

Team Exposure Stress Training (TEST): An Approach for Reducing Stress

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ABSTRACT

Many military teams must operate in exceptionally stressful environments (e.g., battlefield) that include both physical (e.g., noise) and psychological stressors (e.g., time pressure). Often, exposure to such environments results in negative responses (e.g., subjective anxiety). To remedy these reactions, it has been suggested that repeated exposure to stress can decrease negative responses (Driskell & Johnston, 1998), allowing trainees to develop and perfect coping strategies. However, to date there has been little in the way of stress training intervention for teams. At the individual level, Stress Exposure Training (SET) has been used successfully to enhance affective responses to stress. It attempts to enhance the individual's performance by providing them with an understanding of anticipated stressors and responses (physiological and behavioral) in addition to practice under stressful conditions. With practice, trainees are able to apply their coping skills while being gradually exposed to stressors. Thus, by teaching coping strategies and allowing practice sessions, trainees are able to inhibit automatic negative responses to stress and achieve higher performance levels. This same concept may be leveraged to enhance team performance under stress. This paper proposes an extension of SET to teams (Team Exposure Stress Training (TEST)), which would be aimed at enhancing a team's ability to cope with stressors. Specifically, teams must maintain team process skills to maximize performance (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 1998). Given this, the crux of TEST is to provide teams with knowledge on stress, define the skills and strategies needed to overcome negative effects, and practice within a stressful environment. This paper will discuss how this method can be applied to Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) teams.

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INTRODUCTION

A military team conducting a search and clear mission clearing in a residential compound in Afghanistan discovers unexploded ordnance within the structure, and come under sniper fire preventing egress. Communications are hindered due to urban corridor effects. The team members must act interdependently and coordinate their efforts to quickly secure their position and eliminate the enemy threat. However, the team members do not communicate their location, and are unable to coordinate a new plan, resulting in a loss of shared situational awareness.

A military team is securing an area in Iraq; they are approached by unknown individuals with unknown intent. The search of these individuals causes a crowd to gather and a hostile atmosphere to develop. The team needs to focus on the mission, handle the increase in noise (limiting team communication) and be aware of the environment (surveying) without being overwhelmed by rapid and confusing movement. Due to stress effects, the team focuses completely on searching the unknowns and loses situation awareness. Due to this, they do not see a car rapidly approaching.

The aforementioned examples relate to a common factor, teams performing in stressful situations. Many military teams must operate in exceptionally stressful environments (e.g., battlefields) that include acute stress- a sudden, novel, and intense demand that occurs in a relatively short period (Salas, Driskell, & Hughes, 1996). These situations may result in a potential breakdown in teamwork among members who must perform cooperatively to mitigate stressful events which require precise synchronization of activities under unpredictable circumstances.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly examine stress, describe the effects of stress on human performance, and provide training interventions that attempt to reduce performance decrements imposed by stressful conditions. At the individual level, Stress Exposure Training (SET) has been used successfully to enhance

affective responses to stress. It attempts to enhance the individual's performance by providing them with particular skills in the presence of defined stressors (Johnston & Cannon- Bowers, 1996). However, to date there has been little in the way of stress training intervention for teams. This same concept may be leveraged to enhance team performance under stress. This paper proposes an extension of SET to teams (Team Exposure Stress Training (TEST)), which is aimed at enhancing a team's ability to cope with stressors. Stress and the TEST method will be discussed in a Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) team application.

What is stress?

Stress is a concept that we are all faced within our lives. It is a psychological concept that cannot be seen, touched, or smelled, but is definitely felt. Acute stress generally takes place in emergency situations where the task must be performed in a limited amount of time, and the consequences of the performance are seen instantly. The examples described above were all crisis conditions where the individual and team members had limited resources and were increasingly taxed with demands. Critical decisions had to be made under extremely stressful conditions, which may have resulted in disastrous consequences.

Stress can be described as "a process by which certain environmental demands.....evoke an appraisal process in which perceived demand exceeds resources and results in undesirable physiological, psychological, behavioral, or social outcomes" (Salas et al., 1996, p. 6). Salas and colleagues described stress by formulating a four-stage model. The process begins by the introduction of a stimulus such as time pressure, workload, fatigue or any other activating stressor. The second stage involves a two part psychological phase where the individual appraises the situation. The individual determines if the situation poses a threat by evaluating the stressor via primary appraisal. Then, the individual evaluates if his/her perceived resources meet

the threat during a secondary appraisal stage. Stress occurs when a discrepancy is found between the demands and resources of the individual. Therefore, the individual perceives the event as threatening when they perceive that their available resources are insufficient. Hence, it is the individual's perception that leads to the experience of stress. Therefore, there are individual differences in the appraisal process of stress which depends on the perceived resource and demand of the individual. For instance, one team member may perceive a situation as challenging and non-stressful while the other may perceive it as threatening and very stressful. In the next stage, the individual formulates performance expectations of the situation. If the demand of the stressor is perceived as exceeding an individual's resources, s/he will form a negative performance expectation. However, if an individual's resources exceed the demands of the stressor, then a positive performance expectation will be formed. Finally, the fourth stage describes the stress outcomes such as physiological and emotional reactions, social changes, performance outcomes, and cognitive effects.

Soldiers in the battlefield are required to perform while bombarded with physical and psychological stressors. Military teams must perform complex tasks individually and collectively in combat operations without adequate sleep and under extreme stress. A report from the Army on combined arms operations in urban terrain (2002) suggests several vital stressors found in urban environment. Psychological stressors such as anxiety and fear of the unknown can have devastating effects on the physical, behavioral, and cognitive state of the soldier. For example, soldiers may fear being wounded or dying on the battlefield. Furthermore, the lack of overt communication with other team members in combat may cause feelings of vulnerability and isolation. Physical stressors such as intense noise, limited/diminished visibility, fatigue, illness, disrupted wake/sleep cycles, extreme weather conditions (i.e., cold, heat) may also have detrimental effects on the soldier in urban combat situations (i.e. Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)). For instance, smoke and glare may make it very difficult to see enemy combatants. In addition, high intensity noise may not only cause stress but can also interfere with a team member's situational awareness. Cognitive stressors such as uncertain, incomplete, and ill-defined problems under time pressure and high workload may result in erroneous decision making strategies for team members and leaders in particular, due to increases in responsibilities.

In Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) environments, teams are required to physically coordinate (e.g., maintain formation) while searching

and eliminating enemy threats in an urban environment (e.g., snipers in buildings; Milham, Gledhill-Holmes, Jones, & Stanney, 2004). MOUT teams perform under varying conditions, including limited visibility (due to fog, smoke, or night time operations), often in an overtly hostile environment. During operations, there are a number of auditory stressors, as noted by Clark (2005) "...you hear women screaming, dogs barking and people yelling 'help, save me,'"". While conducting the task, team member casualties can be high, leading to highly adaptive team members who are trained to step in and take over each other's roles. Further, split-second discriminations must be made when encountering unknowns, as they may be enemy combatants or non combatants.

Clearly, stress is a salient factor in military environments. Individuals and teams in combat conditions are impacted with numerous stressors. The process of stress affects each individual differently depending on how the situation is appraised. To provide successful remediation for stress, we must be aware of the type of stressors imposed on the individual, examine the effects of stress on team member's performance, and develop effective training interventions to minimize the negative effects of stress on human performance to the extent possible.

How does stress effect human performance?

Due to current combat conditions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the impact of stress on individual and team performance has increased tremendously. To disentangle the stress enigma, we must identify the effects of stress. Stressors influence us physiologically, emotionally, behaviorally, cognitively, and socially. For instance, several physiological reactions to stress have been documented in the literature (Baum, Singer, & Baum, 1981). Physiological changes include an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, skin perspiration, dry mouth, trembling, heavy breathing, and dilated pupils. Furthermore, the digestive system has been found to decrease in activity, glucose and epinephrine/norepinephrine have also been found to be released into the body, and the metabolic rate of the stressed individual increase to give him/her more energy. These physiological reactions may be a source of discomfort and may be distracting for the task performer, when the cause of the reactions are unknown. For example, Worchel and Yohai (1979) found that individuals who were able to identify and categorize their physiological reactions to a reasonable

cause were less distracted and aroused by their bodily reactions.

Cognitive and behavioral changes also occur under stressful conditions. For instance, individuals tend to increase their time on the task, the number of errors committed increase, and they decrease in task accuracy (Holding, 1983; Jones, 1983). When under stress, individuals have the tendency to restrict and narrow the range of attention (called perceptual/attentional tunneling; Wickens, 1992). In addition, humans have a tendency to cognitively tunnel by focusing attention on only one explanation of the situation while ignoring to consider other options (Wickens, 1996; Wickens, Gordon, & Liu 1999). Stress also has a degrading effect on our memory. When an individual is under stress, he or she will be less able to store or rehearse new material or other attention-demanding activities. However, these effects only hinder new information but do not disrupt retrieval of well-learned information previously stored in long-term memory, where individuals engage in the most dominant thoughts and actions (Wickens, 1992). It is also well acknowledged from the literature that individuals differ when making decisions under stress. Tversky and Kahneman (1981) suggest that decision makers use a small number of heuristics (i.e., rules) in making decisions to estimate the degree of danger. The need for certainty and confidence often leads to biases in judgment. Decision makers often use the heuristic of availability, where individuals will believe an event is more likely to occur if they can imagine it or recall some examples of it. Consequently, decision makers fail to consider all possible decisions and outcome options. When stress is high, the decision maker is likely to show a premature conclusion to the situation without seeking all available information about the consequences of the decision (Slovic, Fischhoff, & Lichtenstein, 1977; Janis, 1983). Hence, individuals under stress tend to take immediate actions thus sacrificing accuracy through the speed-accuracy tradeoff.

Changes that occur to an individual's decision making process happen to teams as well. The impact of stress on team performance has been found even when one member is overloaded (Roby & Lanzetta, 1957). Due to the interdependent interaction between team members, team decision making employs more than one information source and task perspective that needs to be combined to reach a common decision (Orasanu & Salas, 1993). For instance, some organizations respond to stress using a centralization of authority approach, where decision-making is concentrated at a higher level of the organizational hierarchy (Hermann, 1963; Staw, Sandlelands, & Dutton, 1981).

Furthermore, Driskell and Salas (1991) found that under stressful conditions an individual's status may be a relevant factor in group interaction. Specifically, results suggested that while under stress high status group members become more receptive to task inputs from other members, whereas low status group members become more willing to defer to others. One explanation for this occurrence is that members are more receptive to inputs from others because they are inclined to share and diffuse responsibility under critical conditions imposed by stress.

In addition to the above changes, individuals under stress encounter social changes which include withdrawal from their surrounding and showing hostile or aggressive behavior. For instance, an individual's stress effects may cause him/her to neglect obligations to other team members (Dyer, 1984). Individuals experiencing stress also tend to be less attentive to social cues, and thus are less likely to help others. This tendency may be related to the narrowing of attention (perceptual tunneling) during cognitive processing. For instance, Cohen (1980) noted that the restriction of attention that occurs during stress may lead to the neglect of interpersonal cues and decreased sensitivity towards others. Stress also affects group dynamics and coordination such that team members tend to shift from a more team perspective to a self-focused and are more individualistic perspective (Driskell, Salas, & Johnston, 1999). They are less likely to be cooperative among their team members, and show an overall declination in their team performance (Epstein, 1983; Welford, 1973; Jones, 1983). For instance, research has shown that teams may lose explicit communication and coordination activities under stressful conditions (Kleinman & Serfaty, 1989). Moreover, emotional changes are seen with such reactions as anxiety, fear, frustration, tension, depression, anger, motivational losses, and learned helplessness (Salas, Driskell, & Hughes, 1996).

In the MOUT environment, soldiers may experience several of these effects. Physiological reactions may cause physical distraction. Decreases in situational awareness (SA) and non optimal team process performance may result from cognitive tunneling. Soldiers may focus in on hostile taunting of non combatants, becoming distracted from their primary objectives. Discrimination between combatants and non combatants may require more time, resulting in increased exposure to danger and possible discrimination errors. Communications may be restricted, impacting a team's decision making.

In summary, evidence indicates that stress manifests itself in countless ways. These effects are costly in

terms of health-related issues, emotional well-being, and individual and team productivity. In an attempt to overcome these effects training interventions can be used to alleviate these negative effects.

STRESS EXPOSURE TRAINING INTERVENTIONS

In general, training interventions are developed to ensure that individuals gain and learn the attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to perform tasks in particular situations (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2000). During stress training interventions, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes are acquired under realistic stressful conditions. These techniques are developed to guarantee optimal transfer of training from simulated environments to real operational settings. For instance, stress management training introduced by Smith (1980) attempted to reduce an individual's anxiety by providing knowledge about the stressor and its effects, and teaching individuals a variety of physiological and cognitive stress-reduction techniques that can aid with stress coping (Prince, Bowers, & Salas, 1994). This method concentrated on comfort and relaxation rather than performance changes and enhancements for the individual. Intervention techniques included-relaxation training (e.g., breathing, stretching), biofeedback, cognitive reappraisal, and providing dietary and exercise information. Some shortcomings can have been found with these techniques. For instance, these behavioral and cognitive stress-coping methods have been mainly used in clinical domains and are thus limited in that specific scope. Furthermore, these techniques have not incorporated stressors while including knowledge and skills of complex cognitive task performance.

To fill the void of going beyond clinical settings and the application of different venues, a stress training intervention labeled stress exposure training (SET) was proposed to enhance an *individual's* performance by providing him/her with particular skills in the presence of defined stressors (Johnston & Cannon-Bowers, 1996; Prince et al., 1994). SET was described into three stages (Driskell & Johnston, 1998). The first phase of SET is *information provision*. It provides knowledge and preparatory information to the trainees, which will enhance their familiarity with the stress environment. Lectures, discussions, and examples are given to trainees in a classroom setting. In order for the trainees not to be 'surprised' by their own reactions to stress, knowledge included- information regarding the type of stressors that might be encountered; the

reactions that might result and what to expect when stress occurs; and how stress affects the overall performance of an individual. There is some evidence that suggests that individuals who receive preparatory information prior to performing under high stress conditions report less anxiety, and are more confident in their ability to perform the task. Specifically, individuals will make fewer performance errors than those who are not given any preparatory information (Inzana, Driskell, Salas, & Johnston, 1996).

The second phase of SET is *skill acquisition*. It attempts to build confidence in the trainee's performance in a stressful environment through practice, modeling, and feedback. It provides trainees with practice within such an environment. For instance, trainees learn different relaxation techniques that will calm their physiological reactions. This might include deep breathing and deep muscle relaxation. In addition, individuals learn various effective cognitive skills through positive coping thoughts and behavior. One effective coping skill is for trainees to use words or images that would trigger relaxation. Furthermore, individual learn several problem-solving skills. For example, Cannon-Bowers and Salas (1998) suggest several stress-training strategies that can be incorporated into this phase. Over-learning skills can help trainees perform tasks rapidly and effortlessly. These skills can be performed with little demand on cognitive resources. Trainees are taught to focus their attention on their own learning rather than their performance outcomes. This technique has been found to assist in building self-confidence. Trainees can also be instructed to assess their own decision-making processes while performing in a stressful environment. Trainees can develop expectations about their performance and ability, and consequently will have greater confidence in their performance.

The third and final phase of SET is *application and practice*. Trainees are able to practice their coping skills while being exposed to the stressors gradually. This phase allow trainees to perform tasks in a simulated stress environment that resembles a real environment while experiencing the performance difficulties that are encountered in such settings. The use of the information and skills gathered in phase one and two allows the trainees to implement and adapt their performance to this environment. SET trainers can coach trainees through role-playing, scenarios, and using visual imagery of typical stressful conditions that can occur in the real world. At the end of the SET training, trainees receive feedback regarding their performance. Thus, SET trainers are able to provide

specific examples of what the trainees did correctly and what they did incorrectly in the stressful situation.

TEAM EXPOSURE STRESS TRAINING (TEST)

In combat situations, teams are critical for mission success. They are assigned to complete a host of tasks, which may be complex and/or dangerous for an individual to accomplish alone. Thus, to ensure optimal performance, teams must receive stress training in teamwork to maintain effective performance. Teamwork involves the activities that enhance the quality and quantity of team interactions including collaboration, cooperation, and communication of team members (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2000). In many stressful conditions, teams tend to focus primarily on the task work demands and on their individual performance rather than on teamwork (Kleinman & Serfaty, 1989; Orasanu & Backer, 1996). However, when team members are trained to work effectively as a team, especially under stressful conditions, performance can be enhanced. For example, Serfaty, Entin, and Johnston (1998) demonstrated that effective teams that are encountered with stress can modify their decision making and coordination strategy and change their work to deal with the task environment. Specifically, efficient teams are able to shift from explicit communication methods to implicit communication cues. For team members to anticipate and make these changes, they must be able to adapt to the situation by recognizing the cues required in optimizing team performance (Paris et al., 1999).

Although SET has been used to train individuals in overcoming stressful conditions, there has been little in developing training techniques for teams under stress. To fill this void, an expansion of the individual based training technique for stress to team training is proposed. Team exposure stress training (TEST) can be used to enhance a team's ability to cope with stressors (Samman, 2002). Thus, prior to examining the teamwork proficiencies needed, we need to describe the concept of teams. A team can be defined as a "distinguishable set of two or more people who interact dynamically, interdependently, and adaptively toward a common and valued goal/objective/mission, who have each been assigned specific roles or functions to perform, and who have a limited life-span membership" (Salas, Dickinson, Converse, & Tannenbaum, 1992, p.4). Thus, teams differ from individual performance such that teams include multiple sources of information that must be shared, task interdependencies that must be developed,

coordination and communication strategies that must be developed and adaptive techniques that must be built to respond to the dynamics of the mission and/or member.

Hence, the success of teams in stressful conditions depends on what and how the team members think, do, and feel and the corresponding cognitive, behavioral, and attitudes needed for team effectiveness. These elements have been characterized into knowledge, skills, and attitudes of teams (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2000). In a MOU environment, Milham, Gledhill-Holmes, Jones and Stanney (2004) suggest that MOU teams rely on situation awareness, information exchange, coordination and adaptability to perform effectively. As such, this type of team will be used to illustrate the application of this methodology to a team performing in stressful conditions. To determine the essential teamwork constructs used in Team Exposure Stress Training (TEST), we examined the team performance literature and extrapolated two theoretical conceptual models for teams. Prince and Salas (1993) identified seven dimensions of teamwork which include- communication, decision making, leadership, situational awareness, mission analysis, assertiveness, and adaptability/flexibility. Furthermore, Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum, Salas, and Volpe (1995) developed a team competency framework which identified eight different team competencies which include- adaptability, shared situational awareness, performance monitoring/feedback, leadership/team management, interpersonal relations, coordination, communication, and decision making. Based on the above teamwork elements, we selected the common team knowledge and skills in both frameworks to include in the TEST framework which includes five team dimensions- communication, adaptability, leadership, decision making, and shared situational awareness.

In the first stage of TEST, *ACquaintance to Team Stress (ACTS)*, team members may receive the knowledge necessary to be familiar with stress, the types of stressors (e.g., noise, time pressure, fatigue) likely to encounter in the specific context, and the performance effects of stress (i.e., physiological, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social). Furthermore, team information regarding individual and team responsibilities, task interdependencies, team goal, teammate roles, and most importantly expectations of each team member will be provided to team members. This phase may employ lectures, video presentations, and multimedia techniques to deliver effective team performance knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1997). For

instance, in the aviation domain, video presentation was used to train (in)effective crew coordination behavior on a several team performance skills (Fowlkes et al., 1994).

In the second stage of TEST, *TEam Competencies for Stress (TECS)*, team members may be trained on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in counteracting the negative effects of stress. Training techniques can provide strategies for team leaders. Effective team leaders can be trained to provide constructive feedback to members on task work (e.g., assess problem) and teamwork (e.g., facilitate information exchange) (Paris et al., 1999). The team leader can also assist the members with specific instructions in developing required team competencies needed for better team performance (e.g., communication, coordination, adaptability, decision making, shared situational awareness). They can provide guidance and state clear priorities to enable team members to perform tasks more effectively (Smith-Jentsch et al., 1998). For communication skill training, lines of communication can be trained to be clear, open, and effective amongst team members. Team members should discuss issues freely while requesting clarification from team leaders or members when necessary (Paris et al., 1999). For instance, leaders may insist on team members to use military terminology and share relevant information before it is needed. For instance, research in communication skills (Johnston et al., 1997) suggests that team success may be dependent on the dynamic patterns of communication and the accurate and effective information exchange among members that leads to an efficient information flow to a single decision maker (i.e., leader). For adaptability skill training, cross training can focus on increasing team members' understanding of other team members' roles by providing practice in other members' tasks (Volpe, Cannon-Bowers, Salas, & Spector, 1996). The goal of this method is to create shared mental models among team members, allowing team members to work together seamlessly.

Decision making training will also be provided to team members. Team decision making skills may be trained using naturalistic decision making (NDM; Klein, 1989). NDM can be defined as "how experienced people, working as individuals or groups in dynamic, uncertain, and often fast-paced environment, identify and assess their situation, make decisions and take actions whose consequences are meaningful to them and the larger organization in which they operate" (Zsombok, 1997, p.4). Specifically, decision makers will be trained to recognize familiar elements of a

situation on the basis of their past experience and existing knowledge structure (shared mental models), then use the information to evaluate and predict current situations. Hence, trainees will learn how to make perceptual discrimination, recognize typical situations and detect inconsistencies, mentally simulate future and past states of the situation, improvise using story generation, and adapt to the event (Klein & Hoffman, 1993).

Crucial to team communication and decision making, is the formation of shared situational awareness. Situational awareness refers to the ability to perceive elements in the environment, understand what they mean, and project the status of the situation in the near future (Endsley, 1988). In a team, individuals strive to create common understandings of the situation by providing information to other team members. To promote shared situational awareness among team members, instructions can include communication techniques that promote collective awareness of the team's internal and external environment (Cooke, Stout, & Salas, 1997). Furthermore, it is critical to report any anticipated problems and/or deviations projected from the mission goal (Prince et al., 1999).

In third stage of TEST, *Practice Effective Reinforcement with Feedback to Ensure Competent Team (PERFECT)*, trainees may be provided with practice sessions, feedback, and reinforcement in a simulated environment. To ensure superior transfer of training from simulated environment to real conditions, team members may be immersed in a virtual environment with multimodal cues.

In a MOUT environment, teams encounter a host of stress responses. Stage one (*ACTS*) of TEST would include listing out the specific physiological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral responses expected. For example, soldiers are expected to experience increases in heart rate and blood pressure, skin perspiration, dry mouth, trembling, heavy breathing, and dilated pupils. Cognitively, soldiers may expect to experience attentional narrowing, in which they focus in on one part of the task and lose the bigger picture. Behaviorally, soldiers may experience increased time to make decisions, and may experience decreased team communications. Overall, soldiers may not leverage their team members for providing information or supporting behaviors.

Stage two (*TECS*) of TEST would include a focus on overlearning MOUT team skills. Training in decision making can provide variations of different configurations, allowing trainees to have automatic,

quick responses to different situation that do not require a lot of cognitive resources. Adaptability training would allow practice in seamlessly changing roles. Finally, Stage three (*PERFECT*) of TEST would provide training with stressors. Training with multisensory cues (i.e. in virtual environment) is especially suited for this, as auditory, visual, and haptic cues can be used to build an affective environment that replicates real world stressors. Haptics can be used to represent if and when soldiers are shot, auditory cues can provide the 'fog of war' effects of screaming crowds, team members, and injured individuals. Visual cues can provide realistic simulated casualties, and team member behaviors. With this approach, MOUT teams can have the opportunity to practice key skills under stress, leading to less performance decrements in live exercises and in battlefield operations.

To determine performance evaluation and training effectiveness, measures may be collected based on performance reactions, attitudes, knowledge, behavior, and strategies used by individual and teams. Team members may receive feedback from the information gathered from the simulated environment. Based on team member's evaluation, instructors can reinforce appropriate methods used under stress and provide alternative techniques to inappropriate strategies through lecturing and exercises. Employing video feedback of the trainees' performance may also be used for members to monitor their actions (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 1997). Moreover, role-playing may be used by trainers while employing previous simulated scenarios used in the multimodal virtual environment. This method allows team members to practice the targeted learning objective and receive feedback either in the classroom or in the multimodal virtual environment.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the TEST approach leverages a validated method for mitigating individual stress responses (SET) and adapts it to the team domain. From the team perspective, it is critical that such approaches are tested and applied in team settings, as such environments can introduce a host of stressors and stress responses that are not experienced at the individual level. With the TEST method, teams would have knowledge and skills to successfully deal with stressful battlefield conditions, leading to successful mission performance.

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