SWISS ARMY RESILIENCE TRAINING – 

Current State of Work and Initial Findings

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1. Definition

2. „Our road with resilience“

3. Swiss Army Resilience Training (ART)
   • Aims
   • Field study Inf OS („Operation PHOENIX“)
   • Selected results

4. Conclusion
DEFINITION

Resilience framework

Community level

Unit level

Individual level

Family level
DEFINITION

• „resilire“ (lat.) = bounce back

INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE

• Ability of individuals to deal successfully with challenging situations and to carry on and persevere in the face of adversity.

• Mental strength that allows you to stay healthy or to recover quickly despite adversities.

• Adaptation process after stress and trauma with the help of personal resources and strengths.
OUR ROAD WITH RESILIENCE

Since 2009: Positive Psychology as part of military psychology (e.g. character strengths of career officers)

2010 – 2013: Intervention study PROGRESS; measurement of resilience

2011: American Psychologist „Comprehensive Soldier Fitness“

2012: MILAC spring conference

2015: Master Resilience Training U.S. Army

Since 2015: Swiss Army Resilience Training (ART)
RELEVANCE OF RESILIENCE within the given context

- BMT 18 weeks
- NOC C 4 w
- PS as NCO 7 w
- OS 15 weeks
- PS as LT 18 weeks

Appropriate behavior
RESEARCH PROJECT 'ART'‘

Aims

• Recognizing and promoting the mental health of soldiers

• Development and strengthening of the leadership personality

• Integration of selected and proven elements into leadership training

• Scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of ART with regard to the optimal handling of challenges

• Added value in the field of resilience research
OPERATION 'PHOENIX': ART in action

4 modules à 90 minutes

Thinking traps
Optimism
Icebergs
Dealing with negative thoughts

Stress management
Energy management
Communication
Character strengths
RESEARCH PROJECT 'ART'

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OPERATION 'PHOENIX' I

Officer school

- ART W4-7

Practical service

- OS W1: Data collection (subjective parameters)
- PS W1-4: Data collection (subjective parameters & stressors)
- PS Interviews

Civilian life

- Follow Up: Data collection (subjective parameters)

Stress W1 + W7

N = 160
Satisfaction with Operation 'PHOENIX'

- Satisfied: 67%
- Personally enriching: 43%
SELECTED RESULTS STUDY 1

Practical applicability

- Civilian life
- Military life
- Endurance exercise
SELECTED RESULTS STUDY 1

Subjectively perceived effects

- Improved self-awareness (86%)
- Improved awareness of one’s thinking patterns (84%)
- More appropriate control of emotions (81%)
- More constructive communication in conflict situations (74%)
- Generally more resilient (72%)
- Improved coping with negative events (69%)
SELECTED RESULTS STUDY 1

Subjectively perceived effects

- Significant differences between intervention group and control group with regard to
  - work overload
  - stress
  - rumination
  - recovery after a stressful event

- Depending on
  - the application of the methods
  - the motivation of the cadets
  - the attitude of the instructors
Swiss Armed Forces
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OPERATION 'PHOENIX' II

Officer school

ART vs. DMT
W3/5/6/7

N = 100

OS W1
Data collection (subjective parameters)

OS W9
Data collection (objective and subjective parameters)

OS W2
Data collection (objective and subjective parameters)

OS W12
Data collection (objective and subjective parameters)

Follow Up
Data collection (subjective parameters and performance rating)

TSST W2, W9
Endurance exercise W12

Practical service
„WORK IN PROGRESS“ STUDY 2

- Cortisol
- Testosteron
INTERIM STATEMENT

• Highly motivated cadets
• High satisfaction with the training
• ART is perceived as practice-oriented

• Positive effect on stress perception, stress management and emotion regulation
• Self reflection, individual motivation and attitude of instructors as amplifiers
• Practice again and again ...

→ Short and mid term training effects confirmed, long term effects and objective data still being analyzed.
→ Study 3 in preparation
OUR ROAD TO RESILIENCE

Culture

Attitude

Outcome

Successfully dealing with challenges

Identifying thinking traps and icebergs

Three blessings

Exercise

Nature

Entry level

Behavior / Tools

Successfully responding

Active constructive responding

Strong effect

Poor effect

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