
	<p><b>CDP Presents A Monthly Webinar Series</b></p> <p><b>Psychological Flexibility Training to Enhance Resilience in Service Members</b></p>
<p><b>Presenter:</b></p> <div> </div> <p>Dr. Wyatt Evans</p>	
<p><b>Before We Get Started in:</b></p> <div> <p>01:00:00</p> </div> <div> <p><b>Q &amp; A</b> – You can submit a question via the chat at any point during the presentation. Questions will be answered during or the last 10 minutes of the program. While chatting, please make sure to select “All Panelists and Attendees” in chat so all can see your comments and questions!</p> <p><b>Resources</b> – You can find a PDF of the presentation and additional resources in your CE21 account page.</p> <p><b>Dial In for Audio (only if having audio problems)</b> Stay Logged In! Dial 646-876-9923 Meeting # 974 2690 1707</p> <p><b>Help</b> – for assistance, please e-mail Micah Norgard at micah.norgard.ctr@usuhs.edu</p> </div>	

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<p>To receive credit, you must attend the webinar all the way through the Q &amp; A section at the end of the presentation.</p> <p><b>Please do NOT leave the webinar!</b></p>	

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**CDP Presents A Monthly Webinar Series**  
**Psychological Flexibility Training to Enhance Resilience in Service Members**

### Upcoming Training Events:

Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) Training via Zoom	November 16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup>
Online Prolonged Exposure (PE) for PTSD Training via Zoom	November 30 <sup>th</sup> – December 1 <sup>st</sup>
Strengthening the Homefront: A Tactical Toolkit Targeting Key Factors During Deployment	December 20 <sup>th</sup>
Online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) Training via Zoom,	January 18 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup>
Online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) Training via Zoom	January 25 <sup>th</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup>

Register now for these upcoming trainings:  
[www.deploymentpsych.org/trainings](http://www.deploymentpsych.org/trainings)

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**CDP Presents A Monthly Webinar Series**

**Psychological Flexibility Training to Enhance Resilience in Service Members**

**Sorry We Missed You!**

We have you covered!  
Check out last month's series:  
**Debunking Common Misperceptions about Sleep Interventions**

Excellent presentation regarding framework for evaluating literature and seeking evidence for/against interventions.

CDP quality training by very knowledgeable professionals in the field always gain applicable material that can be directly used with my Veterans.

Thanks again for making this type of training so readily available. I enjoyed getting updates and bringing my knowledge up to date on the topic. Thanks to the speakers for taking time to conduct lit review and then to share their knowledge, Really appreciate it!!

Watch Archived CDP Presents Webinars at  
<https://deploymentpsych.org/archived-webinars>

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**CDP's Official PODCAST**

**Practical For Your Practice**

**SEASON 2 EPISODE 10** IS THERE AN ECHO IN HERE?  
JUST-IN-TIME TRAINING AND  
PROVIDER SELF CARE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

**SEASON 2 EPISODE 11** PRACTICAL FOR YOUR (AND YOUR CLIENT'S) PRONOUNS:  
WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU OR A COLLEAGUE  
MISGENDERS A CLIENT

**SEASON 2 EPISODE 12** HELPING MY YOUNGER  
PROFESSIONAL SELF: LESSONS  
LEARNED TO REDUCE  
BARRIERS TO EBP IMPLEMENTATION.

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**Enhancing Your Experience**



**Best of Mindset**



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**CDP Presents A Monthly Webinar Series**

**Psychological Flexibility Training to Enhance Resilience in Service Members**

**Presenter:**



Wyatt R. Evans, PhD ABPP  
 Staff Psychologist, VA North Texas Health Care System, Plano, TX  
 Assistant Professor, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

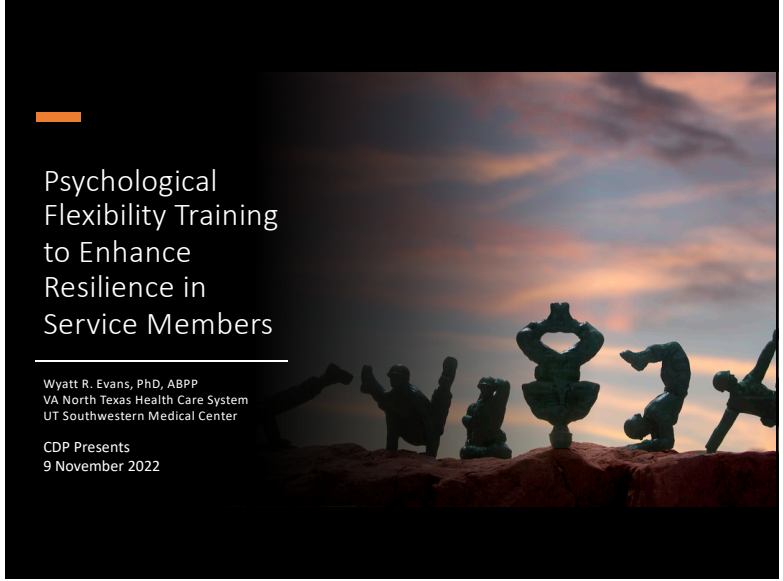
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## Disclosures

All faculty, course directors, planning committee, content reviewers and others involved in content development are required to disclose any financial relationships with commercial interests. Any potential conflicts were resolved during the content review, prior to the beginning of the activity.

Dr. Evans has no financial interests to disclose.

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## Psychological Flexibility Training to Enhance Resilience in Service Members

Wyatt R. Evans, PhD, ABPP  
VA North Texas Health Care System  
UT Southwestern Medical Center

CDP Presents  
9 November 2022

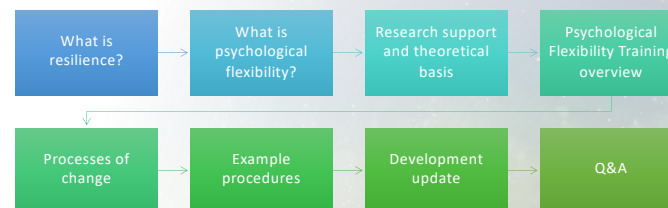
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### Agenda



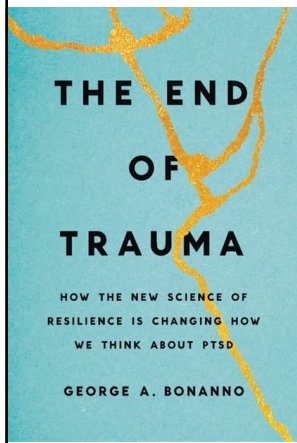
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### Psychological Resilience

- The resilient "type"
  - Learning from stressful experiences and acquiring all the necessary skills for successful stress-coping (Comer & Davidson, 2003).
- The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress (APA, 2014).
- A *dynamic process* by which individuals utilize protective factors and resources to achieve an advantageous outcome amid stress (Sizantion et al., 2018).
- *Many* 'resilience-promoting' traits and behaviors.

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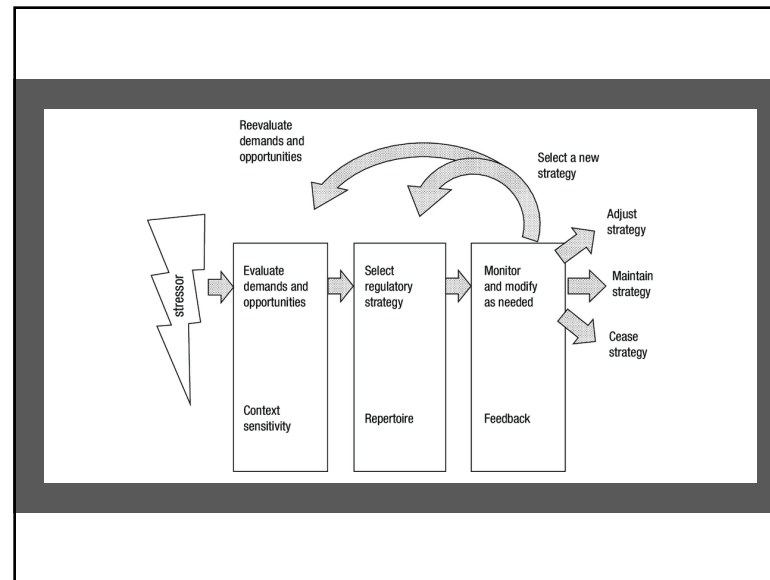


### The State of Resilience Science

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- Though we can identify correlates of resilience, we cannot predict who will be resilient with much accuracy. Therefore, attempts to enhance resilience that focus on one (or even several) known correlates will likely be ineffective (Bonanno, 2021).
- *Fallacy of uniform efficacy* (Bonanno & Burton, 2013): Strategy effectiveness is highly dependent on fit with situational demands. 'Predictors' of resilience show modest effects because they are not beneficial in every situation or at every time.
- So, "...the mechanism that underlies resilience must involve some sort of adjudication process; some way of working out, moment by moment, what the best response might be and then engaging in that response" (Bonanno, 2021).
- Bonanno (2021) proposes the mechanism of resilience is flexible self-regulation.

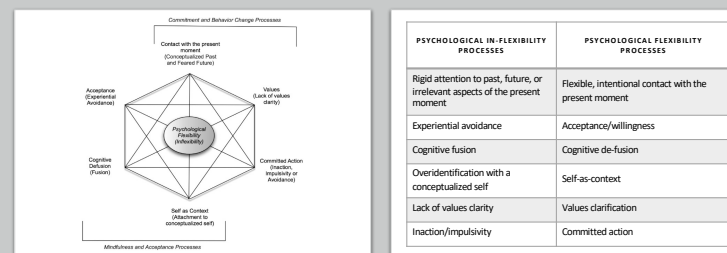
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## Psychological Flexibility

- The ability to contact the present moment more fully via greater conscious awareness and intention and to change or persist in behavior in a way that is consistent with personally chosen values (Hayes et al., 1999).
- The pursuit of valued goals despite the presence of distress (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010)



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## Mechanisms of Resilience Enhancement (from the *resilience* literature)

The Flexibility Sequence (Bonanno, 2021)	
Context Sensitivity	Working out the demands of a particular situation and choosing a regulatory response that will best meet the specific challenges we are facing at that moment
Repertoire	The set of regulatory strategies we are able to use effectively
Feedback Monitoring	Asking ourselves, 'Is it working?' and then either continuing, ceasing, adjusting or replacing strategies as necessary

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## Mechanisms of Resilience Enhancement (from the *psychological flexibility* side)

Psychological Flexibility (e.g., Evans et al., 2022)	
Select the most adaptive behavior for task completion	Adeptly selecting the most helpful behavior for values-aligned living and values-based task/goal completion
Contextually sensitive behavioral repertoire	A broad range of response behaviors (e.g., acceptance, reappraisal, perseverance, discontinuation) sufficient to allow of effective action across situations
Refine this ability through practice/training	Assessing response effectiveness from a de-fused Self so as to make necessary adaptations or persist

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## Mechanisms of Resilience Enhancement (a comparison)

The Flexibility Sequence (Bonanno, 2021)	Psychological Flexibility (e.g., Evans et al., 2022)
Context Sensitivity	Select the most adaptive behavior for task completion
Repertoire	Contextually sensitive behavioral repertoire
Feedback Monitoring	Refine this ability through practice/training

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## Why Psychological Flexibility as a Training Model?

- As of 7 November 2022, there are 949 published, peer-reviewed RTCs of ACT ([contextualscience.org](https://contextualscience.org)).
- Improves work performance, job satisfaction, training outcomes, and mental health while reducing work stress, absenteeism, burnout, and job-related errors (Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Moran, 2015).
- Increases pain tolerance (Macedo & Rose Esteve, 2007; Smith et al., 2018)
- Increases levels of performance on physical exercise tasks (Garcia et al., 2004; Gardner & Moore, 2001; Ludczyszewski, et al, 2007; Wolann, 2005)
- Improves group functioning, enhances functioning in collaborative workplace settings, and develops "crisis-resilient change managers" (Bond & Flaxman, 2006; Moran, 2011).
- Evidence-based intervention with a broad and robust array of tools and techniques for enhancing the very qualities necessary for resilience: context sensitivity, repertoire, and feedback/adaptability

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## Previous/ Existing Resilience Enhancement Training

- **Battlemind:** Pre-deployment training on how to be resilient in the deployed environment. Follow-up training after returning home encouraged service members to identify behaviors in themselves and others that were adaptive in the deployed combat environment but maladaptive in non-deployed settings (Castro et al., 2006; Castro et al., 2012).
- **Master Resilience Trainer (MRT):** Within the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program (Cassey, 2011), MRT focuses on training soldiers to recognize maladaptive cognitions (i.e., catastrophizing, overgeneralizing) and how to change them.
  1. Largely focused on resilience in austere environments.
  2. Highly focused on identifying and addressing maladaptive cognitions, stress management, and problem-solving skills.
  3. In many cases, clinical interventions adapted without sound theory of resilience enhancement or attention to processes/mechanisms.

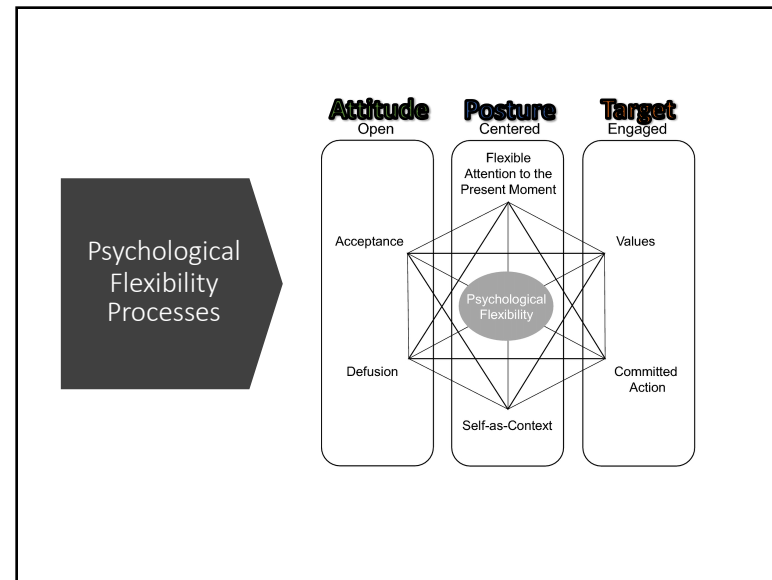
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## Psychological Flexibility Training

- Resilience = Arsenal x Adaptability
- Rigidity as the problem
- Adaptability as the solution
- Psychological Situational Awareness
  - Context Sensitivity & Adaptability
- Flexibility Skills Training
  - Repertoire (skills)



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Psychological Flexibility Process		Impact on Resilience Enhancement
Flexible contact with the present moment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance environmental awareness</li> <li>Increase intentional responding</li> <li>Decrease ineffective reactivity</li> </ul>	
Acceptance/Willingness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce disabling effects of unwanted internal experiences</li> <li>Promote access to full behavioral repertoire</li> <li>Expands repertoire with myriad new skills</li> </ul>	
Cognitive de-fusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counter negative effects of "buying into" unhelpful beliefs</li> <li>Decrease context-insensitive rule rigidity</li> <li>Increase psychological resource availability by reducing mental struggle</li> </ul>	
Self-as-context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance context sensitivity by decreasing over identification with roles, identities, or judgments</li> <li>Mitigate impact of stressful events on sense of self</li> </ul>	
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orient actions across contexts toward effectiveness, vitality, meaning, and purpose</li> <li>Provide teams with shared framework for decision making and behavioral responding</li> </ul>	
Committed action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground behaviors in values approach (rather than experiential avoidance)</li> <li>Decrease dysfunction resulting from impulsivity or inaction</li> <li>Continuously increase behavioral repertoire</li> </ul>	

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## Present Moment Contact: Attention Training +

Aware	Centered	Flexible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully conscious awareness puts us in touch with the reality around us. Without, we are missing vital information about the context and what resources we have available.</li> <li><i>Experiential</i>: Five Senses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The groundedness necessary to make intentional selections based on the current context. Without this quality, reflexive responding perpetually narrows options.</li> <li><i>Experiential</i>: Returning to the Breath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From a flexible stance, our range of motion is greatest, and we are able to pivot into the most apt behavior from context to context.</li> <li><i>Experiential</i>: Defensive Posture, Open Posture</li> </ul>

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## Self as Context: The Perspective of Resilience

- Military training and culture often (intentionally) narrow the sense of self (i.e., "soldier 24/7").
  - Control, predictability, mission effectiveness
- Overidentification with a narrow view of 'self' hinders responsiveness to context.
  - Limits awareness of the need (or option) to adapt.
- Allows for psychological and environmental situational awareness.
  - Seeing things as they are, fully and unfiltered, with awareness of the being who is "seeing"
- Growing awareness of and contact with this enduring 'self'
  - Diminishes the potential repertoire narrowing impact of temporary experiences
  - Releases psychological limiters imposed by self-as-content
  - Increases ability to make fully conscious decisions/responses

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WHAT MATTERS MOST  
IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.



### Perspective

1. Release psychological limiters
2. Decrease impact of temporary experiences
3. Increase ability to make fully conscious decisions



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## Defusion: The Perils of Automaticity

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- Fusion isn't all bad
  - Good books, thrilling movies, nostalgic trips down memory lane
  - Terrifying, chaotic situations in which higher level thinking goes offline
- Automatic responding can be life saving
  - Demonstrated to enhance performance.
- Rigidity around rules (especially about toughness and performance) is characteristic of military culture.
  - Narrows repertoire/access.
  - Reduces (or eliminates) context sensitivity.
  - Reduces guideposts from values to specific tasks.
  - Limits the expansion of behavioral responses (i.e., growth).
- Current training programs are largely comprised of cognitive interventions that may perpetuate a toxic quality of fusion with thoughts – the belief/rule that we must defeat or at least distract ourself from unhelpful thoughts in order to perform and live well.
- The cool thing about intervening on PF, distancing from thinking is okay *and* so is getting right up next to them. Just make sure the intention is set and the context is clear. What's most workable?

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## Acceptance: *Really* Embrace the Suck

Both a behavioral (tool/skill) and a process by which full access to behavioral repertoire maintained.

Often misconstrued as representing concession, weakness, laziness, lack of skill or grit.

Phrases such as “embrace the suck ” have been construed to mean suppress feelings, banish thoughts, and be tougher/stronger/better.

Sometimes quashing unhelpful emotions and thoughts is an appropriate strategy. A short-term “solution” limited to those contexts in which survival is the primary objective.

But rigid application of control-based strategies across contexts hinders performance and causes unnecessary suffering.

Inflexible application of even “positive” approaches or skills (e.g., stoicism, meticulousness, alertness, preparedness, uniformity) can lead to suffering and limit effectiveness in other contexts.

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## Values Clarification: Continuity & Flexibility



- Getting “positive ID” on what matters
- Army core values & Personal values
- Domains → Values → Goals
- Values Bullseye
- Language of values-aligned living

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## Committed Action: Do What Works, Do What Matters

- Previous processes (“skills”) are engaged in the service of overcoming psychological barriers that impede committed action.
  - Over time and with consistent engagement, this facilitates the context-sensitive expansion of behavioral repertoires.
- While values do tend to be enduring, the ways in which values are most effectively instantiated varies across contexts.
  - A limited repertoire of even values-based actions likely leads to context-insensitivity and myopic focus on short-term goals disconnected from broader, enduring values.
- Integrity, for example, is likely more effectively engaged differently in garrison, in a firefight, in traffic, and at the family dinner table.
- Resilience is then engaged via the willingness and adaptability to change tacks while maintaining the values-aligned course (i.e., feedback monitoring).



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## Training Development/Evaluation

- Co-PIs: Drs. Alan Peterson & Eric Meyer
- Two training cohorts completed to date
- Participants to date have been mostly mid-career Army NCOs and Officers
- Exploring additional training sites
- Participant feedback largely positive
- #1 takeaway (so far): Implement *sooner*





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Next Steps	
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