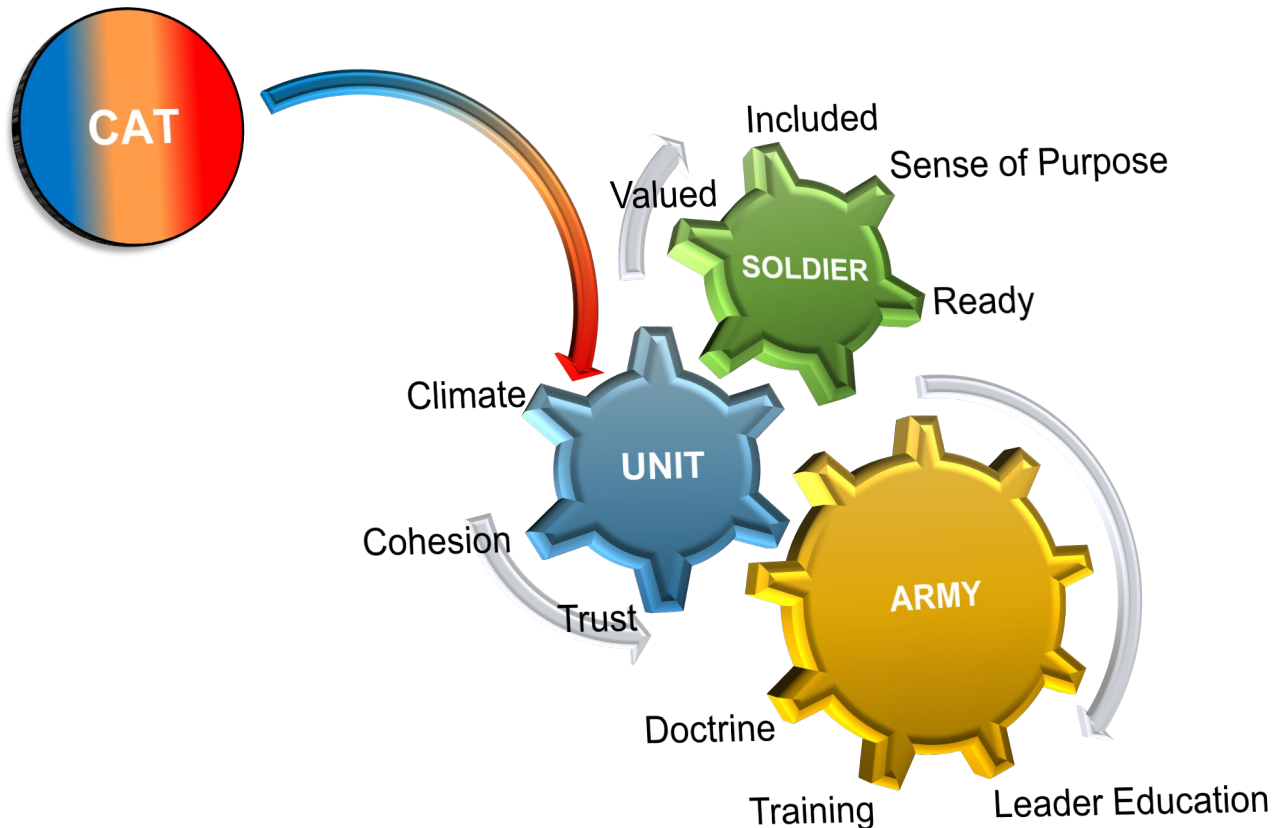


Cohesion Assistance Team (CAT)

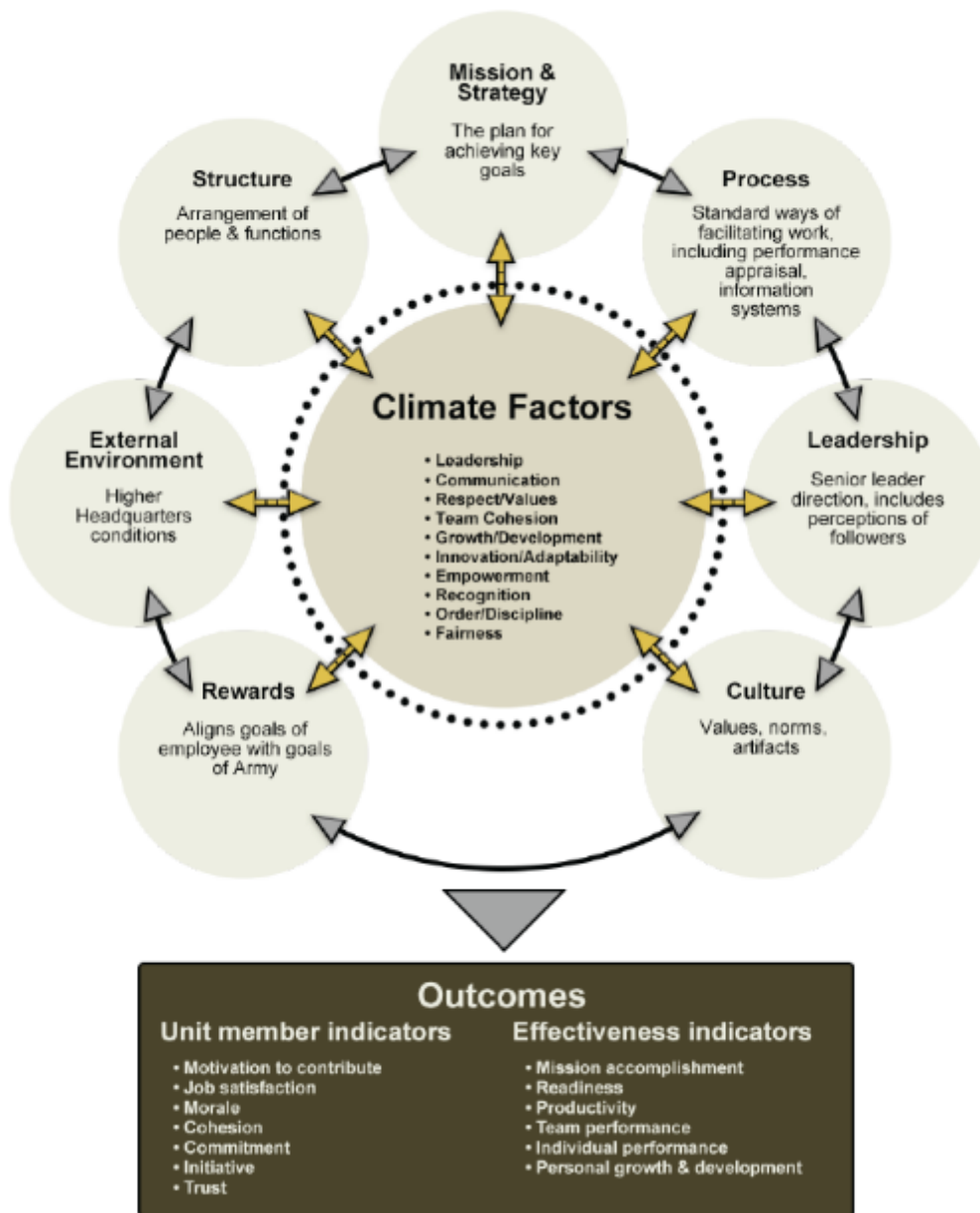
A Secretary of the Army initiative to build positive command climates and reduce harmful behaviors

BE ALL YOU CAN BE

Mission: The Cohesion Assistance Team (CAT) conducts on-site unit visits to assist tactical commanders in identifying root causes to challenges affecting cohesive team building. The CAT then provides the commander assistance with building tailored solutions focused on improving their unit climate, strengthening cohesion and building trust.



End State. At the unit level, the CAT improves the climate within those units visited and at the Army level, improves doctrine, training and leader development to build and maintain cohesive teams who value trust between leader and led, embrace our culture and ultimately drive down harmful behaviors within our ranks.



- The elements on the outside ring reflect the larger Army, higher headquarters and environment that impact a unit's climate. The CAT researches these elements prior to an assistance visit to establish context.
- The climate factors in the inner circle are areas a commander has direct influence over. During the visit, the CAT observes unit member and effectiveness indicators to draw conclusions and develop its assessment of the unit's climate.
- The CAT provides feedback to help commanders see their blind spots and take steps to improve their unit climate.
- For more, see <https://cal.army.mil/>.



The CAT Is

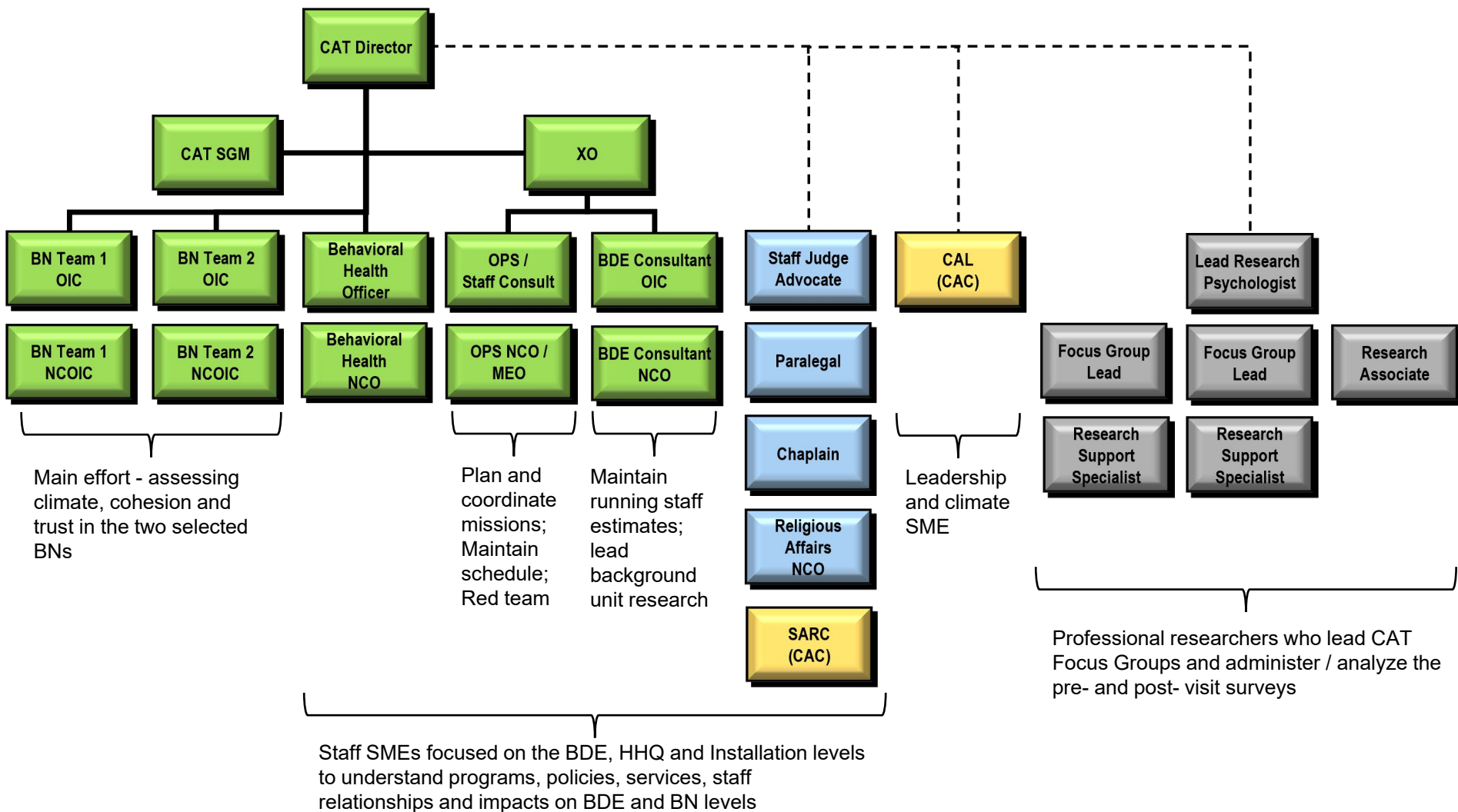
- A cross-functional team of operational leaders and experts
- Focuses on organizational climate
- Researches command issues and concerns
- Identifies leader blind spots
- Recommends doctrinal solutions and resources
- Coaches tactical leaders through action plan development



The CAT Is NOT

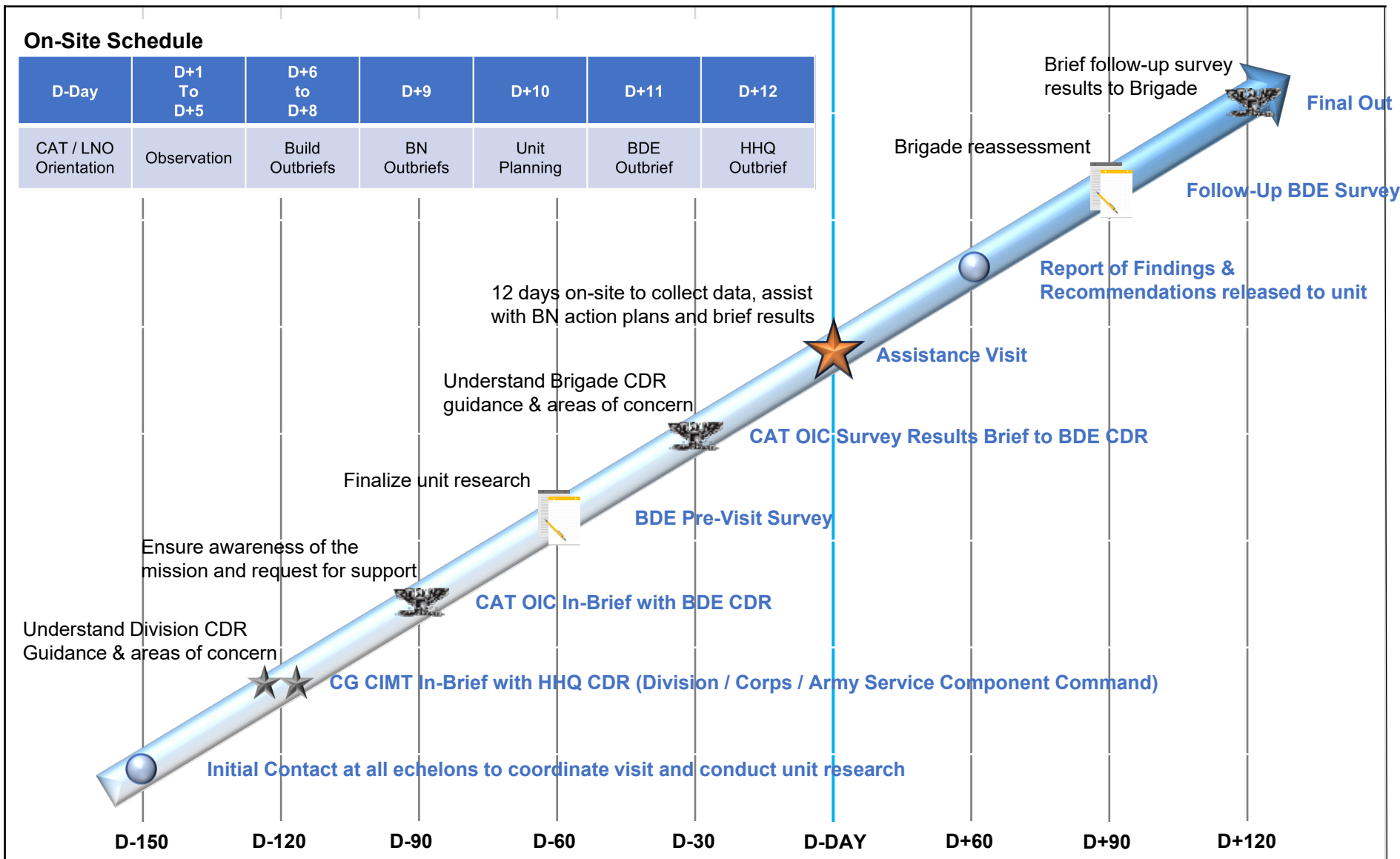
- Inspector General
- Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)
- On-Site Installation Evaluation (OSIE)
- A 15-6 investigation
- Focused on leaders or individuals

-  Core Team
-  CIMT Support
-  WRAIR Support (via Memo of Agreement)
-  CAC Support (via TASKORD)



On-Site Schedule

D-Day	D+1 To D+5	D+6 to D+8	D+9	D+10	D+11	D+12
CAT / LNO Orientation	Observation	Build Outbriefs	BN Outbriefs	Unit Planning	BDE Outbrief	HHQ Outbrief





- **Support Battalion Level Planning**
- **Outbrief Brigade and Higher Headquarters**



Develop Conclusions

- Determine sustains, best practices, and issues



Analyze

- Nightly reports and daily huddles to iterate data and refine picture of the unit
- Build initial outbrief



On-Site Data Collection

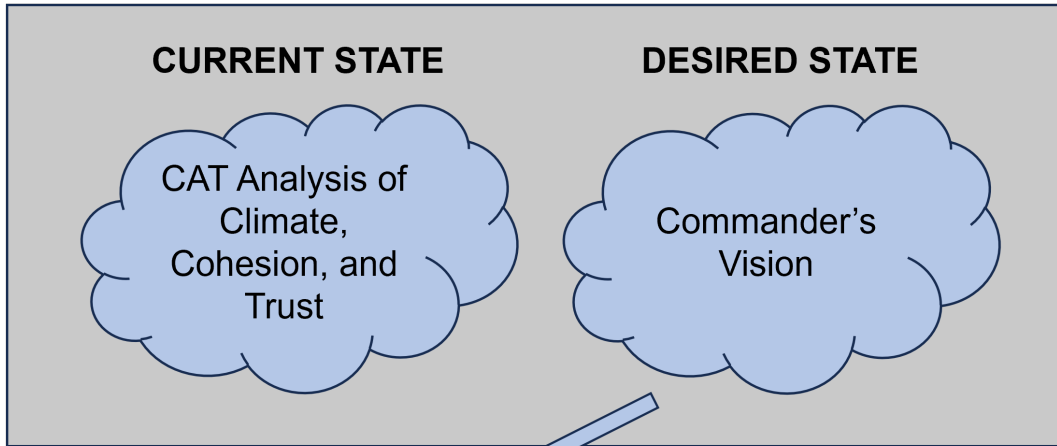
- Focus groups
- Listening sessions
- Office calls / Interviews
- Observations of unit activities



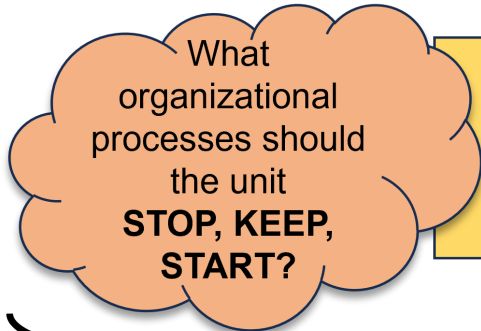
Pre-Mission Research

- Examine DEOCS and other surveys, unit stats on discipline (i.e. SHARP, suicides, EO)
- Administer and analyze pre-visit WRAIR survey
- Obtain guidance and focus areas from HHQ, BDE and BN Commanders

ENVIRONMENTAL FRAME



PROBLEM FRAME



INITIAL ACTION PLAN AND BRIEF
BROAD GENERAL ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE

REFINE AND IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

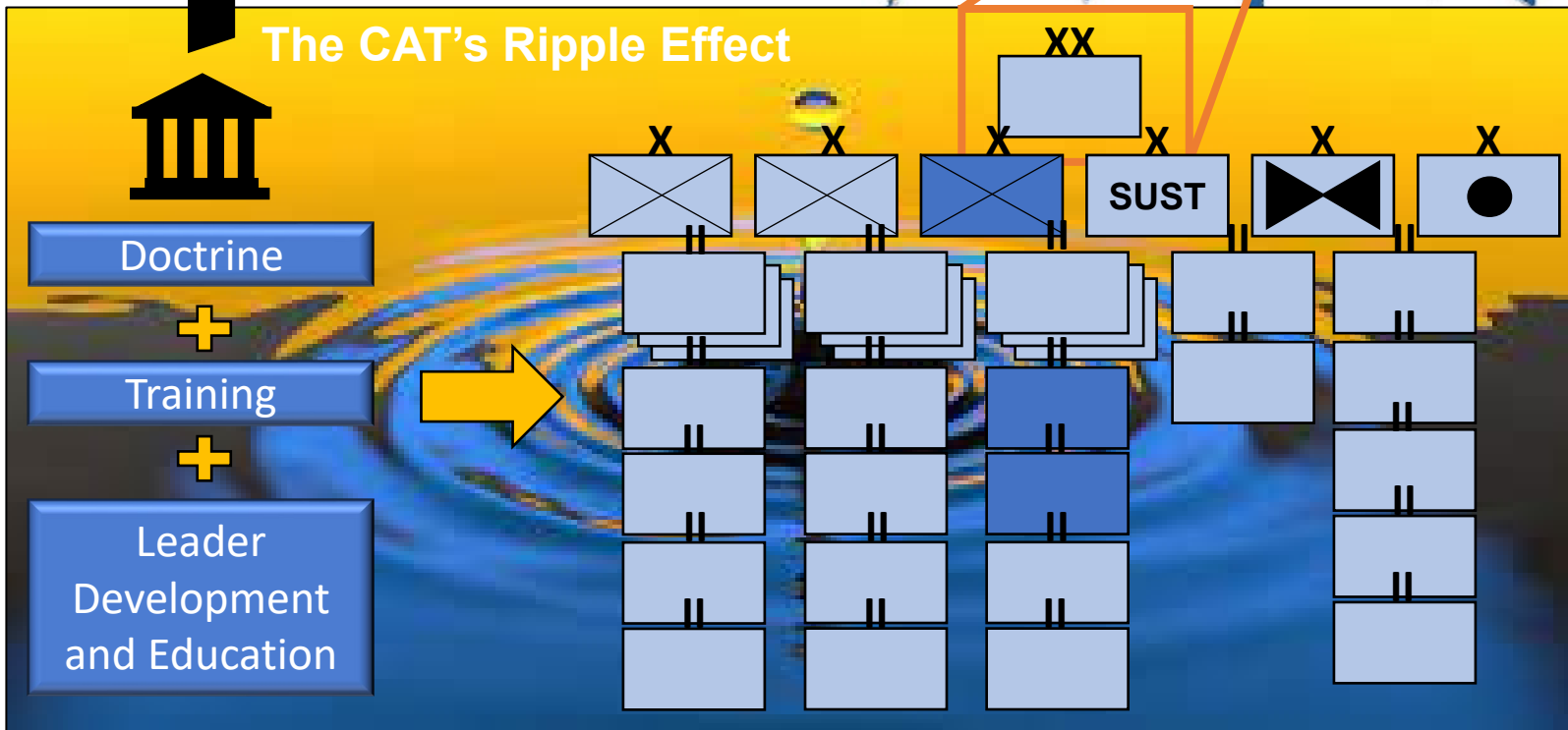
POST-VISIT DETAILED PLANNING

CAT Assisted Unit-Level Planning Session

Command emphasis amplifies each CAT visit across an installation. CAT observed trends are consolidated and influence the institutional Army.



The CAT's Ripple Effect

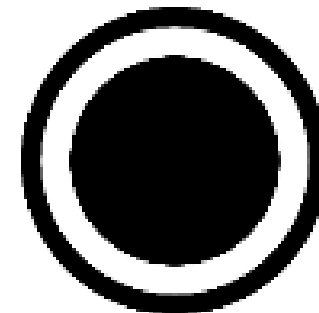
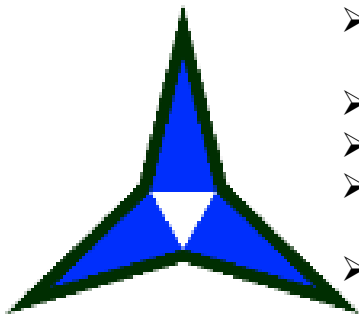


Challenges

- Reception, acceptance, and team building in new or junior Soldiers
- Failure to integrate newcomers and build a culture of proper work-life balance
- Perceptions of unfairness and lack of engaged leadership
- Lack of professional development, counseling, and mentorship (particularly for female Soldiers given the smaller population)
- Breaking teams to make teams
- Grade-plate mismatch
- Learned helplessness from leaders when responding to potential harmful behaviors
- Work-related issues driving suicidal ideation

Best Practices

- Wellness Checks with embedded MFLC
- Family time (late start work calls and/or early release) built into the unit battle rhythm
- Ruthless prioritization of LPDs and Sergeants Time Training
- Mentorship programs (particularly for female Soldiers given the smaller population)
- Sponsorship and deliberate onboarding of new personnel
- Virtual medical centers / “tele-heal” platforms to improve access to behavioral health
- Brigade and battalion at-risk meetings



Quick Reference Guides

MISSION. The Cohesion Assistance Team (CAT) conducts on-site unit visits to assist tactical commanders in identifying root causes to challenges effecting cohesive team building. The CAT then provides the commander assistance with building tailored solutions focused on improving their unit climate, strengthening cohesion and building trust.

Assistance Visit:

- 10 working days on the ground with the brigade, focused on the HQ and two (2) subordinate battalions.
- Pre-visit surveys at approximately D-90, and a review of unit, higher headquarters and installation metrics build context to support the visit.
- The CAT conducts observations and collects data via listening sessions over a five (5) day period.
- The CAT mentors battalion command teams and assists in developing action plans to improve their organizations.
- Visits conclude with an out-brief to the brigade and division (or next higher headquarters) commanders.
- The CAT follows up with a report and post-visit survey at D+90.

CAT Composition:

- Experienced field grades and senior NCOs
- Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) and Equal Opportunity (EO) expertise
- Behavioral health specialists
- Unit Ministry Team
- Legal Team
- Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR)
- Center for Army Leadership (CAL)
- Reach back to:
 - Suicide Prevention Program Manager
 - Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)
 - School of Command Preparation

Brigade Bill:

- Pre-Visit. Support participation in a 15-min survey to build context
- Week 1: Support from two (2) battalions for focus groups and listening sessions (approximately 40 personnel per day from each battalion for; time commit per person is approximately 2 hours):
 - Male/Female junior enlisted/junior NCO
 - New arrivals in last 120 days
 - E7 and above company leadership
 - Brigade and battalion staffs
- Week 2: Support from the two (2) battalion commands and staffs to build action plans and conduct out-briefs.
- Logistical Support During Visit: Coordinate five (5) secure rooms for the CAT to operate and conduct listening sessions

Setting Expectations

- The CAT is a SECARMY initiative to build positive command climates and reduce harmful behaviors..
- A CAT Visit is NOT an inspection or an investigation. The CAT does not look for or report problem leaders or poor performance. Findings are non-attributional. The CAT will not observe units undergoing an investigation.
- Selection of units for Assistance Visits should be command driven to support and shape command initiatives. The CAT can assist incoming brigade command teams in assessing their units and building cohesive teams.
- CAT visits should be minimally disruptive; it is best to coordinate a visit when the majority of the brigade is not in the field.

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What does the CAT do?

The CAT partners with battalions and brigades to conduct a 10-day in-person organizational climate assessment. Its purpose is to assist commanders in seeing blind spots, prioritizing areas of concern for improvement, and developing a plan to build and sustain a positive command climate.

Why is the CAT visiting my unit?

Your leadership is committed to its Soldiers and dedicated to building stronger and more cohesive teams. Leaders request an outside look to help them see the organization from a different lens and implement changes to make it better.



How am I involved in this process?

The CAT requests candid, honest feedback from Soldiers via a 10-minute survey and participation in listening sessions and focus groups. The CAT conducts the survey approximately 60 days prior to the visit, and in-person listening sessions and focus groups during the first five days of its visit.

How important am I to this process and should I be concerned about providing honest feedback?

The Soldier perspective is critical, and your feedback is anonymous. Subject matter experts collect the data and conduct the analysis without attribution. Without your candid feedback on unit processes and functioning, the CAT cannot properly support your unit, your leaders, or you.

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INTENT.

- ❑ **Purpose.** The purpose of the CAT is to observe, analyze, and assist with building cohesive teams at brigades and battalions, reinforcing leader education and development, and promoting a healthy climate and culture across our Army.

- ❑ **Key Tasks.**
 1. Provide an outside perspective on unit functioning through observations and analysis of statistical metrics and other factors in order to enable brigade and battalion commanders to better see their organizations.
 2. Provide commanders with tools and resources to assist in building cohesive teams and developing a prevention-oriented approach to harmful behaviors.
 3. Disseminate trends and lessons learned to broaden awareness across the force and promote adoption of effective unit programs and policies.
 4. In accordance with trends analysis, report gaps and shortfalls that may present with respect to doctrine, training, leader education, and policy.

- ❑ **End State.** At the unit level, the CAT improves the climate within those units visited and at the Army level, improves doctrine, training and leader development to build and maintain cohesive teams who value trust between leader and led, embrace our culture and ultimately drive down harmful behaviors within our ranks.