projected timeline for piloting proposed assessment measures.
- **Prepare New Leaders and First-Line Supervisors for Applied Leadership Challenges.** To ensure our newest officer and enlisted leaders are prepared to fulfill their supervisory roles to prevent and properly respond to sexual assault and sexual harassment, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chiefs of the Military Services, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau will create a working group to identify the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for training and



education (inclusive of all officer accession pathways and professional military education) to effectively prepare junior officers and junior enlisted leaders for preventing and responding to the applied leadership challenges presented by sexual assault and sexual harassment. Junior leaders are on the frontline of our fight to eradicate these problems in our ranks and must serve as role models in this effort. As such, they must be appropriately prepared and held appropriately accountable for promoting civility and cohesion among their subordinates, setting the example through their own behavior. This includes an appropriate, professional response by peers to a victim and an alleged offender when a sexual assault is reported in a unit. I expect you to report your plan of action and milestones for the working group to better prepare junior officer and junior enlisted leaders to me through the USD(P&R) by September 30, 2019.

- **Execute the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention Plan of Action (PPOA).** To stop sexual assault before it occurs and promote unity of effort throughout the DoD, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chiefs of the Military Services, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau will implement the Department's PPOA, realigning resources as required. Implementation progress will be reported in four phases in accordance with the "Execution of the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention Plan of Action, 2019-2023" memorandum dated April 26, 2019. The PPOA outlines the process by which we implement and assess our prevention efforts. This includes specific objectives towards rigorous research and evaluation of the effectiveness of targeted prevention strategies. These evaluations align with the feedback from the National Discussion on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at America's Colleges, Universities and Service Academies. Although the Department's efforts addressed in the PPOA will focus primarily on sexual assault prevention, the Military Departments, the Military Services, and the National Guard Bureau may define the scope of their respective prevention activities, given many use an integrated approach that incorporates multiple areas. Using the Department's template for phase one of implementation, provide completed frameworks to me through the USD(P&R) no later than December 31, 2019.

Collectively, we must do everything we can to eliminate sexual harassment and assault in the military. In doing so, we must provide the highest-quality response to service members and hold offenders appropriately accountable. Through these combined prevention, accountability, and support efforts, we will better prevent the crime and investigate and adjudicate reports, all while reiterating the Department's emphatic message that sexual assault is illegal and immoral, is inconsistent with the military's mission, and will not be tolerated. We will not rest until all Service members can serve in an environment of dignity and respect.

  
Patrick M. Shanahan  
Acting



# Appendix D.

## Focus Groups: Military Focus Group Participant Breakdowns

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Service	Installation	Population	Rank	Participants
Army	Joint Base Langley-Eustis	Service Member	E-5-E-6	32
		Service Member	E-7-E-8	
	Fort Bragg*	Equal Opportunity Advisor	EOA	
Navy	Naval Station Norfolk	Commander	O-4-O-6	31
		Service Member	E-9	
	Naval Amphibious Base Coronado*	Commander	O-4-O-6	
Marine Corps	Marine Corps Base Quantico	Commander	O-3-O-4	21
		Service Member	E-5-E-6	
Air Force	Fort Meade	Service Member	E-5-E-6	48
		Service Member†	O-3-O-4	
	Joint Base Andrews	Service Member	E-2-E-4	
		Commander	O-5 and above	
D.C. National Guard	D.C. Armory	Service Member	E-2-E-4	26
		Service Member	E-5-E-6	

\*These focus groups were conducted remotely via telephone.

†Due to differences in the Services, some officers who were expected to have administered the DEOCS had not. In these cases, the group was considered to be a Service Member group, rather than a Commander group.



# **Appendix E. Focus Groups: Command Climate Assessment Summit Protocol**

**DATA  
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DECISION  
MAKERS**







**Part 1: Introduction to the Discussion Groups (8 min)**

Hello everyone. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. My colleague, \_\_\_\_\_, and I are here on behalf of the DoD Office of People Analytics, also known as OPA. While I will be leading today's discussion \_\_\_\_\_ will be taking notes, so that I can concentrate on what everyone is saying today.

Today we'll be talking about command climate assessments – how you use them and what you need from them. There will be specific questions about the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), but I encourage you to think about any and all command climate assessments you may use in your work

I want to mention a couple of things before we get started.

- **This is intended to be a conversation among peers.** I was hired to run this discussion group so you won't hurt my feelings or offend me with whatever you say. I don't have a personal stake in these results.
- **There are no wrong answers.** You know a lot about the topics we plan to discuss, and I'm here to listen to you and get your perspective. Please speak up, especially if what you have to say is different than what someone else is saying. You may represent what a lot of other people think. OPA is interested in your candid thoughts and ideas so they can help improve command climate assessments for you and our service members.
- **We are not trying to come to consensus.** It's OK for there to be disagreement and in fact I welcome different points of view. Please share what is true for you. In the spirit of this, I ask that you remain respectful of each other's opinions during our discussion. Everyone in this room may see things differently and we want to hear everyone's perspective.
- As I mentioned, my colleagues are here for notetaking purposes. **We will be recording comments but will not be recording names or other identifying information.** We are interested in what is being said, not who is saying what.
- **We will be audio-recording today's session.** The audio files will be transcribed and destroyed 90 days after transcription.

In the interest of time, we may need to move on from one topic to get to another area of interest.

When we return to the larger group, we will share parts of our discussion with the other groups. There are specific topics we would like to highlight for the larger group. I will point those out as we go (in bold). For these topics, we'll ask you to summarize the top 2-3 from our discussion group. Would somebody like to volunteer to be the representative for our group?

*MODERATOR NOTE: Pass the representative the yellow sheet for notetaking, let him or her know when the discussion reaches one of the topics outlined on the sheet.*

Does anyone have any questions?

**MODERATOR NOTE: START THE RECORDER HERE!**

Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to go around the room and get to know each other a little bit better.

What is your name, organization, and why are you interested in the assessment of command climate?

**Part 2: Command Climate Assessment Purpose and Content (42 min)**

1. What are some of the major goals your organization is focused on right now?
  - a. **What are the most important topics that you need commanders to know about?**
  - b. What information would help you accomplish those goals?
2. What tools do you currently use to assess command climate?
  - a. Are there other tools you're aware of that the DoD should think about using?
3. **What do you think is the primary purpose of command climate assessments (commanders' tool, commander accountability, policy monitoring, etc.)?**
  - a. How have you observed climate results being used? What actions have been taken in response to a command climate assessment (by commanders or leadership)? What policies/programs have been informed by assessment results? What kind of research is being done on command climate?
  - b. Who sees/uses command climate results beyond commanders (policy offices, leadership, etc.)?
  - c. What are some barriers to current command climate assessments being more useful for you/commanders?
4. How much do commanders value climate assessments?
  - a. How much do commanders care about the assessments beyond the requirement to do them?
  - b. Are commanders held accountable for the results? If so, how?
  - c. Are results used in performance reviews/promotions/ranking?
  - d. Do you feel that commanders know what do with their results?
  - e. Do commanders face disciplinary action based on command climate scores?
5. How do you feel about the current DEOCS?
  - a. Are there any topics on the current DEOCS that are not particularly useful?
  - b. Are there any topics/items on the current DEOCS that you would not want to see changed at all?

*MODERATOR NOTE: Pass the blue sheets out to participants. Read each question out loud and give them enough time to write a response.*

6. **WORD CLOUD QUESTION: If I could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure \_\_\_\_\_.**
7. **WORD CLOUD QUESTION: The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Part 3: Administration (20 min)**

1. What is the smallest level or echelon that you need command climate data from?
2. How important is it to be able to aggregate command climate data? What levels would you want to aggregate?
3. **What are some of the biggest challenges you have experienced in the command climate administration/reporting process?**
4. What do you like about the DEOCS process that you would like to see maintained?
5. How often do you need updated data (monthly/quarterly/yearly/biennially)?
  - a. How often do commanders need updated data?

- b. What time of year is the best for surveys?
  - c. How quickly upon assuming command do commanders need to evaluate the command climate (what makes the most strategic sense regardless of the NDAA requirements)?
  - d. How important is the ability to administer a DEOCS whenever necessary (i.e., outside of the NDAA required times)?
6. What concerns do you have about climate data being confidential rather than anonymous (i.e., individuals would be identifiable to researchers, but not commanders)?
  7. What are barriers to complete command climate assessments?
    - a. What are some things that may help improve service members' ability and willingness to complete the survey (stand-down time, non-electronic options, tablet/cell phone capability, incentives)?
  8. What are your thoughts on collecting DEOCS information in conjunction with another survey (like the Workplace Gender Relations Survey or Status of the Forces Survey that we use to produce Total Force estimates)?
    - a. Do you think it will affect the way participants answer or the usability of the DEOCS?

**Part 4: Reporting (15 min)**

1. How do you like to be briefed on survey results?
2. What do you find the most helpful when receiving survey results?
3. What do you find the least helpful when receiving survey results?
4. How should a commander judge the climate of their unit (e.g., how should they know their climate is "good" or that it "needs improvement")?
  - a. Would commanders compare to other units (e.g., scores are in the top 90<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to other similar units in their Service) or rely on standard cut-offs (e.g., any unit with a score above 75% on this factor has a "good" climate).
  - b. Which approach would be most useful in helping you meet your mission goals?
5. What do you like about the current DEOCS report template?
  - a. What do you dislike about the current DEOCS report template?
6. **What other formats/data points/visualizations/comparisons/content would be useful?**
7. How easy is it for you to understand the data?
  - a. Do you know how to interpret the results?
8. How easy is it for commanders to understand the data?
  - a. Do they know how to interpret the results?
9. Are there other ways that you would like to analyze DEOCS data that you cannot currently?

**Part 5: Conclusion (5 min)**

This wraps up the prepared questions for today, but if you have anything you would like to add to today's discussion I open the floor to you.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in today's discussion. Your insights have provided valuable feedback.



# **Appendix F. Focus Groups: Command Climate Assessment Summit Handouts**

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**Command Climate Summit Group Discussion**

**Please answer the following items using only one word or short phrase.**

**a) If I could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure:**

**b) The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is:**

**Command Climate Summit Discussion Groups – Representative Note Sheet**

**a) The most important topics commanders need to know about:**

**b) The primary purposes of command climate assessments:**

**c) Biggest challenges in the command climate administration/reporting process:**

**d) Other formats, data points, visualizations, or content that would be useful:**



# **Appendix G. Focus Groups: Command Climate Assessment Summit Word Cloud Activity**

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MAKERS**





**Table G-1.**  
*July 2019 OPA Command Climate Summit Word Cloud Raw Responses, Question 1*

<b>Question 1: If I could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure:</b>
Confidence in commander
Role of climate in preventing sexual assault (what pos/neg things happen in unit that impacts sexual assault)
Measure of improvement from time to time
Leadership as it relates to belongingness of each unit member to the unit
Inclusion
Do I belong
Trust in leadership
Inclusivity
Destructive behaviors
Trust (in peers, in leadership, in service)
Safety and well-being of the SM's
Employee management
Relationship development (across levels) (trust building)
Do you feel safe in the work place
Inclusiveness
Psychological safety
Leadership effectiveness
Positivity
Trust
If Service members have all the necessary tools/support to conduct their jobs
Member perception of how they are treated
Leadership support/accountability
Leadership climate (at all levels) - not just CO's but those with supervisory responsibilities
Inclusion in the work place
Commitment!! Discussion - What do commanders say they need? Compliance commitment measures intent to comply. Figure out how to measure commitment.
Job satisfaction
Trust in leadership
Inclusion

<b>Question 1: If I could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure:</b>
Inclusion
Sexual harassment
Engagement or civility
Unit cohesion
Inclusion
Toxicity
Unit cohesion
Trust
Morale
Respect for individuals
Trust (at all levels)
Trust - in teammates in leadership
How comfortable people feel in their work environment (i.e. belonging, inclusion)
Trust - close second to connectedness
Inclusion
Culture
Qualitative rather than quantitative methods (for local pulses)
How the sailors view the commander's vision and mission
Morale and mental health
Inclusion
Leader effectiveness
My usefulness
Connectedness
(M) Suicide ideation
(T) Do I belong
(T) Trust
(T) Usefulness
Trust. Confidence in command.
Is this where I belong?
Human dignity
Hostile work environment
The "blubber layer" of my command. The leadership layer that is put in place to protect from the inside and protect from the outside.
Inclusion

**Question 1: If I could only measure one topic related to command climate, I would measure:**

Belongingness

Inclusion/belongingness

Validity (reliability of the data)

Acceptance

**Table G-2.**  
*July 2019 OPA Command Climate Summit Word Cloud Responses, Question 2*

<b>Question 2: The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is:</b>
Quantifiable/measurable impact of climate relationship to underserved population, retention, and removal of barriers
Accountability for improving climate
Bench marked information to determine how a unit compares relative to a higher tier
Better access to command climate data for analytic purposes (I am an analyst)
Diversity and inclusion
Effective measures of inclusion
Service evaluation system to measure commanding officer's leadership with respect to inclusion and diversity
Collaboration
A plus up in command climate specialist (CCS) manning in the Navy (More CCSs)
Transparency
In command: transparent communication with ISIC
Defined priorities by leadership
Leadership buy-in for EO
Vision, our way ahead
Intent of senior leader in the area of command climate
Evidence-based information
How to affect change
Truly knowing what my troops need
Ability to aggregate surveys
Outcome data, not just output
Access to easily analyze climate data e.g. flat file format
Do members believe they are valuable to the workplace
Why civilian hiring is so painfully slow and inefficient
Understanding of why the network is so slow and why this acceptable
Link to DEOCS (access to data)
Strong metrics with analysis across diverse independent organizations (54 states/territories)
Reliable aggregate trend analysis
Unit-level analysis
Database

<b>Question 2: The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is:</b>
Aggregate data
Relating command climate to the organizational internal or external branding i.e. Apple is a great place to work but the military is not
Resources (people and money)
Manpower/resources
Follow up "deep dive" assessments to better determine issues
What are the best practices that can be used to address command climate issues?
Resources (people and money)
Ability to attach DEOCS responses to personnel records at the individual level
I want to know metrics on pornography consumption and promiscuity within the Navy and Marine Corps. I think these behaviors have a profound impact on command climate, and they have a great potential to lead to sexual assault and harassment, but I don't have specific data regarding these behaviors, particularly in how they relate to command climates.
Approaches for reconciling discrepant data sources and establishing more valid, reliable data source for climate constructs
Resources/manpower
A consolidate policy
What is the true climate and how does it compare to the estimate derived from the climate assessment?
Natural language programming to read qualitative data
SSN or military ID linkage from DEOC to other data to permit analysis, access to DEOC for this purpose
[ILLEGIBLE]/training to effectively address concerns/time
Resources/training, fidelity, buy-in
Cohesiveness, community-functioning, fidelity
Practical solutions
(M) Share understanding/buy-in (T) Resources for C&R's (T) Explain content (T) Validity (C) Challenge of CCS (T) Follow through on issues (T) Participation (lack of trust, retribution, etc.)
Vulnerability - high-risk factors, excellence - low risk factors, buy-in, engagement
Engagement

<b>Question 2: The most important piece of information I need for my work that I don't currently have is:</b>
Multilevel climate (individual and group level), how group climate perceptions influence individual, variability/strength of climate
Transparency
Data that can be generalizable and connected to other administrative data or survey data (i.e., make it a confidential - not anonymous - survey)
Predictive assessment/causation for particular behaviors
Identification of syndemics; cooccurring problematic behaviors that worsen due to each other e.g., suicidal ideation and substance abuse e.g., sexual harassment and sexual assault
work-life balance (hours worked, lack of equipment, OpTempo)
Transparency



# Appendix H. Focus Groups: Service Member Protocol

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### CCAS Focus Group Guide: Service Members

#### Part 1: Introduction to the Focus Groups

Hello everyone. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. My colleague, \_\_\_\_\_, and I are here on behalf of the DoD Office of People Analytics, also known as OPA. While I will be leading today's discussion \_\_\_\_\_ will be taking notes, so that I can concentrate on what everyone is saying today.

Today we'll be talking about the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) – how you use it and what you need from it. Just so we are all on the same page, the DEOCS is a confidential, command-requested organizational development survey that focuses on issues of equal opportunity and organizational effectiveness. OPA is doing a complete re-design of the DEOCS to make sure that it is providing commanders with reliable and useful information. The insights you provide are an important piece of our efforts to improve the DEOCS.

I want to mention a couple of things before we get started.

- **This is intended to be a conversation among peers.** I was hired to run this focus group so you won't hurt my feelings or offend me with whatever you say. I don't have a personal stake in these results.
- **Your participation is completely voluntary,** meaning that you do not have to answer every question and you can withdraw from this discussion at any time. However, I do encourage your full participation today to ensure that I am getting a representative response.
- **There are no wrong answers.** You know a lot about the topics we plan to discuss, and I'm here to listen to you and get your perspective. Please speak up, especially if what you have to say is different than what someone else is saying. You may represent what a lot of other people think. OPA is interested in your candid thoughts and ideas so they can help improve command climate assessments for you and our service members.
- **We are not trying to come to consensus.** It's OK for there to be disagreement and in fact I welcome different points of view. Please share what is true for you. In the spirit of this, I ask that you remain respectful of each other's opinions during our discussion. Everyone in this room may see things differently and we want to hear everyone's perspective.
- **This is a non-attribution session.** Your name and personal information will not be used in any of our reports. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave.
- As I mentioned, my colleagues are here for notetaking purposes. **We will be recording comments but will not be recording names or other identifying information.** We are interested in what is being said, not who is saying what.
- **We will be audio-recording today's session.** The audio files will be transcribed and destroyed 90 days after transcription.

In the interest of time, we may need to move on from one topic to get to another area of interest.

Does anyone have any questions?

Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to go around the room and get to know each other a little bit better.

What is your name and command?

How often do you take the DEOCS?

**MODERATOR NOTE: Start Recording****Part 2: Making the DEOCS an Indispensable Tool for Commanders**

1. What do you think is the primary purpose of command climate assessments like the DEOCS? What do you think the purpose *should* be?
2. In order for your unit to do their job well and meet their mission, there are lot of things you need, like equipment and training, but the people also need to be ready and able to work well together. We are interested in those people-related aspects of your job, including aspects about you as a person (like how stressed or motivated you feel in your job) and your interactions with other people (like how well people in your unit get along or whether there are any problems like harassment or discrimination). What challenges or obstacles related to people do you encounter at work that hamper your ability to meet your mission?

Probe: Do you feel you and your unit are ready?

Probe: Are there people issues that prevent you or your unit from being able to perform better?

Probe: What types of people challenges take up a lot of your time or cause you a lot of stress?

- a. Who do you think has responsibility for fixing these issues (e.g., you, your immediate supervisor, their boss, etc.)?

Probe: Which of these issues are related to your leadership?

Probe: What level of your chain of command has the power to make things better?

Probe: What could be done to fix these issues?

3. When you think about issues that arise in the unit, what information do you want your commander to know?
  - a. What would you like them to know about your current command's climate that would help you achieve your goals?
  - b. What types of information would help them identify issues that impact your or the unit's progress in reaching your goals?

**MODERATOR NOTE: Keep conversation focused on command climate/people-related issues, rather than things like IT support, office supplies, etc.**

**MODERATOR NOTE: Ask them to be specific about who they are talking about when they talk about commanders, supervisors, leaders, etc.**

Activity: Sticky Note Brainstorming

I would like you all to think about what makes an effective or ineffective command climate in the military.

When you think about an effective or positive command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that come to mind? Please write them on the [color 1] sticky notes in front of you.

4. How do these traits affect command climate?
5. When you think about an ineffective or negative command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that spring to mind? Write these on the [color 2] sticky notes.
6. How do these negative traits contribute to an ineffective command climate?
7. Do you find that the current DEOCS survey measures the behaviors and traits we discussed well?

**Part 3: Leading Indicators of the Strategic Outcomes**

1. RETENTION
  - a. Why do you think retention is better in some units than others?
    - i. What do Commanders need to know to be able to impact retention?
  - b. What methods do you currently have to tell your commanders about retention issues?
2. READINESS
  - a. What makes readiness better in some units than others?
    - i. What do Commanders need to know about their personnel in order to impact readiness?
  - b. What methods do you currently have to tell your commanders about readiness issues?
3. PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS
  - a. Why do you think some units encounter problems with problematic or destructive behaviors, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment, and suicide?
    - i. What do Commanders need to know to "get to the left" of these problems and make sure they don't happen?
    - ii. Are there differences for sexual assault and harassment vs. racial/ethnic harassment vs. suicide?
  - b. What methods do you currently have to tell your commanders about risk or issues with problematic or destructive behaviors, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment, or suicide issues?

**Part 4: Making the DEOCS More Useful**

1. Do you or others you know think it is important to take the DEOCS?
  - a. What would motivate you to take the DEOCS?
  - b. What has prevented you from taking the DEOCS in the past? What do you think are some of the reasons why other people don't take it?
  - c. What is the best way to reach you with information or requests to take a survey?
  - d. What would hold you back from being open and honest on the DEOCS?
  - e. Have you ever felt pressured by your commander or others to take the DEOCS?
  - f. Have you ever felt pressured by your commander or others to respond in a certain way on the DEOCS?
2. Do you think the data your commander gets from the DEOCS are accurate and reliable?
  - a. What concerns do you have about accuracy or reliability?
3. How have DEOCS results been shared with you in the past, if at all?
  - a. What are some ways that DEOCS results could be shared better with service members?
4. What actions have you taken in response to a DEOCS?
5. What actions have you seen your commander take in response to a DEOCS?
  - a. Do your commanders conduct follow-up activities, like focus groups?
  - b. Were those actions successful at improving the climate in your unit?

- c. What are some barriers that might prevent your commander from responding to the DEOCS?
- 6. Should commanders' face disciplinary action if they have poor DEOCS results?
- 7. Would you respond differently to the DEOCS if you knew your commander would face a high level of accountability?
- 8. Who do you consider to be a part of your unit?
  - a. Do you consider people who may be temporarily assigned, Reserve members, civilians, etc. to be a part of your unit?

**Part 4: Conclusion**

This wraps up the prepared questions for today, but if you have anything you would like to add to today's discussion I open the floor to you.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in today's discussion. Your insights have provided valuable feedback.

# Appendix I.

## Focus Groups: Commander and EOA Protocol

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### CCAS Focus Group Guide: Commanders

#### Part 1: Introduction to the Discussion Groups

Hello everyone. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. My colleague, \_\_\_\_\_, and I are here on behalf of the DoD Office of People Analytics, also known as OPA. While I will be leading today's discussion \_\_\_\_\_ will be taking notes, so that I can concentrate on what everyone is saying today.

Today we'll be talking about the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) – how you use it and what you need from it. Just so we are all on the same page, the DEOCS is a confidential, command-requested organizational development survey that focuses on issues of equal opportunity and organizational effectiveness. OPA is doing a complete re-design of the DEOCS to make sure that it is providing commanders with reliable and useful information. The insights you provide are an important piece of our efforts to improve the DEOCS.

I want to mention a couple of things before we get started.

- **This is intended to be a conversation among peers.** I was hired to run this focus group so you won't hurt my feelings or offend me with whatever you say. I don't have a personal stake in these results.
- **Your participation is completely voluntary,** meaning that you do not have to answer every question and you can withdraw from this discussion at any time. However, I do encourage your full participation today to ensure that I am getting a representative response.
- **There are no wrong answers.** You know a lot about the topics we plan to discuss, and I'm here to listen to you and get your perspective. Please speak up, especially if what you have to say is different than what someone else is saying. You may represent what a lot of other people think. OPA is interested in your candid thoughts and ideas so they can help improve command climate assessments for you and our service members.
- **We are not trying to come to consensus.** It's OK for there to be disagreement and in fact I welcome different points of view. Please share what is true for you. In the spirit of this, I ask that you remain respectful of each other's opinions during our discussion. Everyone in this room may see things differently and we want to hear everyone's perspective.
- **This is a non-attribution session.** Your name and personal information will not be used in any of our reports. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave.
- As I mentioned, my colleagues are here for notetaking purposes. **We will be recording comments but will not be recording names or other identifying information.** We are interested in what is being said, not who is saying what.
- **We will be audio-recording today's session.** The audio files will be transcribed and destroyed 90 days after transcription.

In the interest of time, we may need to move on from one topic to get to another area of interest.

Does anyone have any questions?

Before we begin, I'd like to take a moment to go around the room and get to know each other a little bit better.

What is your name and command?

How often do you administer a DEOCS?

**MODERATOR NOTE: Start recording****Part 2: Making the DEOCS an Indispensable Tool for Commanders**

1. What do you think is the primary purpose of command climate assessments like the DEOCS? What do you think the purpose *should* be?
2. What do you want to know from a command climate report?

**Activity: Sticky Note Brainstorming**

I would like you all to think about what makes an effective or ineffective command climate in the military.

- a. When you think about an effective or positive command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that come to mind? Please write them on the [color 1] sticky notes in front of you.
3. How do these traits affect command climate?
  - a. When you think about an ineffective or negative command climate, what are some words, behaviors, and phrases that spring to mind? Write these on the [color 2] sticky notes.
4. How do these negative traits contribute to an ineffective command climate?
5. Do you find that the current DEOCS survey measures the behaviors and traits we discussed well?

**Part 3: Leading Indicators of the Strategic Outcomes**

1. RETENTION
  - a. What information do you currently have that helps you understand retention in your unit?
  - b. What measures and metrics do you use that can tell you that your retention is good?
    - i. How useful is that information? What other information do you need?
  - c. What are some reasons you think retention is better in some units than others?
    - i. What do Commanders need to know to be able to impact retention?
2. READINESS
  - a. What information do you currently have that helps you understand readiness in your unit?
  - b. What measures and metrics do you use that can tell you that your readiness is good?
    - i. How useful is that information? What other information do you need?
  - c. What makes readiness better in some units than others?
    - i. What do Commanders need to know about their personnel in order to impact readiness?
3. PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIORS
  - a. What information do you currently have that helps you understand your unit's rate or risk for problematic or destructive behaviors?
    - i. What about sexual assault?
    - ii. What about sexual harassment?
    - iii. What about racial/ethnic harassment?
    - iv. What about suicide?
  - b. What measures or metrics do you use that tell you about problem behaviors?

- c. How useful is that information? What other information do you need?
- d. What are some reasons you think some units encounter problems with sexual assault or harassment or suicide?
  - i. What do Commanders need to know to "get to the left" of these problems and make sure they don't happen?
  - ii. Are there differences for sexual assault and harassment vs. suicide?
- e. What information do you need to know to ensure that your unit is not at risk for problematic behaviors?

#### Part 4: Making the DEOCS More Useful

1. How do you encourage people to take the DEOCS survey?
2. What do you think are some of the reasons why some people don't take it?
3. What makes information from the DEOCS useful? What makes it actionable?
  - a. How do you currently use your DEOCS results?
 

Probe: What actions have you taken in response to a DEOCS? Were those actions successful at improving your climate?
  - b. Do you conduct follow-up activities like focus groups or records reviews?
 

Probe: Are you familiar with the Assessment to Solutions website and resources?
4. What are some barriers that are preventing the current DEOCS from being more useful for you?
  - a. What are some of the barriers to your unit members taking the DEOCS survey?
  - b. What are some of the barriers to unit members being honest and open on the DEOCS survey?
  - c. What are some of the barriers to DEOCS results being more actionable?
 

Probe: Do you feel you know what to do with the information?
5. Have you ever written your own locally developed questions?
  - a. What did you ask about?
6. How do you use the open-ended survey comments?
  - a. What types of information in these comments is most useful to you?
7. Who do you consider to be part of your unit?
  - a. Do you consider people who may be temporarily assigned, Reserve members, civilians, etc. to be a part of your unit?
8. How do you currently share DEOCS results?
 

Probe: Who do share the results with?

Probe: Do you conduct briefings? Do you share the results report?

#### Part 5: Conclusion

This wraps up the prepared questions for today, but if you have anything you would like to add to today's discussion I open the floor to you.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in today's discussion. Your insights have provided valuable feedback.



# Appendix J.

## Focus Groups: NVivo Codes

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Level I	Level II	Level III	
A. Rich Quotes			
B. Positive			
C. Negative			
D. Suggestions and Recommendations			
E. General Survey Comments	E1. Purpose and Goal		
	E2. Length		
	E3. Repetition		
	E4. Anonymity		
	E5. Barriers		
	E6. Data Falsification		
	E7. Question Format		E7a. Locally Developed Questions
			E7b. Open-Ended Questions
E8. Response Rates			
F. Survey Administration	F1. Initial Request		
	F2. Outreach and Messaging		
	F3. EO Advisor		
	F4. Survey Timing		
	F5. Other similar surveys		
G. Content	G1. Leadership		
	G2. Engagement		
	G3. Retention		
	G4. Readiness		
	G5. Problematic Behavior		G5a. Sexual Harassment
		G5b. Ethnic/Racial Harassment	
		G5c. Suicide	
		G5d. Sexual Assault	
H. Reporting	H1. Report Breakdown	H1a. Past Reports	
	H2. Analysis and Interpretation	H2a. Assessment to Solutions	
	H3. Sharing Results		
	H4. Actionability	H4a. Training	
	H5. Outcome	H5a. Disciplinary Action	
	H6. Impact		
I. Perception	I1. Usefulness		

Level I	Level II	Level III
	I2. Credibility	
	I3. Effective Measurement	
J. DoD Structure and Culture	J1. Army	
	J2. Navy	
	J3. Air Force	
	J4. Marines	
	J5. National Guard	
K. Sticky-Note Activity	K1. Positive Command Climate	K1a. Raw Command Climate
		K1b. Clean Command Climate
	K2. Negative Command Climate	K2a. Raw Command Climate
		K2b. Clean Command Climate



# Appendix K. DEOCS 4.1 Sample Report

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# **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

## **DEOMI Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Report**

**Organization: Sample DEOCS**

**Commander/Director: Commander**

**Admin Number: 180xxxx**

**August 01, 2018**

**Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute  
Climate Enhancement Department  
Patrick AFB, FL**

Management or disciplinary actions should not be taken based solely on the results of this report.

**RCS: DD-P&R (AR) 2338**

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**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Careful deliberation should be taken prior to making any management or disciplinary decisions based solely on the survey results.

The DEOCS report provides valuable information about members’ perceptions of the organization’s climate. It is important to review all sections in this report. Compare the information presented in *Section III, Overall Unit Summary, Section IV, Climate Factor Subgroup Comparison, Section V, DEOCS Summary of Survey Item Responses, along with Appendix, Written Comments from Your Organization*. Doing so can help create a more complete picture and help validate potential areas of concern.

DEOMI recommends organizations use multiple approaches, including individual interviews and/or focus groups, observations, and reviews of records and reports to more comprehensively characterize the command’s climate.

For example, the climate factor subgroup comparisons provided in *Section IV* can help identify subgroups with lower favorability ratings, and conducting focus groups and interviews with members of these subgroups can clarify their perceptions regarding a climate factor, and the reasons why these perceptions exist.

For information regarding climate factors, focus group/interview questions, and/or additional materials to assist with action planning, please visit “Assessment to Solutions” at:

<https://www.deocs.net>

## I. HOW TO INTERPRET YOUR DEOCS

1. Start by looking at the demographic breakout in *Section II, Demographic Breakout*. The table displays the number of respondents by their demographic features. Survey respondents can select different options when completing the demographic portion of the survey, so numbers may not match the total personnel assigned. Determine how closely participants in each demographic group represent the overall assigned population. Note: disparities in responses presented in the tables throughout the report are due to missing or erroneous responses.
2. Identify areas of concern and strength (both for your overall unit and subgroups) using the color-coded comparisons:
  - a. Unit: Examine *Section III, Overall Unit Summary* to compare your unit's favorability\* percentage to units of a similar organization function, and your parent Service branch on each DEOCS factor.
  - b. Subgroups: Examine *Section IV, Climate Factor Subgroup Comparisons* to compare perceptions among subgroups. No data are displayed in cases where fewer than five people in any subgroup complete the survey.
3. Examine the item-level results using the favorable/unfavorable response rates in *Section V, DEOCS Summary of Survey Item Responses*. This can help identify those items with high levels of unfavorable responses.
4. Examine the written comments associated with an area of concern to determine whether any of the comments reflect negative perceptions that may help explain the numerical findings. Comments can be easier to analyze if they are broken into themes.
5. Based on the degree of favorability of the item-level responses and written comments, determine if the apparent climate of your unit or any subgroup(s) warrants further action.
6. In such cases, use those findings to guide follow-on climate assessment actions (e.g., determine the demographic composition of focus groups and the topics to discuss with them; identify records and reports to analyze to validate perceptions, develop a plan of action to correct validated issues, etc.). For more strategies to create a healthier command climate, refer to *Section VI, Recommendations*.

\* Note: There are seven response options for each item that range from unfavorable to favorable. Because the scale has a 7-point range, three of the response options are categorized as unfavorable (e.g., strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree), one response option is considered neutral (neither agree nor disagree), and three response options are categorized as favorable (e.g., slightly agree, agree, strongly agree). Negative worded items noted with an asterisk (\*) have their scales reversed. Therefore, a favorability percentage would be interpreted as the average of your favorable response options summed.

HOW TO INTERPRET DEOCS COLOR CODING

Color Coding	Category	Criteria	General Interpretation
Green	Excellent	90% and above favorable responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost complete unit endorsement of scale</li> <li>• Area of excellence and maintenance/stability actions recommended</li> </ul>
Blue	Adequate	Between 70% and 89% favorable responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of unit endorsed scale and reached recommended endorsement threshold (70%)</li> <li>• Area not of concern but room for improvement</li> </ul>
Yellow	Caution	Between 50% and 69% favorable responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of unit endorsed scale but did not reach recommended endorsement threshold (70%)</li> <li>• Area flagged for concern. Actions should be considered to boost endorsement</li> </ul>
Red	Improvement Needed	Below 50% favorable responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of unit did NOT endorse scale</li> <li>• Area of great concern and corrective actions should be taken ASAP</li> </ul>

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## II. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKOUT

Table 1: Demographic Representation

REPRESENTATION		
	Number	Percent
Majority	103	51.5%
Minority	57	28.5%
Declined to Respond	40	20.0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0.5%
Asian	13	6.5%
Black	13	6.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.5%
White	120	60.0%
Selected Multiple Races	6	3.0%
Declined to Respond	46	23.0%
Hispanic	28	14.0%
Not Hispanic	137	68.5%
Declined to Respond	35	17.5%
Women	34	17.0%
Men	166	83.0%
Junior Enlisted (E1 - E6)	22	11.0%
Senior Enlisted (E7 - E9)	66	33.0%
Warrant Officer (WO1 - CW5)	2	1.0%
Junior Officer (O1 - O3)	9	4.5%
Senior Officer (O4 - Above)	53	26.5%
Junior Federal Civilian (Grades 1 - 12)	21	10.5%
Senior Federal Civilian (Grades 13 - SES)	27	13.5%
Non-Appropriated Funds (NAF)	0	0.0%
Wage Grade (WG/WS/WL)	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Supervisor (civilian only)	15	31.2%
Non-Supervisor (civilian only)	33	68.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	

For the majority/minority subgroup categories, the majority category includes all respondents who listed their race as "White," and their ethnicity as "not Hispanic." All respondents who select any other race and/or Hispanic are included in the minority subgroup; the "Declined to Respond" designation includes those respondents whose responses to the race and ethnicity items render it impossible to classify them as majority or minority.

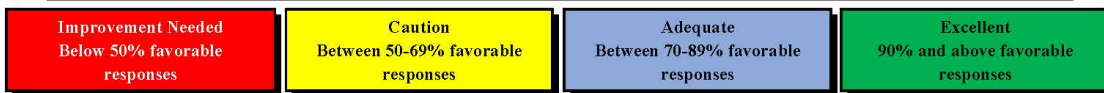
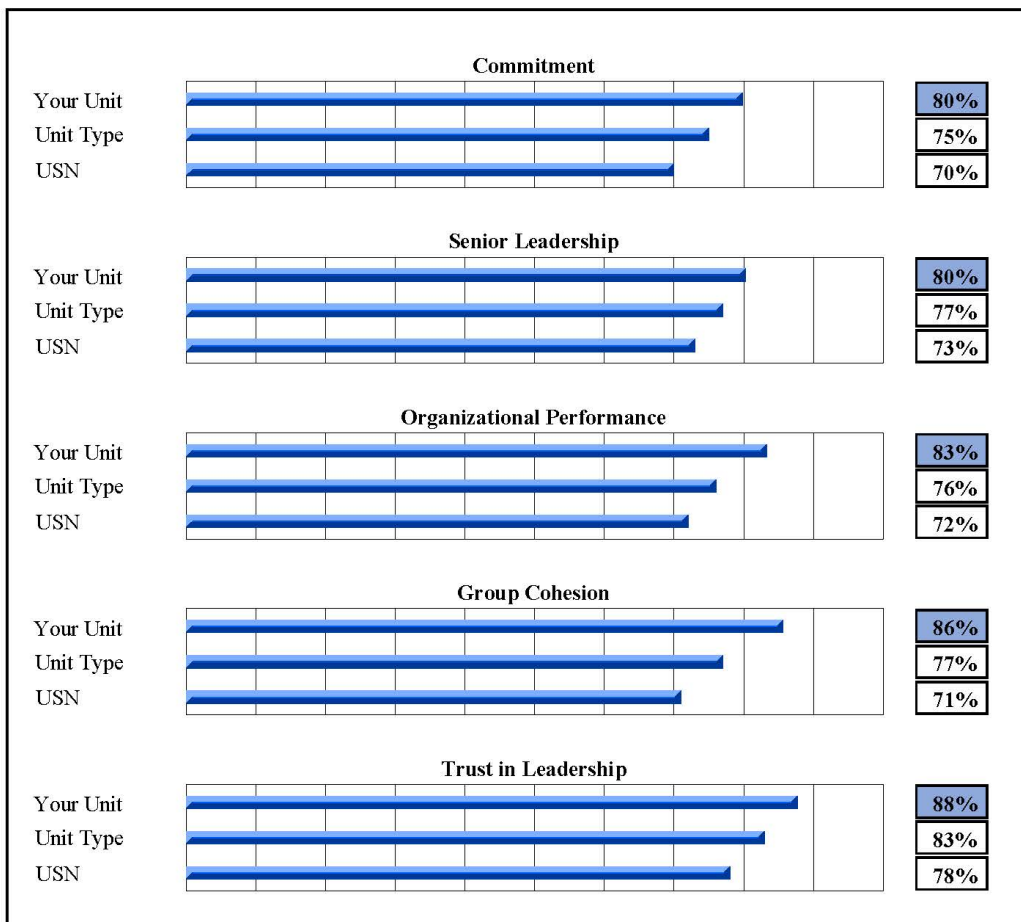
All Warrant Officers (WO1 - CW5) will be combined with Junior Officers in *Section IV, Climate Factor Subgroup Comparison*. Additionally, all Wage Grade and Non-Appropriated Fund civilians will not be in the Junior/Senior Civilian breakout within *Section IV, Climate Factor Subgroup Comparison*.

### III. OVERALL UNIT SUMMARY

The figure below compares your organization's favorability ratings for each climate factor against units in your Service with similar functions (Unit Types), and to your parent Service. Unit Type and Service favorability ratings are updated on a bi-annual basis, during the first half or second half of the fiscal year. The block to the right of each figure displays your organization's favorability rating and will be color-coded green, blue, yellow, or red. Please refer to How to Interpret DEOCS Color Coding on page 4 for more information regarding the DEOCS color-coding convention. To understand how the Service and Unit Type favorability ratings were calculated and considerations for assessing the generalizability these results, contact the DEOCS Support Team. Some Unit Type favorability ratings are unavailable as an insufficient number of that Unit Type completed the DEOCS, thus a representative sample was not obtained.

Figure 2: Unit Summaries

Unit Type = HQ Staff/Element



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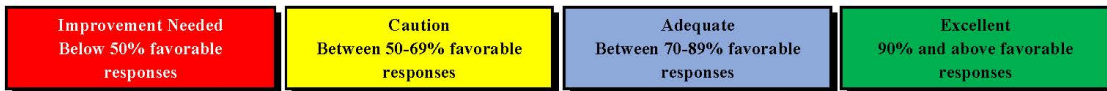
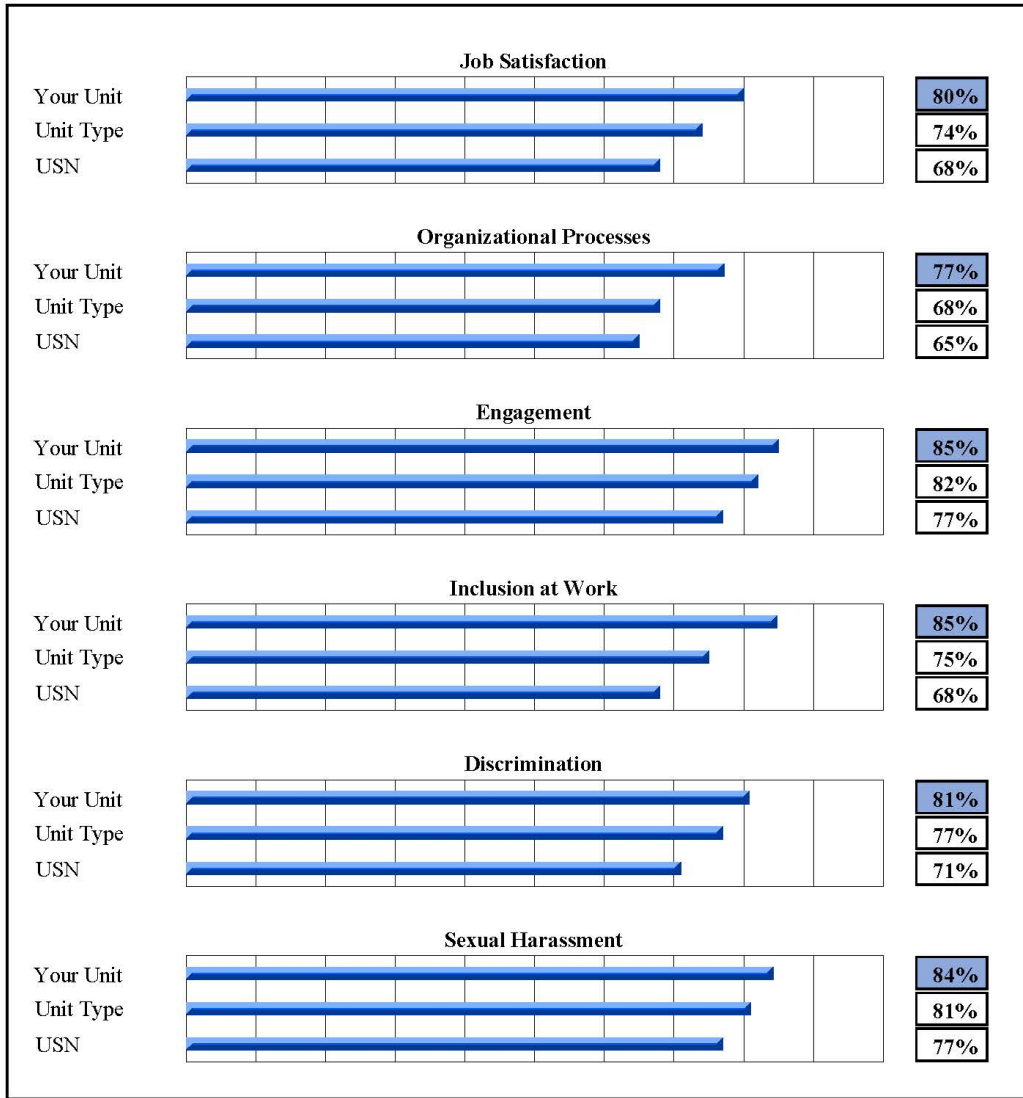
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Figure 2 (cont): Unit Summaries

Unit Type = HQ Staff/Element



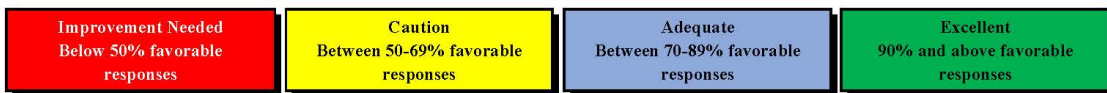
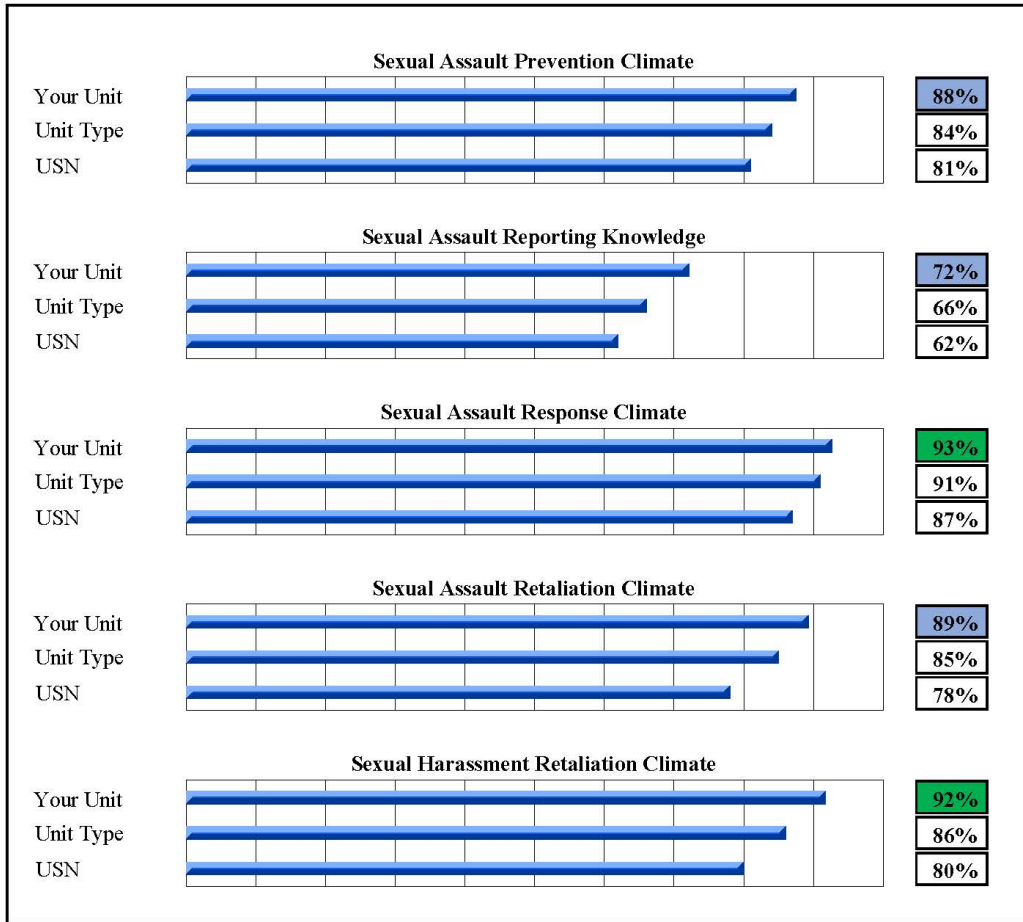
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Figure 2 (cont): Unit Summaries

Unit Type = HQ Staff/Element



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### IV. CLIMATE FACTOR SUBGROUP COMPARISONS

#### Organizational Effectiveness Factors

The following figure displays the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Factor favorability ratings by demographic subgroup. No data are displayed in cases where fewer than five people in a subgroup completed the survey; this helps maintain respondent anonymity. Refer to Section V, DEOCS Summary of Survey Item Responses to view the respective item level response frequencies for each factor.

Figure 3: OE Subgroup Comparison

		<b>Organizational Effectiveness</b>							
		Commit	Senior Leader	Org Perform	Group Cohesion	Trust in Leader	Job Satisfact	Org Process	Engage
Minority		78%	85%	87%	86%	83%	85%	80%	88%
Majority		81%	80%	84%	87%	89%	79%	78%	83%
Women		86%	84%	95%	89%	82%	75%	77%	83%
Men		79%	80%	81%	85%	89%	81%	77%	85%
Enlisted		79%	79%	79%	84%	84%	78%	77%	82%
Officer		83%	89%	88%	92%	92%	79%	81%	86%
Junior Enlisted		83%	75%	82%	85%	74%	73%	74%	80%
Senior Enlisted		77%	80%	78%	84%	88%	80%	78%	82%
Junior Officer		70%	98%	100%	97%	84%	73%	76%	88%
Senior Officer		86%	88%	86%	91%	93%	81%	82%	86%
Military		80%	83%	83%	87%	88%	79%	79%	84%
Civilian		78%	71%	85%	81%	89%	85%	72%	89%
Junior Civilian		65%	68%	83%	68%	88%	87%	62%	89%
Senior Civilian		88%	73%	88%	90%	89%	83%	80%	89%
Non-Supervisor		71%	70%	83%	74%	85%	84%	70%	89%
Supervisor		93%	73%	91%	96%	97%	87%	78%	89%
Your Unit		80%	80%	83%	86%	88%	80%	77%	85%

<b>Improvement Needed</b> Below 50% favorable responses	<b>Caution</b> Between 50-69% favorable responses	<b>Adequate</b> Between 70-89% favorable responses	<b>Excellent</b> 90% and above favorable responses
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**Equal Opportunity / Equal Employment Opportunity / Fair Treatment  
& Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Climate Factors**

The following figure displays the EO / EEO / Fair Treatment & SAPR Climate Factor favorability ratings by demographic subgroup. No data are displayed in cases where fewer than five people in a subgroup completed the survey; this helps maintain respondent anonymity. Refer to *Section V, DEOCS Summary of Survey Item Responses* to view the respective item level response frequencies for each factor. SH and SA refer to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault respectively.

Figure 4: EO/EEO/Fair Treatment & SAPR Subgroup Comparisons

	EO/EEO/Fair Treatment				SAPR			
	Inclusion	Discrim	SH	SH Retaliation	SA Prevent	SA Report Knowledge	SA Response	SA Retaliation
Minority	82%	75%	83%	93%	89%	73%	95%	90%
Majority	88%	83%	84%	92%	86%	75%	92%	90%
Women	85%	83%	86%	96%	86%	83%	91%	93%
Men	85%	80%	84%	91%	88%	70%	93%	88%
Enlisted	82%	77%	81%	91%	86%	74%	89%	88%
Officer	90%	88%	90%	95%	94%	77%	98%	93%
Junior Enlisted	71%	70%	75%	90%	82%	70%	86%	89%
Senior Enlisted	85%	79%	83%	92%	88%	76%	90%	88%
Junior Officer	89%	92%	84%	100%	91%	82%	98%	94%
Senior Officer	91%	87%	91%	94%	95%	75%	97%	93%
Military	85%	81%	85%	93%	90%	75%	93%	91%
Civilian	83%	80%	83%	89%	81%	60%	93%	85%
Junior Civilian	76%	75%	79%	82%	72%	62%	88%	75%
Senior Civilian	88%	83%	87%	94%	88%	59%	96%	93%
Non-Supervisor	80%	77%	80%	88%	78%	62%	92%	83%
Supervisor	90%	84%	90%	90%	87%	56%	95%	89%
Your Unit	85%	81%	84%	92%	88%	72%	93%	89%

<b>Improvement Needed</b> Below 50% favorable responses	<b>Caution</b> Between 50-69% favorable responses	<b>Adequate</b> Between 70-89% favorable responses	<b>Excellent</b> 90% and above favorable responses
--	--	---	---

### V. DEOCS SUMMARY OF SURVEY ITEM RESPONSES

The following tables and figures provide the item-level response frequencies across all the DEOCS factors. The total percentage of responses and color coding for each factor mirror those found for that factor in *Section III: Overall Unit Summary*. Factor results for Bystander Intervention, Sexual Assault Reporting Knowledge, Unwanted Workplace Experiences, Connectedness, Hazing, and Bullying are presented at the end of the following tables due to different response scales. Only favorable response totals are presented in the color shaded area.

**Table 2.1 Commitment**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel like "part of the family" in this workgroup.	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	7 (4%)	22 (11%)	17 (9%)	82 (41%)	63 (32%)
This workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	7 (4%)	27 (14%)	25 (13%)	81 (41%)	51 (26%)
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this workgroup.	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	8 (4%)	22 (11%)	19 (10%)	89 (45%)	52 (26%)
<b>Total</b>	2%	3%	4%	12%	<b>10%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>28%</b>
		<b>8%</b>				<b>80%</b>	

**Table 2.2 Senior Leadership**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My senior leader puts processes in place to facilitate the sharing of information throughout the organization.	5 (3%)	4 (2%)	14 (7%)	17 (9%)	23 (12%)	84 (42%)	52 (26%)
My senior leader clarifies our organization's goals and priorities.	5 (3%)	2 (1%)	8 (4%)	17 (9%)	22 (11%)	90 (45%)	55 (28%)
My senior leader communicates a clear vision for the future.	5 (3%)	4 (2%)	12 (6%)	20 (10%)	24 (12%)	84 (42%)	50 (25%)
My senior leader listens to the concerns of the organization's military members and employees.	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	7 (4%)	26 (13%)	16 (8%)	83 (42%)	59 (30%)
<b>Total</b>	2%	2%	5%	10%	<b>11%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>27%</b>
		<b>9%</b>				<b>80%</b>	

**Table 2.3 Organizational Performance**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
When short suspense/tasks arise, people in my organization do an outstanding job in handling these situations.	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	2 (1%)	14 (7%)	21 (11%)	96 (48%)	58 (29%)
My organization's performance, compared to similar organizations, is high.	2 (1%)	7 (4%)	3 (2%)	23 (12%)	14 (7%)	99 (50%)	51 (26%)
My organization makes good use of available resources to accomplish its mission.	4 (2%)	7 (4%)	11 (6%)	16 (8%)	29 (15%)	87 (44%)	45 (23%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>26%</b>
		<b>7%</b>				<b>83%</b>	

**Table 2.4 Group Cohesion**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My workgroup is united in trying to reach its goals for performance.	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	12 (6%)	16 (8%)	95 (48%)	67 (34%)
We all take responsibility for the performance of the workgroup.	3 (2%)	7 (4%)	4 (2%)	17 (9%)	19 (10%)	92 (46%)	57 (29%)
If members of our workgroup have problems in the workplace, everyone wants to help them so we can get back on task.	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	4 (2%)	22 (11%)	23 (12%)	87 (44%)	58 (29%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>30%</b>
		<b>5%</b>				<b>86%</b>	

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**Table 2.5 Trust in Leadership**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can rely on my immediate supervisor to act in my organization's best interest.	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	12 (6%)	13 (7%)	85 (43%)	79 (40%)
My immediate supervisor follows through with commitments he or she makes.	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	14 (7%)	14 (7%)	91 (46%)	74 (37%)
I feel comfortable sharing my work difficulties with my immediate supervisor.	5 (3%)	7 (4%)	5 (3%)	16 (8%)	25 (13%)	77 (39%)	64 (32%)
My immediate supervisor treats me fairly.	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	73 (37%)	97 (49%)
<b>Total</b>	2%	2%	2%	7%	<b>8%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>39%</b>
		<b>5%</b>				<b>88%</b>	

**Table 2.6 Job Satisfaction**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like my current job.	2 (1%)	10 (5%)	8 (4%)	14 (7%)	19 (10%)	79 (40%)	67 (34%)
I feel satisfied with my current job.	3 (2%)	10 (5%)	13 (7%)	15 (8%)	19 (10%)	82 (41%)	57 (29%)
I am happy with my current job.	3 (2%)	10 (5%)	13 (7%)	16 (8%)	19 (10%)	75 (38%)	63 (32%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	5%	6%	8%	<b>10%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>31%</b>
		<b>12%</b>				<b>80%</b>	

**Table 2.7 Organizational Processes**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Programs are in place to address military members' and employees' concerns.	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	7 (4%)	19 (10%)	22 (11%)	102 (51%)	44 (22%)
Discipline is administered fairly.	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	55 (28%)	13 (7%)	80 (40%)	44 (22%)
Decisions are made after reviewing relevant information.	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	24 (12%)	11 (6%)	103 (52%)	44 (22%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	2%	3%	16%	<b>8%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>22%</b>
		<b>6%</b>				<b>77%</b>	

Table 2.8 Engagement

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
At my workplace, I am mentally resilient.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	16 (8%)	14 (7%)	105 (53%)	59 (30%)
I am enthusiastic about my work.	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	8 (4%)	12 (6%)	27 (14%)	88 (44%)	56 (28%)
Time flies when I am working.	1 (1%)	8 (4%)	8 (4%)	21 (11%)	24 (12%)	79 (40%)	58 (29%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	2%	4%	8%	<b>11%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>29%</b>
		<b>6%</b>				<b>85%</b>	



Table 2.9 Inclusion at Work

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Coworkers are treated as valued members of the team without losing their unique identities.	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	4 (2%)	11 (6%)	7 (4%)	109 (55%)	65 (33%)
Within my workgroup, I am encouraged to offer ideas on how to improve operations.	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	17 (9%)	18 (9%)	83 (42%)	73 (37%)
Military members/employees in my workgroup are empowered to make work-related decisions on their own.	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	2 (1%)	16 (8%)	24 (12%)	84 (42%)	65 (33%)
Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, and recognition) are fairly distributed among military members/employees of my workgroup.	1 (1%)	6 (3%)	5 (3%)	39 (20%)	13 (7%)	88 (44%)	48 (24%)
The decision-making processes that impact my workgroup are fair.	1 (1%)	9 (5%)	3 (2%)	16 (8%)	13 (7%)	99 (50%)	59 (30%)
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I feel excluded by my workgroup because I am different.*	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	8 (4%)	18 (9%)	3 (2%)	69 (35%)	98 (49%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	3%	2%	10%	7%	44%	34%
		5%				85%	

\* Note. The item marked with the asterisk (\*) indicates the question is negatively worded; therefore agreement with this item indicates an unfavorable response

Table 2.10 Discrimination

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Discrimination Items</b>							
<b>Discrimination based on _____ does not occur in my workplace.</b>							
<b>Race/Color/National Origin</b>	10 (5%)	7 (4%)	3 (2%)	11 (6%)	1 (1%)	56 (28%)	112 (56%)
<b>Religion</b>	12 (6%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	12 (6%)	4 (2%)	57 (29%)	110 (55%)
<b>Sex</b>	12 (6%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	13 (7%)	4 (2%)	57 (29%)	104 (52%)
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	12 (6%)	6 (3%)	0 (0%)	14 (7%)	6 (3%)	59 (30%)	103 (52%)
<b>Age (Civilian Only)</b>	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	14 (29%)	24 (50%)
<b>Disability (Civilian Only)</b>	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	14 (29%)	25 (52%)
<b>Equal Pay (Civilian Only)</b>	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	6 (13%)	1 (2%)	12 (25%)	23 (48%)
<b>Genetic Information (Civilian Only)</b>	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	7 (15%)	0 (0%)	13 (27%)	23 (48%)
<b>Pregnancy (Civilian Only)</b>	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	9 (19%)	1 (2%)	10 (21%)	23 (48%)
<b>Discrimination Behavioral Subfactor</b>							
<b>I believe I can use my chain of command/supervision to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation/reprisal.</b>	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	4 (2%)	14 (7%)	7 (4%)	67 (34%)	99 (50%)
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
<b>Racial slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.*</b>	22 (11%)	12 (6%)	5 (3%)	13 (7%)	6 (3%)	64 (32%)	78 (39%)
<b>Sexist slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.*</b>	21 (11%)	11 (6%)	7 (4%)	13 (7%)	12 (6%)	63 (32%)	73 (37%)
<b>Total</b>	7%	4%	1%	7%	3%	30%	49%
					<b>12%</b>		
					<b>81%</b>		

\* Note. The items marked with the asterisk (\*) indicates the question is negatively worded; therefore agreement with this item indicates an unfavorable response.

Table 2.11 Discrimination Summary

Discrimination based on _____ does not occur in my workplace.	Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable
<b>Race/Color/National Origin</b>	20 (10%)	11 (6%)	169 (85%)
<b>Religion</b>	17 (9%)	12 (6%)	171 (86%)
<b>Sex</b>	22 (11%)	13 (7%)	165 (83%)
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	18 (9%)	14 (7%)	168 (84%)
<b>Age (Civilian Only)</b>	6 (13%)	4 (8%)	38 (79%)
<b>Disability (Civilian Only)</b>	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	39 (81%)
<b>Equal Pay (Civilian Only)</b>	6 (13%)	6 (13%)	36 (75%)
<b>Genetic Information (Civilian Only)</b>	5 (10%)	7 (15%)	36 (75%)
<b>Pregnancy (Civilian Only)</b>	5 (10%)	9 (19%)	34 (71%)

Table 2.12 Sexual Harassment

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My chain of command/supervision adequately responds to allegations of sexual harassment.	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	51 (26%)	2 (1%)	64 (32%)	80 (40%)
My chain of command/supervision plays an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment.	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	26 (13%)	9 (5%)	79 (40%)	83 (42%)
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Individuals from my workplace use offensive gestures that are sexual in nature.*	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	2 (1%)	14 (7%)	1 (1%)	73 (37%)	102 (51%)
Individuals from my workplace have been offered rewards or special treatment in return for engaging in sexual behavior.*	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (8%)	0 (0%)	48 (24%)	133 (67%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	1%	1%	13%	2%	33%	50%
		3%				84%	

\* Note. The items marked with the asterisk (\*) indicates the question is negatively worded; therefore agreement with this item indicates an unfavorable response

Table 2.13 Sexual Assault Prevention Climate

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My immediate supervisor models respectful behavior.	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	5 (3%)	70 (35%)	110 (55%)
My immediate supervisor promotes responsible alcohol use.	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	24 (12%)	5 (3%)	82 (41%)	84 (42%)
My immediate supervisor would correct individuals who refer to coworkers as 'honey', 'babe', 'sweetie', or use other unprofessional language at work.	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	21 (11%)	7 (4%)	71 (36%)	93 (47%)
My immediate supervisor would stop individuals who are talking about sexual topics at work.	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	18 (9%)	6 (3%)	77 (39%)	94 (47%)
My immediate supervisor would intervene if an individual was receiving sexual attention at work.	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	13 (7%)	6 (3%)	76 (38%)	102 (51%)
My immediate supervisor encourages individuals to help others in risky situations that could result in harmful outcomes.	7 (4%)	11 (6%)	0 (0%)	19 (10%)	6 (3%)	71 (36%)	85 (43%)
<b>Total</b>	1%	2%	1%	8%	3%	37%	47%
		4%				88%	

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**Table 2.14 Sexual Assault Response Climate**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
If a coworker were to report a sexual assault, my chain of command/supervision would take the report seriously.	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	6 (3%)	3 (2%)	69 (35%)	117 (59%)
If a coworker were to report a sexual assault, my chain of command/supervision would keep the knowledge of the report limited to those with a need to know.	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	8 (4%)	7 (4%)	72 (36%)	108 (54%)
If a coworker were to report a sexual assault, my chain of command/supervision would discourage military members or employees from spreading rumors and speculation about the allegation.	6 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	8 (4%)	5 (3%)	72 (36%)	107 (54%)
If a coworker were to report a sexual assault, my chain of command/supervision would promote healthcare, legal, or other support services to the reporter.	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	9 (5%)	4 (2%)	65 (33%)	116 (58%)
If a coworker were to report a sexual assault, my chain of command/supervision would support the reporter for speaking up.	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (7%)	6 (3%)	65 (33%)	110 (55%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>56%</b>
		<b>2%</b>				<b>93%</b>	

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The items for both the Sexual Assault Retaliation and Sexual Harassment Retaliation factors are negatively worded; therefore agreement with these items indicates an unfavorable response. Because all of the questions on this scale are negatively worded, the total disagreement responses to the items are color coded. Following the color-coding convention as in the rest of this report, this color coding reflects the percentage of favorability on the questions/scales.

**Table 2.15 Sexual Assault Retaliation Climate**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be excluded from social interactions or conversations.	95 (48%)	68 (34%)	2 (1%)	19 (10%)	2 (1%)	6 (3%)	7 (4%)
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be subjected to insulting or disrespectful remarks or jokes.	108 (54%)	72 (36%)	4 (2%)	12 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be blamed for causing problems.	109 (55%)	69 (35%)	5 (3%)	14 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be denied career opportunities.	112 (56%)	65 (33%)	2 (1%)	17 (9%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be disciplined or given other corrective action.	111 (56%)	63 (32%)	3 (2%)	14 (7%)	1 (1%)	4 (2%)	3 (2%)
In my work group, reporters of sexual assault would be discouraged from moving forward with the report.	114 (57%)	67 (34%)	2 (1%)	12 (6%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
		<b>89%</b>				<b>3%</b>	

Table 2.16 Sexual Harassment Retaliation Climate

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be excluded from social interactions or conversations.	105 (53%)	73 (37%)	3 (2%)	11 (6%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be subjected to insulting or disrespectful remarks or jokes.	110 (55%)	75 (38%)	2 (1%)	10 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be blamed for causing problems.	110 (55%)	69 (35%)	3 (2%)	14 (7%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be denied career opportunities.	111 (56%)	70 (35%)	2 (1%)	13 (7%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be disciplined or given other corrective action.	114 (57%)	68 (34%)	1 (1%)	13 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
In my work group, military members or employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be discouraged from moving forward with the complaint.	112 (56%)	71 (36%)	2 (1%)	11 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
		<b>92%</b>				<b>2%</b>	

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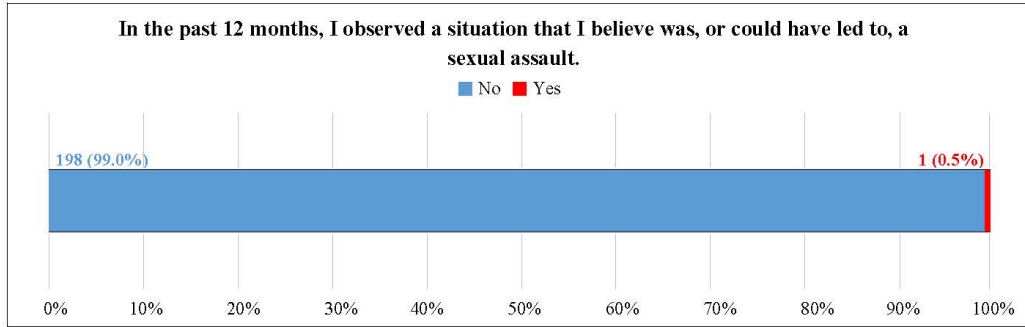
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### Bystander Intervention Experience in Past 12 Months

Respondents were asked if they have observed a situation they believed was, or could have led to a sexual assault within the past 12 months. Respondents’ responses to this *observation* question are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Respondents who Observed a High Risk Situation



If respondents answered “yes” to the observation of a high risk situation question, they were prompted to identify the response that most closely resembled their actions. Table 3 displays the responses of those who completed the question across your organization.

Table 3. Respondents’ Reported Actions Taken Following High Risk Situation

If yes, in response to this situation, select the one response that most closely resembles your actions.		
	Number	Percent
I stepped in and separated the people involved in the situation.	0	0.0%
I asked the person who appeared to be at risk if they needed help.	0	0.0%
I confronted the person who appeared to be causing the situation.	1	100.0%
I created a distraction to cause one or more of the people to disengage from the situation.	0	0.0%
I asked others to step in as a group and diffuse the situation.	0	0.0%
I told someone in a position of authority about the situation.	0	0.0%
I considered intervening in the situation, but I could not safely take any action.	0	0.0%
I decided to not take action.	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Sexual Assault Reporting Knowledge

Knowledge of the sexual assault reporting options is assessed using two questions. The first item reads, “All of the following types of people can receive an Unrestricted Report of sexual assault. However, a Restricted (confidential) Report can only be made to certain people. Please identify which of the following types of people can and cannot take a Restricted Report.” The Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Victim Advocate, and Military Service Healthcare Personnel can take a Restricted Report. “Anyone in my chain of command” and “Criminal investigator and military police officer” are incorrect answers. These persons cannot take a Restricted Report. Figure 6 displays the percentage of members within your organization who correctly and incorrectly identified who can and cannot take a Restricted Report.

The second item reads, “Service members who report they were sexually assaulted are eligible for the service of a military attorney.” The correct answer is “True”. Figure 7 displays the percentage of members in your organization who correctly identified who is eligible for the service of a military attorney.

Figure 6. Respondents’ Restricted Reporting Knowledge.

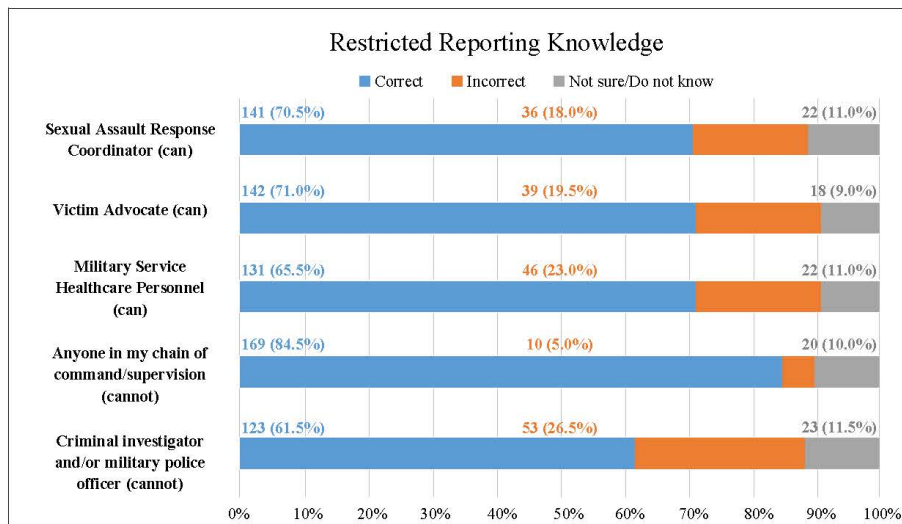
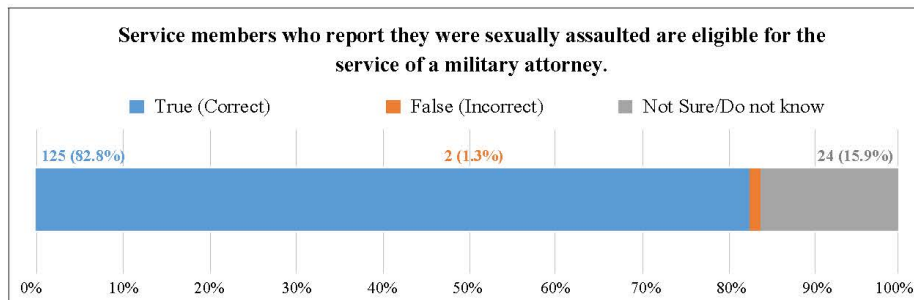


Figure 7. Respondents’ Knowledge of Military Attorney Eligibility.





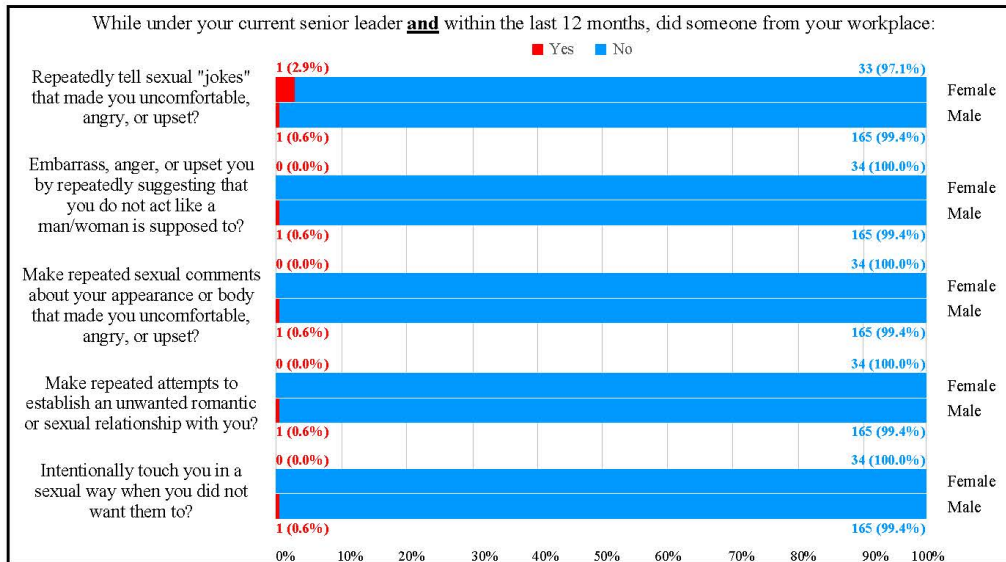
### Unwanted Workplace Experiences

Below is the presentation of Yes/No response frequencies to the Unwanted Workplace Experience items. No data are displayed in cases where fewer than five people in a subgroup complete the survey.

**Table 4. Respondents' Overall Unwanted Workplace Experience Responses**

While under your current senior leader <b>and</b> within the last 12 months, did someone from your workplace: (Overall)				
	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
Repeatedly tell sexual "jokes" that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	2	1.0%	198	99.0%
Embarrass, anger, or upset you by repeatedly suggesting that you do not act like a man/woman is supposed to?	1	0.5%	199	99.5%
Make repeated sexual comments about your appearance or body that made you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	1	0.5%	199	99.5%
Make repeated attempts to establish an unwanted romantic or sexual relationship with you?	1	0.5%	199	99.5%
Intentionally touch you in a sexual way when you did not want them to?	1	0.5%	199	99.5%

**Figure 8. Respondents' Overall Unwanted Workplace Experience Responses by Sex**



### Connectedness

Connectedness is defined as a frame of mind that reflects an individual's outlook on life and perceptions of belongingness, well-being, and social support. Reflects a member's viewpoint that they are relevant, contributing, and have relationships upon which they can confidently depend on in times of need. Burdensomeness and Belongingness are two subfactors that when combined, create an overall Connectedness factor.

Figure 9. Percentage of Respondents' Overall Connectedness

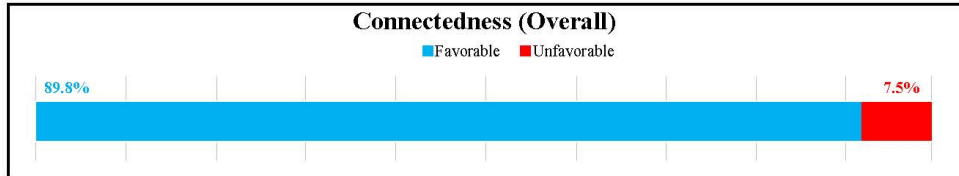


Table 5. Respondents' Connectedness Responses

Burdensomeness							
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My future seems dark to me.	1 (1%)	5 (3%)	9 (5%)	21 (11%)	3 (2%)	67 (34%)	93 (47%)
	Very true for me	True for me	Somewhat true for me		Somewhat untrue for me	Untrue for me	Not at all true for me
These days, I think I am a burden on people in my life.	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	7 (4%)	-	10 (5%)	41 (21%)	139 (70%)
Belongingness							
	Not at all true for me	Untrue for me	Somewhat untrue for me		Somewhat true for me	True for me	Very true for me
These days, I feel like I belong.	6 (3%)	6 (3%)	12 (6%)	-	22 (11%)	87 (44%)	66 (33%)
These days, I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	6 (3%)	-	29 (15%)	80 (40%)	78 (39%)
<b>Total*</b>	1%	2%	4%	-	8%	35%	47%
		8%				90%	

\* Note. The total may not equal 100% due to the changing from a seven point scale to six point scale. The loss of a response option accounts for the difference in percentage for the factor overall.

Table 6. Respondents' Knowledge of ideation of, attempted or death by suicide

I know someone in my organization who has thought of, attempted, or died by suicide.		
	Number	Percent
Thought of	12	6.0%
Attempted	4	2.0%
Died by Suicide	16	8.0%
Thought of, Attempted	0	0.0%
Attempted, Died by Suicide	1	0.5%
Thought of, Died by Suicide	1	0.5%
Thought of, Attempted, Died by Suicide	3	1.5%
None of the above	162	81.4%

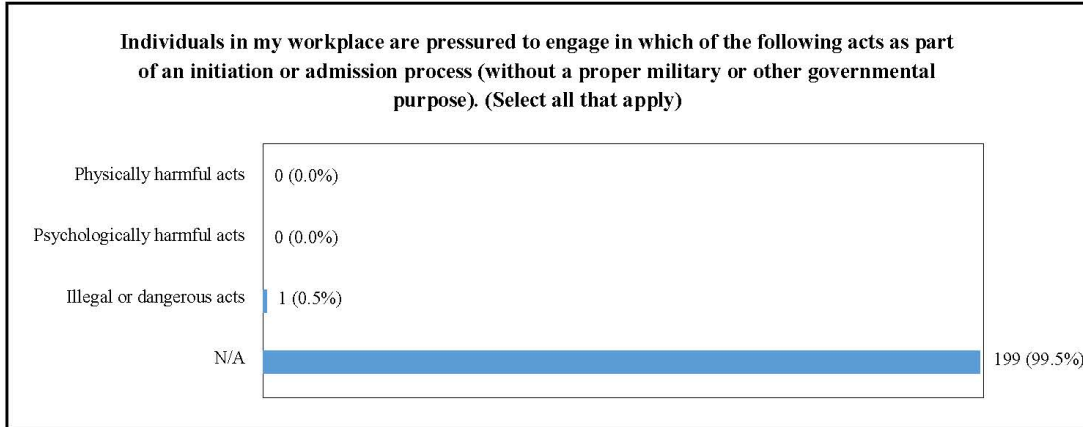
Note. Results presented below the line are the possible combinations of the items above, as it was a “select all that apply.”

The definitions of Hazing and Bullying were obtained directly from the Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Hazing and Bullying Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces," dated 23 December 2015.

### Hazing

The figure below displays response frequencies to the Hazing item. Please note that respondents' option to select more than one type of Hazing behavior accounts for disparities that may appear in the totals shown below.

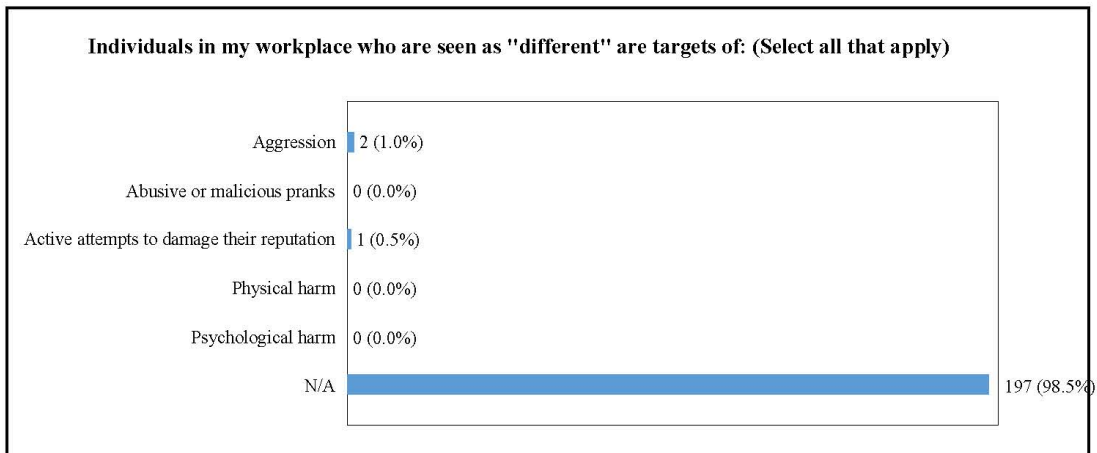
Figure 11. Respondents' Responses to Hazing



### Bullying

The figure below displays response frequencies to the Bullying item. Please note that respondents' option to select more than one type of Bullying behavior accounts for disparities that may appear in the totals shown below.

Figure 12. Respondents' Responses to Bullying



## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides interpretation of the DEOCS report and recommended follow-on actions. Based on the data obtained, your organization's DEOCS results may display both organizational strengths and concerns. It is important to not only review *Section V, DEOCS Summary of Survey Item Responses*, but to contrast that information with *Section IV, Climate Factor Subgroup Comparison*. Additionally, the *Written Comments*, may also help to validate some areas of concerns within Sections IV and V; please ensure you review that area to determine if there are comments that address any areas of concern.

This section also seeks to provide guidance for identifying additional steps in the climate assessment effort, and prescribe actions to help address organizational concerns.

Compare subgroups to determine whether diminished perceptions of climate factors are more prevalent among specific groups, and the sources of those perceptions.

### Excellent/Adequate

Seek to identify and reinforce those practices and programs currently in place.

Reinforce behaviors that create a climate of inclusion, supporting and preserving the dignity and worth of all members.

Continue to promote and maintain a healthy human relations climate. This can be done by ensuring all members in the unit understand their roles and responsibilities.

Share positive results to enhance members' commitment to the organization and its mission.

Consider utilizing training aids to further provide awareness and knowledge regarding key factors.

### Caution/Improvement Needed

Examine favorability ratings among specific climate factors and demographic subgroups to determine whether diminished perceptions are more obvious among some of them.

After identifying the specific climate factors with low favorability ratings and those demographic subgroups that harbor negative perceptions regarding them, use these findings to plan follow-on assessment efforts, including focus groups, interviews, and written record reviews.

Conducting focus groups and interviews with members of these subgroups can help determine the source and extent of specific perceptions.

Develop an action plan to address each specific validated concern, and socialize the plan with members. Set a timeline for each action item, and provide timely feedback on progress accomplishing them. This will demonstrate your willingness to listen to your subordinates, and take action to improve conditions whenever possible.

### MAKING CLIMATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS WORK FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. Share the results with members of your organization.
2. Involve key leaders; let members know you are acting on their feedback.
3. If needed, establish an action team to develop and implement a plan for organizational improvement.
4. Conduct another climate assessment in accordance with your Service component directives to determine the effectiveness of the corrective actions that were taken to remedy validated perceptions.

We trust these recommendations for interpretation will prove useful. The DEOCS can help commanders improve the readiness within their commands. To make best use of this tool, DEOMI provides tools and products designed to address the mission impacting issues that were identified during the climate assessment process.

### ASSESSMENT TO SOLUTIONS

Assessment to Solutions ([www.deocs.net](http://www.deocs.net)) was created to support leaders and equal opportunity professionals throughout the climate assessment process. Assessment to Solutions provides products that help identify appropriate follow-on climate assessment efforts, aid in the development of an action plan to rectify workplace conditions that negatively impact climate, and training materials that can be incorporated in an action plan.

The Assessment to Solutions area parallels the main assessment sections of the DEOCS, which include OE, EO/EEO/Fair treatment, and SAPR. Each area further addresses each climate factor included in the section, and provides a host of products for each.

Access to products can be found at the “Assessment to Solutions” website which is designed to support leaders and equal opportunity professionals. To access the site go to:

<https://www.deocs.net>

The DEOCS Support Team is available to assist you and can be contacted at:  
321-494-2675/3260/4217  
DSN: 854-2675/3260/4217  
[support@deocs.net](mailto:support@deocs.net)



# Appendix L. DEOCS Redesign Survey Instrument

DATA  
DRIVEN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR  
DECISION  
MAKERS







**Wave 1: Content focused, have before offsite (Field March 9-13<sup>th</sup> – March 25<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>)**

1. This survey is an opportunity to have my voice heard.
2. The issues raised on this survey should be monitored by higher-level leadership in the Military
3. I am concerned that my commander will know how I responded to this survey.
4. There are problems in my unit that were not asked about on the survey.
5. I answered the questions on the survey honestly.
6. This survey was organized reasonably well.
7. I am concerned about the privacy of my responses to this survey.
8. It is risky to be totally honest about issues like those covered on this survey.
9. I trust that my commander will use information provided by this survey to improve my unit.
10. What issues that the survey asked about do you think are most important for the chain of command to know about? (short answer)
11. What issues that the survey asked about are least important for the chain of command to know about? (short answer)
12. What else do you think the survey should ask about that wasn't covered? (short answer)
13. If the military only had one survey, what do you think the survey should ask about? (short answer)
14. At what levels of leadership is information about unit climate, like what is covered in this survey, most actionable? For example; your immediate supervisor. One level above your immediate supervisor, etc. (short answer)
15. This survey will be undergoing a revision, is there anything else would you like to tell the people who will be designing the new survey? (short answer)

**Wave 2: Some survey admin, comms, actionability focused (Field March 25-30<sup>th</sup>- Mid April)**

1. What barriers might prevent people from taking survey? (short answer)
2. What would make it easier to take the survey? (short answer)
3. The process of logging in to take this survey was reasonable.
4. The way I was notified about this survey made sense.
5. I understand why I was asked to take this survey.
6. I encountered computer-related challenges in completing this survey.
7. I like the survey website.
8. The questions asked on the survey were clear and easy to understand.
9. I am confident the results of the survey will be briefed to me.
10. What is the best way to reach you with information or requests to take a survey?
  - a. DoD email
  - b. Personal email
  - c. Postal mail
  - d. Text message
  - e. Social media
  - f. Other
11. How were you informed to take the survey? Please describe all of the ways you heard about it. (short answer)
12. Has your current commander, or any of your previous commanders, ever talked with the unit (as a whole or in groups) about issues raised in a DEOCS? (yes/no)

13. Has your current commander, or any of your previous commanders, ever shared an action plan to address issues raised in a DEOCS? (yes/no)
14. This survey will be undergoing a revision, is there anything else you would like to tell the people who will be designing the new survey related to survey administration? (short answer)

**Wave 3: everything else (Field Mid-April until May)**

1. The purpose of the survey was clear.
2. The survey was too long.
3. I appreciate having a person in my unit (for example, the EO advisor) who helped manage [or run or give] the survey
4. The survey asked about important issues that commanders need to know about.
5. I believe it is important for issues discussed in this survey to be addressed by people above my commander.
6. I am concerned about the privacy of my responses to this survey.
7. I would prefer to take this survey on my cell phone.
8. I had enough time to complete the survey.
9. Where did you complete the survey?
  - a. At a military location
  - b. At another work location
  - c. At home- Off base housing
  - d. At home- On base housing or barracks
10. How did you complete the survey?
  - a. Work/military computer
  - b. Personal computer
  - c. Mobile device
  - d. Paper

# Appendix M. DEOCS Redesign Survey Results

DATA  
DRIVEN  
SOLUTIONS  
FOR  
DECISION  
MAKERS





**Table M-1.**  
**DEOCS Redesign Survey Respondents Demographic Profile**

Demographic Group	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Total</b>	3006	100%	2999	100%	3009	100%
<b>Component</b>						
Active	1940	65%	2048	68%	1752	58%
Guard	383	13%	362	12%	477	16%
Reserve	344	11%	249	8%	497	17%
Civilian	297	10%	282	9%	175	6%
Did not identify	42	1%	58	2%	108	4%
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	1432	54%	1579	59%	1776	64%
Navy	383	14%	345	13%	260	10%
Marine Corps	486	18%	565	21%	591	21%
Air Force	302	11%	144	5%	118	4%
Coast Guard	69	3%	36	1%	12	<1%
Did not identify	0	<1%	0	<1%	0	<1%
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	2338	88%	2351	88%	2416	88%
Officer	334	13%	318	12%	341	12%
Did not identify	0	<1%	0	<1%	0	<1%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	2476	82%	2505	84%	2523	84%
Female	528	18%	494	17%	479	16%
Did not identify	2	<1%	0	<1%	7	<1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	1441	48%	1446	48%	1487	49%
Minority	1126	37%	1133	38%	1134	38%
Did not identify	439	15%	420	14%	388	13%

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-2.**  
*W1 Q1: This survey is an opportunity to have my voice heard.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	29%	35%	22%	7%	7%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	28%	34%	23%	8%	7%	1940
Guard	33%	34%	22%	4%	7%	383
Reserve	33%	39%	18%	4%	6%	344
Civilian	24%	44%	23%	6%	3%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	30%	30%	25%	7%	8%	1432
Navy	26%	42%	20%	8%	4%	383
Marine Corps	29%	35%	20%	8%	8%	486
Air Force	31%	42%	18%	4%	4%	302
Coast Guard	29%	46%	12%	7%	6%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	29%	33%	23%	7%	8%	2338
Officer	31%	45%	15%	5%	4%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	29%	35%	23%	7%	7%	2476
Female	30%	39%	20%	8%	3%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	29%	36%	21%	7%	6%	1441
Minority	31%	36%	22%	5%	6%	1126
Did not identify	22%	32%	27%	11%	8%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-3.**  
*W1 Q2: The issues raised on this survey should be monitored by higher-level leadership in the Military.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	33%	33%	26%	5%	4%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	32%	31%	28%	6%	4%	1940
Guard	36%	36%	21%	3%	4%	383
Reserve	35%	34%	23%	2%	6%	344
Civilian	29%	44%	22%	4%	2%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	33%	29%	28%	5%	6%	1432
Navy	33%	34%	25%	5%	3%	383
Marine Corps	29%	34%	27%	6%	5%	486
Air Force	35%	38%	22%	3%	2%	302
Coast Guard	43%	38%	14%	3%	1%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	33%	31%	27%	4%	5%	2338
Officer	34%	36%	18%	6%	5%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	32%	32%	26%	5%	5%	2476
Female	34%	36%	25%	3%	2%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	33%	34%	24%	4%	4%	1441
Minority	31%	34%	26%	4%	4%	1126
Did not identify	33%	28%	28%	7%	4%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-4.**

*W1 Q3: I am concerned that my commander will know how I responded to this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	10%	12%	30%	22%	27%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	10%	12%	31%	21%	26%	1940
Guard	7%	9%	28%	24%	31%	383
Reserve	10%	10%	23%	26%	31%	344
Civilian	8%	16%	28%	22%	26%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	10%	10%	32%	22%	26%	1432
Navy	7%	11%	27%	26%	28%	383
Marine Corps	9%	10%	28%	22%	31%	486
Air Force	9%	14%	28%	24%	26%	302
Coast Guard	19%	13%	29%	22%	17%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	10%	11%	32%	22%	26%	2338
Officer	9%	14%	18%	22%	36%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	9%	11%	30%	22%	27%	2476
Female	11%	14%	26%	22%	26%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	8%	10%	26%	25%	31%	1441
Minority	10%	12%	31%	22%	25%	1126
Did not identify	13%	17%	36%	14%	18%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.



**Table M-5.**

*W1 Q4: There are problems in my unit that were not asked about on the survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	10%	15%	34%	23%	18%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	10%	16%	36%	21%	17%	1940
Guard	12%	13%	29%	24%	22%	383
Reserve	9%	11%	28%	31%	21%	344
Civilian	7%	21%	36%	24%	12%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	12%	14%	35%	21%	19%	1432
Navy	7%	16%	30%	28%	19%	383
Marine Corps	8%	15%	35%	24%	19%	486
Air Force	9%	19%	31%	26%	14%	302
Coast Guard	14%	16%	35%	16%	19%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	10%	14%	36%	23%	17%	2338
Officer	9%	19%	20%	27%	25%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	9%	15%	35%	23%	18%	2476
Female	11%	18%	30%	25%	16%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	9%	15%	32%	24%	20%	1441
Minority	9%	14%	35%	25%	17%	1126
Did not identify	14%	22%	38%	15%	11%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-6.**  
*W1 Q5: I answered the questions on the survey honestly.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	56%	30%	11%	11%	2%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	54%	29%	13%	2%	2%	1940
Guard	57%	30%	9%	1%	2%	383
Reserve	53%	33%	11%	1%	2%	344
Civilian	61%	36%	2%	0%	0%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	52%	28%	16%	2%	2%	1432
Navy	59%	32%	7%	1%	1%	383
Marine Corps	55%	31%	11%	1%	2%	486
Air Force	61%	31%	7%	<1%	1%	302
Coast Guard	68%	29%	1%	<1%	1%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	53%	30%	14%	1%	2%	2338
Officer	64%	30%	4%	1%	2%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	55%	29%	12%	1%	2%	2476
Female	56%	35%	7%	<1%	1%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	59%	30%	9%	1%	1%	1441
Minority	52%	31%	13%	2%	2%	1126
Did not identify	54%	27%	16%	1%	2%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-7.**
*W1 Q6: This survey was organized reasonably well.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	26%	44%	25%	4%	2%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	25%	42%	27%	3%	2%	1940
Guard	31%	43%	20%	4%	2%	383
Reserve	26%	46%	21%	4%	3%	344
Civilian	20%	56%	20%	4%	<1%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	26%	38%	29%	5%	3%	1432
Navy	27%	49%	20%	3%	2%	383
Marine Corps	27%	46%	23%	2%	3%	486
Air Force	26%	50%	20%	3%	1%	302
Coast Guard	28%	55%	16%	0%	1%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	26%	41%	27%	3%	3%	2338
Officer	28%	53%	13%	4%	2%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	25%	44%	25%	4%	2%	2476
Female	27%	45%	23%	3%	1%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	25%	48%	21%	3%	2%	1441
Minority	28%	42%	24%	4%	2%	1126
Did not identify	22%	35%	36%	5%	2%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-8.**  
*W1 Q7: I am concerned about the privacy of my responses to this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	10%	13%	27%	23%	27%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	10%	14%	28%	22%	26%	1940
Guard	10%	11%	23%	25%	31%	383
Reserve	10%	12%	24%	24%	31%	344
Civilian	10%	18%	22%	25%	25%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	10%	13%	30%	21%	26%	1432
Navy	8%	14%	22%	27%	30%	383
Marine Corps	10%	9%	27%	24%	31%	486
Air Force	10%	18%	23%	22%	28%	302
Coast Guard	23%	15%	19%	22%	22%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	10%	12%	29%	22%	27%	2338
Officer	11%	16%	16%	26%	31%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	10%	12%	27%	22%	28%	2476
Female	10%	19%	24%	24%	23%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	8%	11%	23%	26%	31%	1441
Minority	10%	13%	29%	21%	26%	1126
Did not identify	17%	19%	31%	15%	17%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-9.**

*W1 Q8: It is risky to be totally honest about issues like those covered on this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	11%	14%	26%	24%	25%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	11%	14%	28%	21%	25%	1940
Guard	10%	13%	22%	25%	30%	383
Reserve	10%	10%	24%	31%	25%	344
Civilian	10%	18%	21%	31%	21%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	11%	13%	29%	22%	25%	1432
Navy	9%	13%	22%	28%	27%	383
Marine Corps	10%	12%	26%	23%	30%	486
Air Force	12%	19%	23%	24%	23%	302
Coast Guard	20%	16%	16%	26%	22%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	11%	13%	28%	23%	25%	2338
Officer	10%	16%	18%	26%	30%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	10%	13%	27%	23%	26%	2476
Female	13%	18%	23%	27%	20%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	8%	13%	23%	25%	30%	1441
Minority	10%	14%	27%	24%	24%	1126
Did not identify	21%	16%	32%	17%	14%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-10.**

*W1 Q9: I trust that my commander will use information provided by this survey to improve my unit.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	30%	32%	24%	8%	7%	3006
<b>Component</b>						
Active	29%	31%	25%	8%	7%	1940
Guard	36%	29%	20%	8%	8%	383
Reserve	33%	38%	18%	5%	6%	344
Civilian	25%	37%	24%	10%	5%	297
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	29%	29%	26%	7%	8%	1432
Navy	33%	34%	20%	6%	7%	383
Marine Corps	29%	35%	24%	7%	4%	486
Air Force	35%	35%	18%	8%	5%	302
Coast Guard	32%	29%	17%	12%	10%	69
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	29%	31%	25%	7%	8%	2338
Officer	39%	34%	13%	9%	4%	334
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	30%	32%	24%	7%	7%	2476
Female	29%	33%	23%	9%	5%	528
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	31%	35%	20%	8%	7%	1441
Minority	32%	31%	25%	6%	6%	1126
Did not identify	22%	26%	33%	10%	9%	439

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-11.**
*W2 Q1: The process of logging in to take this survey was reasonable.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	40%	40%	14%	3%	3%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	38%	39%	17%	3%	3%	2048
Guard	43%	41%	9%	2%	4%	362
Reserve	48%	39%	7%	3%	3%	249
Civilian	46%	42%	7%	3%	1%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	39%	37%	17%	3%	4%	1579
Navy	34%	49%	12%	3%	1%	345
Marine Corps	42%	39%	14%	2%	3%	565
Air Force	43%	45%	6%	1%	5%	144
Coast Guard	53%	39%	6%	0%	3%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	38%	40%	16%	3%	4%	2351
Officer	54%	39%	3%	3%	2%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	40%	39%	15%	3%	3%	2505
Female	44%	41%	11%	2%	2%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	42%	42%	11%	3%	2%	1446
Minority	41%	38%	15%	3%	4%	990
Did not identify	36%	35%	21%	4%	4%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-12.**  
*W2 Q2: The way I was notified about this survey made sense.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	39%	40%	15%	3%	3%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	36%	39%	18%	3%	4%	2048
Guard	41%	40%	12%	3%	4%	362
Reserve	50%	38%	9%	1%	2%	249
Civilian	43%	44%	9%	2%	3%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	36%	38%	18%	4%	4%	1579
Navy	41%	48%	9%	1%	1%	345
Marine Corps	40%	39%	16%	1%	3%	565
Air Force	45%	42%	8%	1%	3%	144
Coast Guard	56%	36%	8%	<1%	<1%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	36%	40%	18%	3%	4%	2351
Officer	51%	38%	6%	3%	2%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	38%	40%	16%	3%	4%	2505
Female	42%	41%	12%	2%	3%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	40%	43%	13%	2%	3%	1446
Minority	40%	38%	16%	3%	4%	990
Did not identify	34%	36%	21%	5%	4%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.



**Table M-13.**
*W2 Q3: I understand why I was asked to take this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	41%	38%	15%	3%	3%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	40%	38%	17%	3%	3%	2048
Guard	43%	39%	12%	2%	4%	362
Reserve	46%	38%	11%	3%	2%	249
Civilian	43%	40%	11%	3%	4%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	38%	36%	18%	4%	4%	1579
Navy	45%	45%	9%	1%	1%	345
Marine Corps	44%	38%	14%	2%	3%	565
Air Force	49%	41%	6%	1%	3%	144
Coast Guard	61%	28%	8%	3%	<1%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	38%	38%	17%	3%	3%	2351
Officer	58%	38%	2%	2%	1%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	41%	38%	16%	3%	3%	2505
Female	43%	40%	12%	3%	2%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	43%	40%	12%	2%	3%	1446
Minority	41%	37%	15%	4%	3%	990
Did not identify	35%	35%	22%	3%	4%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-14.**

*W2 Q4: I encountered computer-related challenges in completing this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	9%	11%	16%	30%	34%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	10%	11%	19%	30%	31%	2048
Guard	11%	9%	12%	31%	38%	362
Reserve	7%	11%	14%	31%	37%	249
Civilian	3%	11%	6%	34%	45%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	11%	11%	20%	28%	31%	1579
Navy	6%	15%	13%	36%	29%	345
Marine Corps	9%	10%	16%	30%	34%	565
Air Force	4%	8%	6%	33%	49%	144
Coast Guard	8%	11%	11%	33%	36%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	10%	11%	19%	30%	30%	2351
Officer	8%	8%	6%	28%	50%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	9%	11%	17%	30%	33%	2505
Female	7%	9%	13%	31%	40%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	7%	9%	13%	33%	39%	1446
Minority	11%	14%	18%	26%	30%	990
Did not identify	10%	11%	23%	29%	27%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-15.**  
*W2 Q5: I like the survey website.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	22%	30%	40%	4%	4%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	21%	29%	41%	5%	4%	2048
Guard	24%	30%	39%	4%	3%	362
Reserve	25%	37%	31%	4%	2%	249
Civilian	20%	35%	42%	1%	2%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	23%	28%	41%	5%	4%	1579
Navy	17%	34%	41%	6%	2%	345
Marine Corps	23%	33%	37%	3%	4%	565
Air Force	19%	30%	44%	4%	3%	144
Coast Guard	28%	47%	22%	3%	<1%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	21%	29%	41%	5%	4%	2351
Officer	27%	34%	34%	5%	1%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	21%	30%	41%	5%	4%	2505
Female	24%	34%	38%	2%	2%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	20%	30%	42%	4%	3%	1446
Minority	25%	31%	37%	4%	4%	990
Did not identify	18%	30%	44%	5%	4%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-16.**  
*W2 Q6: The questions asked on the survey were clear and easy to understand.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	30%	44%	18%	6%	3%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	29%	42%	20%	6%	3%	2048
Guard	33%	45%	13%	6%	4%	362
Reserve	37%	43%	14%	4%	2%	249
Civilian	26%	50%	15%	8%	1%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	32%	39%	20%	6%	3%	1579
Navy	23%	54%	16%	6%	1%	345
Marine Corps	31%	43%	18%	5%	3%	565
Air Force	23%	56%	10%	5%	6%	144
Coast Guard	25%	50%	19%	6%	<1%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	30%	42%	20%	6%	3%	2351
Officer	35%	49%	8%	7%	2%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	29%	44%	19%	6%	3%	2505
Female	31%	45%	16%	7%	2%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	28%	48%	16%	6%	2%	1446
Minority	36%	39%	19%	4%	3%	990
Did not identify	20%	45%	24%	9%	3%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-17.**
*W2 Q7: I am confident the results of the survey will be briefed to me.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	22%	29%	30%	10%	10%	2999
<b>Component</b>						
Active	23%	28%	30%	10%	10%	2048
Guard	22%	28%	31%	9%	10%	362
Reserve	27%	28%	26%	12%	7%	249
Civilian	17%	36%	29%	10%	8%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	20%	27%	32%	9%	11%	1579
Navy	25%	32%	25%	10%	8%	345
Marine Corps	26%	29%	27%	10%	8%	565
Air Force	31%	31%	23%	8%	8%	144
Coast Guard	39%	25%	14%	14%	8%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	22%	28%	31%	9%	10%	2351
Officer	27%	28%	22%	13%	10%	318
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	23%	29%	29%	9%	10%	2505
Female	19%	28%	33%	12%	9%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	21%	31%	29%	10%	9%	1446
Minority	27%	29%	29%	7%	8%	990
Did not identify	16%	21%	33%	13%	16%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-18.**

*W2 Q8: Has your current commander, or any of your previous commanders, ever talked with the unit (as a whole or in groups) about issues raised in a DEOCS?*

Demographic Group	Yes	No	n
	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	63%	37%	2999
<b>Component</b>			
Active	64%	36%	2048
Guard	59%	41%	362
Reserve	63%	37%	249
Civilian	68%	32%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>			
Army	56%	44%	1579
Navy	76%	24%	345
Marine Corps	69%	31%	565
Air Force	80%	20%	144
Coast Guard	83%	17%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>			
Enlisted	62%	38%	2351
Officer	70%	30%	318
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	64%	36%	2505
Female	60%	40%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Non-Hispanic White	65%	35%	1446
Minority	63%	37%	990
Did not identify	57%	43%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-19.**

*W2 Q9: Has your current commander, or any of your previous commanders, ever shared an action plan to address issues raised in a DEOCS?*

Demographic Group	Yes	No	n
	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	56%	44%	2999
<b>Component</b>			
Active	57%	43%	2048
Guard	51%	49%	362
Reserve	60%	40%	249
Civilian	57%	43%	282
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>			
Army	51%	49%	1579
Navy	64%	36%	345
Marine Corps	65%	35%	565
Air Force	67%	33%	144
Coast Guard	64%	36%	36
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>			
Enlisted	56%	44%	2351
Officer	61%	39%	318
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	57%	43%	2505
Female	52%	48%	494
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
Non-Hispanic White	57%	43%	1446
Minority	58%	42%	990
Did not identify	50%	50%	563

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-20.**

*W3 Q1: I appreciate having a person in my unit (for example, the EO advisor) who helped manage [or run or give] the survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	25%	33%	34%	4%	4%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	23%	30%	37%	4%	5%	1752
Guard	29%	35%	28%	3%	5%	477
Reserve	30%	38%	27%	2%	3%	497
Civilian	18%	37%	41%	2%	2%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	27%	32%	32%	4%	5%	1776
Navy	24%	37%	33%	3%	3%	260
Marine Corps	24%	31%	36%	4%	5%	591
Air Force	19%	33%	42%	1%	4%	118
Coast Guard	<1%	50%	50%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	25%	32%	34%	4%	5%	2416
Officer	27%	37%	29%	4%	4%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	25%	32%	34%	4%	5%	2523
Female	24%	39%	33%	3%	1%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	24%	34%	34%	3%	4%	1487
Minority	28%	33%	31%	4%	4%	1134
Did not identify	17%	28%	44%	4%	6%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.



**Table M-21.**
*W3 Q2: The survey asked about important issues that commanders need to know about.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	31%	41%	21%	4%	4%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	29%	36%	25%	5%	4%	1752
Guard	33%	45%	16%	4%	3%	477
Reserve	35%	48%	13%	2%	2%	497
Civilian	29%	55%	9%	6%	1%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	31%	38%	22%	5%	4%	1776
Navy	28%	52%	15%	3%	2%	260
Marine Corps	31%	38%	24%	4%	3%	591
Air Force	36%	41%	17%	4%	3%	118
Coast Guard	42%	50%	8%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	31%	39%	22%	4%	4%	2416
Officer	31%	48%	14%	4%	3%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	30%	40%	22%	5%	4%	2523
Female	34%	47%	16%	2%	1%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	31%	41%	19%	5%	4%	1487
Minority	32%	41%	20%	4%	3%	1134
Did not identify	26%	36%	28%	5%	5%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-22.**

*W3 Q3: I believe it is important for issues discussed in this survey to be addressed by people above my commander.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	30%	34%	26%	6%	3%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	28%	31%	30%	6%	4%	1752
Guard	35%	38%	17%	7%	4%	477
Reserve	33%	40%	23%	4%	1%	497
Civilian	30%	39%	21%	10%	1%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	31%	34%	27%	5%	4%	1776
Navy	28%	40%	22%	8%	2%	260
Marine Corps	29%	32%	28%	6%	4%	591
Air Force	26%	38%	29%	3%	3%	118
Coast Guard	50%	33%	17%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	30%	33%	28%	6%	4%	2416
Officer	33%	45%	16%	5%	1%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	30%	34%	27%	6%	4%	2523
Female	31%	40%	23%	5%	1%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	30%	35%	25%	7%	3%	1487
Minority	31%	34%	26%	5%	3%	1134
Did not identify	28%	33%	30%	5%	4%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-23.**
*W3 Q4: I am concerned about the confidentiality of my responses to this survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	13%	14%	30%	23%	21%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	13%	13%	34%	21%	18%	1752
Guard	14%	14%	22%	27%	23%	477
Reserve	12%	12%	25%	25%	26%	497
Civilian	11%	19%	26%	23%	21%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	13%	14%	30%	23%	21%	1776
Navy	12%	18%	24%	25%	20%	260
Marine Corps	14%	9%	35%	24%	18%	591
Air Force	9%	10%	28%	23%	30%	118
Coast Guard	<1%	25%	42%	25%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	12%	13%	32%	23%	20%	2416
Officer	17%	16%	17%	27%	23%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	13%	12%	31%	23%	21%	2523
Female	12%	19%	25%	24%	20%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	10%	12%	27%	25%	26%	1487
Minority	14%	14%	31%	22%	18%	1134
Did not identify	19%	18%	35%	18%	11%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-24.**  
*W3 Q5: I would prefer to take this survey on my cell phone.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	15%	14%	44%	15%	11%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	18%	16%	45%	12%	9%	1752
Guard	15%	13%	45%	16%	11%	477
Reserve	13%	16%	43%	15%	12%	497
Civilian	2%	2%	37%	35%	24%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	18%	17%	45%	12%	8%	1776
Navy	16%	14%	40%	18%	12%	260
Marine Corps	13%	15%	48%	12%	12%	591
Air Force	5%	7%	40%	25%	24%	118
Coast Guard	<1%	8%	50%	33%	8%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	18%	16%	46%	12%	9%	2416
Officer	7%	11%	40%	23%	18%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	16%	15%	45%	14%	11%	2523
Female	12%	14%	43%	20%	11%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	14%	14%	43%	17%	13%	1487
Minority	18%	16%	45%	12%	9%	1134
Did not identify	13%	12%	46%	15%	14%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-25.**
*W3 Q6: I had enough time to complete the survey.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	39%	42%	15%	2%	2%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	37%	39%	18%	2%	2%	1752
Guard	44%	45%	9%	2%	1%	477
Reserve	42%	46%	9%	1%	1%	497
Civilian	37%	53%	7%	1%	2%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	39%	40%	17%	2%	2%	1776
Navy	35%	54%	8%	2%	1%	260
Marine Corps	39%	41%	16%	2%	2%	591
Air Force	47%	43%	8%	1%	2%	118
Coast Guard	42%	50%	8%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	39%	41%	16%	2%	2%	2416
Officer	42%	50%	7%	1%	1%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	39%	41%	16%	2%	2%	2523
Female	41%	48%	9%	1%	1%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	41%	44%	12%	1%	2%	1487
Minority	41%	39%	16%	2%	2%	1134
Did not identify	27%	45%	22%	3%	3%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-26.**

*W3 Q7: My commanders use the information from surveys like the DEOCS to inform their decision making.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	18%	29%	41%	6%	6%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	17%	26%	43%	7%	7%	1752
Guard	21%	33%	37%	4%	5%	477
Reserve	20%	37%	38%	3%	3%	497
Civilian	12%	33%	42%	9%	5%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	18%	28%	43%	6%	6%	1776
Navy	23%	38%	29%	6%	5%	260
Marine Corps	19%	27%	43%	5%	6%	591
Air Force	20%	32%	37%	7%	3%	118
Coast Guard	8%	33%	58%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	17%	28%	42%	6%	6%	2416
Officer	24%	34%	33%	6%	3%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	18%	29%	40%	6%	6%	2523
Female	15%	30%	46%	6%	4%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	19%	33%	37%	6%	6%	1487
Minority	19%	27%	44%	5%	5%	1134
Did not identify	10%	22%	50%	10%	9%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-27.**

*W3 Q8: The answers provided on this survey will be used by higher-level leadership to improve the climate of my unit.*

Demographic Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	20%	32%	34%	7%	7%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	19%	28%	37%	8%	8%	1752
Guard	24%	38%	28%	6%	5%	477
Reserve	22%	37%	33%	4%	4%	497
Civilian	13%	38%	35%	8%	5%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	20%	30%	35%	7%	7%	1776
Navy	19%	40%	27%	9%	5%	260
Marine Corps	20%	31%	37%	5%	7%	591
Air Force	20%	33%	31%	8%	7%	118
Coast Guard	8%	25%	67%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	20%	31%	35%	7%	7%	2416
Officer	22%	35%	30%	8%	5%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	20%	31%	34%	7%	7%	2523
Female	16%	35%	37%	7%	5%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	20%	34%	32%	7%	7%	1487
Minority	22%	33%	34%	5%	6%	1134
Did not identify	12%	22%	43%	12%	11%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-28.**  
**W3 Q9: Where did you complete the survey?**

Demographic Group	At a Military Location	At Another Work Location	At Home - Off Base Housing	At Home - On Base Housing or Barracks	n
	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	31%	9%	42%	18%	3009
<b>Component</b>					
Active	42%	7%	22%	29%	1752
Guard	25%	9%	64%	2%	477
Reserve	6%	7%	84%	3%	497
Civilian	22%	24%	53%	2%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>					
Army	25%	7%	47%	21%	1776
Navy	41%	5%	42%	12%	260
Marine Corps	45%	10%	24%	22%	591
Air Force	45%	8%	41%	6%	118
Coast Guard	92%	<1%	8%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>					
Enlisted	32%	7%	40%	21%	2416
Officer	35%	7%	49%	9%	341
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	31%	9%	41%	19%	2523
Female	29%	10%	48%	13%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
Non-Hispanic White	27%	8%	46%	18%	1487
Minority	33%	7%	40%	20%	1134
Did not identify	39%	14%	33%	14%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.



**Table M-29.**  
*W3 Q10: How did you complete the survey?*

Demographic Group	Work/ Military Computer	Personal Computer	Mobile Device	Paper	n
	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	32%	29%	38%	1%	3009
<b>Component</b>					
Active	34%	17%	49%	1%	1752
Guard	23%	49%	28%	<1%	477
Reserve	19%	52%	29%	<1%	497
Civilian	75%	22%	2%	1%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>					
Army	21%	31%	47%	1%	1776
Navy	44%	31%	25%	<1%	260
Marine Corps	39%	21%	40%	1%	591
Air Force	58%	33%	9%	<1%	118
Coast Guard	92%	8%	<1%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>					
Enlisted	25%	27%	46%	1%	2416
Officer	53%	39%	7%	1%	341
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	30%	29%	40%	1%	2523
Female	42%	30%	28%	1%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
Non-Hispanic White	31%	33%	35%	1%	1487
Minority	29%	26%	44%	1%	1134
Did not identify	41%	25%	32%	2%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-30.**  
*W3 Q11: How many other surveys were you asked to complete over the last 12 months as a Service member?*

Demographic Group	Zero (The DEOCS Was the Only Survey)	1 Other Survey	2 or 3 Other Surveys	4 or 5 Other Surveys	6 or More Other Surveys	n
	%	%	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	28%	21%	35%	10%	6%	3009
<b>Component</b>						
Active	27%	21%	35%	11%	6%	1752
Guard	23%	21%	40%	9%	7%	477
Reserve	29%	25%	34%	8%	4%	497
Civilian	35%	24%	35%	5%	2%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>						
Army	24%	20%	37%	12%	7%	1776
Navy	27%	28%	36%	6%	3%	260
Marine Corps	37%	24%	31%	5%	4%	591
Air Force	29%	20%	32%	12%	7%	118
Coast Guard	33%	17%	42%	8%	<1%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>						
Enlisted	28%	22%	35%	9%	6%	2416
Officer	19%	18%	39%	16%	8%	341
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	27%	21%	35%	10%	6%	2523
Female	32%	23%	34%	7%	3%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>						
Non-Hispanic White	26%	20%	37%	11%	6%	1487
Minority	31%	23%	32%	8%	5%	1134
Did not identify	27%	22%	35%	10%	6%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-31.**
*W3 Q12: I feel the number of surveys that I am asked to complete as a Service member is:*

Demographic Group	Not enough. I want more opportunities to give survey feedback.	About right. I am able to provide enough survey feedback.	Too many. I am asked to provide too much survey feedback.	n
	%	%	%	
<b>Total</b>	12%	71%	17%	3009
<b>Component</b>				
Active	14%	67%	19%	1752
Guard	9%	71%	19%	477
Reserve	5%	80%	15%	497
Civilian	12%	77%	11%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>				
Army	11%	69%	20%	1776
Navy	12%	81%	7%	260
Marine Corps	12%	70%	17%	591
Air Force	6%	75%	19%	118
Coast Guard	25%	58%	17%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>				
Enlisted	12%	70%	18%	2416
Officer	8%	70%	22%	341
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	12%	70%	19%	2523
Female	12%	78%	11%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Non-Hispanic White	8%	73%	18%	1487
Minority	13%	72%	14%	1134
Did not identify	19%	58%	23%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

**Table M-32.**

*W3 Q13: Which factor would be the most likely to convince you to take a voluntary survey in your capacity as a Service member?*

Demographic Group	Assurance that my responses are kept confidential.	Specific examples of how past surveys have been used to impact life in my unit.	Receiving a request to take the survey from my Service Chief.	Receiving a request to take the survey from my Senior Enlisted Advisor.	Being able to take the survey on a Smartphone.	Receiving a text message reminder to complete the survey.	A friend telling me they had already taken the survey.	Knowing how the survey will be used to benefit my unit in the future.	n
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
<b>Total</b>	29%	18%	3%	6%	8%	3%	2%	31%	3009
<b>Component</b>									
Active	29%	16%	3%	8%	9%	4%	2%	30%	1752
Guard	31%	20%	3%	5%	9%	4%	1%	27%	477
Reserve	29%	19%	2%	4%	7%	3%	2%	34%	497
Civilian	30%	25%	1%	1%	2%	1%	<1%	41%	175
<b>Service (Military Only)</b>									
Army	29%	16%	4%	7%	10%	4%	2%	29%	1776
Navy	27%	22%	2%	6%	7%	3%	<1%	32%	260
Marine Corps	33%	17%	2%	7%	6%	4%	3%	29%	591
Air Force	19%	26%	4%	1%	4%	<1%	2%	44%	118
Coast Guard	33%	25%	<1%	8%	<1%	<1%	8%	25%	12
<b>Paygrade (Military Only)</b>									
Enlisted	30%	16%	3%	7%	9%	4%	2%	30%	2416
Officer	27%	26%	2%	2%	6%	4%	1%	33%	341
<b>Gender</b>									
Male	29%	17%	3%	6%	8%	3%	2%	31%	2523
Female	30%	22%	3%	3%	7%	3%	1%	32%	479
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>									
Non-Hispanic White	26%	22%	3%	6%	7%	3%	2%	32%	1487
Minority	32%	13%	3%	6%	10%	4%	2%	30%	1134
Did not identify	32%	16%	3%	7%	7%	2%	3%	30%	388

*Note.* Numbers and percentages are respondents with at least one usable closed-ended response or comment that were included in analyses.

# Appendix N. Stakeholder Conversations: Structured Guide

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### DEOCS Structured Conversation Guide

#### Goals:

1. **Climate Goals:** Identify senior leader's perspective on the purpose of the DEOCS
2. **DEOCS Purpose:** Identify senior leader's goals and priorities for organizational climate
3. **DEOCS Needs:** Understand what is working and what needs to be improved in current DEOCS

#### Definition of Climate

"The shared meaning organizational members attach to the events, policies, practices, and procedures they experience and the behaviors they see being rewarded, supported, and expected." (Erhart et al., 2014)

We know that traditionally the DEOCS has focused on EO and SAPR issues, which will still likely be an important factor, but we also want to think about climate more broadly.

#### Questions:

1. Climate Goals:
  - a. What do you think are the biggest climate issues or problems currently facing Navy commanders?
  - b. What are the characteristics of a healthy climate?
    - i. What is the environment like in units that are successful?
    - ii. How do unit members relate to each other/leaders in successful units?
2. DEOCS Purpose:
  - a. What do you think is purpose(s) or role of the DEOCS?
    - i. Is it a commanders' tool or a performance assessment?
    - ii. Should commanders be held accountable for the results? How? Should it be used for performance reviews or disciplinary actions?
    - iii. How much do you think other people agree with your view?
    - iv. If it is a commander's tool, what would make it a useful tool?
  - b. If service members could only take one survey, what would you want on that survey?
    - i. What do commanders need to know at lower-levels? What about senior leaders?
  - c. How do we engage leaders who may not be as interested in climate or don't see it as important?
3. DEOCS Needs
  - a. What do you like about the current DEOCS?
  - b. In what ways is the current DEOCS failing to meet your needs?
    - i. What are some barriers to the current DEOCS being more useful for you and your commanders?
  - c. What levels of aggregation (what echelons) would be useful for you? What is the lowest level of commander that should do a DEOCS?





# Appendix O. DEOCS 5.0 Customizable Survey Bank Items

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### DEOCS 5.0 Customizable Survey Block

The following are optional survey items. Commanders and leaders may select items from this list for inclusion in their DEOCS administration. All items in the Locally Developed Questions (LDQs) section use a 5-point scale (Strongly agree/Agree/Neither agree nor disagree/Disagree/Strongly disagree). Items in the Short Answer Question (SAQs) section are open-ended.

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## Locally Developed Questions

### Section I. Work/Academy Experience

#### Engagement and Morale

- I like my current job. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I feel satisfied with my current job. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I am happy with my current job. (DEOCS 4.1)
- At my job I always persevere, even when things do not go well. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel happy when I am working intensely. (4.1LDQ)
- I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. (4.1LDQ)
- I get immersed in my work. (4.1LDQ)
- My work inspires me. (4.1LDQ)
- My work is challenging to me. (4.1LDQ)
- I am proud of the work that I do. (4.1LDQ)
- I can continue working for long periods at a time. (4.1LDQ)
- When I am working, I forget everything else around me. (4.1LDQ)
- I am enthusiastic about my work. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Time flies when I am working. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I am being fully utilized in my current job. (4.1LDQ)
- I am challenged by my current job. (4.1LDQ)
- I am proud of my unit/organization.
- The overall morale of my unit is positive.
- The current level of morale in my command is high.

- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (4.1LDQ)

#### Equipment

- My command-issued gear is offered in appropriate sizing options.
- My command-issued equipment accommodates my body shape well.
- My unit/organization is able to assist me to fit my equipment to my needs.
- My command-issued gear is offered in appropriate sizes.
- My command is able to fit my issued equipment to my needs.

#### Military, Civilian and Contractor Working Relationships

- Civilian managers supervise military personnel as effectively as they supervise civilian personnel. (4.1LDQ)
- Civilians are treated as valued members of the unit by leadership. (4.1LDQ)
- Contract employees are viewed as part of the team. (4.1LDQ)
- Military managers supervise civilian personnel as effectively as they supervise military personnel. (4.1LDQ)

#### Mission

- The people I work with are united in trying to achieve our goals/mission.
- My unit/organization makes good use of available resources to accomplish its mission. (DEOCS 4.1)
- The people I work with are united in trying to achieve our goals/mission.
- I understand how my unit/organization supports the mission of the overall unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- The unit/organization recognition program enhances our ability to perform our mission. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel the work I do every day is critical to warfighter readiness and national security.
- My unit is well prepared to perform its wartime duties. (4.1LDQ)

#### Physical Work Area

- I am satisfied with the physical surroundings of my work area. (4.1LDQ)
- Parking is available at work. (4.1LDQ)
- Work areas are accessible to persons with disabilities. (4.1LDQ)

#### Professional Development

- I am satisfied with my latest one-on-one rater feedback session with my rater. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive periodic formal feedback from my rater. (4.1LDQ)
- Having a Leader Development Program has positively impacted my performance and personal/professional development.
- I have a mentor at work who encourages my development.
- In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress and career goals.
- I am assigned duties that are commensurate with my rank/grade. (4.1LDQ)
- Correctional training given to members of my command directly corresponds to the deficiency. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit promoting a climate based on mutual respect and trust.

#### Recognition

- I am recognized for contributing to a positive atmosphere in my workplace. (4.1LDQ)
- I am rewarded for contributing to a positive atmosphere in my workplace. (4.1LDQ)

- I am rewarded for my duty performance. (4.1LDQ)
- Participation for community service is recognized in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)

#### Resources and Support

- I am familiar with the support provided by the various on-base agencies (for example, Equal Opportunity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging, Violence Prevention, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO)).
- I am aware of the ways to provide anonymous feedback to the installation command.
- My unit/organization conducts monthly Bridge Chats to strengthen connections and improve trust.
- Programs are in place to address military members'/employees' concerns. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader's support staff meets my needs. (4.1LDQ)
- The functional experts I work with assist me in my success. (4.1LDQ)

#### Retention

- I will leave my current career within the next couple of years. (4.1LDQ)
- Provided the opportunity, I will stay in my current career the next several years, but not until retirement. (4.1LDQ)
- Provided the opportunity, I will stay in my current career until retirement. (4.1LDQ)
- My present assignment motivates me to continue a career in the military. (4.1LDQ)

#### Training and Education

- The unit/organization's orientation program is adequate for new personnel. (4.1LDQ)
- I have received the necessary training to accomplish my job. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive the counseling and coaching needed to advance in my career. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive the training needed to perform my job well. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive the training I need to be a successful officer/supervisor.
- I have adequate opportunity to pursue off-duty education. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive adequate support from my immediate supervisor to pursue off-duty education. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit/organization is concerned about and supports my academic success.

#### Unit Cohesion

- My unit/workgroup has a great deal of personal meaning to me. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I have good relationships with the people I work with. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel a strong sense of belonging to this unit/workgroup. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My associates (fellow employees) are committed to doing quality work.
- My unit/workgroup devotes a reasonable amount of time for social activities. (4.1LDQ)
- My work environment is free from unprofessional behavior. (4.1LDQ)
- Relationships at work are professional in nature. (4.1LDQ)
- Junior enlisted service members care about what happens to each other. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with all take responsibility for the performance of the group. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If members of my unit/workgroup have problems in the workplace, everyone wants to help them so we can get back on task. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If someone in the unit/organization has a problem, other members of my unit/organization will try to help them out.
- I am encouraged to participate in unit/organization functions. (4.1 LDQ)
- The people I work with do an outstanding job in handling short suspense/tasks when they arise (DEOCS 4.1)

- If someone in the unit/organization has a problem, other members of the unit will try to help them out.

#### Unit Values

- My unit/organization is true to Army core values.
- My unit/organization is true to Navy core values.
- My unit/organization is true to Marine Corps core values.
- My unit/organization is true to the Air Force core values.
- My unit/organization is true to Coast Guard core values.
- My unit/organization is true to National Guard core values.
- My unit/organization is true to DoD core values.
- Human relations problems are handled correctly in this command. (4.1LDQ)

#### Work/Life Balance

- I am challenged by the duties of my current job. (4.1LDQ)
- I have sufficient time in my duty day to conduct my core duties. (4.1LDQ)
- I am afforded opportunities to take leave. (4.1LDQ)
- Additional duties are not interfering with my ability to perform my primary mission. (4.1LDQ)
- I do not feel overburdened with additional duties. (4.1LDQ)

## Section II. Leadership

### Commander/Leader

- I feel that my commander/leader will use the information from the DEOCS to improve the unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader puts us and our families first, above and beyond their personal interests.
- My commander/leader cares about my personal well-being. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader shows an interest in my welfare. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader is accessible. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader is a competent leader. (4.1LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this unit/organization to meet with their commander/leader. (4.1LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this command to meet with their commander/leader about problems. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader creates an environment that promotes building trust within my unit/organization.
- My commander/leader sets the right example with their actions. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader understands what my job entails. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader frequently visits my duty section. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader effectively deals with adversity and conflict within their command. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader clarifies our unit/organization's goals and priorities. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader listens to the concerns of the unit/organization members. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I can rely on my commander/leader to act in my unit/organization's best interest. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader follows through with commitments they make. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader models respectful behavior. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader would correct individuals who refer to coworkers as "honey," "babe," "sweetie," or use other unprofessional language at work. (DEOCS 4.1)



- My commander/leader would stop individuals who are talking about sexual topics at work. (DEOCS4.1)
- My commander/leader would intervene if an individual was receiving sexual attention at work (for example, staring at someone's chest, standing too close, or rubbing someone's shoulders). (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader encourages individuals to help others in risky situations that could result in harmful outcomes (for example, sexual assault, violence, or suicide). (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader shows a real interest in the welfare of single service members. (4.1 LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this command to meet with the commander/leader. (4.1 LDQ)
- My commander/leader seems to care more about my success than their own.
- My commander/leader puts the unit/organization's interests ahead of their own.
- My commander/leader does what they can do to make my job easier.
- My commander/leader can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the unit/organization's future.
- My commander/leader emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.
- My commander/leader has a long-term vision.
- My commander/leader emphasizes the societal responsibility of our work.
- My commander/leader is open about their limitations and weaknesses.
- My commander/leader shows their true feelings to the unit/organization.
- I would feel comfortable asking my commander/leader for help. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader is open to new ideas.
- I would seek the assistance of the superintendent. (4.1 LDQ)
- My senior leadership creates an environment that promotes building trust within my work center.

#### Communication

- Commander's calls/all hands effectively pass on information I need to know. (4.1LDQ)
- Communication between units/organizations is good. (4.1LDQ)
- Communication flows freely from senior leadership to all levels of the unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- Communication from my chain of command is clear. (4.1LDQ)
- Communication from the chain of command is timely. (4.1LDQ)
- Communication flow up the chain of command is good. (4.1LDQ)
- Small group discussions with unit/organization leaders and teammates improve the work environment.
- I am satisfied with the communication from the chain of command.
- Communication from my direct leadership is clear.

#### Immediate Supervisor

- My immediate supervisor puts us and our families first, above and beyond their personal interests.
- My immediate supervisor cares about my personal well-being. (4.1LDQ)
- I would feel comfortable asking my immediate supervisor for help. (4.1LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this unit to meet with their immediate supervisor about problems. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor is accessible. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor creates an environment that promotes building trust within our team.
- My immediate supervisor is a competent leader. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor sets the right example with their actions. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor understands what my job entails. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor effectively deals with conflict within the team. (4.1LDQ)
- My immediate supervisor explains things clearly to me. (4.1LDQ)

- My immediate supervisor shares information to the unit/organization that has been presented to them by senior leaders. (4.1LDQ)
- I can rely on my immediate supervisor to act in my organization's best interest. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor follows through with commitments they make. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor models respectful behavior. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor would correct individuals who refer to coworkers as "honey," "babe," "sweetie," or use other unprofessional language at work. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor would stop individuals who are talking about sexual topics at work. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor would intervene if an individual was receiving sexual attention at work (for example, staring at someone's chest, standing too close, or rubbing someone's shoulders). (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor encourages individuals to help others in risky situations that could result in harmful outcomes (for example, sexual assault, violence, or suicide). (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor seems to care more about my success than their own.
- My immediate supervisor puts my best interests ahead of their own.
- My immediate supervisor does what they can do to make my job easier.
- My immediate supervisors can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the team's future.
- My immediate supervisor emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.
- My immediate supervisor is open about their limitations and weaknesses.
- My immediate supervisor is often touched by the things they see happening around them.
- My immediate supervisor shows their true feelings to their team.
- I receive routine feedback on my performance by my immediate supervisor.
- My immediate supervisor is equally responsive and accessible to the needs of all unit/organization members.
- My immediate supervisor does not designate subordinates to be responsible for supervising unit/organization members of a different race, ethnicity, or gender.

#### Senior NCO Leadership

- My unit's senior NCO puts us and our families first, above and beyond their personal interests.
- My unit's senior NCO cares about my personal well-being. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO shows an interest in my welfare. (4.1LDQ)
- I would feel comfortable asking my unit's senior NCO for help. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO creates an environment that promotes building trust within my unit.
- My unit's senior NCO sets the right example with their actions. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO understands what my job entails. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO frequently visits my duty section. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO effectively deals with adversity and conflict within the unit. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO clarifies our organization's goals and priorities. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO listens to the concerns of the unit members. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I can rely on my unit's senior NCO to act in my unit's best interest. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO follows through with commitments he or she makes. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO models respectful behavior. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO would correct individuals who refer to coworkers as "honey," "babe," "sweetie," or use other unprofessional language at work. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO would stop individuals who are talking about sexual topics at work. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO would intervene if an individual was receiving sexual attention at work (for example, staring at someone's chest, standing too close, or rubbing someone's shoulders). (DEOCS 4.1)

- My unit's senior NCO encourages individuals to help others in risky situations that could result in harmful outcomes (for example, sexual assault, violence, or suicide). (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO shows a real interest in the welfare of single service members. (4.1 LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this unit to meet with the senior enlisted NCO. (4.1 LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO seems to care more about my success than their own.
- My unit's senior NCO puts my best interests ahead of their own.
- My unit's senior NCO sacrifices their own interests to meet my needs.
- My unit's senior NCO does what they can do to make my job easier.
- My unit's senior NCO is sincere in their attempts to understand unit members' point of view.
- My unit's senior NCO can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the unit's future.
- My unit's senior NCO emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.
- My unit's senior NCO has a long-term vision.
- My unit's senior NCO emphasizes the societal responsibility of our work.
- My unit's senior NCO is open about their limitations and weaknesses.
- My unit's senior NCO shows their true feelings to unit members.
- My unit's senior NCO is accessible. (4.1LDQ)
- It is easy for service members in this unit to meet with their unit's senior NCO about problems. (4.1LDQ)
- I would seek the assistance of my First Sergeant. (4.1LDQ)
- I would seek the assistance of my flight chief. (4.1 LDQ)

#### Trust in Leadership

- Decisions in my unit/organization are made after reviewing relevant information. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I trust leadership to handle complaints, problems, or issues effectively. (4.1LDQ)

#### Leadership Support

- After returning from maternity, paternity, or primary caregiver leave, I felt I had adequate support from my leadership while transitioning back to the workplace.

My command gives me adequate time to address my healthcare needs.

### Section III. Behavior and Personal Experience

#### Alcohol and Illegal Substances

- Illegal drug use is a problem in this command. (4.1LDQ)
- Alcohol abuse by members of this command is a problem. (4.1LDQ)
- Alcohol consumption is a problem in this command. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit's senior NCO promotes responsible alcohol use. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader promotes responsible alcohol use. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor promotes responsible alcohol use. (DEOCS 4.1)

#### Discipline

- My unit/organization displays high standards of discipline. (4.1LDQ)
- Rules, regulations, and policies are enforced in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- Rules, regulations, and policies are obeyed in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)

## Discrimination

- People I work with challenge discriminating behaviors. (4.1LDQ)
- Discrimination based on sex occurs in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Racial slurs, comments, or jokes are used in the unit/organization.
- Discrimination based on race/color/national origin does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on religion does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on sexual orientation does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Sexist slurs, comments, or jokes are used in the unit/organization.
- Discrimination based on age does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on disability does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on equal pay does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on genetic information does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Discrimination based on pregnancy does **not** occur in my workplace. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor makes work detail assignments based on gender, race, or ethnicity.
- My commander/leader makes work detail assignments based on gender, race, or ethnicity.
- Work assignments, training opportunities, and promotions within my unit/organization are based on candidates' qualifications, without regard to race or ethnicity.
- People in your unit/organization have received a work detail or promotion because of their gender, race, or ethnicity.
- People I work with make me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing me a lack of respect due to my sex.
- People I work with make me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing me a lack of respect due to my race/ethnicity.
- People I work with make me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by excluding me because of my sex.
- People I work with make me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by excluding me because of my race/ethnicity.
- My immediate supervisor makes me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing me a lack of respect due to my sex.
- My immediate supervisor makes you feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by showing me a lack of respect due to my race/ethnicity.
- My immediate supervisor makes me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by excluding me because of my sex.
- My immediate supervisor makes me feel uncomfortable, angry, or upset by excluding me because of my race.
- People I work with have mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted me because of my sexual preferences.
- My immediate supervisor has mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted me because of my sexual preferences.
- My commander/leader has mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted me because of my sexual preferences.
- My unit's senior NCO has mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted me because of my sexual preferences.
- I have been mistreated, ignored, excluded, or insulted in my unit/organization because of my sexual preferences.
- I know how to contact an EO/EEO counselor. (4.1LDQ)
- I know the complaint procedure process. (4.1LDQ)
- A complaint about harassment or discrimination would be taken seriously in my unit/organization.
- I am able to report harassment or discrimination without fear of negative reactions from my peers.

- I am able to report harassment or discrimination without fear of negative reactions from my immediate supervisor.
- I believe I can use my chain of command/leader to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation/reprisal. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I know who my Equal Opportunity (EO) Representative is and I could contact them if I needed to. I know who my SHARP Rep or Victim Advocate is and I could contact them if I needed to.

#### Diversity

- There are opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds and cultures to serve as leaders and/or be promoted.
- My unit/organization is accepting of individuals with diverse backgrounds.
- My unit/organization provides equal opportunity regardless of one's sex. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader values the rights of its members to practice their religion. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader provides diversity training to unit/organization members. (4.1LDQ)
- I am aware of my EO/EEO rights as a Federal employee. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit/organization keeps an updated EO/EEO bulletin board with upcoming cultural events, policy letters, complaint procedures and general EO/EEO information. (4.1LDQ)
- Cultural heritage celebrations such as Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month help bring unit/organization members closer together as a team. (4.1LDQ)
- My command allows me to participate in or attend special observance programs. (4.1LDQ)
- My command supports special observance programs. (4.1LDQ)
- Special observances are conducted to enhance cross-cultural awareness among all service members, civilians, employees, and families. (4.1 LDQ)
- I have seen extremist group behavior or propaganda in my workplace. (4.1LDQ)

#### Extremism

- In the past 12 months, I have been asked to join or support an organization that promotes racial, ethnic, and/or religious intolerance or supremacy.
- In the past 12 months, I have been asked to join or support an organization that engages in violence or criminal activity to support a political, religious or social cause
- In the past 12 months, I have been asked to join or support an anti-government organization or movement

#### Fairness

- Additional duties are assigned fairly. (4.1LDQ)
- Correctional training for poor performance is enforced fairly in this unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- Deployments are distributed fairly throughout the unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- Discipline is administered fairly by the professional staff.
- My unit/organization leave policy is administered fairly. (4.1LDQ)
- When making an honest mistake on the job, members of my unit/organization are corrected fairly. (4.1LDQ)
- Favoritism does not occur in my workgroup. (4.1LDQ)
- Favoritism involving personal relationships does not occur in my workgroup. (4.1LDQ)
- Awards in my workgroup depend on how well employees perform their jobs. (4.1LDQ)
- The decision-making processes that impact my unit/organization are fair. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I frequently get assigned undesirable or unimportant tasks.
- I have received an unfair performance evaluation or rating from my current commander/leader.

- Contributions of all career fields are respected in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- The criteria for determining who gets developmental opportunities in my workgroup is understood.
- The process for determining who gets developmental opportunities in my workgroup is fair. (4.1LDQ)
- My command ensures that the process of advertising, interviewing, and hiring candidates for positions or promotions is open, fair, and transparent.
- Favoritism involving race/sex/national origin does not occur in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel quite confident that I will be treated fairly in my unit/organization.
- Officers and NCO's in my unit receive preferential treatment compared to enlisted personnel.

#### Hazing and Bullying

- Hazing and/or bullying happens in my unit/organization.
- I have **not** experienced or witnessed hazing while assigned to this command. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader discourages hazing. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader does not tolerate hazing. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader has published a policy that prohibits hazing. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader would punish anyone who hazes others. (4.1LDQ)
- People I work with are pressured to engage in physically harmful acts as part of an initiation or admission process (without a proper military or other governmental purpose). (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with are pressured to engage in psychologically harmful acts as part of an initiation or admission process (without a proper military or other governmental purpose). (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with are pressured to engage in illegal or dangerous acts as part of an initiation or admission process (without a proper military or other governmental purpose). (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with who are seen as "different" are targets of aggression. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with who are seen as "different" are targets of abusive or malicious pranks. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with who are seen as "different" are targets of active attempts to damage their reputation. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with who are seen as "different" are targets of physical harm. (DEOCS 4.1)
- Someone from work has made it harder for me to get a promotion.
- I have been harassed by higher ranking personnel while off duty. (4.1LDQ)
- I have been harassed by higher ranking personnel while on duty. (4.1LDQ)
- Someone from work has made it harder for me to receive recognition for my work performance.
- I feel safe within my work area.
- I can express my safety concerns within this organization without fear of reprisal.
- People I work with who are seen as "different" are targets of psychological harm. (DEOCS 4.1)

#### Inclusion

- People at your unit/organization segregate themselves by race, ethnicity, or gender while on duty.
- People I work with respect differences in others.
- My work center is accepting of individuals with diverse backgrounds.
- My command is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- The people I work with allow each other to express their opinions. (4.1LDQ)
- I am encouraged to offer ideas on how to improve operations. (4.1LDQ)
- I am comfortable being myself while working in this unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- In this workgroup, I am comfortable discussing my background. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with respect other people's differences. (4.1LDQ)

- My coworkers treat me as a part of the workgroup. (4.1LDQ)
- My input is sought out before making important decisions. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel excluded by people I work with because I am different. (DEOCS 4.1)
- I am encouraged to offer ideas on how to improve operations in my workgroup. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with are empowered to make work-related decisions on their own. (DEOCS 4.1)
- The people I work with are accepting of individuals with diverse backgrounds. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with allow me to be honest about who I am. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with allow me to be true to my core values. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with encourage me to share about myself. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with make me feel like I belong. (4.1LDQ)
- The people I work with treat me as an insider. (4.1LDQ)
- In my work center, people's differences are respected.

#### Respect

- All unit/organization personnel receive the same level of respect from leadership. (4.1LD)
- An atmosphere of respect exists in my unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- I am treated with dignity and respect in this unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- My commander/leader takes steps to ensure I am treated with respect. (4.1LDQ)
- My unit enforces the standards of military courtesy. (4.1LDQ)

#### Respect & Cohesion

- My unit/organization is cohesive.
- In my unit/organization, there is respect from the chain of command.
- People in my unit/organization have respect for the chain of command.
- In my unit/organization, people respect others from diverse backgrounds.
- In my unit/organization, women and men treat each other well.
- In my unit/organization, people provide help to one another when personal problems arise.
- In my unit/organization, people deal effectively with adversity or conflict when it occurs.

#### Responsibility and Intervention

- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization make it clear that sexual assault has no place in the military.
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization lead by example by refraining from sexist comments and behaviors.
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization recognize and immediately correct incidents of sexual harassment.
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization encourage bystander intervention to assist others in situations at risk for sexual assault or other harmful behaviors.
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization publicizing sexual assault report resources (for example, SARC information, UVA/VA information, awareness posters, sexual assault hotline number).
- In the past 12 months, I have witnessed people in my unit/organization encourage victims to report sexual assault.
- People I work with challenge sexual harassing behaviors. (4.1LDQ)

#### Sexual Assault

- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I stepped in and separated the people involved in the situation. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I asked the person who appeared to be at risk if they needed help. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I confronted the person who appeared to be causing the situation. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I created a distraction to cause one or more of the people to disengage from the situation. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I asked others to step in as a group and diffuse the situation.
- While serving in this unit/organization, I told someone in a position of authority about a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I considered intervening in the situation, but I could not safely take any action. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault and I decided to not take action. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If a coworker were to report a sexual assault allegation, my chain of command/leader would take the report seriously. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If a coworker were to report a sexual assault allegation, my chain of command/leader would keep the knowledge of the report limited to those with a need to know. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If a coworker were to report a sexual assault allegation, my chain of command/leader would discourage military members/employees from spreading rumors and speculation about the allegation. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If a coworker were to report a sexual assault allegation, my chain of command/leader would promote healthcare, legal, or other support services to the reporter. (DEOCS 4.1)
- If a coworker were to report a sexual assault allegation, my chain of command/leader would support the individual for speaking up. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be excluded from social interactions or conversations. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be subjected to insulting or disrespectful remarks or jokes. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be blamed for causing problems. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be denied career opportunities (for example, denied training, awards, or promotions). (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be disciplined or given other corrective action. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, reporters of sexual assault allegation would be discouraged from moving forward with the report. (DEOCS 4.1)

#### Sexual Harassment

- My immediate supervisor adequately responds to allegations of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor plays an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)



- My commander/leader adequately responds to allegations of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My commander/leader plays an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO adequately responds to allegations of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My unit's senior NCO plays an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with use offensive gestures that are sexual in nature. (DEOCS 4.1)
- People I work with have been offered rewards or special treatment in return for engaging in sexual behavior. (DEOCS 4.1)
- While serving in this unit/organization, people I work with shared or distributed nonconsensual digital sexually explicit images.
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be excluded from the social interactions or conversations. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be subjected to insulting or disrespectful remarks or jokes. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be blamed for causing problems. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be denied career opportunities (for example, denied training, awards, or promotions). (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be disciplined or given other corrective action. (DEOCS 4.1)
- In my unit/organization, military members/employees who file a sexual harassment complaint would be discouraged from moving forward with the complaint. (DEOCS 4.1)

#### Section IV. Health

##### Access to Care

- My unit/organization allows me adequate time to address my healthcare needs prior to deployment.
- I feel I have the knowledge to address my personal hygiene and basic healthcare needs.
- The overall health of this unit/organization is better now than one year ago. (4.1LDQ)
- I postpone my healthcare needs until I can access medical care outside of my command in an MTF or clinic because I am uncomfortable with my command provider's gender.
- I postpone my healthcare needs until I can access medical care on shore/in an MTF, because I am uncomfortable seeking medical care at the command level.
- The healthcare provider at my command can meet my medical needs or ensure that I receive the care I need if they cannot meet my needs.
- My commander/leader gives me adequate time to address my healthcare needs.
- I postpone my healthcare needs until I can access medical care outside of my command in an MTF or clinic because I am uncomfortable with my command provider's level of training.
- The provider at my command is able to meet my medical needs or refer me to the appropriate specialist.

##### Access to Lethal Means

- Putting time and distance between a person who is going through a stressful time or having conflict with others and weapons and poisons can save lives.
- Safe storage methods are effective and can save lives, including the lives of children.
- Removal or safe storage of weapons, medications, and poisons can keep everyone in the home safer.

- Families should safely dispose of medications they no longer use and limit the availability of medications they do need.

#### COVID-19

- During COVID-19, I believe reasonable accommodations for high-risk individuals are being addressed/offered within a timely manner.
- My chain of command supports schedule flexibility for employees managing work and dependent or elder care responsibilities within the context of the COVID-19 work/telework environment.
- My command/leader is taking appropriate steps to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic.
- COVID-19 has negatively impacted my life.
- COVID-19 has negatively impacted our unit/organization's ability to meet our mission.
- My unit/organization has provided the tools necessary to do my job successfully in a full-time telework status.

#### Family Planning and Support

- I feel supported by my commander/leader to seek contraceptive services.
- I am aware of what family planning resources are available at my current duty station (such as contraception, information on adoption, abortion, or infertility services) and how to access them.
- I am aware of how to obtain family planning resources (for example, information on contraception, adoption, abortion, or infertility service).
- I feel I understand when in my career would be a good time to start a family.
- After returning from maternity, paternity, or primary caregiver leave, I had adequate support from my leadership while transitioning back to the workplace.
- If I were to deploy, my family members would have adequate resources on base to be taken care of. (4.1LDQ)
- The leaders in my unit/organization show a real interest in the welfare of families. (4.1LDQ)
- This unit/organization takes an active role in caring for the needs of family members of deployed unit personnel. (4.1LDQ)
- I am comfortable discussing when in my career would be a good time to start a family with leaders in my command.

#### Gender-Specific Health

- I have confidence in command medical to treat my gender-specific healthcare needs.
- I prefer to see a provider of the same gender when accessing medical care for gender-specific healthcare needs.

#### Information Privacy

- I feel my medical information will be kept confidential.
- I feel there is enough privacy offered in medical spaces.
- I know my rights regarding divulging medical information to my command.
- I feel confident that my medical information is kept private and confidential to only those who need to know.
- I feel my medical information will be kept confidential by the provider(s) at my command.
- I feel there is enough privacy offered in my command's medical space.
- I know who in my chain of command has the right to access to my medical information if my medical status results in mission impact.

### Physical Health

- I am given adequate time to maintain my physical conditioning. (4.1LDQ)
- I receive the required time to participate in personal fitness. (4.1 LDQ)
- A mandatory structured physical training program should be implemented in my unit. (4.1LDQ)
- I am given the time I need during my workday to comply with the mandatory fitness program. (4.1 LDQ)
- I feel physically worn out. (4.1LDQ)
- I get 6-8 hours of sleep a night, five nights a week.
- A lack of sleep negatively impacts my work in this unit/organization.
- I feel I have the knowledge to maintain my health and wellness to stay fit to fight.
- My command allows me adequate time to address my healthcare needs prior to deployment.

### Stress and Mental Health

- I experience a high level of stress because I serve/work in this unit/organization. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 30 days, I have been able to control important things in my life. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 30 days, I have felt confident about my ability to handle my personal problems. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 30 days, I have felt things were going my way. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 30 days, I have not felt that difficulties were piling up so high that I could not overcome them. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel emotionally worn out. (4.1LDQ)
- I feel mentally worn out. (4.1LDQ)
- While performing my work duties, I am able to press on and adapt to psychologically challenging work situations while still maintaining my sense of confidence. (DEOCS 4.1)
- My immediate supervisor can recognize when I'm down without asking me.
- People I work with are well-trained to recognize the signs of depression, suicidal thoughts, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (4.1LDQ)
- Seeking help for depression, suicidal thoughts, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a sign of strength. (4.1LDQ)
- Seeking help for depression, suicidal thoughts, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) would negatively impact a member's career. (4.1LDQ)
- In the past 12 months, I have known someone in my unit/organization who has thought of suicide.
- In the past 12 months, I have known someone in my unit/organization who has attempted suicide.
- In the past 12 months, I have known someone in my unit/organization who has died by suicide.
- I know what actions to take if someone expresses a desire to do harm to themselves or others. (4.1LDQ)
- If needed, I could find/identify my Military & Family Life Counselor.
- I know who at least one of my Master Resilience Training Reps are and I could contact them if I needed to.

### Section VI. Military Service Academies

- Cadets/Midshipmen are hazed prior to being accepted by peers.  
*Hazing Definition: Pressuring members to engage in non-mission-relevant behaviors that can at times be degrading, humiliating, hazardous, and/or dangerous as a condition of acceptance into the group, or rites of passage such as promotion in rank.*

- Cadets/Midshipmen are pressured by peers to participate in potentially dangerous activities (for example, forced consumption of alcohol, vile substances, and paddling) not related to the Academy's mission.
- Cadets/Midshipmen are pressured by peers to engage in potentially destructive activities (for example, vandalism) that are not related to the Academy's mission.
- The Academy provides clear definitions of what constitutes appropriate internet behaviors.
- The sending or posting of aggressive, intimidating, and/or tormenting comments using electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites, occurs at the Academy.
- I would report a cadet/midshipman who was engaged in Cyberbullying.  
*Cyberbullying definition: The sending or posting of aggressive, intimidating, and/or tormenting comments using electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.*
- The Academy would take appropriate action against an individual who participates in Cyberbullying.  
*Cyberbullying definition: The sending or posting of aggressive, intimidating, and/or tormenting comments using electronic technology such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites*
- Certain students are excessively teased to the point where they are unable to defend themselves.
- Certain students are frequently reminded of small errors or mistakes they have made in an effort to belittle them.
- Certain students are publicly humiliated in an effort to belittle them.
- Seeking help for depression, suicidal thoughts, or other psychological issues is a sign of strength.
- Cadets/Midshipmen are well trained to recognize the signs of depression, suicidal thoughts, or other psychological issues in their peers.
- Seeking help for extreme dieting, anorexia, bingeing, bulimia, or compulsive exercise is a sign of strength.
- College program and scholarship midshipmen are treated equally by the professional staff.
- Sexual harassment does not occur in my company/squadron.  
*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*
- Cadet/Midshipman leadership plays an active role in the prevention of sexual harassment.  
*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*
- My company/squadron permanent party leadership would adequately respond to allegations of sexual harassment.  
*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*
- Sexual harassment by cadets/midshipmen does not occur in the academic environment.  
*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*
- Sexual harassment by faculty members does not occur in the academic environment.

*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*

- My instructors/professors would adequately respond to allegations of sexual harassment.  
*Sexual Harassment definition: Unwelcome behaviors of a sexual nature that create a hostile work environment, and/or that include quid pro quo ("something for something") solicitations for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., the harasser not revealing an incriminating secret, negatively evaluating the cadet/midshipman's performance, etc.)*
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by a same year peer cadet/midshipman.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by a cadet/midshipman company/squadron leader.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by an upper class cadet/midshipman not in a company/squadron leadership position
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by a Senior Enlisted Company/Squadron Leader.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by an Officer Company/Squadron Leader.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by an Academy Faculty Member.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by an Academy Staff Member.
- I have personally witnessed teasing, belittling, and/or humiliating behaviors by an Athletic Coach/Staff Member.
- If I reported a faculty member for misconduct, I would receive negative academic outcomes (for example, poor evaluations, opportunities for leadership would suffer, and unfair grades) .
- If I reported an athletic coach or staff member for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes from my coaches (for example, less playing time and opportunities for participating in athletic events would suffer) .
- If I reported an athletic coach or staff member for misconduct, I would experience negative social outcomes (for example, being the center of gossip or rumors, ignored, and bullied).
- Discrimination based on gender identity occurs at the Academy.
- Within the past 12 months, I have personally experienced an incident of gender identity discrimination at my Service Academy.
- Discrimination based on race/national origin/color occurs at the Academy.
- Discrimination based on religion occurs at the Academy.
- Discrimination based on sexual orientation occurs at the Academy.
- Female cadets/midshipmen are treated fairly.
- Male cadets/midshipmen are treated fairly.
- I feel safe from being sexually assaulted by a cadet/midshipman in my class year.
- I feel safe from being sexually assaulted by an upper-class cadet/midshipman.
- I feel safe from being sexually assaulted in Academy dorms/living areas.
- I feel safe from being sexually assaulted on the Academy campus.
- I feel safe from being sexually assaulted off the Academy campus.
- My permanent party chain of command actively discourages sexist comments and behaviors.
- My permanent party chain of command provides sexual assault prevention and response training that interests and engages me.

- My permanent party chain of command encourages cadets/midshipmen to assist others in situations at risk for sexual assault or other harmful behavior.
- My permanent party chain of command publicizes sexual assault reporting resources (for example, Sexual Assault Response Coordinator contact information, Victim Advocate contact information, awareness posters, and sexual assault hotline phone number).
- My permanent party chain of command publicizes the restricted (confidential) reporting option for sexual assault.
- My permanent party chain of command encourages victims to report sexual assault.
- My permanent party chain of command creates an environment where victims feel comfortable reporting sexual assault.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would take the report seriously.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would keep knowledge of the report limited to those with a need to know.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would take steps to protect the safety of the person making the report.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would support the person making the report.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would take corrective action to address factors that may have led to the sexual assault.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, Cadets/Midshipmen would support the person making the report.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the chain of command would take steps to protect the safety of the person accused of sexual assault.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the peer review rankings of the person making the report would suffer.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, cadets/midshipmen would label the person making the report a troublemaker.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the alleged offender(s) or their friends would retaliate against the person making the report.
- If someone reported a sexual assault to your current permanent party chain of command, the academic career of the person making the report would suffer.
- If I were to experience sexual assault in the future, I would trust the Academy to protect my privacy.
- If I were to experience sexual assault in the future, I would trust the Academy to ensure my safety following the incident.
- If I were to experience sexual assault in the future, I would trust the Academy to treat me with dignity and respect.
- During the current academic program year, I observed a situation that I believe was, or could have led to, a sexual assault.
- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, cadets/midshipmen engage in unauthorized/underage drinking.
- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, unauthorized/underage drinking is a problem at the Academy.
- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, consumption is accepted in the cadet/midshipman culture.
- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.

- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, unauthorized drinking is condoned by my sponsor.
- From what you have personally witnessed or experienced while attending the Academy, cadets/midshipmen engage in binge drinking (for example, consuming four or more drinks/shots/beers in less than two hours).
- Within the past 12 months, I have personally experienced an incident of racial/national origin/color discrimination at my Service Academy.
- Within the past 12 months, I have personally experienced an incident of gender (sex) discrimination at my Service Academy.
- Within the past 12 months, I have personally experienced an incident of religious discrimination at my Service Academy.
- Within the past 12 months, I have personally experienced an incident of sexual orientation discrimination at my Service Academy.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I *filed a formal complaint* through my organization's EO representative.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I informally reported the incident through my organization's EO representative *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I reported the incident to a superior in my chain of command *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I reported the incident to an Academy faculty/staff member *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I confronted the individual who committed the act *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of discrimination, I did not report the incident to anyone.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I filed a formal complaint through my EO/SHARP representative.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I informally reported the incident through my EO/SHARP representative *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I reported the incident to a superior in my chain of command *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I reported the incident to a faculty/staff member *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I confronted the individual who committed the act *without filing a formal complaint*.
- After experiencing an incident of sexual harassment, I did not report the incident to anyone.

## Short Answer Questions

### Section I. Work/Academy Experience

#### Deployment/Post Deployment

- What worries you about return from deployment?
- If you could CHANGE one thing about this deployment, what would it be? (4.1 SAQ)
- How can leadership better support the deployment process? (4.1 SAQ)
- If you could MAINTAIN one thing about this deployment, what would it be? (4.1 SAQ)

- What are your biggest concerns as you prepare to deploy? (4.1 SAQ)
- What is the one thing you like LEAST about this deployment? (4.1 SAQ)
- What is the one thing you like MOST about this deployment? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Education

- How would you characterize the time and opportunity you are provided to pursue military education? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the time and opportunity you are provided to pursue personal education? (4.1 SAQ)
- How can the unit/organization assist you with completing the next military education you are scheduled to complete? (4.1 SAQ)
- How can the unit/organization assist you with pursuing personal education that you are hoping to complete? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Engagement and Morale

- How much do you feel like a valued member of the team? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the morale of the civilian staff of this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the morale of the military members of this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- The greatest morale-enhancing action leadership could make at this unit/organization would be: (4.1 SAQ)
- What changes does this unit/organization need to improve morale? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you see as the most significant factor impacting morale at this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- Are you proud to be a member of this unit/organization? Please explain.
- How would you rate your level of job satisfaction (low, average, high) and why?

#### OPTEMPO

- How does the balance between work and liberty hours affect your quality of life? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe your experiences with Base Support Services? (4.1 SAQ)
- The most valuable feature of Base Support Services is: (4.1 SAQ)
- What is the quality of life in the barracks? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- What one thing would you change about Base Support Services? (4.1 SAQ)
- What one thing would you make sure Base Support Services continues to provide? (4.1 SAQ)
- How has the unit's current OPTEMPO impacted you professionally? (4.1 SAQ)
- How has the unit's current OPTEMPO impacted your personal life? (4.1 SAQ)
- What ONE change would you make that you feel would improve the unit's OPTEMPO issues? (4.1 SAQ)
- What ONE thing about the unit's OPTEMPO would you NOT want to change? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Physical Work Area

- If you could make one facility improvement, what would it be? (4.1 SAQ)
- What would you suggest to improve the parking situation? (4.1 SAQ)
- What are the things that bring you the most satisfaction & least satisfaction working at your workstation?
- What would you change about the current food service? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Recognition

- How are your contributions to the unit/organization's mission recognized? (4.1 SAQ)
- How much are your contributions to the unit/organization's mission appreciated? Please explain.



- How are you recognized for your performance? (4.1 SAQ)
- What type of performance feedback do you receive from your chain of command? Describe whether it has been beneficial, and why. (4.1 SAQ)
- How much does your supervisor value, support and encourage your ideas for improvement? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)

#### Resources and Support

- What type of training would you like to see available to you in the next fiscal year? (4.1 SAQ)
- How often do you receive Leader Development Training within your command?
- From the time you first learned of your assignment until 30 days after your arrival, were you provided with the resources you needed to be successful? Why or why not?
- Do you get sufficient time and resources to accomplish your assigned tasks? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- What can be done to help you better perform your work? (4.1 SAQ)
- What things keep you from performing your work well? (4.1 SAQ)
- What things help you perform your work well? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe your experience with your check-in procedures when you first arrived at this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe your experience with your sponsor when you arrived at this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- Describe how the unit/organization encourages or discourages growth/advancement. (4.1 SAQ)
- What factors contribute to your decision whether or not to pursue a career in the Service? (4.1 SAQ)
- How important do you feel your daily duties are to this unit/organization's mission? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- Briefly describe how Bridge Chats have improved your organization's climate.

#### Retention

- Do you have plans to stay in the military after your current term? Why or why not?
- If you could choose to stay in this unit/organization, would you? Why or why not?
- What can be done to motivate you to continue serving in this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- What are some of the considerations you make when thinking about your intent to stay in the military?
- What would your advice be to someone seeking civilian employment here? (4.1 SAQ)
- What would your advice be to someone seeking military orders here? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Training

- How would you characterize the unit/organization's support of formalized training (billet-related and professional)? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the availability of small unit training? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the quality of small unit training? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the value of small unit training? (4.1 SAQ)
- What recommendations would you offer to improve unit/organization support of formalized training? (4.1 SAQ)
- What type of training would you like to see available to you in the next couple of years? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe your experience with the unit's Mentorship Program? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you recommend to improve the unit's Mentorship Program? (4.1 SAQ)
- What is the best feature of the unit's Mentorship Program? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Unit Challenges and Improvements

- What is the ONE quality of life issue that affects you and how would you improve it?
- What do you see as the most significant improvements made in your unit/organization in the last year?
- What do you see as the most significant challenges facing your unit/organization? Please list specifics, location (if needed) and how we can improve or fix it.
- What do you see as the most significant challenge currently facing this unit right now? What would you recommend to address this challenge? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you see as the most significant challenge facing this unit during the next year? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you see as the most significant challenge facing this unit over the next five years? What would you recommend to address this challenge? (4.1 SAQ)
- How have changes (positive or negative) at this unit/organization during the past year impacted you? (4.1 SAQ)
- What one thing about our unit/organization would you want to change? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you know about this unit/organization that leadership does not know, but should? (4.1 SAQ)
- Which inter-department relationships enhance your mission and why? (4.1 SAQ)
- Which inter-department relationships negatively impact your mission and why? (4.1 SAQ)
- Explain how you feel your responses on this survey will impact your unit/organization. (4.1 SAQ)

#### Unit Climate

- How is the overall climate of this unit/organization, compared to one year ago? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- What three change(s) would you make that you feel would most improve the unit's/organization's climate? (4.1 SAQ)
- What climate issue does this unit/organization most need to improve? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Work Center

- How would you describe the level of professionalism in your work center/department? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- In a few words, how would you describe your workplace? (4.1 SAQ)
- What issues do you feel need to be addressed in your work center/department? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the way time is utilized to complete tasks in your work area? (4.1 SAQ)

### Section II. Leadership

#### Commander/Leader, Immediate Supervisor, and Senior NCO

- What training or development would you give your immediate supervisor to make them better?
- What is ONE thing that leadership can do for you to make your workplace better?
- How effectively do leaders in this unit/organization use your time?
- Do you feel the leadership support provided assures your safety at your workstation? Why or why not?
- What is the ONE thing that leadership can do for you that they currently do not do?
- Do you feel that your chain of command micromanages? If yes, please provide an example. (4.1 SAQ)
- How effectively do commanders/leaders deal with conflicts or difficulties within the unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the way leadership within your department treats its members? (4.1 SAQ)

- How would you describe the example set by your unit's/organization's middle managers? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the example set by your unit's/organization's top leaders? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the way leadership deals with conflict when it occurs within the unit? (4.1 SAQ)
- How much does fraternization create problems at this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the way NCOs in this unit interact with junior enlisted service members? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the way officers in this unit interact with enlisted service members? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Communication

- Describe how information is communicated from senior leadership to all levels of the unit/organization. (4.1 SAQ)
- How has communication changed in the unit/organization since last year? (4.1 SAQ)
- How effective is communication within this unit? How could it be improved? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the flow of information at this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you feel about expressing your opinion to leadership concerning unit/organization issues? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you improve the communication processes in the unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- If communication breaks down in this unit/organization, where do you see it happening? (4.1 SAQ)
- What one thing would you change to improve communication? (4.1 SAQ)
- Are there any issues that you would NOT be comfortable bringing to your advisor? What steps could be taken to make you feel more comfortable?

#### Trust in Leadership

- How much do you trust the senior leadership at the unit? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- Can you describe an example where leadership has failed you? (4.1 SAQ)

### Section III. Behavior and Personal Experience

#### Discrimination and Harassment

- Please describe anything that has been said while at work that offended you or made you uncomfortable. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think age discrimination is in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think disability discrimination is in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think racial discrimination is in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think religious discrimination is in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think gender discrimination is in the unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How serious a problem do you think sexual harassment is in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)

- If you experienced discrimination or sexual harassment but did not report it, why did you choose not to report it? (4.1 SAQ)
- To whom would you feel comfortable reporting an act of discrimination or sexual harassment (for example, your commander/leader, immediate supervisor, other leadership) and why? (4.1 SAQ)
- What do you see as the most prominent form of discrimination in this unit/organization? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- What kinds of inappropriate or offensive conduct have you witnessed while assigned to this unit? (4.1 SAQ)

#### Diversity and Inclusion

- Have you participated in small group discussions regarding diversity, inclusion & belonging? If so, did you find the discussion beneficial? Please explain.
- How can you and/or leadership strengthen diversity, inclusion & belonging and equal opportunity?
- How committed is your leadership to creating an environment of human respect and inclusion? Please explain.
- What is your impression of the equal opportunity policies at this unit/organization? (4.1 SAQ)
- What is your leadership doing well in terms of diversity and inclusion?
- What changes should your leadership make to better support diversity and inclusion?

#### Fairness

- Can you provide any recent examples of favoritism or discrimination you have witnessed? What actions did you take? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the fairness of the unit/organization's disciplinary actions? (4.1 SAQ)
- How fair do you see the Individual Augmented selection process? Please explain. (4.1 SAQ)
- How well does the unit/organization hold people accountable for their performance? (4.1 SAQ)  
Do you feel that there is any unfairness with billet assignments, fitness reports, or awards? Please explain.

#### Respect

- How would you describe leaderships' commitment to creating an environment of human respect and dignity? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you describe the level of respect higher level leadership provides your department's members? (4.1 SAQ)
- Please describe any incidents where members of the unit/organization acted disrespectfully to subordinates. (4.1 SAQ)
- Please describe any incidents where members of the unit/organization acted disrespectfully to superiors. (4.1 SAQ)

### Section IV. Health

#### Access to Care

- How would you characterize the medical care obtained from off-base? (4.1 SAQ)
- How would you characterize the medical care obtained from on-base providers? (4.1 SAQ)

#### COVID-19

- Please give me at least 3 things you think this unit/organization is doing well in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and at least 3 things we could improve on. Please be specific.
- How do you feel about the actions taken by your leadership in response to COVID-19?
- Has your command/leader effectively communicated COVID-19 guidance? If not, what could have been done better/different?
- Due to COVID-19, do you have the proper resources required? If not, what do you need?
- Do you believe your commander/leader is doing everything possible to protect you from COVID-19?

#### Family Planning and Support

- Where do you go for questions related to contraception, family planning (such as information on adoption, abortion, or infertility services), and operational responsibilities?
- Explain how the support (or lack of support) you received from your command related to family and pregnancy planning changed your decision to reenlist/remain commissioned.
- Does the Military provide access to adequate childcare for your family's needs? If not, please explain what is needed from your perspective.
- How do you access gender-specific medical care (contraceptive counseling, vasectomies, etc.) when you need it?
- Has the support you received from your command related to family and pregnancy planning changed your decision to reenlist/remain commissioned? Please explain.

#### Gender-Specific Health

- How do you access gender-specific medical care when you need it?
- Do you feel as though command leadership has sufficient knowledge of gender-specific health needs to maintain your readiness? Please explain.

#### Stress and Mental Health

- Briefly list the sources of job-related stress you experience, from the greatest source to the least. (4.1 SAQ)
- What are the main causes of stress for you in your unit/organization?



# Appendix P. Process for Submitting Customizable Survey Bank Questions

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## DEOCS Portal: Updates to the Custom Question “Bank”

10/22/2020

### Question Bank

The DEOCS team recognizes that adding customized questions to the DEOCS is a feature valued by commanders, organization leaders, and EO professionals. Due to DoD guidance (DoDM 8910.01, DoDI 8910.01, and DoDI 1100.13) the DEOCS team had to change the process used to add questions. When initiating a DEOCS through the new online DEOCS portal, you will be asked to select up to 10 multiple-choice and 5 short answer questions from a “bank” of over 400 pre-approved questions. This bank provides questions that cover a wide selection of topics of interest to commanders, organization leaders, and EO professionals (available for download at <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>).

### Adding Questions

To ensure that the bank of questions meets the changing needs of the Force, the DEOCS team has developed a process to regularly review and add new questions to the bank that complies with DoD regulatory requirements. Commanders, DoD organization leaders, EO professionals, and survey administrators can submit questions or topic areas to the DEOCS team to be considered for addition to the customizable bank. Once a quarter, the DEOCS team will review the submitted questions and topic areas and add questions to the customizable bank.

Some questions will be added to the bank as they are submitted. Others questions will be edited by the DEOCS team to ensure all DEOCS questions conforms to industry best practices, DEOCS standards, and DoD policy. If you would rather suggest a topic area (rather than a specific question) for consideration, the DEOCS team of survey professionals can write appropriate DEOCS questions for that topic. Questions that are redundant with existing DEOCS questions, are not applicable across the Force, or that do not meet regulatory requirements set forth by the DoD Office of People Analytics, DoD Human Subjects Review, and DoD Privacy Review, may be rejected.

To have your question or topic area considered for addition to the DEOCS, please fill out the form here: <https://www.dodsurveys.mil/EFM/se/074A97156FBE5EFA>

### Response

After each quarterly review, the DEOCS team will send an email announcing decisions on all submitted questions or themes. Submissions will receive either “Concur” (question or topic area added to the DEOCS) or “Non-Concur” (questions or topic areas not added to the DEOCS). Concurred items will include any edits that the DEOCS team made to the suggested question or questions developed for suggested topics. Non-Concurred suggestions will include a reason for non-concurrence. The decisions

**DEOCS Portal: Updating Custom Question Bank**

represented on the excel sheet and sent out from the DEOCS team are final and there is no opportunity for appeal.

**Schedule**

The schedule for submitting custom questions for consideration and review is below.

**First update- Questions must be received by November 25th 2020**

**Second update – Questions must be received by February 25th 2021**

**Third update – Questions must be received by May 25th 2021**

**Fourth update- Questions must be received by August 25th 2021**

<b>Cut-off Date for Suggestions</b>	<b>Date new items are added to the custom bank</b>
11/25/2021	1/25/2021
2/25/2021	4/25/2021
5/25/2021	7/25/2021
8/25/2021	10/25/2021

**References**

Department of Defense (June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014) *DoD Information Collections Manual: Procedures for DoD Internal Information Collections* (DoDM 8910.01)

Department of Defense (June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014) *Information Collection and Reporting* (DoDI 8910.01)

Department of Defense (January 15<sup>th</sup> 2015) *DoD Surveys* (DoDI 1100.13)

Peterson, R. A. (2000). *Constructing effective questionnaires*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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# Appendix Q. DEOCS 5.0 Survey Communications

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System to Participant: Introduction Email (Sent once)

Subject Line: Your DEOCS is Now Available

Friendly-From Name: Department of Defense–DEOCS

ATTENTION: Your DEOCS is now available at [SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS](https://SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS)

As you may have heard from your leadership, it is time for your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] to take the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS). Unit commanders and organization leaders are required to conduct a DEOCS of their [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] at least once a year. The DEOCS is your chance to confidentially provide feedback and raise issues that concern you.

To take the DEOCS, go to: [SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS](https://SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS)

The DEOCS is considered official business meaning you can take the DEOCS while on duty or during the workday using any computer or mobile device, including your smartphone.

Your DEOCS responses will be kept completely confidential and your participation is voluntary. The DEOCS provides your leadership information about your entire [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] and not you personally. No one in your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy], including your coworkers and your immediate supervisor, will know how you personally respond to any DEOCS question.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response,

Dr. Ashlea Klahr  
Director of Health and Resilience Research  
Department of Defense Office of People Analytics

In accordance with DoD Instruction 8910.01, all data collection in the Department must be licensed and show that license as a Report Control Symbol (RCS) with an expiration date. The RCS for this survey is DD-P&R-2338, exp. January 31, 2024. All DEOCS data is protected by a federal Certificate of Confidentiality issued by the National Institutes of Health which provides the highest level of protection of survey data available under federal law. If you have any questions about the DEOCS, please contact your DEOCS administrator, [ADMINISTRATOR NAME], at [ADMINISTRATOR EMAIL].

System to Participant: Reminder Email (Sent every 6 days, until end or extended)

-----  
 Subject line: REMINDER: Take the DEOCS before time runs out  
 -----

Friendly-From Name: Department of Defense–DEOCS  
 -----

I am writing to remind you to complete your Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS).

The DEOCS provides you a unique opportunity to give your senior leaders confidential feedback on the working climate in your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] and the effectiveness of your leadership.

Go to [SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS](https://SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS) to take the DEOCS.

When you take the DEOCS, you are adding your voice to others in your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] who have already responded. You can take the DEOCS using any computer or mobile device, including your smartphone. Your DEOCS can be completed at any time. Because the DEOCS is considered **official business** by the Department of Defense, you can take the DEOCS while on duty or during the workday.

**The DEOCS is secure and completely confidential.** No one within your chain of command, including your supervisor, commander, or other senior leaders will know how you respond to any DEOCS questions. Your DEOCS is only open for a limited time. Participation is voluntary, but to have your voice heard, we need to hear from you soon.

I appreciate you taking the time to complete the DEOCS. If you have any questions about the DEOCS, please contact your DEOCS administrator, [ADMINISTRATOR NAME], at [ADMINISTRATOR EMAIL].

Thank you,

Dr. Ashlea Klahr  
 Director of Health and Resilience Research  
 Department of Defense Office of People Analytics

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System to Participant: Extension Reminder Email (Sent if extended)

Subject line: FINAL REMINDER: Take the DEOCS before time runs out

Friendly-From Name: Department of Defense–DEOCS

**ATTENTION: YOUR DEOCS IS PAST DUE**

I am writing to remind you to complete your Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS). Because your feedback is critically important, the deadline for you to complete your DEOCS has been extended. Time is running out.

The DEOCS provides you a unique opportunity to give your senior leaders confidential feedback on the working climate in your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] and the effectiveness of your leadership. This is your final chance.

Go to [SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS](https://SurveysDRC.com/DEOCS) to take the DEOCS.

When you take the DEOCS, you are adding your voice to others in your [unit | organization | Military Service Academy] who have already responded. You can take the DEOCS using any computer or mobile device, including your smartphone. Your DEOCS can be completed at any time. Because the DEOCS is considered **official business** by the Department of Defense, you can take the DEOCS while on duty or during the workday.

**The DEOCS is secure and completely confidential.** No one within your chain of command, including your supervisor, commander, or other senior leaders will know how you respond to any DEOCS questions. Your DEOCS is only open for a limited time. Participation is voluntary, but to have your voice heard, we need to hear from you soon.

I appreciate you taking the time to complete the DEOCS. If you have any questions about the DEOCS, please contact your DEOCS administrator, [ADMINISTRATOR NAME], at [ADMINISTRATOR EMAIL].

Thank you,

Dr. Ashlea Klahr  
Director of Health and Resilience Research  
Department of Defense Office of People Analytics

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Template email for commanders, leaders, or DEOCS administrators:

---

Below is an email template that you can use to send to people in your unit to inform them about the DEOCS.

---

- The text in **BLUE** is required. Do not edit this text.
  - The text in **RED** must be edited so that the communication is accurate for your unit.
  - Feel free to make changes to the text in black so that the communication is accurate and sounds like it comes from you. Write in your own voice.
  - Do not forget to add your name to the bottom before sending.
- 

Dear **[Soldier/Sailor/Marine/Airman]**,

Today, I need your help. It is time for our unit to take our Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS). **[Because I recently took over command, I am required to conduct an assessment of our unit.] OR [Each year I am required to conduct an assessment of our unit.]** It is also important to me that you are given an opportunity to bring up work issues that concern you the most. While **the DEOCS is voluntary**, it provides you with this opportunity.

**[Put in instructions from survey administrator on how to access and complete the DEOCS.]**

The DEOCS is a resource for you to provide confidential feedback on many of the factors that affect you and our workplace. As you complete the DEOCS, please answer the questions honestly, whether your answer is positive or negative. I only receive information about the unit as a whole. I will not be able to see how you, or anyone else in our unit, answer any specific questions.

This survey will help me understand issues facing our unit and plan actions to ensure we are moving in the right direction. **[I will debrief you and the unit on the results of the DEOCS after the survey is complete. This way, we can all learn from this effort.]**

**[Consider saying something personal here—something specific and special from you to your unit. We find that personalized communications are more likely to be read, respected, and acted on.]**

Thank you in advance for participating in this survey. **[Add a personal “Thank You” message here.]**

**[Commanders enter in their own signature block]**



# Appendix R. Toxic Leadership

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## DEOCS: Toxic Leadership Additional Analysis

### Data Sources

Unfortunately, no prior OPA survey included a measure of toxic leadership. To assess toxic leadership items and their relationship to retention (see Chapter 6 for a review of the evidence), we collected pilot data that included toxic leadership items and retention by leveraging the DEOCS 4.1 research block.

### Item Reduction Analysis

#### Toxic Leadership and Retention.

We selected items from the Toxic Leadership Short scale (Schmidt & Hanges, 2012; <https://hangeslab.umd.edu/andrew-schmidts-toxic-leadership-scale/>) to assess toxic leadership. We removed one item based on the limit of 15 possible items to include on the DEOCS 4.1 research block and the need to include an item assessing retention intentions. From the short scale, we removed "varies in his/her degree of approachability" because this item has the lowest loading on a factor (find the factor analyses here: <https://hangeslab.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/schmidt-and-hanges-toxic-leadership-scale.pdf>). We collected data via the DEOCS research block, and then analyzed these toxic leadership items in relation to retention intentions. The toxic leadership items we tested and their wording are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*Toxic Leadership Variable Name and Item Wording*

Variable Name	Item Text
Q1	My current supervisor thinks that he/she is more capable than others.
Q2	My current supervisor believes that he/she is an extraordinary person.
Q3	My current supervisor will only offer assistance to people who can help him/her get ahead.
Q4	My current supervisor reminds subordinates of their past mistakes and failures.
Q5	My current supervisor holds subordinates responsible for things outside their job descriptions.
Q6	My current supervisor publicly belittles subordinates.
Q7	My current supervisor drastically changes his/her demeanor when his/her supervisor is present.
Q8	My current supervisor allows his/her current mood to define the climate of the workplace.
Q9	My current supervisor controls how subordinates complete their tasks.
Q10	My current supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement.
Q11	My current supervisor accepts credit for successes that do not belong to him/her.
Q12	My current supervisor determines all decisions in the unit whether they are important or not.
Q13	My current supervisor expresses anger at subordinates for unknown reasons.
Q14	My current supervisor does not permit subordinates to approach goals in new ways.

DEOCS: Survey Portal 101

First, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals). There were no noticeable differences in responding between items. Thus, we did not remove any items based on descriptive statistics. Frequencies are presented in Table 2 and the means and standard deviations are presented in Table 3.

**Table 2.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Toxic Leadership Items*

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Q1	714	11.56	1193	19.31	2207	35.72	1309	21.18	756	12.23
Q2	528	8.55	930	15.05	2571	41.61	1398	22.63	752	12.17
Q3	1793	29.02	1704	27.58	1521	24.62	666	10.78	495	8.01
Q4	1513	24.49	1798	29.10	1695	27.43	742	12.01	431	6.98
Q5	1245	20.15	1612	26.09	1925	31.15	938	15.18	459	7.43
Q6	2295	37.14	1739	28.14	1415	22.90	420	6.80	310	5.02
Q7	1880	30.43	1747	28.27	1503	24.32	578	9.35	471	7.62
Q8	1735	28.08	1700	27.51	1623	26.27	666	10.78	455	7.36
Q9	1266	20.49	1673	27.08	1947	31.51	853	13.80	440	7.12
Q10	1661	26.88	1685	27.27	1698	27.48	713	11.54	422	6.83
Q11	1979	32.03	1779	28.79	1582	25.60	443	7.17	396	6.41
Q12	1497	24.23	1710	27.67	1958	31.63	633	10.24	381	6.17
Q13	2224	35.99	1801	29.15	1479	23.94	380	6.15	295	4.77
Q14	1993	32.25	1875	30.34	1637	26.49	364	5.89	310	5.02

**Table 3.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Toxic Leadership Items*

Item	Mean	SD
Q1	3.03	1.16
Q2	3.15	1.09
Q3	2.41	1.23
Q4	2.48	1.18
Q5	2.64	1.18
Q6	2.14	1.14
Q7	2.35	1.22
Q8	2.42	1.21
Q9	2.60	1.16
Q10	2.44	1.19
Q11	2.27	1.17
Q12	2.46	1.14
Q13	2.15	1.12
Q14	2.21	1.11

DEOCS: Survey Portal 101

Next, we examined correlations between the toxic leadership items (see Table 4). With the exception of item Q1, all other items were highly correlated (e.g.,  $r > .50$ ), suggesting content overlap between items. However, we included all items into the weighted linear regression analysis predicting retention.

**Table 4.**  
*Correlations Between Toxic Leadership Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Q1													
2. Q2	0.69												
3. Q3	0.37	0.33											
4. Q4	0.37	0.32	0.59										
5. Q5	0.36	0.33	0.52	0.61									
6. Q6	0.30	0.25	0.57	0.66	0.55								
7. Q7	0.31	0.27	0.60	0.65	0.56	0.74							
8. Q8	0.33	0.28	0.57	0.65	0.56	0.73	0.78						
9. Q9	0.34	0.30	0.52	0.58	0.55	0.61	0.64	0.67					
10. Q10	0.37	0.33	0.59	0.63	0.56	0.70	0.72	0.71	0.69				
11. Q11	0.32	0.27	0.61	0.61	0.54	0.70	0.75	0.72	0.62	0.74			
12. Q12	0.32	0.30	0.55	0.57	0.55	0.61	0.65	0.65	0.67	0.67	0.68		
13. Q13	0.27	0.22	0.56	0.62	0.53	0.76	0.73	0.75	0.60	0.69	0.74	0.66	
14. Q14	0.29	0.23	0.57	0.61	0.53	0.71	0.72	0.70	0.65	0.68	0.74	0.69	0.78

Next, we examined the relationship between each of the toxic leadership items and the STO of interest, in this case retention intentions, in a linear regression. We controlled for the following demographic variables: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity. Only items Q8 (Coef =  $-.09$ ,  $p = .012$ ) and Q14 (Coef =  $-.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted retention intention. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Toxic Leadership Predicting Retention Intention*

Predictor	Coef.	SE	p value
Q1	-.01	.03	.690
Q2	.04	.03	.154
Q3	-.00	.02	.918
Q4	-.04	.03	.141
Q5	-.02	.03	.379
Q6	-.01	.03	.822
Q7	-.02	.03	.473
Q8	-.09	.03	.012
Q9	.01	.03	.782
Q10	-.01	.03	.730
Q11	.02	.03	.570
Q12	.04	.03	.150

DEOCS: Survey Portal 101

Predictor	Coef.	SE	p value
Q13	-.05	.04	.229
Q14	-.16	.04	<.001

Note. R<sup>2</sup> = 0.10; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 6, both items Q8 (Coef = -.12, *p* < .001) and Q14 (Coef = -.18, *p* < .001) continued to significantly predict retention intention.

**Table 6.**  
*Linear Regression Analysis Summary for Toxic Leadership Predicting Retention Intention*

Predictor	Coef.	SE	p value
Q8	-.12	.03	<.001
Q14	-.18	.03	<.001

The two-item revised scale demonstrated a high level of reliability ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and was highly correlated with the fourteen-item original version of the scale ( $r = .91$ ), suggesting substantial content overlap between the revised and original scales. On the basis of these analyses, only items Q8 and Q14 were initially considered for inclusion in the new scale. Table 7 shows the items retained after item reduction analysis.

**Table 7.**  
*Toxic Leadership Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis*

Variable Name	Item Text
Q8	My current supervisor allows his/her current mood to define the climate of the workplace.
Q14	My current supervisor does not permit subordinates to approach goals in new ways.

# Appendix S. Inclusion

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## DEOCS: Inclusion Item Selection Appendix

### Inclusion

We tested items from two scales, the Workgroup Inclusion scale (Daniel et al., 2019) and Inclusive Leadership scale (Ratliff, Key-Roberts, Simmons, & Jiménez-Rodríguez, 2018) as measures of “Inclusion”, and examined them in relation to the STO of racial/ethnic harassment/discrimination.

#### *Workgroup Inclusion and Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination*

Fourteen items measuring topics related to perceptions of inclusion within a workgroup that were included in the 2017 WEOA (Daniel et al., 2019) were assessed in relation to the STO for experiences of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination. These items and their wording are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
*2017 WEOA Inclusion Variable Name and Item Text*

Variable Name	Item Text
DIVERSITY2G	Racial slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.
DIVERSITY2H	Sexist slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.
ORGWRKA	There is very little conflict among your coworkers.
ORGWRKB	Your coworkers put in the effort required for their jobs.
ORGWRKC	The people in your work group tend to get along.
ORGWRKD	The people in your work group are willing to help each other.
ORGWRKE	You are satisfied with the relationships you have with your coworkers.
DIVERSITY2B	I feel excluded by my workgroup because I am different.
DIVERSITY2A	Coworkers are treated as valued members of the team without losing their unique identities.
DIVERSITY2C	Within my workgroup, I am encouraged to offer ideas on how to improve operations.
DIVERSITY2D	Members in my workgroup are empowered to make work-related decisions on their own.
DIVERSITY2E	Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, recognition) are fairly distributed among members of my workgroup.
DIVERSITY2F	The decision-making processes that impact my workgroup are fair.
DIVERSITY2I	I believe I can use my chain of command to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

*Note.* For DIVERSITY2A-DIVERSITY2I, the stem of this questions reads as follows: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about diversity in your workplace?” For ORGWRKA-ORGWRKE, the stem of this question reads as follows: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people you work with at your workplace?”

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for workgroup inclusion, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). Although there were some difference in means, each of the items had a similar distribution of responses. Thus, we did not remove items based on descriptive statistics. We present the frequencies in Table 2 and also examine the means and standard deviations for each item in Table 3.

**Toxic Leadership**

**Table 2.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Workgroup Inclusion Items*

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
DIVERSITY2G	3464	34.90	2124	21.40	1704	17.17	85.20	889	8.96	94.16	1165	11.74
DIVERSITY2H	3391	34.16	2109	21.25	1684	16.97	923	9.30	604	6.09	1215	12.24
ORGWRKA	544	5.48	1284	12.94	1816	13.30	3816	38.44	2449	24.67	17	0.17
ORGWRKB	406	4.09	971	9.78	1664	16.76	4188	42.19	2660	26.80	37	0.37
ORGWRKC	229	2.31	566	5.70	1582	15.94	4697	47.32	2814	28.35	38	0.38
ORGWRKD	287	2.89	552	5.56	1490	15.01	4371	44.04	3172	31.96	54	0.54
ORGWRKE	372	3.75	578	5.82	1733	17.46	4231	42.63	2978	30.00	34	0.34
DIVERSITY2B	3559	35.86	2153	21.69	1521	15.32	757	7.63	743	7.49	1193	12.02
DIVERSITY2A	142	1.43	291	2.93	1230	12.39	2927	29.49	4194	42.24	1142	11.51
DIVERSITY2C	204	2.06	362	3.65	1484	14.95	3020	30.43	3617	36.44	1239	12.48
DIVERSITY2D	215	2.17	460	4.63	1609	16.21	3179	32.03	3280	33.04	1183	11.92
DIVERSITY2E	366	3.69	508	5.12	1651	16.63	2960	29.82	3273	32.97	1168	11.77
DIVERSITY2F	272	2.74	498	5.02	1686	16.99	3091	31.14	3187	32.11	1192	12.01
DIVERSITY2I	296	2.98	303	3.05	1379	13.89	2741	27.61	4043	40.73	1164	11.73

**Table 3.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Workgroup Inclusion Items*

Item	Mean	SD
DIVERSITY2G	2.20	1.25
DIVERSITY2H	2.22	1.26
ORGWRKA	3.64	1.15
ORGWRKB	3.78	1.07
ORGWRKC	3.94	0.94
ORGWRKD	3.97	0.98
ORGWRKE	3.90	1.02
DIVERSITY2B	2.20	1.27
DIVERSITY2A	4.22	0.92
DIVERSITY2C	4.09	0.98
DIVERSITY2D	4.01	1.00
DIVERSITY2E	3.94	1.08
DIVERSITY2F	3.96	1.03
DIVERSITY2I	4.13	1.02

Next, we examined correlations between the workgroup inclusion items. As shown in Table 4, the correlations among items ranged from  $r = .15$  to  $r = .92$ , with items with similar face validity showing higher correlations. The pattern of correlations suggests potential multidimensionality. Therefore, no items were removed based on this step and all items were retained for the regression analysis.

**Toxic Leadership**

**Table 4.**  
*Correlations Between Workgroup Inclusion Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. DIVERSITY2G	-												
2. DIVERSITY2H	0.92	-											
3. ORGWRKA	-0.19	-0.19	-										
4. ORGWRKB	-0.19	-0.19	0.64	-									
5. ORGWRKC	-0.21	-0.21	0.75	0.67	-								
6. ORGWRKD	-0.21	-0.20	0.67	0.71	0.77	-							
7. ORGWRKE	-0.20	-0.21	0.68	0.67	0.74	0.77	-						
8. DIVERSITY2B	0.58	0.57	-0.17	-0.16	-0.21	-0.21	-0.23	-					
9. DIVERSITY2A	-0.24	-0.25	0.40	0.37	0.43	0.43	0.45	-0.28	-				
10. DIVERSITY2C	-0.21	-0.21	0.39	0.36	0.42	0.43	0.45	-0.23	0.66	-			
11. DIVERSITY2D	-0.16	-0.17	0.38	0.36	0.39	0.40	0.41	-0.15	0.61	0.74	-		
12. DIVERSITY2E	-0.18	-0.19	0.42	0.41	0.43	0.45	0.46	-0.19	0.64	0.70	0.70	-	
13. DIVERSITY2F	-0.18	-0.19	0.44	0.42	0.44	0.45	0.47	-0.20	0.66	0.73	0.73	0.81	-
14. DIVERSITY2I	-0.24	-0.26	0.39	0.36	0.42	0.42	0.44	-0.26	0.65	0.66	0.59	0.66	0.68

We then examined the relationship between each of the workgroup inclusion items and the STO of interest, in this case racial/ethnic discrimination, in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for demographic variables such as sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 5, only items DIVERSITY2G ( $p = .000$ ), ORGWRKA ( $p = .000$ ), ORGWRKE ( $p = .037$ ), DIVERSITY2B ( $p = .017$ ), DIVERSITY2E ( $p = .017$ ), DIVERSITY2I ( $p = .000$ ) significantly predicted racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 5.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Workgroup Inclusion Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination*

Predictor	OR	SE	p value
DIVERSITY2G	1.71	.17	.000
DIVERSITY2H	0.93	.09	.458
ORGWRKA	0.75	.05	.000
ORGWRKB	0.95	.07	.474
ORGWRKC	1.10	.10	.312
ORGWRKD	0.98	.09	.856
ORGWRKE	0.85	.07	.037
DIVERSITY2B	0.88	.05	.017
DIVERSITY2A	0.94	.07	.399
DIVERSITY2C	1.16	.10	.079
DIVERSITY2D	0.92	.08	.348
DIVERSITY2E	0.81	.07	.017
DIVERSITY2F	1.05	.16	.629
DIVERSITY2I	0.74	.05	.000

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.17$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

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As shown in Table 6, the overall model fit was the same between the two models and all items remained significant. Based on the item reduction analyses, the six workgroup inclusion items in Table 7 were retained.

**Table 6.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Workgroup Inclusion Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination*

Predictor	Odds Ratio	SE	p value
DIVERSITY2G	1.62	.08	.000
ORGWRKA	0.76	.04	.000
ORGWRKE	0.84	.05	.008
DIVERSITY2B	0.87	.04	.007
DIVERSITY2E	0.85	.05	.011
DIVERSITY2I	0.76	.05	.000

*Note.* Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> = 0.17; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

**Table 7.**  
*Workgroup Inclusion Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis*

Variable Name	Item Text
DIVERSITY2G	Racial slurs, comments, and/or jokes are used in my workplace.
ORGWRKA	There is very little conflict among your coworkers.
ORGWRKE	You are satisfied with the relationships you have with your coworkers.
DIVERSITY2B	I feel excluded by my workgroup because I am different.
DIVERSITY2E	Outcomes (e.g., training opportunities, awards, recognition) are fairly distributed among members of my workgroup.
DIVERSITY2I	I believe I can use my chain of command to address concerns about discrimination without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

*Note.* For DIVERSITY2G, DIVERSITY2E, and DIVERSITY2I, the stem of this questions reads as follows: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about diversity in your workplace?” For ORGWRKA and ORGWRKE, the stem of this question reads as follows: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people you work with at your workplace?”

***Inclusive Leadership and Racial/Ethnic Harassment/Discrimination***

A 15-item measure of inclusive leadership (Ratliff et al., 2018) was included on the 2019 WEOR and was assessed in relation to the STO for experiences of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination. These items and their wording are presented in Table 8.

**Table 81.**  
*2019 WEOR Inclusive Leadership Variable Name and Item Text*

Variable Name	Item Text
IMSUPACT2A	Checks to see if unit members are tracking information.
IMSUPACT2B	Communicates information clearly to unit members.

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IMSUPACT2C	Promotes information sharing across the unit.
IMSUPACT2D	Ensures critical information reaches the entire unit.
IMSUPACT2E	Is available to unit members to clarify tasks.
IMSUPACTA	Promotes understanding of similarities and differences among unit members.
IMSUPACTB	Urges unit members to share different views when discussing hard topics.
IMSUPACTC	Allows less popular viewpoints to be respectfully expressed.
IMSUPACTD	Urges unit members to build on other unit members' views during unit discussions.
IMSUPACTE	Acknowledges unit member ideas even if they are not included in the final decision.
IMSUPACTF	Urges unit members to think about how others might view the problem.
IMPSUPACT3A	Enforces standards equally across all unit members.
IMPSUPACT3B	Avoids showing favoritism when assigning tasks.
IMPSUPACT3C	Addresses all unit members in the same way to avoid perceptions of preferential treatment.
IMPSUPACT3D	Ensures unit members are disciplined in the same manner.

*Note.* The stem of this question reads as follows: “The next questions ask about actions that your immediate supervisor at your military job may or may not currently exhibit.”

As a first step in the item reduction analyses for inclusive leadership, we examined how frequently each of the item response options were endorsed as well as the prevalence of missing responses (refusals) and skip patterns (not applicable). Each of the items had a similar distribution of responses. Thus, we did not remove items based on descriptive statistics. We present the frequencies in Table 9 and also examine the means and standard deviations for each item in Table 10.

**Table 9.**  
*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Inclusive Leadership Items*

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
IMSUPACT2A	571	3.15	1058	5.83	2438	13.44	7896	43.52	6084	33.54	95	0.52
IMSUPACT2B	837	4.58	1287	7.09	2449	13.50	7292	40.19	6206	34.21	77	0.42
IMSUPACT2C	754	4.16	1023	5.64	2579	14.22	7193	39.65	6537	36.03	56	0.31
IMSUPACT2D	767	4.23	1083	5.97	2590	14.28	7055	38.89	6571	36.22	76	0.42
IMSUPACT2E	630	3.47	842	4.64	2486	13.70	7370	40.62	6752	37.22	62	0.34
IMSUPACTA	629	3.47	901	4.97	3349	18.46	7047	38.84	6135	33.82	81	0.45
IMSUPACTB	679	3.74	1085	5.98	3586	19.77	6760	37.26	5956	32.83	76	0.42
IMSUPACTC	717	3.95	1082	5.96	3724	20.53	6845	37.73	5714	31.50	60	0.33
IMSUPACTD	612	3.37	941	5.19	4038	22.26	6762	37.27	5686	31.34	103	0.57
IMSUPACTE	688	3.72	960	5.29	3460	19.07	7157	39.45	5802	31.98	75	0.41
IMSUPACTF	674	3.72	999	5.51	3773	20.80	6885	37.95	5743	31.66	68	0.37
IMPSUPACT3A	870	4.80	1019	5.62	2433	13.41	6789	37.42	6915	38.12	116	0.64
IMPSUPACT3B	953	5.25	1066	5.88	2805	15.46	6506	35.86	6678	36.81	134	0.74
IMPSUPACT3C	859	4.73	930	5.13	2533	13.96	6810	37.54	6914	38.11	96	0.53
IMPSUPACT3D	914	5.04	899	4.96	3213	17.71	6389	35.22	6601	36.39	126	0.69

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**Table 10.**  
*Means and Standard Deviations of Inclusive Leadership Items*

Item	Mean	SD
IMSUPACT2A	3.99	1.00
IMSUPACT2B	3.93	1.08
IMSUPACT2C	3.98	1.05
IMSUPACT2D	3.97	1.06
IMSUPACT2E	4.04	1.00
IMSUPACTA	3.95	1.02
IMSUPACTB	3.90	1.05
IMSUPACTC	3.88	1.05
IMSUPACTD	3.89	1.02
IMSUPACTE	3.91	1.03
IMSUPACTF	3.89	1.03
IMPSUPACT3A	3.99	1.09
IMPSUPACT3B	3.94	1.11
IMPSUPACT3C	4.00	1.08
IMPSUPACT3D	3.94	1.09

Next, we examined correlations between the inclusive leadership items. As shown in Table 11, all the items were highly correlated ( $r > .65$ ). When items are highly correlated it suggests that there might be redundancy in the information being captured by these items. Therefore, no items were removed based on this step and all items were retained for the regression analysis.

**Table 11.**  
*Correlations Between Inclusive Leadership Items*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. IMSUPACTA	-													
2. IMSUPACTB	0.85	-												
3. IMSUPACTC	0.81	0.85	-											
4. IMSUPACTD	0.84	0.87	0.85	-										
5. IMSUPACTE	0.82	0.84	0.85	0.87	-									
6. IMSUPACTF	0.83	0.85	0.83	0.88	0.88	-								
7. IMSUPACT2A	0.71	0.69	0.67	0.70	0.70	0.71	-							
8. IMSUPACT2B	0.73	0.71	0.7	0.72	0.73	0.73	0.83	-						
9. IMSUPACT2C	0.74	0.74	0.72	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.81	0.87	-					
10. IMSUPACT2D	0.72	0.71	0.69	0.71	0.73	0.72	0.81	0.87	0.87	-				
11. IMSUPACT2E	0.73	0.72	0.71	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.79	0.82	0.82	0.82	-			
12. IMSUPACT3A	0.77	0.73	0.73	0.74	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.76	0.76	0.75	0.75	-		
13. IMSUPACT3B	0.75	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.75	0.74	0.70	0.73	0.74	0.72	0.73	0.86	-	
14. IMSUPACT3C	0.77	0.74	0.74	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.71	0.74	0.76	0.73	0.75	0.86	0.89	-
15. IMSUPACT3D	0.76	0.74	0.73	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.71	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.74	0.87	0.86	0.89

We then examined the relationship between each of the inclusive leadership items and the STO of interest, in this case racial/ethnic discrimination, in a weighted logistic regression. We controlled for demographic variables such as sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and

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race/ethnicity. As shown in **Table 12**, only items IMSUPACT2D ( $p = .003$ ), IMSUPACT2C ( $p = .021$ ), and IMPSUPACTD ( $p = .017$ ) significantly predicted racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination. We thus removed the non-significant items from the analyses and re-ran the regression.

**Table 12.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Inclusive Leadership Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination*

Predictor	OR	SE	p value
IMSUPACT2A	1.03	.07	.595
IMSUPACT2B	1.08	.08	.269
IMSUPACT2C	1.21	.10	.021
IMSUPACT2D	.81	.06	.003
IMSUPACT2E	.89	.06	.099
IMSUPACTA	.90	.06	.131
IMSUPACTB	1.06	.09	.514
IMSUPACTC	.99	.07	.875
IMSUPACTD	.78	.08	.017
IMSUPACTE	1.14	.11	.182
IMSUPACTF	.85	.08	.084
IMPSUPACT3A	.89	.07	.132
IMPSUPACT3B	.86	.08	.099
IMPSUPACT3C	1.05	.09	.573
IMPSUPACT3D	.86	.08	.113

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.11$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

As shown in Table 13, the overall model fit was similar between the two models; however, IMPSUPACT2C was no longer significant ( $p = .253$ ) and was removed from the scale.

**Table 13.**  
*Logistic Regression Analysis Summary for Inclusive Leadership Predicting Racial/Ethnic Harassment and Discrimination*

Predictor	Odds Ratio	SE	p value
IMSUPACT2C	1.08	.08	.253
IMSUPACT2D	.76	.05	<.001
IMSUPACTD	.62	.03	<.001

*Note.* Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.10$ ; we controlled for the following demographic variables in the regression: sex, paygrade, Service, deployment status, and race/ethnicity.

We next calculated Cronbach’s alpha to demonstrate whether the shortened version of the scale had sufficient reliability. The two remaining items demonstrated a high level of reliability ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and was highly correlated with the full version of the scale ( $r = .95$ ). Based on these analyses, only items IMSUPACTD and IMSUPACT2D were retained from the item reduction analysis. We present the retained inclusive leadership items in Table 14 below.

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**Table 14.**  
*Inclusive Leadership Items Retained from Item Reduction Analysis*

Variable Name	Item Text
IMSUPACT2D	Ensures critical information reaches the entire unit.
IMSUPACTD	Urges unit members to build on other unit members' views during unit discussions.

*Note.* The stem of this question reads as follows: “The next questions ask about actions that your immediate supervisor at your military job may or may not currently exhibit.”



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