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DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE SURVEY

★ DEOCS ★

INFORMATION GUIDE



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Sexist Behaviors

Definition: Beliefs or attitudes based on sex that isolate, alienate, or negatively affect morale, self-worth, or purpose.

Scenario: **"Not for Women"**

A female Soldier volunteers to carry heavy equipment during a field exercise. A male NCO says, "This job's too tough for women." The group laughs and the female Soldier looks embarrassed. She's assigned a lighter task, even though she is fully qualified.

Scenario: **"Meeting Mission Needs"**

A female officer is assigned to lead a logistics planning team and a male officer is assigned to a separate tactical role. Roles are filled according to qualifications, availability, and mission alignment.

Sexually Harassing Behaviors

Definition: Unwanted and/or offensive sexual advances, comments, or gestures.

Scenario: **"Crossing the Line"**

An Airman often makes sexual jokes toward a female Airman in front of his peers. He messages her after hours, saying, "You can tell me to stop – but you haven't." She screenshots the message and reports it. The behavior is confirmed as a pattern of unwanted, sexually suggestive comments, creating a hostile work environment.

Scenario: **"Respect in Every Interaction"**

Two Airmen work closely and support each other during long shifts. One says, "You're easy to work with. I appreciate how you're always prepared." Both Airmen maintain healthy boundaries and act as role models for others.

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Racially Harassing Behaviors

Definition: Unwelcome verbal, nonverbal, or physical behaviors based on race, color, or ethnicity that demean, ridicule, insult, or create a hostile environment for an individual or group.

Scenario: **"Just a Joke"**

During a training event, some Soldiers make race-based jokes about a coworker. The comments continue during drills and group conversations. Over time, the ridiculed Soldier stops participating in team activities and becomes reluctant to speak during meetings. What some members view as harmless has created an environment where he feels disrespected because of his race.

Scenario: **"Respectful Conversation"**

During a team discussion, Service members talk about their different cultural backgrounds and experiences. One Airman asks a coworker about a cultural tradition he mentioned, and the coworker explains its significance. Team members ask respectful questions and avoid stereotypes or assumptions. When someone is unsure whether a question is inappropriate, they ask respectfully. The conversation involves race and ethnicity, but does not demean anyone.



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LEADERSHIP STYLES

Passive Leadership

Definition: Leaders avoid decision-making, fail to provide guidance, or ignore issues in the unit. Things are often not addressed until they become a problem.

Scenario: **"No One's in Charge"**

A squad is waiting to start a vehicle maintenance task. The squad leader doesn't check in, assign roles, or clarify expectations. Some Soldiers start the task while others sit idle. No feedback is given and many key maintenance checks are missed. When the company commander asks for an update, the squad leader responds, "I assumed they knew what to do."

What does it mean to be an active leader?

Proactive Communication: The Brigade Commander gave explicit instructions for it to reach every Service member, showing initiative and clarity of intent.

Clear Expectations and Accountability: The responsibility for dissemination was delegated with accountability. Battalion Commanders were not left to interpret the message and were responsible for ensuring it reached all levels.

Transformational Leadership

Definition: Leaders inspire and motivate individuals to exceed expectations by transforming attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.



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Scenario: **"Good Intentions, Poor Execution"**

During a meeting, 1LT Daniels gives a motivational speech but provides no clear direction on how to improve. He tells squad leaders to "figure it out" and doesn't follow up. When Soldiers bring up concerns, he listens but doesn't act. Instead, he continues to delegate most issues and rarely engages with junior Soldiers. Morale remains low and Soldiers feel the new LT lacks understanding and leadership.

Scenario: **"From Frustration to Motivation"**

A new Commander arrives to lead a unit known for poor morale and retention. She meets individually with platoon leaders, junior NCOs, and several Soldiers, and many express frustrations about being overlooked for awards and feeling disconnected from the mission. The Commander implements monthly recognition ceremonies, empowers junior leaders to lead training events, and creates a mentorship program.

Toxic Leadership

Definition: Leaders harm individual and organizational health by prioritizing personal gain or control over trust, team growth, and mission success.

Scenario: **"My Flight, My Rules"**

TSgt Morgan, while knowledgeable and skilled, has a demeaning and unpredictable leadership style. Instead of coaching junior Airmen through mistakes, she humiliates them publicly. She frequently changes schedules without notifying the team and then punishes Airmen for not showing up. Those who speak up are labeled as "weak" and their EPR bullets mysteriously weaken. Morale drops, leave requests increase, and more Airmen visit the chaplain or Mental Health – some requesting reassignments to other flights.

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Scenario: **"Firm, but Fair"**

MSgt Taylor is known for high standards and holding people accountable with consistency and professionalism. When an Airman misses a maintenance checklist step, she addresses it privately, asks if the Airman needs more support, and develops a follow-up plan. The Airman leaves the conversation feeling corrected and motivated to improve. She expects results, checks work thoroughly, and demands accountability. Her team respects her because she's fair, communicates clearly, and shows that she cares.

Supportive Leadership

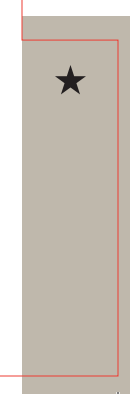
Definition: Leaders actively include others, seek diverse perspectives, show concern for subordinates, provide necessary resources, and build trust.

Scenario: **"Voices at the Table"**

Before a training exercise, a company commander brings together a diverse group of Soldiers (junior NCOs, squad leaders, specialists) from different MOSs and backgrounds. She listens and adjusts the plan based on their feedback. Throughout the exercise, she visits the line, checks in with teams, and praises their efforts in real time. By mission's end, Soldiers express pride in their performance – not just because they succeeded, but because they felt seen and supported.

Scenario: **"Just Do What You're Told"**

During a range qualification planning meeting, the platoon leader consults the platoon sergeant and ignores input from squad leaders. A specialist tries to point out a potential safety issue but is dismissed. On range day, confusion causes delays, and a miscommunication nearly results in a safety violation. Afterward, the platoon leader blames squad leaders. Trust in leadership erodes and Soldiers begin avoiding communication unless necessary.



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Cohesive Organization

Definition: Strong interpersonal bonds and collaborative teamwork. A unit that trains together, socializes, and supports each other's growth.

Scenario: **"Ruck March"**

Charlie Company is doing their quarterly ruck march. The senior leader notices some Soldiers falling behind. He instructs the company to slow the pace so those individuals may catch up. When they do, other Soldiers take their rucks and begin calling cadences so they can complete the march together.

Scenario: **"Everyone for Themselves"**

A group of Airmen is assigned to prepare aircraft for an upcoming inspection. Each technician focuses on their own task, with little communication between shifts. No one offers guidance or mentorship, and there are no team huddles or shared planning. After duty hours, everyone goes their separate ways. When inspection results come back, the unit falls short due to overlooked details and duplicated work. Morale remains low, and several junior Airmen express interest in cross-training or separating altogether, feeling more like a group of individuals than a cohesive team.



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Fair Treatment

Definition: Consistent, fair treatment of all personnel in decision-making processes. Performance evaluations are transparent and apply consistent criteria.

Scenario: **"Earning it the Right Way"**

In an Air Force operations squadron, leadership announces that a quarterly award board will be held. Criteria will include performance, leadership, and self-improvement. Nominations open and supervisors are required to provide documented examples tied to the criteria. Each nominee presents their accomplishments to an interview panel made up of unbiased senior NCOs. After discussion, a standout senior Airman is selected, known for mentoring new Airmen, excelling in training, and completing a CCAF course. The squadron commander announces the award, highlighting the transparency of the process and encouraging others to pursue growth opportunities. Other Airmen express respect for the outcome and motivation to step up next quarter.

Scenario: **"Same Work, Different Rules"**

In an Air Force support squadron, two senior Airmen have nearly identical workloads and performance metrics. One consistently volunteers for extra duties and earns strong peer feedback. The other often arrives late and misses deadlines. When quarterly awards are announced, the second Airman is selected, citing "initiative" and "leadership potential." No formal justification is provided and the decision isn't board-reviewed. The overlooked Airman grows discouraged and others feel the system is about favoritism, not fairness—and motivation begins to slip.

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Engaged and Committed

Definition: Engagement and commitment refer to the extent to which members feel emotionally attached to their team, identify with its goals and values, are motivated to give their best, and feel pride and loyalty toward their organization.

Scenario: "Job Well Done"

CMSgt Munoz notices low morale and takes initiative to regularly recognize Airmen's contributions during formation. As a result, Airmen show more enthusiasm and voluntarily stay late to assist with unit readiness tasks. This reflects increased engagement and commitment because they feel valued and aligned with squadron goals.

Scenario: **"Present, but Not Invested"**

SMSgt Warrick shows up to all required events but avoids participation in team-building activities, skips voluntary training, and expresses no interest in career progression. She's present but not truly invested.

High Connectedness

Definition: Sense of belonging and peer support in the unit.

Scenario: **"Check In, Check Strong"**

During Annual Training, a private seems quiet and skips chow. His Battle Buddy asks if everything is OK. The private opens up about feeling overwhelmed and missing his family. The Battle Buddy listens without judgment, then encourages him to see the chaplain and tags along for support. Later, the Battle Buddy organizes a card game, inviting others to join and making sure the private feels included. The nightly squad game becomes a regular morale booster. When leadership learns about it, they commend the initiative, highlighting how small acts of peer support strengthen the whole team.

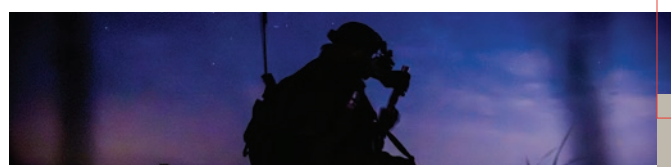
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Scenario: **"On Their Own"**

A new Soldier arrives for his first drill weekend. During formation, no one introduces themselves or offers to help. At lunch, he sits alone. During training, he struggles with a task but hesitates to speak up. His teammates notice but say nothing. That evening, no one checks in, and the Soldier books a hotel off-post rather than staying in the barracks. By the end, he feels isolated, questioning whether he belongs in the unit at all. Leadership is unaware and the squad continues operating in silos with little communication or camaraderie.



High Morale

Definition: Refers to a Service member or unit's positive mental and emotional state, characterized by confidence, motivation, resilience, and commitment to the mission and each other.

Scenario: **"Above and Beyond"**

A squad is tasked with setting up an overnight OP on short notice. Despite exhaustion from a 12-hour movement, the team moves with urgency and focus. One Soldier volunteers for the first watch without being asked, while others share gear and reinforce the perimeter. The squad leader offers encouragement and checks in regularly. The next morning, they complete their task early and help a neighboring squad with theirs. Leadership highlights their effort during the AAR. Soldiers walk away tired but proud, bonded by trust, shared hardship, and a common purpose.

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Scenario: **"Just Get Through It"**

A platoon begins a training event already burned out from poor planning, minimal communication from leadership, etc. Soldiers and NCOs seem equally disengaged. During downtime, Soldiers isolate themselves. The mission is completed, but only the bare minimum is done. In the AAR, no one has feedback. Leadership leaves frustrated, unaware that low morale is weakening performance and cohesion.

Work-Life Balance

Definition: Effectively managing the demands of military and personal responsibilities.

Scenario: **"Just Figure it Out"**

A Soldier requests schedule flexibility for a court hearing, but her team leader dismisses the concern. She shows up late and distracted, receiving a counseling statement for poor performance. The following month, she misses drill due to a child care emergency, resulting in further discipline. Leadership, unaware of context, assumes she's unreliable. The Soldier feels unsupported and considers leaving the unit. Other Soldiers with families keep concerns to themselves, worried they'll experience the same lack of understanding.

Scenario: **"Finding the Balance"**

A staff sergeant with two young children and a spouse navigating a recent job change anticipates child care challenges ahead of Annual Training. He notifies his chain of command and works with his platoon sergeant to adjust his timeline. With a flexible report time and open communication, the NCO remains highly productive, leads a successful training lane, and stays committed to both his family and the mission.

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Moderate/High Stress

Definition: The physical, emotional, and psychological responses to demands or pressures that exceed a Service member's ability to cope.

Scenario: **"Breaking Point"**

An Airman is juggling a full-time school schedule, after-hours upgrade training, and issues at home. Despite showing signs of exhaustion, he pushes through without seeking help. Leadership frequently reminds the class of upcoming evaluations but offers little flexibility or support. One night, the Airman forgets to submit a required assignment and receives a public reprimand. He begins to withdraw from his peers, stops attending squadron events, and reports difficulty sleeping. The demands have exceeded his ability to cope, and he feels overwhelmed with no clear path forward. Eventually, a peer notices the decline and encourages him to speak to the unit's Mental Health representative. It becomes clear the Airman has been under moderate to high stress for weeks without support or intervention.

Scenario: **"Pressure with Perspective"**

A senior Airman is leading a team through pre-deployment preparations while also managing a few lingering personal issues. Deadlines are tight, but he's open with his supervisor about the workload. His flight chief regularly checks in and gives him the freedom to delegate tasks. The Airman uses scheduled gym time to decompress and leans on his team for support. While there is pressure, he feels in control and well-resourced. The team meets the deadline and morale remains high.

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Workplace Hostility

Definition: Workplace hostility refers to repeated, deliberate, or systemic behaviors that create a toxic, intimidating, or emotionally distressing work environment. This can include verbal abuse, exclusion, harassment, intimidation, or other behaviors that undermine an individual's dignity or psychological safety.

Scenario: **"Walking on Eggshells"**

A technical sergeant frequently yells at junior Airmen for mistakes during team briefings. He singles out one Airman repeatedly. When she tries to speak up, he interrupts or rolls his eyes. Her peers notice but avoid getting involved. Over time, she stops contributing, dreads coming to work, and considers a transfer. The behavior goes unaddressed because the NCO gets results, and leadership hasn't taken formal action.

Scenario: **"Everyone's Voice Matters"**

A senior Airman makes a small error in a report. During the team huddle, the team chief calmly addresses it. No one is singled out or embarrassed. New Airmen are encouraged to ask questions, challenge assumptions respectfully, and bring ideas to the table. When interpersonal conflict arises, the supervisor mediates fairly, reinforcing a climate of respect. As a result, the unit operates efficiently with high trust. Team members feel safe speaking up because it's encouraged and consistently modeled by leadership.



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Frequent Binge Drinking

Definition: Frequent binge drinking is how often, in the last three months, one consumed five or more drinks at a time.

Scenario: **"Just Blowing Off Steam"**

After a field exercise, a group wants to celebrate. They start with beers but escalate to shots and hard liquor. SPC James consumes six drinks in under two hours – well above the safe limit.

Scenario: **"Setting the Example"**

A squad plans to unwind with a BBQ. One Soldier brings sodas and water and limits himself to two beers. When someone suggests shots, he declines. His squad leader acknowledges his maturity and encourages other Soldiers to maintain balance.

Frequent Alcohol Memory Loss

Definition: How often, in the last three months, one was unable to remember the night before due to alcohol.

Scenario: **"Missing Pieces"**

After a weekend, an Airman is asked how his night was and he says that he doesn't really remember. He later discovers he lost his wallet and narrowly avoided a fight. This pattern has occurred more than once recently. Over time, his performance slips and trust among teammates erodes.

Scenario: **"In Control, In the Clear"**

At a party, Airmen enjoy a night of food, drinks, and games. A senior Airman volunteers to be a designated driver and a few others stick to a two-drink limit. Leadership promotes responsible drinking and sets the example.

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Safe Firearm Storage

Definition: Measures whether one would keep a firearm safely stored (i.e., unloaded in a secured storage container/device) in their living space.

Scenario: **"Just in Case"**

A National Guard Soldier keeps a loaded handgun in an unlocked drawer at home. He has two young children and no trigger lock or safe storage container. When a fellow Soldier sees the weapon, he expresses concern, but the Soldier brushes it off. A few weeks later, during a family readiness event, the topic of safe firearm storage comes up. The Soldier remains quiet as others discuss lockboxes and cable locks. Later, his spouse privately expresses concern to the unit's Family Programs representative, worried about the risk to their children. The issue eventually reaches leadership, who address it through counseling and mandatory briefings on responsible firearm ownership. The incident sparks tension in the family and raises questions about the Soldier's judgment.

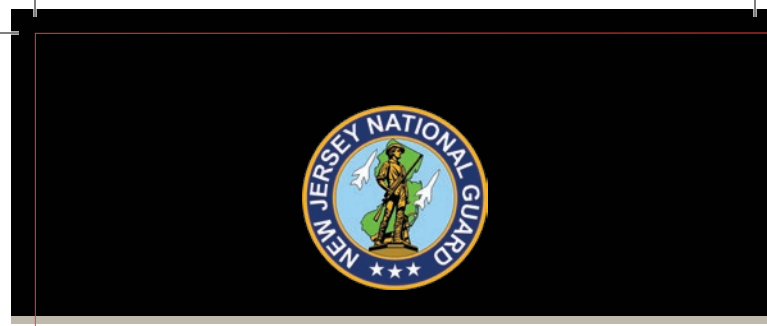
Scenario: **"Secured and Responsible"**

An off-duty Soldier living in the barracks stores his personally owned handgun in a locked, DoD-approved storage container with a cable lock. The unloaded weapon is stored separately from ammunition in a secured drawer. During a routine inspection, the squad leader commends the Soldier for maintaining a safe, regulation-compliant setup. When a new Soldier asks about firearm policies, the Soldier explains the unit's guidance and offers to help him get proper storage. His NCO later uses him as a peer example during a safety briefing, reinforcing a culture of responsible ownership and trust.

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Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Information Guide

This quick-reference guide is designed to help Soldiers and leaders better understand key factors that influence organizational climate, well-being, and readiness. It addresses topics identified through the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), including the following:

- ★ Sexist, sexually, and racially harassing behaviors
- ★ Types of leadership
- ★ Work-life balance, connectedness, and morale
- ★ Fair treatment and workplace hostility
- ★ Alcohol misuse
- ★ Safe firearm storage

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