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Interpret
and
triangulate
data

Guide for Conducting a Climate Assessment



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This publication is available for download at the
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)
website at www.deomi.org.

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The climate assessment process involves five distinct phases: Prepare, Conduct, Interpret, Develop, and Execute. This guide is designed to assist commanders in understanding and executing Phase 3, Interpret. Leaders should review this guide—as well as the four additional guides that describe the other phases—to gain a full appreciation of the entire climate assessment process.

At this point in the process, the unit's members have already completed the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), and the commander is ready to review the DEOCS report. This guide will orient leaders about this process, and provide recommended steps for validating the perceptions reflected in the report.

The DEOCS Review Team

When examining the DEOCS report—especially of a large organization—commanders may recruit other members to assist in reviewing the results. Members of the team may be directed to focus on specific areas in the report; they need to thoroughly review those sections of the DEOCS report, so that they can provide detailed feedback. Also, it can be helpful to develop standardized templates to compile the information, especially when it comes to validating perceptions identified in the DEOCS. Various data collection templates are provided throughout the Assessment to Solutions website. These templates provide examples that commanders can leverage to identify concerns.

Interpret Your DEOCS

Note: A DEOCS report will only be released to the survey administrator, the commander who requested the survey, and the commander's supervisor one step up in the chain of command. It is up to the commander to decide what information from the report will be shared with members of the team, and the analyses they will be responsible for conducting.

The reason the DEOCS reports are provided to the commander's supervisor is to **enhance commander accountability** in establishing command climates that treat all members with dignity and respect. (1)

Completing Phase 3 involves several specific steps. It begins when you receive the results of your unit's DEOCS report. It's important to understand that the DEOCS report provides valuable information about members' *perceptions* of the organization's climate. However, these perceptions might not be accurate, and their validity needs to be determined during this phase. The DEOCS report provides you with a strong starting point for understanding how unit members feel about how their unit is being led, and the sources of organizational issues. Phase 3 ends after you've validated or disproven the perceptions identified in the DEOCS report using the other available assessment methods.

Each area in the report can provide unique insight into what unit members feel are the most significant issues facing the organization. There are 21 climate factors in the report that can help illuminate specific issues in your organization.

Organizational Effectiveness (OE)

- These nine OE factors help illustrate members' trust in and willingness to support leadership in carrying out the organization's mission.

Equal Opportunity (EO)/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Fair Treatment

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- The seven EO/EEO/ Fair Treatment factors reflect perceptions of how members are treated in the workplace. This area helps identify perceived social, personal, &/or institutional barriers that prevent members from rising to their highest professional potential.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

- The five SAPR factors review perceptions regarding Sexual Assault Prevention, Retaliation, Reporting, Response and Bystander Intervention. Working with DEOMI, the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office strives to provide commanders with the needed resources to address perceived SAPR-related issues identified in the DEOCS survey.

Review

The first task is to review the DEOCS report, and carefully analyze your unit's results. The DEOCS report provides a handy Table of Contents on page 2 to guide you. Reviewing "How to interpret your DEOCS" on page 3 provides an explicit set of steps to follow reviewing your DEOCS report. Finally, closely examine the recommendations provided on page 26; these can prove helpful as you move ahead in the climate assessment process.

Start by examining your unit's demographics on page 5. This demographic profile is important, because it helps you determine whether some of the demographic groups' participation rates are appreciably lower than you would expect, given their representation in the organization. For example, if women comprise 35% of your organization, yet represent less than 15% of those completing the DEOCS, this may indicate their unwillingness to complete the survey. Their low participation may stem from them being skeptical about their anonymity, and they fear retaliation for what they say, or they may feel that nothing will be done about the issues they mention. Next, compare perspectives between complementary groups, e.g., men and women, senior enlisted and junior enlisted, majority and minority, etc. A significant disparity between how two groups perceive an issue may suggest a disparity in how they are treated. Highlight these, so that you can later compare these results against other sources of data (discussed below), to determine whether the perceptions harbored by those groups are valid.

At this point in the process, avoid focusing on the merits of members' perceptions; instead, the commander should consider each one, and identify any surprising findings. The commander should already have a feel for the climate of the organization, and be aware of its issues. Use your instinct and experience. All issues identified in the survey report—and especially surprise finds—should be explored in more detail using follow-on assessment actions.

Tip: It is easy to react defensively when the report exposes negative perceptions about the organization, or if named individuals are accused of engaging in unprofessional actions. Use information from other assessment methods to validate or disprove these perceptions.

Compare

Ensure you review members' responses to the Locally Developed Questions (LDQs), then carefully read their responses to the Short Answer Questions (SAQ) and their written comments in the report's final section. After identifying members' positive and negative perceptions, see if they line up with—or contradict—the climate factor favorability ratings. Some comments may lead the inquiry in an entirely new direction, or bring previously-undetected issues to the commander's attention. Responses in this section can prove especially valuable in identifying the demographic composition of future focus groups, and the specific topics to broach with each of them. Written

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comments can also provide insight about where to conduct observations, or what records/reports should be reviewed.

Understand

DEOMI has created various tools to assist you; some enhance your understanding of the DEOCS factors, while others can be used to help you tackle subsequent steps in the climate assessment process, such as triangulating the data during this phase, or Developing an Action Plan in Phase 4. These resources, located on the DEOCS.net website, can be accessed by selecting the tabs covering OE, EO, and SAPR, then the specific climate factor under each. Resources include

- **Fact Sheets:** provide a description of each factor, identify the items used to measure each, summarize the factor's significance, and pinpoints positive and negative indicators and outcomes to look for.
- **Strategy Sheets:** provide candidate strategies for commanders to consider implementing to address the particular factor.
- **Focus Group/Interview Questions:** provide prospective questions for expounding on the DEOCS report findings. These can prove especially valuable when seeking additional details regarding members' responses to the Locally Developed Questions and Short Answer Questions, and their written comments.
- **Recommended Reading:** provides research-based, scholarly articles by subject matter experts on factor-relevant topics.
- **Videos:** DEOMI-produced vignettes designed to increase awareness of conditions that can impact command climate.
- **Web Resources:** provide additional information that can be used when developing an action plan.

Validate Perceived Issues

Once you've identified the areas you wish to explore further, you need to decide the best way to collect the information that will confirm or disprove perceived issues identified in the DEOCS report, to help determine the dynamics affecting the organization's climate. Remember, the DEOCS report provides members' *perceptions* of what may be going on in the organization. Therefore, additional assessment methods, such as focus groups/interviews, observations, and/or a



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review of the organization's records and reports, should be used to validate the survey report findings.

The **Focus Group Guide** identifies important things to consider before conducting focus groups. It provides a primer on focus groups, explaining how they should be used, and some pitfalls to avoid. It then takes you through the steps of preparing for and conducting a focus group, and collating and analyzing the data obtained.

The **Observations Guide** provides you with detailed information on why and how to conduct observations, the advantages and disadvantages of using this method, specific scenarios amenable to conducting observations, and shows how using templates assist the observer systematically collect information.

The **Records and Reports Guide** describes the purpose of reviewing records and reports, describes the different types of data you may consider reviewing and why, conducting the step-by-step process, and other considerations to keep in mind when conducting a records and reports review.

These three guides are available to be downloaded at www.deocs.net.

Triangulate Information

You should use at least two of these additional assessment methods to validate the DEOCS report findings. Triangulating the information you have collected from multiple sources (see Figure 1 for an example of this process) helps you more accurately determine which concerns identified in the DEOCS are indeed valid. The Assessment to Solutions website (<https://www.deocs.net/>) provides descriptions of each additional assessment method, along with how-to guides and videos for conducting them. Each assessment guide also provides a worksheet you can use to compare each DEOCS factor to that assessment method. Consequently, identifying the validated concerns from the DEOCS report enables you to identify candidate interventions to correct them.

Note: Triangulating data can be an involved and time-consuming process. Ensure ample time is allotted and personnel are available to execute these essential tasks.

Identify Potential Corrective Actions

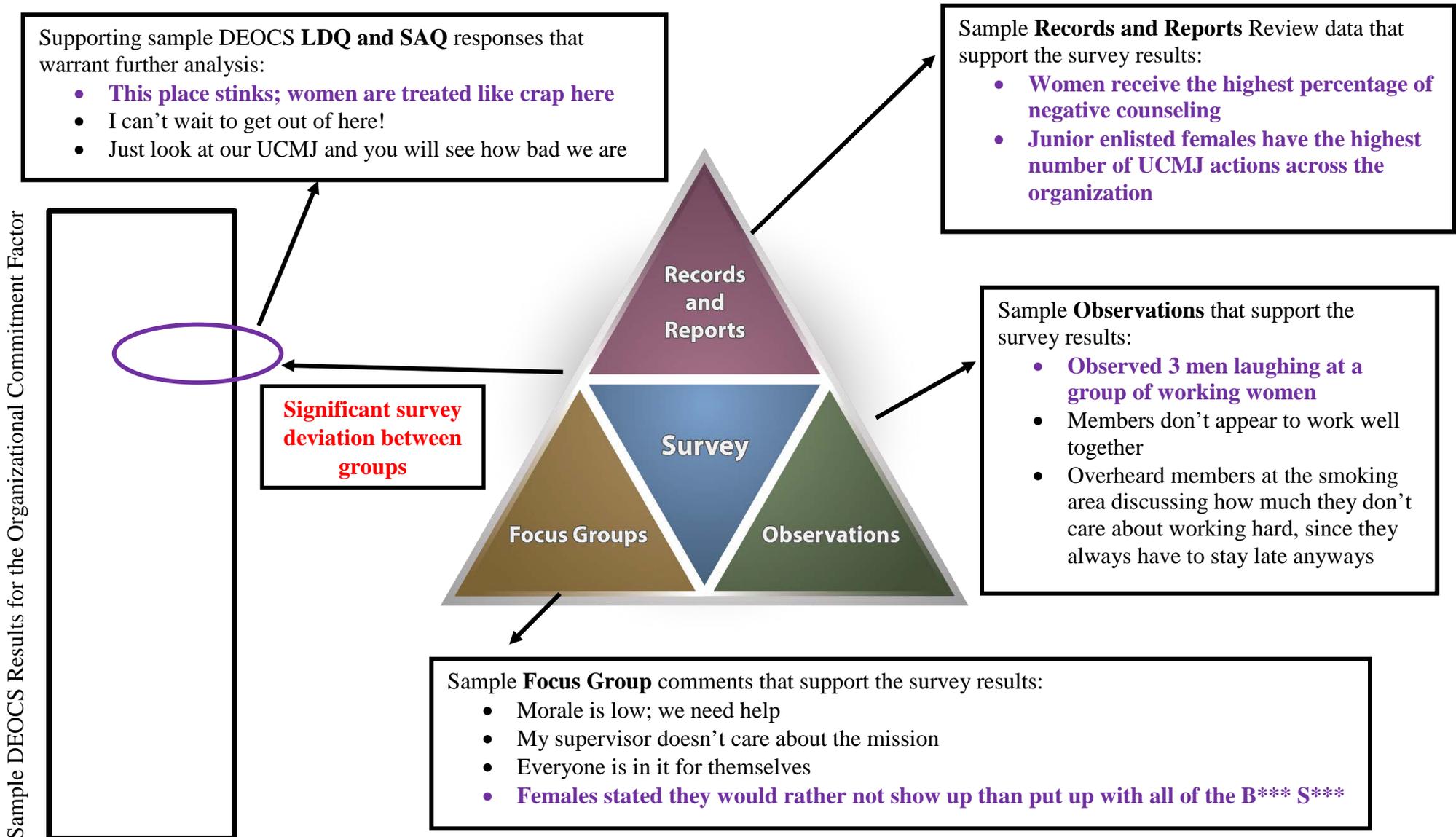
After completing Phase 3 (Interpret), you need to move to Phase 4 of the process, Develop. Leaders can request additional information, insight, and support from their Legal Advisors, Chaplains, retention personnel, Equal Opportunity Advisor, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response representative, junior leaders, and other subject matter experts to ensure all concerns have been identified prior to proceeding to Phase 4 of the Assessment to Solutions Process. This phase involves identifying and developing specific actions designed to resolve validated organizational issues.

Triangulating Data

Figure 1

Accurately identifying an organization's strengths and weaknesses using the organizational assessment process begins by completing a DEOCS. Use the report's results to identify members' perceptions—both positive and negative—by looking at climate factor favorability levels, and how much these are supported by responses to the Locally Developed Questions and Short Answer Questions. Triangulate these findings with additional indicators, using two or more additional assessment methods: Focus Groups/Interviews, Observations, or a review of the organization's Records and Reports.

This chart demonstrates an example of the triangulation process.



Resources

SECDEF Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments, Subject: SAPR (May 06, 2013), *Enhancing Commander Accountability* (1)