

How Emotional Intelligence Can Make a Difference

Gerald F. Sewell

Resilience: *showing a tendency to recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining a mission and organizational focus.*

— Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership: Confident, Competent, and Agile

You're going to see in the next probably 90-120 days that we'll come out with a comprehensive fitness program, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. What we realize is that we need to bring mental fitness to the same level of attention that we give to physical fitness because we're dealing with the realities of war. You can build resilience in mental fitness just like you can build resilience with pushups.

— Chief of Staff of the Army General George W. Casey, Jr., 14 January 2009

After eight years of war, we must better prepare our Soldiers and their Families to persevere with the challenges inherent to military service. The key to increased resiliency is placing the same level of enthusiasm toward conditioning our minds and souls as we place toward conditioning our bodies.

— Brigadier General Ed Cardon, Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

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PHOTO: Soldiers fire their weapons as part of the "stress shoot" at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Paktika Province, Afghanistan, 9 January 2011. (U.S. Army SGT Luther L. Boothe, Jr.)

IN OCTOBER 2006, the Army's revised leadership doctrine became official with the publication of Field Manual (FM) 6-22. The new leadership framework introduced by FM 6-22 highlighted 12 leader attributes and 8 leader competencies: what the leader needs to "Be, Know, and Do." Listed within the leadership attributes is the leader behavior "Resilience." FM 6-22 says, "Resilient leaders can recover quickly from setbacks, shock, injuries, adversity, and stress while maintaining their mission and organizational focus. Their resilience rests on will, the inner drive that compels them to keep going, even when exhausted, hungry, afraid, cold, and wet. Resilience helps leaders and their organizations to carry difficult missions to their conclusion."¹

This reference was the first recognition of the importance of resilience in Army leadership doctrine. Unfortunately, the four short paragraphs in FM 6-22 only look at one aspect of resilience, that of leaders in combat.

Fortunately, the Army has recognized the need for resiliency beyond the battlefield—and not just for soldiers, but for all members of the Army family. The necessity for strengthening this vital behavior has become more significant because of the stress on the force of more than nine years of war. The Casey and Cardon quotations above illustrate the increased importance Army leadership has placed on soldier resiliency and the major steps taken towards helping not just leaders but all members of the Army family to attain

greater levels of resiliency. The key element of this increased recognition and intent to build resiliency in the force is the introduction of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) initiative.

The Army's CSF initiative has a goal to build resiliency not just in leaders but also in all of the members of the Army family. According to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College website, CSF enables soldiers, families, and Army civilians to have increased resilience through a holistic approach that ensures a healthy, balanced force that excels in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict.²

The CSF program's stated purpose, as outlined in the 2009 Army Posture Statement, is to:

- Enhance resilience, [which is] achieved by a combination of specific training and improved fitness in the five domains of health.
- Decrease post-traumatic stress.

- Decrease the incidence of undesirable and destructive behaviors.

- Lead to a greater likelihood for post-adversity growth and success.³

The program has identified key areas to maintain in instilling and increasing resiliency as the five dimensions of strength:

- Emotional.
- Social.
- Spiritual.
- Family.
- Physical.⁴

The goal is to build strength and fitness in each dimension, thereby increasing individual, family, unit, and Army resiliency.

The Army and the University of Pennsylvania have developed a comprehensive plan of training to build resiliency through building strength in each

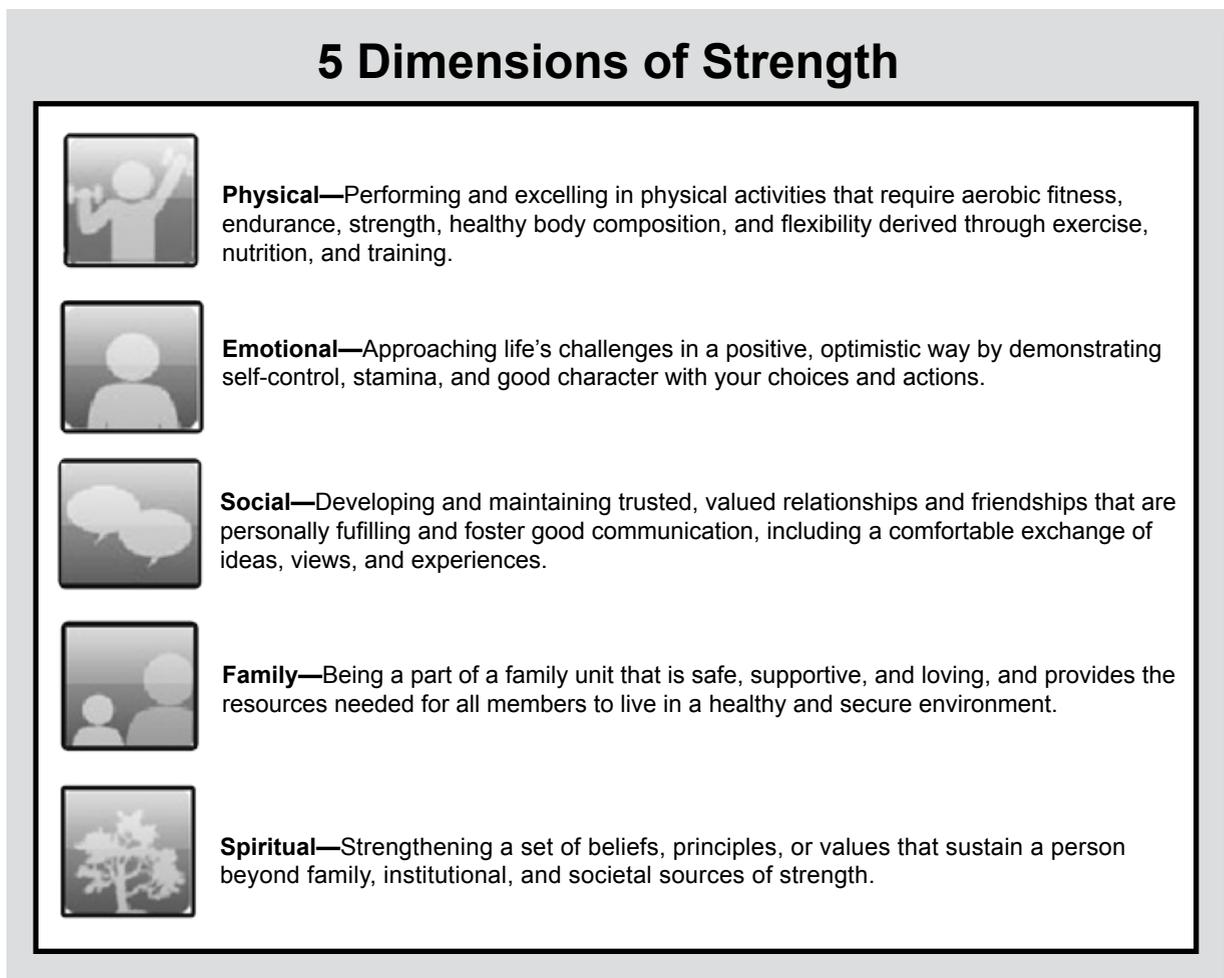


Figure 1. The five dimensions of strength

dimension. Each of these dimensions is affected by how balanced an individual is in his understanding and confidence in himself, his relationships with others, and his or her environment. To truly address each of these elements holistically, the Army's comprehensive fitness programs must include awareness and training in emotional intelligence (EI).

The CSF Program in Brief

The Army's initial push to increase the resiliency levels of the force involved training 32 non-commissioned officers and civilians to be master resiliency trainers. The training, conducted at the University of Pennsylvania, is a 10-day course designed to train sergeants and civilians how to teach their leaders methods to instill resilience in their subordinates. The training at the University of Pennsylvania is not a new program designed specifically for the Army, but a modification of the university's current program for teachers. According to the Army News Service, master resiliency training is being adapted from the Positive Psychology Program at the University Of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, which developed it to instruct teachers (middle and high school) how to impart resiliency skills to their students during the school year.⁵ The school curriculum for this course includes the current recommended resiliency reader for the Army's program, Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte's *The Resilience Factor*, as the required text. This 10-day course is now offered at the Army's Victory University at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The Army has also begun to integrate resilience training into all of its officer and enlisted professional military education courses.⁶

How Emotional Intelligence Can Make a Difference.

According to Dr. Reuven Bar-On, emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social,

and survival aspects of intelligence. These aspects are often more important for daily functioning than the more traditional cognitive aspects of intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with one's immediate surroundings in order to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands.⁷

Although only one of the intelligence dimensions deals specifically with soldier and family emotions, emotional intelligence is inherent in all aspects of intelligence and finds its way into every area of an individual's life. This holistic nature of emotional intelligence is the very reason it can influence resiliency in a positive manner. Recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence to resiliency, Reivich and Shatte write, "While not much can be done to improve your IQ, a lot can be done to improve your resilience, a key component of emotional intelligence."⁸ Understanding the competencies of emotional intelligence and applying them to life increases comprehensive fitness and resiliency.

Emotional intelligence is about understanding your own emotions and those of others in order to be a more successful person. The emotionally well-balanced person will be successful in anticipating adversity and its impacts—personally, professionally, relationally—as well as anticipating the potential response of others to adversity. This will allow him to develop appropriate responses to adversity and bounce back quickly. Emotional intelligence helps individuals deal with the stressors of the environment by understanding their emotions as well as the emotions of others.

The Bar-On Model, Figure 2, defines the emotional intelligence competencies in 5 key composite realms with 15 subscales. These realms and subscales highlight the major areas of focus for improving soldier resiliency.

The emotionally well-balanced person will be successful in anticipating adversity and its impacts—personally, professionally, relationally—as well as anticipating the potential response of others to adversity.

| INTRAPERSONAL | INTERPERSONAL | ADAPTABILITY | STRESS MANAGEMENT | GENERAL MOOD |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Emotional Self-awareness | Empathy | Reality Testing | Stress Tolerance | Optimism |
| Assertiveness | Social Responsibility | Problem Solving | Impulse Control | Happiness |
| Independence | Interpersonal Relationship | Flexibility | | |
| Self-Regard | | | | |
| Self-Actualization | | | | |

Figure 2. The Bar-On Model of emotional intelligence.

Although they have major application to each of the CSF domains as they relate to resiliency, two of the emotional intelligence realms more directly affect the CSF dimensions of emotional and social fitness. These two areas are Bar-On’s intrapersonal realm and the interpersonal realm.

The Bar-On Model

Intrapersonal realm. The intrapersonal realm, which involves what we generally refer to as the “inner self,” determines how in touch with your feelings you are, and how good you feel about yourself and what you are doing in life. Success in this area means that you are able to express your feelings, live and work independently, feel strong, and be confident in expressing your ideas and beliefs. The scales under this realm include self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, self-regard, and self-actualization. This realm allows the soldier to develop true self-awareness of his or her strengths, weaknesses, and fears, and builds the ability to deal with each of these through self-awareness.

Interpersonal realm. The CSF social dimension is primarily addressed by Bar-On’s *interpersonal realm*. This realm captures the three key areas in which soldiers need to attain strength in order to have and maintain orderly and effective relationships. These relationships define how effective a soldier will

be in the social dimension. Recognizing the issues that surround him or her in regards to interacting with others and acting to develop any shortcomings will improve a soldier’s resiliency. This realm’s three subscales—empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships—address the social competencies that, when exercised effectively, leads to successful interaction with others. The *others* this refers to is not just work and job relationships, but includes family, neighbors, teachers, coaches, mentors, and anyone who is part of the soldier’s life.

Each of the remaining three realms of Bar-On’s model emphasize the importance of developing emotionally intelligent fitness. They deal with areas in which the individual has to develop personal competency and strength leading to personal resiliency. These realms are *adaptability*, *stress management*, and *general mood*.

Adaptability realm. This realm includes the ability to be flexible and realistic and to solve a range of problems as they arise. It addresses the ability to size up and respond to a wide range of difficult situations.⁹ Its three scales are reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving. Addressing this area is necessary to developing resiliency because it deals directly with the ability to identify and cope with problems and unexpected events.

Stress management realm. The stress management realm concerns an individual's ability to tolerate stress and control impulses. This realm includes the ability to withstand stress without caving in, falling apart, losing control, or going under.¹⁰ Its two scales are stress tolerance and impulse control. Stress tolerance addresses the ability of the individual to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without developing physical or emotional symptoms by actively and positively coping with stress.¹¹ Impulse control addresses the ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act.¹² This latter ability determines how well an individual makes decisions by first considering alternatives and consequences.

General mood realm. The general mood realm is influenced heavily by how well an individual performs in the other realms. It concerns an individual's outlook on life, ability to enjoy oneself and others, and feelings of contentment or dissatisfaction.¹³ Its two scales are *optimism* and *happiness*. They describe this realm and extol the advantages of having a positive outlook on life.

Emotional Intelligence Assessment and Training

Using emotional intelligence to develop and improve resiliency requires a starting place. *Assessment* is the first step in development. Although it is a relatively new field of study, a host of very good emotional intelligence assessment instruments and education and development programs exist.

One of these is Bar-On's *Emotional Quotient inventory* (EQ-i), which measures an individual's level of emotional intelligence and provides an assessment report that suggests a development program. The EQ-i must be administered by a certified coach/counselor before its results are presented to the individual. This counselor also assists the individual in understanding the report and developing a program to improve his score.

Emotional Intelligence and Resiliency

People are inherently emotional and social creatures who get their motivations and satisfactions from other people and from the level of success they attain while interacting with their environment.

The current operational environment optempo has increased pressures on the force, causing the Army to place more emphasis on the need to ensure and build resiliency in individuals. The Army has developed the CSF initiative for that purpose. However, a vital piece is missing from current CSF training.

A logical response to the need for training in emotional social creatures is to address the emotional aspects that can help develop resiliency. The very nature of emotional intelligence causes an individual to gain strength by acknowledging his or her emotions. The ability to build resiliency and individual strength is enhanced when individuals understand the emotional aspects of their personality that influence his or her actions. Armed with this understanding, they can begin to address them and build the emotional strength that leads to personal resiliency. **MR**

NOTES

1. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 2006), 5-3.

2. See <<https://courses.leavenworth.army.mil/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>> (22 October 2009).

3. See <http://www.army.mil/aps/09/information_papers/comprehensive_soldier_fitness_program.html> (22 October 2009).

4. See <<http://www.army.mil/csf/>> (24 November 2009).

5. See <<http://www.military.com/news/article/army-news/preston-touts-comprehensive-fitness.html>> (26 January 2010).

6. See <<http://www.army.mil/news/2009/08/05/25494-army-developing-master-resiliency-training/>> (29 October 2009).

7. Reuven Bar-On, *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, Technical Manual* (New York: Multi-Health Systems, 1997), 2.

8. Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte, *The Resilience Factor* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 18.

9. Steven J Stein and Howard Book, *The EQ Edge-Emotional Intelligence and Your Success* (Ontario: Josey-Bass, 2006), 161.

10. *Ibid.*, 189.

11. *Ibid.*, 191.

12. *Ibid.*, 204.

13. *Ibid.*, 215.