

Combat Mindset training module in Romanian Air Force Academy

Modulul de Combat Mindset Training în Academia Forțelor Aeriene

- Combat Mindset, psychological theories, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP), research and research projects, and practical exercises
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- ZAI Conference OCT 20 2022





Plan for the speech

- **Purpos:** To give an introduction to what the Combat Mindset Training Module will consist of
- **Method:** Presentation and Q & As at the end
- **End situation:** To have more knowledge about Combat Mindset training is and about the training module

The relationship between the military and psychology

- The strong symbiotic relationship between the military and psychology is partly related to the numerous psychology sub-disciplines that are employed, and in part because the military has been at the forefront of many advances and innovations in psychology (Murphy, Hodson, & Gallas, 2010).
- For example, World War II was the impetus for situational leadership research, numerous training innovations and the rapid expansion of the field of human factors.

The relationship between the military and psychology

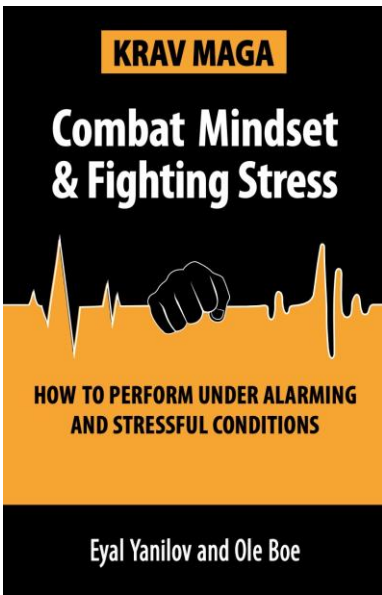
- Regrettably, warfare has been a major source of cases for the management and research of psychoneuroses, brain injuries and traumatic stress reactions (for instance post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD).
- It has been suggested (Leahey, 1997) that the beginnings of modern clinical psychology took root in the busy veterans' hospitals in the US following World War II.
- The Swiss disease, neurosis, shell shock, battle fatigue, PTSD

Reactions to traumatic experiences - Ukraine

- The percentage of soldiers returning to service treated by the centre (UJMM in Ukraine) varies from year to year, but we can observe an upward trend, from 36.3% in 2015, through 52.2% in 2016, 53.5% in 2017 to 64.5% in 2018 (UJMM, 2018; Boe, Piotrowski & Rawat, 2022).
- The percentage of soldiers who were discharged from the Armed Forces of Ukraine for mental health conditions is also decreasing - from 46.6% in 2015 to 28.8% in 2016, from 28.5% in 2017 to 21.2% % in 2018 (UJMM, 2018). Early detection and appropriate treatment are certainly crucial.

The importance of mental training

- Greater than any other calling, the life of the warrior requires mental skills in combination with physical or mechanical skills. Yet, mental training is an area which has been long neglected in the fields of conflict management and force application (Doss, 2007)
- Combat Mindset (Yanilov & Boe, 2014, 2015; 2020)
- Combat mindset has been known by many different names, such as "mental toughness," "grace under fire," and "nerves of steel."



*EAA Project with Romania
Academia Forțelor Aeriene “Henri Coandă”
Brașov
Asociația Societatea de Psihologie Militară*

A first result of the project consists the adaptation of the Multidimensional Self-Control Scale (MSCS) in Romanian language.

The second main goal of the project is to develop a training module for combat mindset (1 semester long training) and train 40 students enrolled in the bachelor and master studies of the Air Force Academy (20 students / group training, 2 groups in implementation period). The training will be eventually included in the educational offer of the university, a minimum of 18 months after the end of the project

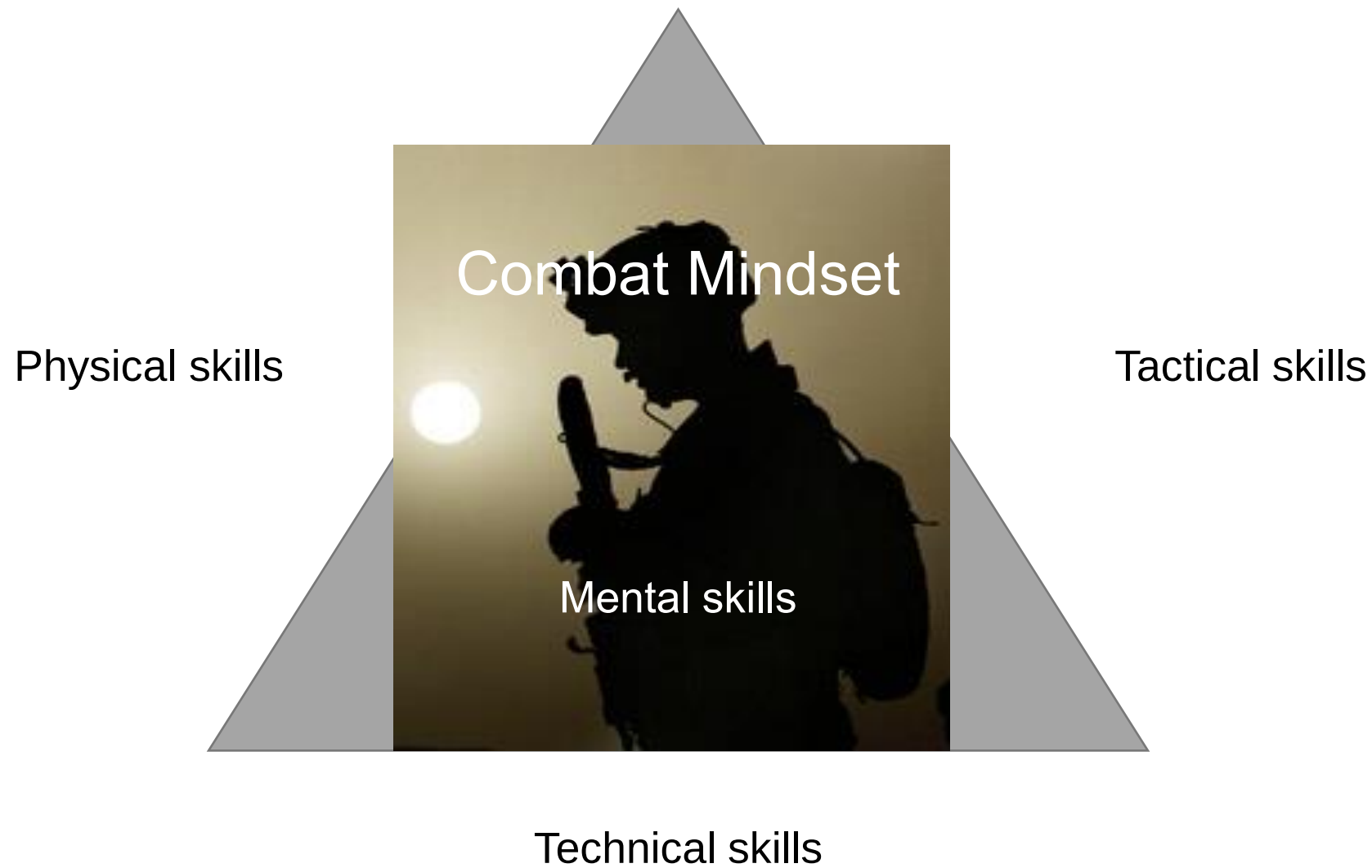
The team will elaborate a trainer’s manual for combat mindsetting. To create the possibility that this training model to be adopted by other military universities, there will be organized a multiplier event where 50 participants teachers from the military universities will participate, and also other specialist from other military institutions (i.e. human resources department, medical department, etc.).

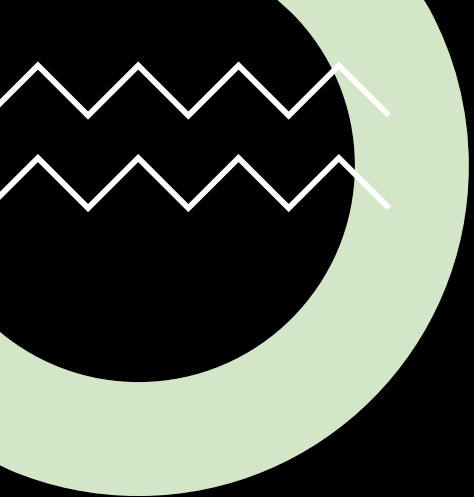


Expanding and Extending the CoMind Project?



- Combat mindset training was completed this week at the Air Force Academy (with other participants also).
 - We aim at extending the period of implementation of the training program above 18 months and we aim at extending this approach nationally.
 - The Air Force Academy will provide a laboratory (in a room) for the training specific to combat mindset training.
 - Used for testing stress, coping, heart rates, attention, breathing control, decision making, reaction times aso (movable walls, low-light level conditions, different sounds, and a multitude of scenarios)
- 





Where does the practical exercises we use come from?

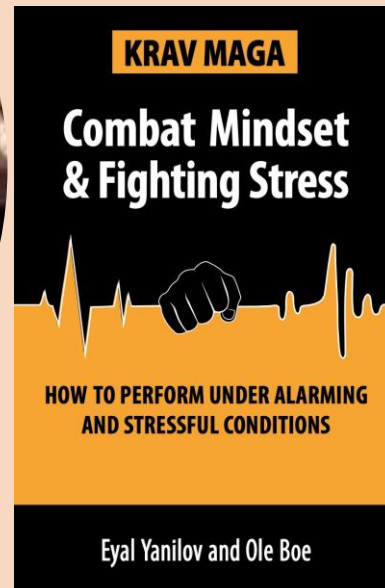
Krav Maga

Krav Maga translated from **Hebrew** into English as '**Contact Combat**'

Initially developed as an unarmed combat system by **Imi Lichtenfeld** for the **Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)** due to its no-nonsense approach.

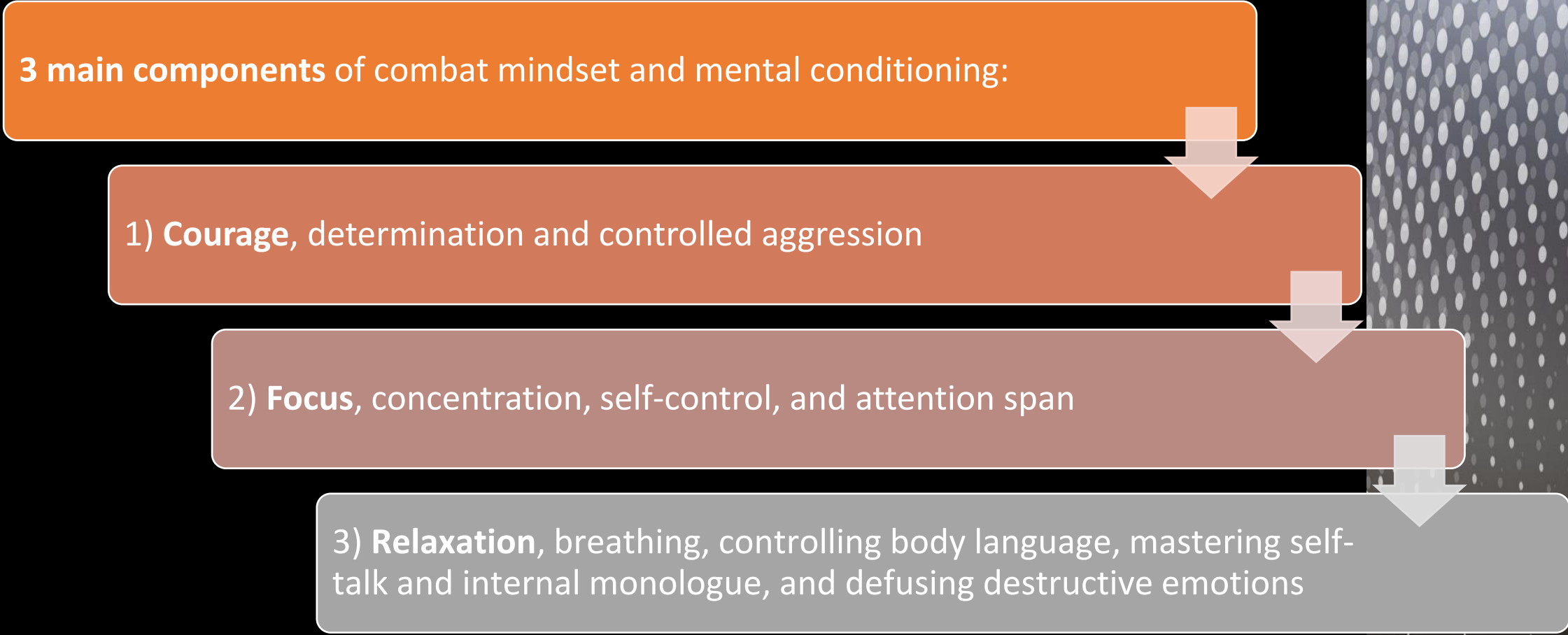
Used as the basis of **close combat training** for Norwegian and Swedish Armed Forces, and several other countries (Singapore, Denmark, Finland, and usually for SF units)

Exercises also developed by Yanilov and Boe in **Krav Maga Global** - MCIC (2014; 2015) and for the book (2020)



Components of the Combat Mindset

3 main components of combat mindset and mental conditioning:



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graph TD; A[3 main components of combat mindset and mental conditioning:] --> B[1) Courage, determination and controlled aggression]; B --> C[2) Focus, concentration, self-control, and attention span]; C --> D[3) Relaxation, breathing, controlling body language, mastering self-talk and internal monologue, and defusing destructive emotions];
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1) **Courage**, determination and controlled aggression

2) **Focus**, concentration, self-control, and attention span

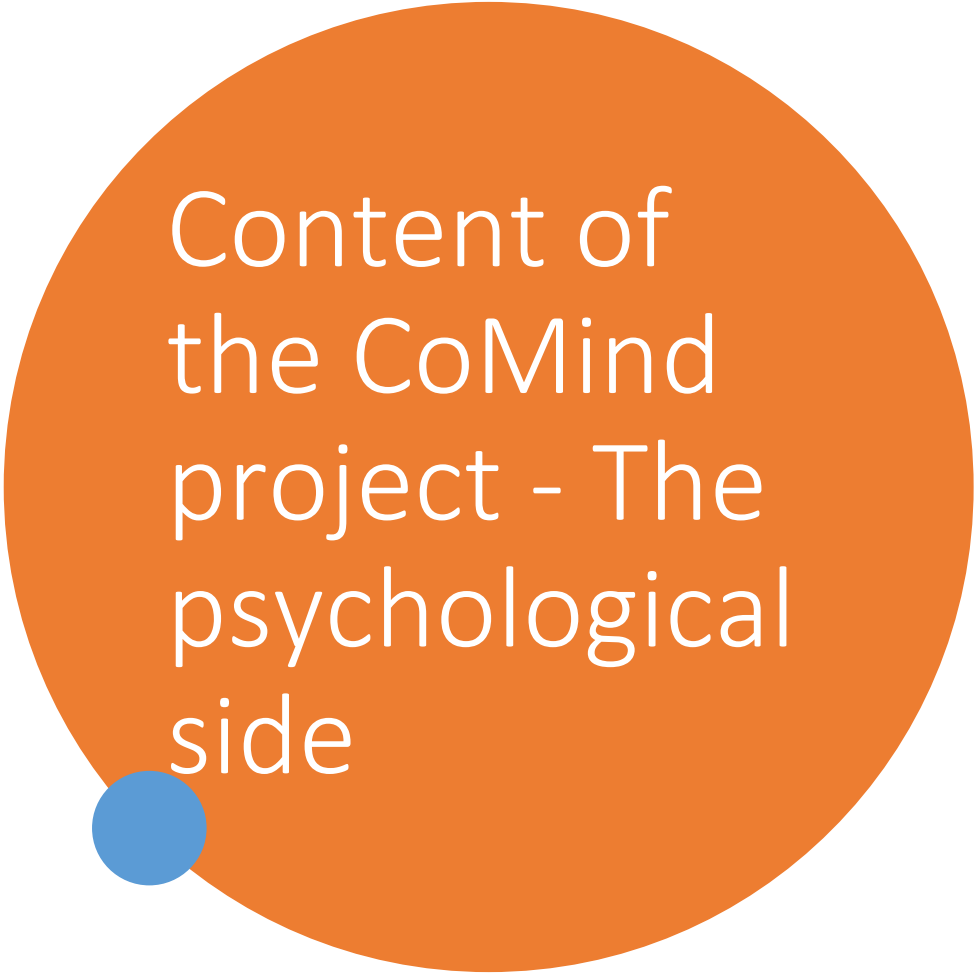
3) **Relaxation**, breathing, controlling body language, mastering self-talk and internal monologue, and defusing destructive emotions



The CoMind Training Module

The training module focuses on three areas of mental training: combat-mindset, which includes, among other qualities, courage, determination, mental toughness and aggression; relaxation and defusing of destructive emotions; and focusing, concentration and self-control.

Beware that even though this is a training module on mental training, the physical training drills are not easy! We provide demanding drills and techniques in order to develop a better combat mindset and mental capacities. Body and mind are not separable.



Content of the CoMind project - The psychological side

- The training module combines military psychology knowledge, especially cognitive approaches, applied martial arts and military sciences.
- Mental training is a collection of methods and techniques to develop psychological and physical capabilities.
- The Necessity of Mental Training and Developing a Combat Mindset.
- Self-confidence (Siddle, 1995), Psychological Skills and Self-Efficacy (Bandura, 1977).
- Visualization (tactical performance imagery), goal setting, positive self-talk (minimizing the internal dialogue), combat mindset (courage, determination, and aggression) and relaxation (Yanilov & Boe, 2020).

Content of the CoMind project - The psychological side

- In extremis leadership (Kolditz, 2010): Boe & Spain, 2022).
- Character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004: Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, and Minhas, 2011, Bang, Boe, Nilsen, Boe, Eilertsen & Lang-Ree, 2021); Boe, Bang & Nilsen, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c, Boe & Bang, 2015).
- Leadership Qualities, Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978).
- Leadership Development and Coping with Stress (Boe et al., 2014; 2015).



Content of the CoMind project - The psychological side

- Stress, and Coping Theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).
- Mental Toughness (Riordan, 2010).
- Tools for Measuring Your Mental Toughness.
- Krav Maga Global Self-Efficacy, Decision Making, and Stress Management Questionnaire (KSDSQ) (Yanilov & Boe, 2015).
- Mental Toughness Psychological Skills Profile (MTPSP) (Asken, Grossman & Christensen, 2010).
- The Self-efficacy Scale (Buch, Säfvenbom, & Boe, 2015).

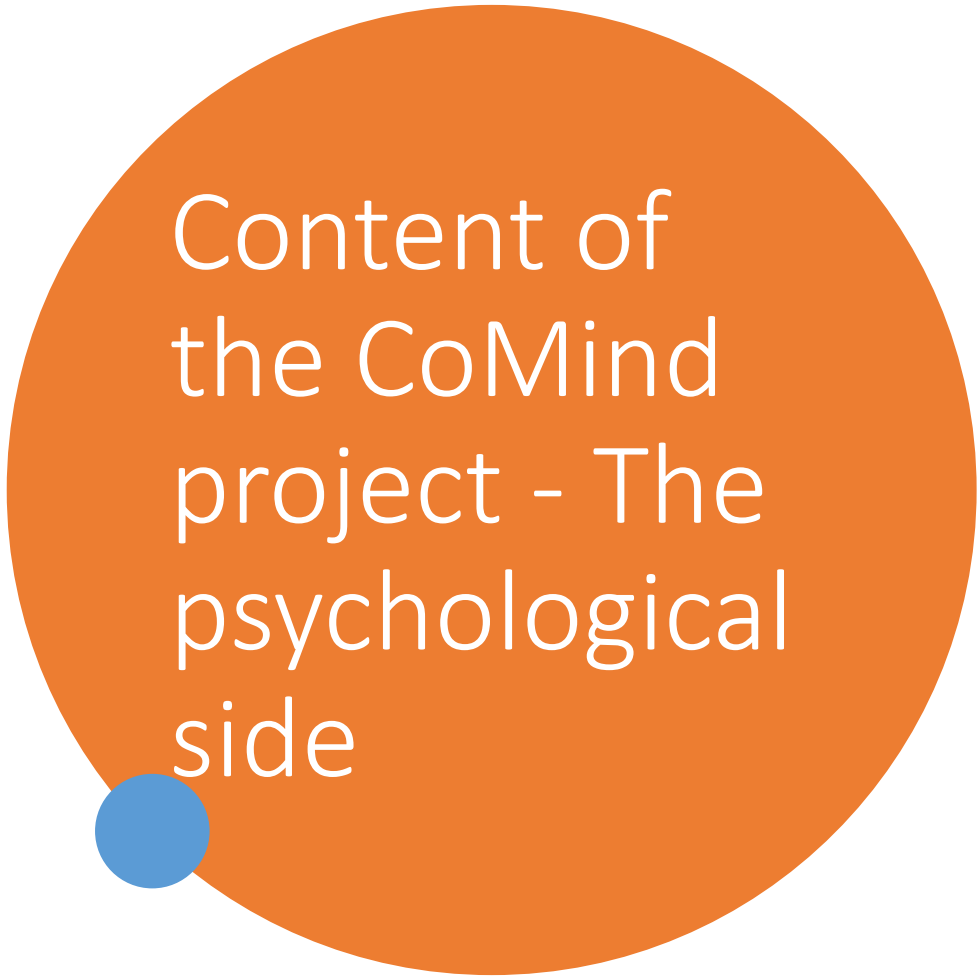
Content of the CoMind project - The psychological side

- Exercise- and Hormone-Induced Activation of the Nervous System (Grossman, 2004).
- The Fear Response: Cognitive - Somatic - Emotional-Behavioural responses = Decision making (Siddle, 1995; Boe, 2003).
- The Survival Stress Reaction (Siddle, 1995).
- Self-regulation and willpower (Mischel & Grusec, 1967).
- Fight or Flight response (Cannon, 1929).



The Fight-or-Flight response

- 7 different possible outcomes:
- 1. Fight
- 2. Flight, escape from the situation, 80 % default mode
- 3. Freeze, temporarily paralysis
- 4. Submit, surrender
- 5. Posture, pretending that you will fight
- 6. Choking, the feeling of not being able to swallow or breathe
- 7. The death grip, holding very hard on something



Content of the CoMind project - The psychological side

All this is found in the book *Combat Mindset & Fighting Stress* (Yanilov & Boe, 2020)

The aim: To educate monsters with brakes (Boe & Ingdahl, 2017)

In addition

- Transgressing from PTSD to PTG (Boe & Torgersen, 2022)
- Resilience as a Path to Posttraumatic Growth (Boe, Piotrowski & Rawat, 2022)
- And of course, the Romanian version of The Multidimensional Self-Control Scale (MSCS) (Nilsen, Bang, Boe, Martinsen, Lang-Ree & Røysamb, 2020)
- As an intellectual product, the team will elaborate a trainer's manual for combat mindset training.

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Relaxation, Body language and Visualization

Different types of
breathing techniques

Abdominal breathing,
full breathing, breathing
Rhythm and Counts

Tactical or Combat
breathing (breathing in a
square or a box) (Asken,
Grossman &
Christensen, 2010)

Body Language, Power
poses (Carney, Cuddy, &
Yap, 2010)

Accepting Failure,
Neutralizing Destructive
Emotions (Yanilov &
Boe, 2020)

Changing self-talk
(Yanilov & Boe, 2020)

Accepting Defeat
(Yanilov & Boe, 2020)



Power poses

Content of the CoMind
project - The military side:
Relaxation, Body language
and Visualization

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination

Chasing Games

Tag Games

Attacker,
Disturber, Target
(ADT)

Passing Through a
Crowd

Passing Through
Two Lines of
Resisting Trainees

Passing Through a
Circle of People

Passing Through a
Rotating Circle of
People

Passing Through a
“Door”

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination

Passing Through a
“Door” from Two
Directions

Passing Through a
Crowd, from Four
Corners

Passing Through a
Crowd, from Four
Corners in Teams

Passing Through
Two Lines: A
Corridor of
Attackers

Breaking Through a
Circle of People
Holding Pads

Breaking Through a
Circle of People
Holding Pads While
on the Ground

Reaching a Target
while Blocked by a
Circle of People

Other
Considerations for
Passing Through
Crowds

Combat mindset

Mental condition

Condition White

Condition Yellow

Condition Red

Condition Gray

Condition Black

Heart frequency

around 70 BPM

up to 115 BPM

115-145 BPM

145-175 BPM

175-220 BPM

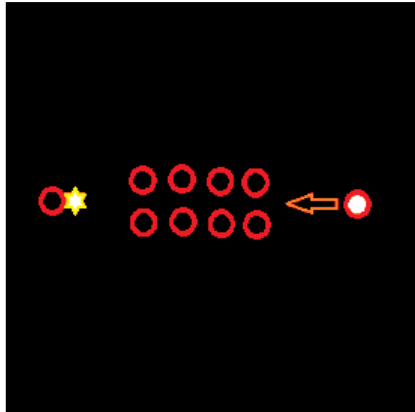
Pushing the envelope in order to increase performance under stress

US Army Green Berets, close combat fighting, Nascar
and F1 drivers (Sddle, 1995)

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination

**Passing Through Two
Lines of Resisting Trainees**

80 kg vs 640 kgs



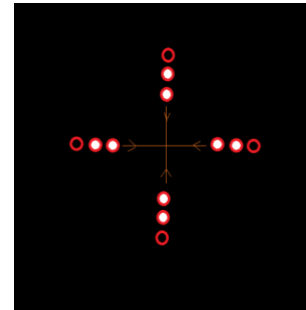
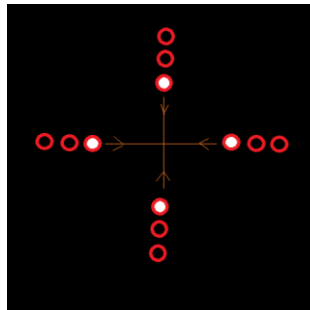
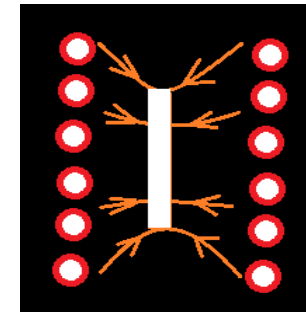
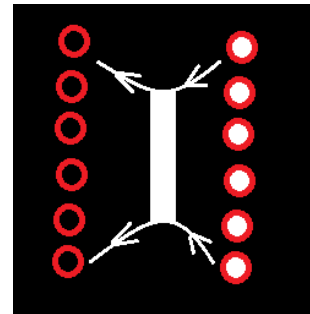
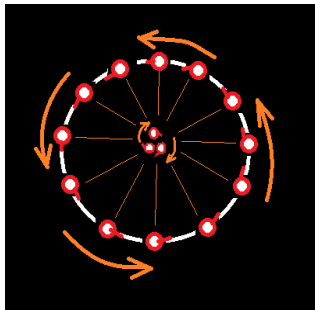
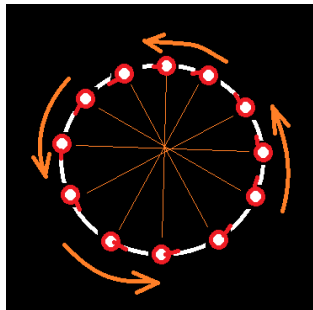
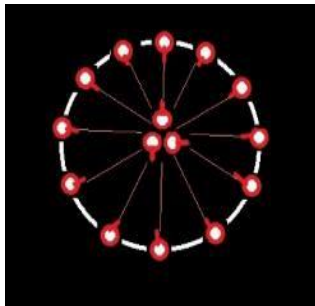
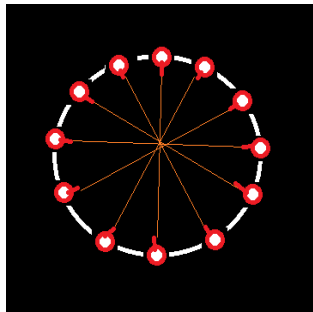


**Content of the CoMind
project - The military side:
Controlled Aggression and
Determination**



**Passing Through Two Lines of
Resisting Trainees**

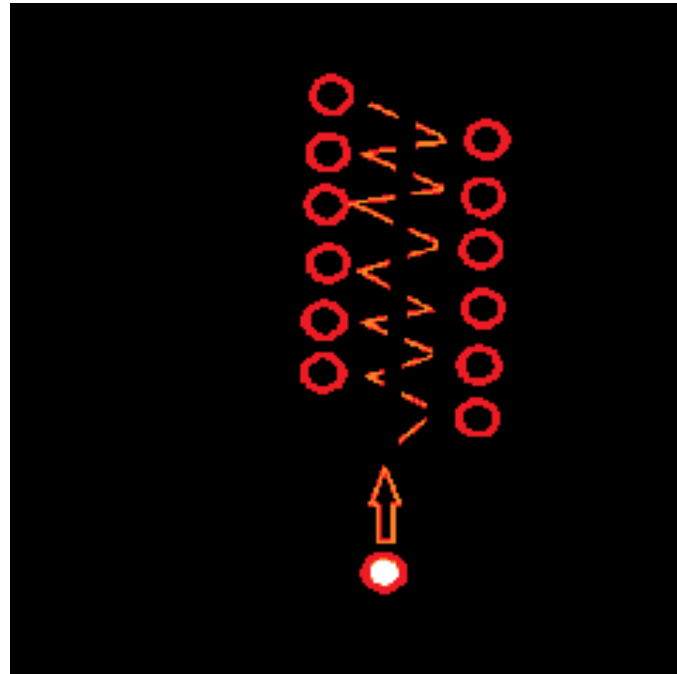
Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination



Can be used in selection?

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination

Passing Through Two Lines:
A Corridor of Attackers



Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Controlled Aggression and Determination

**Breaking Through a Circle of People
Holding Pads While on the Ground**

**Breaking Through a Circle of People
Holding Pads While on top of you**



Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Relaxation and Breathing

- Human Conditioning via Cue Words
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Introduction to Breathing
- Abdominal Breathing
- Midsection or “Rib” Breathing
- High or “Chest” Breathing
- Full Breathing
- Breathing Rhythm and Counts

Content of the CoMind project - The military side: Focus and Attention Span

Defining Focus and Concentration

The Need for Focus and Concentration

Focusing Body, Speech and Mind

Slow-Motion Technique

Focus on a Point (“TRATAK”)

Quieting Self-Talk and Controlling the Ego When a Partner Pushes You

Minimizing Ego by Thanking Others

Attention Span

Open or Divided Attention

Improving Attention



Pavlov's Conditioning in Dogs

- Pavlov gave food to the dog (UCS), this lead to salivation (UCR)
- The bell made noise (CS) before the food was given to the dog (UCS), this lead to salivation (UCR)
- The noise of the bell (CS) lead to salivation (CR)
- Tension is Created by Conditioning
- Be able to Reverse this Process
- Reversed Conditioning using Cue Words and Anchoring an Aggressive Mindset

Who use mental training?

- US Army, SOCOM, the Jedi Project in the 1980s.
- Norwegian Army, mental training, mindfulness before parachute training
- Norwegian Navy, Coastal Ranger Commandoes, NLP training
- Norwegian Military Academy, NLP and close combat
- Norwegian Air Force, mindfulness for fighter pilots
- Mental training implemented in US and Canadian Forces
- US Army, Battlemind training given today
- Some other studies not on fighters
- Tons of studies conducted on athletes, psychiatric patients and so on
- And of course, KMG
- Conclusion: Mental training works

A group of business professionals in an office setting. A woman in the center is gesturing with her hand while talking. To her left, a man in a suit is partially visible. In the foreground, a hand holds a tablet displaying a document with charts and text. Another hand holds a smartphone. A white coffee cup is also visible. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office space.

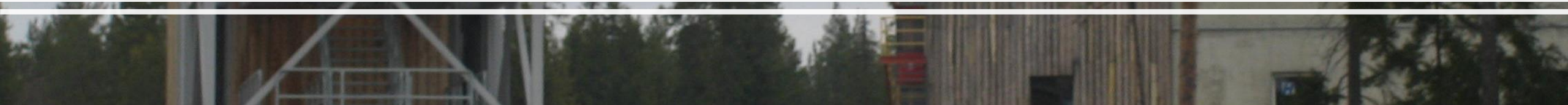
Mental training and why a correct
Combat or Stress Mindset works in
order to minimize the effects of
stress

Combat mindset

Mental condition	Heart frequency
Condition White	around 70 BPM
Condition Yellow	up to 115 BPM
Condition Red	115-145 BPM
Condition Gray	145-175 BPM
Condition Black	175-220 BPM
Pushing the envelope in order to increase performance under stress	
US Army Green Berets, close combat fighting, Nascar and F1 drivers	



Combat Mindset training



Thank you for your
attention

Vă mulțumim
pentru atenție

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**Combat Mindset,
psychological theories,
tactics, techniques and
procedures (TTP),
research and research
projects, and practical
exercises**

**Resilience, posttraumatic
growth (PTG),
character strengths**

Questions?

