



Culture and diversity in relation to the mental and physical health of military personnel

This research theme working group will examine critical factors relating to culture and diversity in military organizations and their impact on the mental and physical health of military personnel and make recommendations for further research and collaboration in this area.

The overarching goal: to better understand the impact of culture and diversity on the health and well-being of serving and transitioning members.

It will begin with activities that give participants insights into diverse ways of defining and studying culture. Then, in small groups, participants will work with subject matter experts to discuss sub-themes:

1. **Culture Change and Diversity**
2. **Transition and Diversity**
3. **Spirituality and Identity, Well-being and Moral Injury**
4. **Soldier enhancement and transition implications (SEIOT)**

Leads:

Allan English, CD, Associate Professor of History, Queen's University

Stéphanie Bélanger, CD, Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, Interim Co-Scientific Director, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research

Pre-Forum Sun 24 Sep (1400-1700 hrs)		
1400	First Plenary (all participants)	Introduce themes and provide context - 40 min
1440	Breakout Discussion Groups	Small group discussion - 90 min
1610	Second Plenary (all participants)	Presentation of breakout discussion group results and general discussion highlights using PowerPoint [at this stage presentations should represent all views; no need to reach consensus] - 50 min
Post-Forum Wed 27 Sep (1330 – 1630)		
1330	Third Plenary (all participants)	Set stage for Post-Forum activities - 20 min
1350	Breakout Discussion Groups	Discuss what participants have learned during Forum 2017 and how they may have modified their views based on their Forum 2017 experience - 90 min
1520	Fourth Plenary (all participants)	Modify Second Plenary PPT presentation to highlight reflection and changes resulting from Forum 2017 participation. Present recommendations for future research and/or collaboration; compiled results – 70 min

Sub-theme 1: Culture Change and Diversity

Lead: Dr. Allan English, CD, Associate Professor of History, Queen's University

Context and Scope. Canada's latest defence policy statement, released in June 2017, has established achieving diversity in the CAF as a priority: "Most importantly, the Canadian Armed Forces must reflect the diversity of the country we defend. We need a military that looks like Canada." The policy statement recognizes that diversity across the Department of National Defence team, consisting of both civilians and CAF members, "increases operational effectiveness by drawing on the strengths of Canada's diverse and multicultural population."¹

In this session, we will explore these aspects of culture change and diversity:

- In a particular organization, e.g., the CAF, DND, other armed forces, or paramilitary organizations (police services, EMS, firefighters)
- Related to a particular group (e.g., linguistic, gender, age, and other unique attributes)
- Obstacles to comprehensive culture change
- Strategies to overcome obstacles to comprehensive culture change
- Other areas

The following resources are provided for participants to consult prior to the workshop:

- Canada, DND. *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*. Ottawa: Office of the Chief of the Defence Staff, [approved May 2016]. Available at <https://cimvhr.ca/resource-reports>
- Davis, Karen D. "Cultural Intelligence, Leadership and Professional Identity." In Irina Goldenberg et al., eds. *The Defence Team: Military and Civilian Partnership in the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence*. Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2015, 143-60 at http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc204/p802756_A1b.pdf.
- English, Allan. "The Impact of Canadian Military Culture on the Defence Team." In Goldenberg et al., eds. *The Defence Team*, 123-42 at http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc204/p802756_A1b.pdf.

Sub-theme 2: Transition and Diversity

Lead: David Albright, Hill Crest Foundation Endowed Chair in Mental Health at The University of Alabama School of Social Work

Context and Scope. Canada's latest defence policy statement, released in June 2017, has claimed to reinvent CAF transition: "We will transform the way the Canadian Armed Forces supports the transition of personnel, whether returning to active duty or transitioning seamlessly to post-military life and the services of Veterans Affairs Canada. And, we will create a new Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group that represents a fundamental reinvention of the way transition is managed. This Group – composed of 1,200 personnel, including specialized staff and holding positions for ill and injured – will work in collaboration with Veterans Affairs Canada to provide our people with the individualized care they need and deserve". This workshop will address transition issues from both Canadian and international perspectives.

¹ Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa, 2017), 20, 105 at <http://dgpapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>.

This discussion group will propose evidence-based research topics and avenues for further collaboration among stakeholders interested in the ways diversity, military well-being, and soldier identity affect successful transition in organizations, like armed forces, that have been traditionally resistant to change.

In this session, we will explore these aspects:

- Theoretical approaches to military to civilian life transition
- Military to civilian transition for women
- Community level efforts
- Identity

Sub-theme 3: Spiritual Dimensions of Identity, Well-being and Moral Injury

Leads: Suzette Brémault-Phillips, Associate Professor, Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta & Karl Hamner, Associate Dean for Research, University of Alabama

Context and Scope. Canada’s latest defence policy statement, released in June 2017, has established achieving wellness in the CAF as a priority: “We will favour a more comprehensive approach to care – known as “Total Health and Wellness” – and will consider psychosocial well-being in the workplace, the physical environment, and the personal health of members (including physical, mental, spiritual, and familial).” The policy statement recognizes spirituality as part of the global approach to personal health.¹ A recent Well-being Construct for Veterans Policy, Programming, and Research has also just been released, and a document titled A Focus on Well-being – A Veteran Health Strategy is in preparation.

The Challenge: How to address, assess and integrate spirituality within well-being for military personnel and veterans in a manner that upholds fundamental freedoms honoured in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and aligns with other international contexts.

Aim This discussion group will present the current state of spirituality and well-being within CAF and VAC, review findings from practice, research and scoping reviews, propose evidence-based research topics, and examine avenues for and next steps regarding further collaboration among stakeholders interested in spirituality and well-being.

In this session, we will explore these aspects of culture change and diversity:

- In what ways is spirituality important to well-being and in Force readiness, recovery (including from moral injury) and the journey across the military life course?
- How can spirituality be integrated into assessments, treatments and research across the military life course?
- What are the near future needs of CAF and VAC relative to spirituality and well-being? How might they be addressed through research, policy and programming, relative to spiritual dimensions of identity, well-being and moral injury?

Following are hyperlinks to some key publications that will nourish our discussions. Several more will follow:

¹ Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada’s Defence Policy* (Ottawa, 2017), 12 at <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>.

- [Canada's Defence Policy \(2017\)](#)
- Félix Fonséca (2013). Social and Spiritual Well-Being and Wellness: Definitions and Indicators, DGMPPRA Technical Report
- [Life After Service Survey 2016 - Executive Summary](#)
- [A Well-Being Construct for Veterans' Policy, Programming and Research \(2016\)](#)
- [Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life – A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers and Researchers \(2017\)](#)
- [Measures of spirituality for use in military contexts: a scoping review \(2016\)](#)
- [Veterans Affairs Canada Reports and Papers](#)

Pre-Forum Sun 24 Sep (1400-1700 hrs)

Sub-theme 3 Presentations

2:40-2:50	Spirituality and Well-being Working Group: Introduction (participants of the specific theme)
2:50-3:00	Presentation 1: The Royal Canadian Chaplain Service Strategy for Spiritual Health and Wellness of the Canadian Armed Forces
3:00-3:10	Presentation 2: Reflections of a Mental Health Chaplain: A Practice Review of Chaplaincy Services Offered at an Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centre
3:10-3:20	Presentation 3: Exploring the Spiritual Dimension of Health and Moral Injury: A Stakeholder Engagement to Inform Research, Policy and Practice
3:20-3:30	Presentation 4: The Value and Relevance of the Spiritual Dimension of Health and Well-being: Findings of a Literature Review and Expert Consultation
3:30-3:40	Presentation 5: Spiritual Dimensions of Health and Moral Injury: Current State of Research
3:40-4:10	Breakout Discussion Groups

Post-Forum Wed 27 Sep (1330-1630 hrs)

Sub-theme 3

1:40-2:00	Introduction - review of Forum 2017 - what has been heard and said during forum
2:00-3:00	Breakout Discussion Groups - small group discussion of what participants have learned during Forum 2017 and how they may have modified their views based on their experience
3:00-3:20	The Royal Canadian Chaplain Service Strategy – Setting the direction
3:20-4:30	Fourth Plenary (all participants of the Culture and Diversity RTWG)

Sub-theme 4: Military Well-Being and Soldier Identity (SEIOT)

Leads: Stefanie von Hlatky, Associate Professor, Political Science, Queen's University and the Director of the Queen's Centre for International and Defence Policy (CIDP) and Maj Christian Breede' PhD, Associate Professor, Political Sciences, RMCC

Introduction. Below you will find information designed to make your participation in the SEIOT more rewarding. If numbers permit, we will subdivide this discussion group into smaller groups to focus on specific themes. Therefore, we invite you to answer the questions at the end of this document so that we may organize the activities to meet your needs and expectations. Following these questions will be the proposed activities and agenda.

Context and Scope. That idea that technology is advancing rapidly has become almost a cliché, but one that remains true nonetheless. Indeed, the advance has been such that technology and more importantly, the new and enhanced capability that it affords is now outstripping policies that are meant to guide and regulate its use. From climate change to cyber security, change has become the new constant and this change is now impacting upon

what it means to be a soldier. Itself not a new concept, optimizing and enhancing soldier performance has been an object of study for centuries. Innovations in fitness, mindfulness, body armour, prophylaxes, and prosthetics, are but only a few examples of such advances in optimization and enhancement, however given the increased pace of change, implications for both operations and transition of soldiers from warfighter to civilian are still poorly understood and underexplored. What explorations have been conducted are either excessively technological in focus (what we can do) or exclusively ethical (what we should not do) and little research looks at both questions.

The SEIOT Challenge.

Aim. This discussion group will propose evidence-based research topics and avenues for further collaboration among stakeholders interested in soldier enhancement and more importantly, the implications of such enhancement for both operations and transition.

Possible SEIOT Themes.

You are invited to respond to the questions below to indicate your preferences for themes to be discussed.

QUESTIONS

1. How can we distinguish between optimization and enhancement?
2. What are some of the alternative futures for soldier enhancement on operations?
3. What are some of the alternative futures for soldier enhancement upon transition to civilian life?
4. What does a balanced enhancement policy approach (BEPA) look like for the soldier?
5. What are some implementation timelines for a BEPA?

Agenda For SEIOT TWG

Pre-Forum Sun 24 Sep (1400-1700 hrs)

First Plenary (all participants) – **40 min** – introduce themes and provide context

Breakout Discussion Groups - 90 min for small group discussion

Second Plenary (all participants) - **50 min**– presentation of breakout discussion group results and general discussion; at this stage presentations should represent all views; no need to reach consensus; compile results – use Powerpoint