

## 360 Leadership Resiliency Skills Program breaks stereotypical military training structure

### U.S. Army North

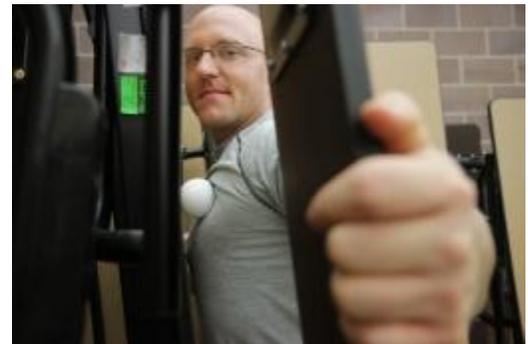
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JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO, Texas— Although downward dog, swan dive, crocodile and pigeon pose may sound like a trendy rendition of the nursery rhyme “Old MacDonald,” they are yoga poses. Service members learned these and other poses as part of the morning workout routine for service members during a resiliency course.



More than forty-five noncommissioned officers from all four branches of the Department of Defense participated in the 360 Leadership Resiliency Skills Program July 24-28 at Joint Base Sam Houston, Texas.

“Starting the day with yoga was different from any other military course that I’ve been to in the Army. As service members, we are no strangers to doing physical fitness in the morning. But, yoga is never part of the equation and is often seen as just a relaxing technique,” said Sgt. 1st Class Juan Martinez, a human resource specialist who serves as an executive NCO with U.S. Army North. “However, this class has changed my perception of yoga; it not only helped make me physically strong, but it helped make me mentally strong too.”

He continued, “I found it to be extremely rewarding because it helps alleviate stress while building on physical conditioning.”

Instructors referred to the instructional areas as “tools” during the weeklong course and helped identify skills that could be used in all aspects of life, therefore creating a “leader’s toolkit.”

From a senior leadership perspective, resiliency training is an important tool.

“Everyone goes through tough situations, and we all face adversity. Resiliency is not about avoiding adversity,” said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey S. Buchanan, commander, U.S. Army North (Fifth Army). “It’s about dealing with adversity, learning how to bounce back and turning that adversity into an opportunity for growth.”

But, yoga wasn’t the only tool learned during what many students are calling an “unconventional approach” to the mundane, military resiliency training. The course is designed to appeal to all types of learning-styles whether students participated in group discussions, one-on-one with the instructors, inspirational videos, hands-on exercises, or partnering with peers.

This course is centered on building stronger leaders through various topics such as: communication, stress management, spirituality, fitness, nutrition, pain management, conflict management, financial fitness and much more.

“It’s not the typical death by PowerPoint course; this course is taught by subject matter experts who know what it feels like to be in our shoes as prior service military members and keeps the [students] fully engaged,” said Martinez. “This course offers a little something of everything that can help [service members] become well-rounded leaders.”

Service members were not only encouraged to apply these techniques to their military lives with subordinates, peers and superiors; they were also encouraged to apply the techniques their personal lives. On days four and five, spouses were invited to attend the course to partake in the discussions on couples and parent-child communication, love, couple’s yoga and of course... sex.

Torieca Russell, whose husband works at the vascular clinic inside San Antonio Military Medical Center, attended the two days.

“I originally came to the class to support my husband because he came home and talked about the amazing information he was learning,” said Russell. “After being in this course, there’s things that I want to implement within my marriage, so that I may be a better spouse and parent.”

“I think it’s absolutely critical for spouses to attend resiliency training with their service members; it helps make you more grounded as a leader. A strong support system at home converts to a strong fighting force,” said Buchanan.

Even the spouses referred to the skills learned as “tools.”

“The tool that I’m going apply to my marriage is the three-by-three rule because I feel like that will allow me to have a deeper connection with my husband,” said Russell.

Three-by-three is a method of communication for couples which allows for both individuals to talk about their most inner thoughts and desires with their spouse for three minutes each in a positive setting, according to retired Army Col. Mary Lopez, the 360 Program co-founder and certified hypnotist. Lopez referred to this method as a key to a long-lasting marriage.

“I’m very happy that I attended the course. And, now I understand how we can use communication techniques learned to work together as a team continuously improving on our relationship goals,” said Russell, as she smiled at her husband of six years.

As for recommending the class to others, Martinez said he would suggest any leader to take the course because it will benefit them in all avenues of life.

Russel added, “I would recommend spouses to attend the class because it teaches both parties to be accountable for the information learned and the application of methods for your relationship. Marriage is work and it takes positive teamwork to keep it going.”