



Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) 5.1 Streamlining Report

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Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) 5.1 Streamlining Report

Sela Harcey,¹ Alyssa McHoes,² Rachel Lipari,¹ Chelsea Lonergan,² Nicholas Mararac,² William Cosner,² Marissa Oliver,² Rachel Trump-Steele,² Erik Harlock,² Ashlea Klahr¹

¹ Office of People Analytics

² Fors Marsh

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Executive Summary

After the launch of the redesigned *Defense Organizational Climate Survey* (DEOCS) 5.0 in January 2021, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Office of People Analytics (OPA) undertook rigorous quantitative and qualitative evaluations to assess the performance of the DEOCS 5.0. These efforts, in concert with stakeholder feedback, were used to streamline the DEOCS instrument. In line with OPA's continuous improvement framework, the intent was to enhance the DEOCS and to reduce survey burden, while retaining the valid and reliable measurement of the DEOCS factors.

Streamlining included revising question text and reducing the number of questions per factor. In total, we reduced the number of survey items by nearly 30%, with the average decision points for participants reduced from 101 decision points on the DEOCS 5.0 to 73 decision points on the DEOCS 5.1.¹ In addition to reducing items, we improved the organization, flow, and web presentation of the instrument. Importantly, the DEOCS 5.1 retains all risk and protective factors from the DEOCS 5.0 and allows for trending across all factors over time, except for the *Safe Storage of Lethal Means* factor.

This report summarizes the streamlining of the DEOCS instrument, which began fielding on August 1, 2023, in line with the first annual DEOCS fielding period codified in DoD Instruction 6400.11.

¹ These decision points account for only the core DEOCS questions; additional decision points vary by Service Component and unique DEOCS registration, for which Service-specific and custom questions may be added.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgments	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Introduction	1
Methods	5
Quantitative Evaluation	5
Supplemental Quantitative Analyses	6
Qualitative Evaluation	6
Leveraging Stakeholder Expertise	7
Streamlining the DEOCS	7
DEOCS 5.1 Streamlining Results	9
Streamlining Results: Cross-Cutting Changes	9
Streamlining Factor Presentation	9
Adding Consistency in Factor- and Item-Level Measurement	11
Updating Leadership Definitions	11
Streamlining Confidentiality Language	11
Standardizing the Reference Period	11
Streamlining Results: Individual Factor Changes	12
Profile Elements	12
Factor Profile: <i>Morale</i>	14
Factor Profile: <i>Engagement & Commitment</i>	15
Factor Profiles: <i>Cohesion and Inclusion</i>	16
Factor Profile: <i>Work–Life Balance</i>	17
Factor Profile: <i>Workplace Hostility</i>	18
Factor Profiles: <i>Sexist Behaviors and Sexually Harassing Behaviors</i>	19
Factor Profile: <i>Racially Harassing Behaviors</i>	21
Factor Profile: <i>Fairness</i>	22
Factor Profile: <i>Leadership Support</i>	22
Factor Profile: <i>Toxic Leadership</i>	24
Factor Profiles: <i>Transformational Leadership and Passive Leadership</i>	25
Factor Profile: <i>Stress</i>	26
Factor Profile: <i>Connectedness</i>	27
Factor Profiles: <i>Binge Drinking and Alcohol Impairing Memory</i>	28
Factor Profile: <i>Safe Storage of Lethal Means</i>	29
Streamlining Results: Nonfactor Items	30
Open-Ended Question Streamlining	30
Streamlining Demographic Items	30
Streamlining Military Service Academy (MSA)-Specific Items	31
Custom Question Bank (CQB) Items	32

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Conclusion	35
References	36
Removed DEOCS 5.0 Items	39

Appendices

Appendix A. Removed DEOCS 5.0 Items.....	37
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List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of DEOCS 5.1 Decision Points by Survey Type and Survey Version.....	2
Table 2. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Morale.....	15
Table 3. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Engagement & Commitment	15
Table 4. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Cohesion and Inclusion	17
Table 5. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Work–Life Balance.....	18
Table 6. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Workplace Hostility.....	19
Table 7. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: Sexist Behaviors and Sexually Harassing Behaviors	20
Table 8. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Racially Harassing Behaviors.....	21
Table 9. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Fairness	22
Table 10. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Leadership Support.....	23
Table 11. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Toxic Leadership	24
Table 12. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: Transformational Leadership and Passive Leadership.....	25
Table 13. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Stress.....	27
Table 14. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Connectedness	27
Table 15. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: Binge Drinking and Alcohol Impairing Memory	28
Table 16. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Safe Storage of Lethal Means.....	29
Table 17. DEOCS CQB Item Reduction Summary	33

List of Figures

Figure 1. Example Question Web Screen View: Single-Item Presentation	9
Figure 2. Example Question Web Screen View: Grid Presentation.....	10
Figure 3. DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile Example	13

Introduction

The *Defense Organizational Climate Survey* (DEOCS) is a unit-/organizational-level survey tool that assesses command climate and helps military commanders and Department of Defense (DoD) civilian organization leaders improve their command climate by understanding their members' attitudes and experiences.² In 2018, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSDP&R) transferred responsibility for the DEOCS from the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) to the Office of People Analytics (OPA) and provided direction to revitalize and modernize the DEOCS to preserve and enhance its utility and credibility into the future. In response, we conducted a rigorous survey development process to create the DEOCS 5.0 survey instrument, which launched in January 2021.³

In line with our continuous improvement framework, we used data collected in calendar year (CY) 2021 to evaluate the performance of the DEOCS 5.0, from both a measurement and a usability perspective. We conducted an in-depth quantitative assessment of the DEOCS 5.0, which included factor structure, reliability, nonresponse bias, and descriptive statistical analyses. Simultaneously, we conducted qualitative user experience testing with survey takers. The results of these efforts, along with the updated requirements in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.11 and ad hoc feedback received from the field,⁴ identified opportunities to streamline the instrument to improve the efficacy of the DEOCS—particularly to reduce the survey burden and to maximize efficiency.

For the DEOCS streamlining effort, our goals were to reduce survey burden while retaining the valid and reliable measurement of the DEOCS factors. Although the DEOCS factors were our primary focus, the streamlining effort included a review of the content, presentation, and flow for all DEOCS 5.0 items. Taken in concert, the quantitative and qualitative evaluations informed the streamlining by identifying what questions are integral for factor measurement and performance, what questions could be removed, and what questions could be edited to provide more clarity. The streamlining effort reduced the total number of survey items by nearly 30%, with the average decision points for participants reduced from 101 on the DEOCS 5.0 to 73 on the DEOCS 5.1.⁵ The reduction in decision points varied across the DEOCS populations. Specifically, streamlining effectively reduced survey burden for military and civilian populations from 94 decision points on the DEOCS 5.0 to 70 decision points on the DEOCS 5.1 and from 108 to 76 for military service academy (MSA) and MSA prep school student populations (Table 1). These respective 25% (military and civilian) and 30% (MSA and MSA prep school) decreases reduced the overall number of items in the survey instrument, improved the

² See the DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6400.11 for the most recent mandates for the DEOCS (<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/640011p.PDF?ver=-WRNG-g78mHPx4gQwkeaQ%3d%3d>)

³ For more information about the redesign of the DEOCS, referenced as the DEOCS 5.0, see the OPA *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Redesign: Phase 1 Overview Report* (<https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/quality-of-work-life/workplace-climate/defense-organizational-climate-survey-deocs-redesign-phase-1-overview-report>). The DEOCS 5.0 survey instruments can be found at OPA.mil.

⁴ OPA receives continuous feedback via the DEOCS help desk and via direct outreach to OPA staff from the field.

⁵ These decision points account for only the core DEOCS questions; additional decision points vary by Service and unique DEOCS registration, for which Service-specific and custom questions may be added.

consistency and comprehensibility for respondents, and maximized the efficiency of the survey instrument across populations.

Table 1.

Summary of DEOCS 5.1 Decision Points by Survey Type and Survey Version

	Military/Civilian		MSA/MSA Prep	
	DEOCS 5.1	DEOCS 5.0	DEOCS 5.1	DEOCS 5.0
Core DEOCS 5.1 Factor Items ^a	50	67	50	67
Senior NCO/SEL Factor Items ^b	9–10	12	n/a	n/a
Open-Ended Items	5	5	5	5
Self-Reported Demographics	10–13	7–8	8–9	5–6
Leader Demographics	2–3	2–3	0–1	0–1
MSA/MSA Prep Specific-Items	n/a	n/a	12	30
Average Number of Decision Points [Range]	70 [67–74]	94 [93–95]	76 [75–77]	108 [107–109]

Note. DEOCS decisions points can vary across surveys, because some questions are driven by branching defined by participant responses (e.g., pay grade). Only core DEOCS questions are included in this breakdown, and additional decision points may vary by Service and unique DEOCS registration.

^a Includes all core factor items for the 19 protective and risk factors measured on the DEOCS that are asked to all populations (i.e., military, civilian, MSA, and MSA prep schools).

^b Units/organizations will receive the senior noncommissioned officers (NCO)/senior enlisted leaders (SEL) factor items if the DEOCS registration is identified as a military or civilian registration and the respondent identifies that they have a senior NCO/SEL.

The streamlining process included both cross-cutting and factor-specific revisions. The cross-cutting changes optimized the factor presentation on the web, reduced survey burden by creating more consistency in survey length across populations, and increased consistency in item measurement (both at the factor- and item-level). The guiding principles for the factor-specific changes included the goals of retaining all 19 protective and risk factors, not adding any new factors, and limiting the reduction of items comprising a factor (e.g., if a factor had six subitems, no more than three were removed). In sum, all core DEOCS protective and risk factors were reduced by 25%, from 67 to 50 (Table 1).⁶ In the DEOCS reports provided to commanders, trends will be provided for all factors except for *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*. The decision to capture trends at the factor level was determined based on the quantitative evaluation assessing the validity of the constructs.⁷ Although the bulk of the streamlining process focused on factor items, other nonfactor items were considered for streamlining, such as demographic and MSA-specific items. The number of demographic items decreased from a total of 28 items on the DEOCS 5.0 to 24 items on the DEOCS 5.1, and the number of MSA-specific items decreased from 30 to 12.

⁶ Senior NCO/SEL personnel for military and civilian populations are also asked three leadership factors that were streamlined from 12 to 10 maximum questions (Table 1).

⁷ Although we will be providing trends at the factor level, further analyses will be conducted to assess the viability of capturing trends at the individual item level after the 2023 annual fielding of the DEOCS 5.1.

The purpose of this report is to serve as documentation of the streamlining process that produced the DEOCS 5.1 survey instrument.⁸ In the next section, we describe each input that informed the streamlining effort in more detail, focusing particularly on how the input was used in the streamlining process. Second, we detail the results of streamlining by summarizing the changes that affected the items across the survey, summarizing the revisions made to factors, summarizing the nonfactor item changes, and identifying items that were added to the survey. We conclude with a summary of the streamlining effort and note potential future enhancements to the DEOCS survey instrument.

⁸ Population-specific DEOCS survey instruments (both versions 5.0 and 5.1) can be found at OPA.mil.

Methods

In streamlining the DEOCS, we leveraged both quantitative and qualitative work to assess the DEOCS 5.0 to ensure the DEOCS 5.1 instrument reduced survey burden and retained the valid and reliable measurement of the risk and protective factors. To target the streamlining effort of these goals, a baseline set of guiding principles was established, which included:

1. No factors will be added or removed;
2. No factors will be reduced by more than 50% (e.g., if a factor includes four items, it will not be reduced by more than two items); and
3. Items that previous research indicated as significantly associated with the strategic target outcomes (STO) will be prioritized for retention.⁹

Below we describe the quantitative and qualitative evaluations and highlight how each effort was leveraged in the streamlining process. For more information on these evaluations, see Lipari et al. (2023) and Lawhead et al. (2023).

Quantitative Evaluation

The DEOCS 5.0 quantitative evaluation assessed the statistical validity and reliability of the DEOCS 5.0 instrument as it performed in the real world. Specifically, this effort sought to answer five methodological questions regarding the DEOCS 5.0 items and factors:

1. What is the central tendency, variability, and distribution of each factor?
2. What is the factor structure of each factor?
3. How reliable, or internally consistent, is each factor?
4. What is the convergent and divergent validity of each factor?
5. Does nonresponse differ meaningfully by demographic group?

Overall, these analyses assessed the statistical characteristics (i.e., the factors' structure and measurement) of the DEOCS 5.0 survey instrument. To answer these questions, we used descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, variance, and skew), correlations, reliability analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, and nonresponse bias analyses.¹⁰

The validation analyses indicated the DEOCS 5.0 factors exhibited strong construct validity and were highly reliable and unidimensional. All DEOCS risk and protective factors had high internal consistency (i.e., inter-factors items are closely related), as evident based on high Cronbach's alphas overall. These findings were also consistent across demographic groups, except for MSA students on a small subset of scales. Additionally, no meaningful nonresponse bias was evident across demographic groups, and the factors were associated with one another in

⁹ The 19 protective and risk factors measured on the DEOCS are associated with six key STOs, namely, retention, readiness, sexual harassment, sexual assault, race/ethnic discrimination, and suicide. For more information about factor and STO associations, see the *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Redesign: Phase 1 Overview Report*, <https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/quality-of-work-life/workplace-climate/defense-organizational-climate-survey-deocs-redesign-phase-1-overview-report>.

¹⁰ Analyses were conducted using all DEOCS registrations, which closed within CY 2021. The analytic sample included 1,387,330 individual-level responses and 17,335 unit-level responses.

expected ways (e.g., protective factors were negatively correlated with risk factors, risk factors were positively correlated with other risk factors).

The validation analyses informed the DEOCS streamlining by identifying viable items for removal within factors based on the alpha-if-item-deleted (AIID) and confirmatory factor analyses. Given the high internal consistency of the factors, these analyses helped ensure that if an inter-factor item were to be removed during streamlining, its removal would not detrimentally impact the statistical structure and measurement of the broader factor.

In our streamlining efforts, we used a two-step process to identify which items were viable for removal: First, using results from the AIID analyses, we identified which items could be removed from their respective scales given that their inclusion either reduced the overall scale alpha or did not have any significant effect on the alpha. Second, since many items did not significantly impact their scales' alpha, we took an additional step to assess the factor structure overall. Specifically, results from the confirmatory factor analyses were used to identify if items did not load well onto a single-factor construct. Although factors generally exhibited unidimensionality, this second step (although rarely needed) helped prioritize items for removal when alpha analyses were not sufficient to make decisions.

Supplemental Quantitative Analyses

For two of the DEOCS risk factors, we used supplementary quantitative analyses to further inform the removal of items. *Sexually Harassing Behaviors* and *Racially Harassing Behaviors* are two risk factors that are reported as “presence” versus “no presence,” which is unlike other DEOCS factors.¹¹ For these factors, any response other than *never* on the scale of *never, rarely, sometimes, or often* “counts” and is considered presence of the factor in question. Thus, removing any of these items presents the risk of artificially suppressing the percentage of those who are in the presence category, compared to the DEOCS 5.0 scale. To minimize this impact, we sought to identify which behaviors were typically selected in conjunction with other behaviors. Behaviors that more often “stood alone” as a singular instance of harassing behavior were prioritized for retention, as these items can be seen as capturing forms of harassing behavior that, if not asked about, would go unaccounted for in the overall scale score. Behaviors that generally co-occurred with others were targeted for potential removal.

Qualitative Evaluation

The qualitative evaluation of the DEOCS 5.0 assessed the efficacy of the redesigned instrument through cognitive testing (i.e., guided interviews with participants whereby survey takers “think aloud” while completing the survey). The purpose of the cognitive testing was to assess comprehension and interpretation of the DEOCS among survey participants. The cognitive testing sought to identify:

1. Which DEOCS survey items do participants perceive as difficult to understand or answer?

¹¹ Additional resources on factor calculations, reporting criteria, and interpretation of the DEOCS results are available on the Assessment to Solutions page (<https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>).

2. Which DEOCS survey items produce inconsistent interpretations between participants?
 - a. Do participants properly anchor their responses to their unit? To different levels of leadership?
3. How can the DEOCS be improved to convey the intended meanings and increase accuracy of data collected?
 - a. How can the wording of open-ended questions be improved?
 - b. How can the wording of definitions of key terms be improved?
4. What survey items are participants hesitant to answer due to confidentiality concerns?

Given the length of the DEOCS 5.0 instrument, the cognitive testing was dedicated to a subset of items prioritized based on known confusion or concern.¹² Cognitive testing was conducted by presenting survey questions and definitions to interview participants while moderators asked the participants questions about each item. Cognitive interviews were conducted with 43 Service members, DoD civilians, MSA students, and MSA staff. The qualitative analyses identified areas in the instrument that frequently impacted participants' comprehension, caused confusion, or interrupted survey completion.

Results of these analyses identified the cause of confusion (e.g., piped text, question wording, instruction text) and guided the targeted recommendations for improving the survey instrument. Specifically, the qualitative evaluation was particularly useful when focusing on the language and design components of the instrument. The analysis was used to prioritize items for removal and to identify when wording of specific survey instructional or question text needed clarifying or updating. The cognitive interviews also highlighted the need to improve the presentation of the items across the survey instrument.

Leveraging Stakeholder Expertise

Stakeholders from the Services and DoD policy offices were leveraged during the DEOCS 5.1 instrument streamlining efforts. These stakeholders were invited to provide recommendations for revisions to the survey instrument and to identify items they preferred to retain. Every recommendation was discussed at length to determine if the recommendation would align with the overall streamlining goals and would maintain the utility of the instrument across all populations. The next section describes how the quantitative and qualitative evaluations, along with other coordinated enhancements, were used to streamline the instrument.

Streamlining the *DEOCS*

All sources of information described above were considered side by side and item by item when streamlining the DEOCS. Often the findings from the quantitative evaluation were reflected in the qualitative evaluation, and vice versa (e.g., items that sparked confusion among participants had less robust statistical properties). When there were discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative findings (e.g., an item that some participants found confusing had robust statistical properties), we considered the strength of the support from the quantitative and qualitative analyses before deciding to retain, revise, or remove the item from the DEOCS. After

¹² Survey item prioritization for the qualitative testing was informed by stakeholder, participant, and subject matter expert (SME) feedback that was compiled during the first year of fielding for the redesigned DEOCS instrument.

the initial decisions had been made, we created a streamlined survey instrument. This draft survey instrument was sent to the Services and policy offices for feedback for formal coordination.¹³ The instrument was also sent to the Office of Force Resiliency's Violence Prevention Cell (OFR VPC) for informal coordination. After receiving feedback, we referenced the quantitative and qualitative evaluations to decide if the recommended changes aligned with these efforts. Using all three perspectives, we were able to streamline the survey to reduce survey burden and improve efficiency. The streamlined DEOCS 5.1 survey instrument was reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Control Number 0704-0659). As part of the OMB approval process, internal Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) reviews were also coordinated, including a DHRA Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) review; a DHRA Office of General Counsel (OGC) review; DHRA technical, privacy, and security reviews; and a DoD Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) review.

¹³ Coordination with stakeholders included Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), Office of Force Resiliency's Violence Prevention Cell (OFR VPC), Army (USA), Navy (USN), Department of Navy (DoN), Air Force (USAF), Marine Corps (USMC), Space Force (USSF), Army Reserve, Diversity Management Operations Center (DMOC), Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), DoD Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO), Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Family Advocacy Program (FAP), Office of Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP), and National Guard Bureau (NGB).

DEOCS 5.1 Streamlining Results

The following section highlights the DEOCS survey instrument streamlining decisions that resulted in the final DEOCS 5.1 items. Within this section, we first cover the changes that affected multiple items across the survey (i.e., cross-cutting changes). Next, we summarize the revisions made to each factor and end with the streamlining to nonfactor items (e.g., the custom question bank [CQB]).

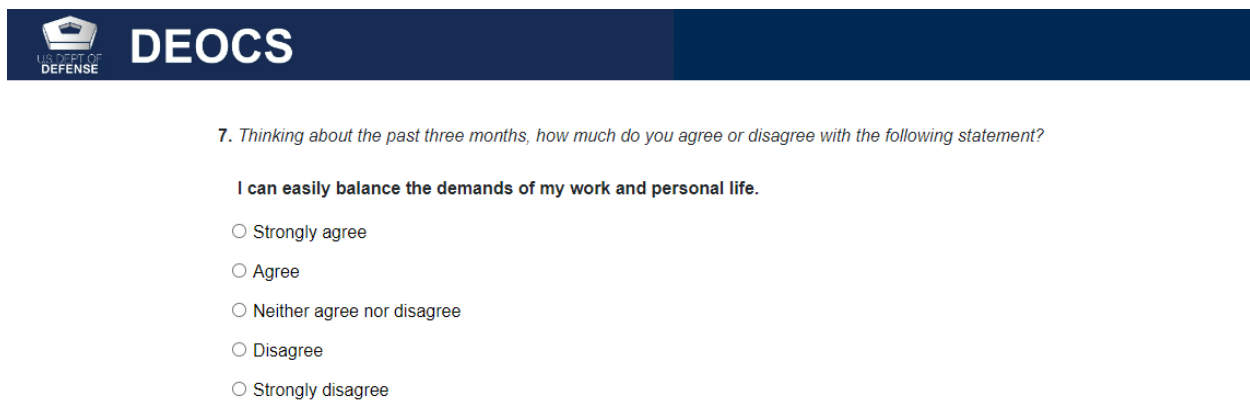
Streamlining Results: Cross-Cutting Changes

Streamlining the DEOCS 5.0 into the DEOCS 5.1 required changes that were applied to items across the survey to improve the efficiency of the instrument. These cross-cutting changes centered on (1) streamlining factor presentation and (2) adding consistency in factor- and item-level measurement.

Streamlining Factor Presentation

In the DEOCS 5.0 survey instrument, every survey item was presented separately on its own web screen, requiring participants to click through many screens to complete the survey (Figure 1).¹⁴ This single-item-per-page display was inefficient for respondents. Both cognitive interviews and informal feedback from the field highlighted that single-item displays are burdensome for respondents, particularly those with limited time and those in low-bandwidth settings. Specifically, the single-item display requires reading repetitive question stems, and this display also has higher internet access requirements, because each item represents another web page that the respondent must load before answering.

Figure 1.
Example Question Web Screen View: Single-Item Presentation



The screenshot shows a web interface for the DEOCS survey. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the DEOCS logo (a shield with a scale) and the text "DEOCS". Below the header, the question is displayed: "7. Thinking about the past three months, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?". The statement is "I can easily balance the demands of my work and personal life." Below the statement, there are five radio button options: "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Neither agree nor disagree", "Disagree", and "Strongly disagree".

¹⁴ The single-item format is considered a best practice in some areas of survey design and has been recommended to the Department by RAND. It is considered an approach to minimizing respondent error when answering each item. Recent OPA research has found the grid format can be used for reliable and valid measurement (Daniel et al., 2022).

An alternative to the single-item-per-page presentation is the presentation of related items in a grid format (Figure 2). A grid format presents items with the same response scale and overlapping question text (e.g., How much do you agree or disagree with...) in a table in which the specific subitem text (i.e., the sky is blue; the grass is green) is presented as one subitem per row and the response options are listed in columns. The grid format provides an opportunity for improved efficiency and reduced burden for respondents.

Figure 2.
Example Question Web Screen View: Grid Presentation

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I am proud of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I am committed to making the military my career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Given that the grid format is most applicable when there is a shared response scale and overlapping question text, we made significant structural changes to the flow of the survey to group the items comprising each factor into grids (e.g., presenting the two *Morale* items in a single grid) and to couple interrelated factor items together.¹⁵ To reduce the potential of context effects, the majority of the DEOCS 5.1 streamlined grid items maintained consistent ordering as in the DEOCS 5.0 instrument.¹⁶ Given that the DEOCS factors have less than 10 subitems per factor, the grid presentation of factors will enhance the respondents' experience without presenting an overwhelming number of items on a single web screen.¹⁷ Our mobile-optimized survey platform ensures efficiency and accessibility of factor presentation across device types (i.e., ensuring that the full list is appropriately sized to the specific device screen; thus, all items on a page are simultaneously viewable to the respondent without needing to scroll).

¹⁵ For factors that were substantively similar, items across more than one factor were grouped into a single grid. Factors displayed together include *Cohesion* and *Inclusion*, *Sexist Behaviors* and *Sexually Harassing Behaviors*, and *Transformational Leadership* and *Passive Leadership*.

¹⁶ Presenting factor items in a grid may cause additional priming of responses when presented together; however, we anticipate these effects to be minimal. Additionally, the grouping of items is consistent with the presentation of similar scales on other OPA surveys (e.g., *Work and Gender Relations* [WGR] and *Workplace and Equal Opportunity* [WEO] surveys).

¹⁷ Presenting a large number of items in a grid introduces a greater risk of item nonresponse (i.e., respondents may overlook an item in a long list and neglect to respond).

Adding Consistency in Factor- and Item-Level Measurement

We made multiple cross-cutting edits to improve consistency across factor- and item-level measurement. For example, for analogous items measured at more than one leadership level, we edited the items to ensure the same wording across leadership levels.¹⁸ We also updated the piping throughout the survey to tailor text based on population to make the questions clearer for respondents and to increase the perception that the DEOCS is personalized to the unit/Service, which our qualitative analyses indicated increases respondents' willingness to respond to the survey. Additional cross-cutting edits are described below.

Updating Leadership Definitions

Leadership definitions were identified as being a source of confusion for participants during the cognitive interviews, because many participants mentioned they were unsure who they should be evaluating. As a result, we simplified how levels of leadership are defined. Respondents expressed confusion regarding what "immediate supervisor" means, and we trimmed and revised the definition based on their feedback.¹⁹ For senior noncommissioned officers (NCO)/senior enlisted leaders (SEL), the leader's last name and rank were added into the leadership definition, which is consistent with our approach to defining the commander/leader by adding dynamic text (i.e., piping) to include rank and last name. Overall, these changes will make it easier for respondents to know about whom they are answering questions, which in turn will strengthen the quality and actionability of these data.

Streamlining Confidentiality Language

The DEOCS 5.0 survey instrument included language that emphasized confidentiality throughout the survey. Results from the qualitative evaluation indicated that the repeated reminders to participants about confidentiality raised doubt rather than providing reassurance. Therefore, we removed the confidentiality reminders throughout the instrument and reiterated ways to maintain confidentiality in open-ended responses without specifically mentioning confidentiality. For example, a DEOCS 5.1 open-ended instruction has the following additional text to remind participants how to maintain confidentiality in their responses: "Please do not include personally identifiable information (for example, a personal story containing specific details that could be used to identify you or others)."

Standardizing the Reference Period

The DEOCS 5.0 questions included multiple timeframes of reference; however, some questions did not include any specific timeframe in the question stem, which was raised as a point of necessary consistency in stakeholders' feedback. As a result, we standardized all timeframes to reference a three-month period, the most common timeframe referenced for factor items in the

¹⁸ *Toxic Leadership* is measured at the immediate supervisor and senior NCO/SEL levels. *Transformational Leadership* and *Passive Leadership* are measured at the commander and senior NCO/SEL levels.

¹⁹ The definition for "immediate supervisor" in the DEOCS 5.0 was "Immediate Supervisor: For the purpose of these questions, your immediate supervisor is the individual to whom you directly report in your unit, [Unit Title]." For DEOCS 5.1, we changed the definition to "Immediate Supervisor: the individual to whom you directly report in your unit, [Unit Title]."

DEOCS 5.0. We also added the three-month timeframe reference to items that previously lacked a timeframe. This standardization pairs well with the streamlined presentation of the DEOCS factors in a grid. Specifically, in the DEOCS 5.0 instrument, the reference period was only noted in the first item of the “section” and was not carried through all single-item text (and thus not visible on most of the web screens). Therefore, adding consistency in the reference period across factors, coupled with factor grid presentation, will better allow participants to accurately recall the reference period being considered, reducing their cognitive burden (i.e., targeted recall) and improving the accuracy of the items measured (i.e., reducing recall bias).

Streamlining Results: Individual Factor Changes

The following section details the streamlining of the 19 protective and risk factors measured on the DEOCS. A summary of the streamlining results is provided for each factor that describes any changes that were made throughout the process (e.g., the removal of items, edits to items). Additionally, for each factor, or set of factors, a table is provided that details the profile for each factor.²⁰ All information provided in the factor profiles is reflective of the DEOCS 5.1 survey instrument for military populations.²¹ None of the introductory text (i.e., supplemental information or instructions) presented in the survey is included in the factor profiles. Figure 3 provides an illustrative example of how to read the factor profile tables.

Profile Elements

Figure 3 shows a sample profile table for the DEOCS 5.1 factors that defines the factor, presents the items comprising the factor, and summarizes the streamlining changes. The factor profiles present two types of information: (1) the factor details and (2) the streamlining summary. Details on how to read the profile tables are provided below:

(a) Name: Identifies the factor(s) documented in the profile. When two factors are presented in a grid format on the DEOCS (i.e., shown on the same web screen), the profile describes both factors. However, each factor is reported separately in the DEOCS reports, which is consistent with prior reporting.

(b) Type: Denotes whether the factors presented in the profile are categorized as a protective or a risk factor.

(c) Factor Presentation: Indicates how the factor is presented within the DEOCS. Although most factors are presented in a grid format, there are occasions when a factor is presented as a single item on a web screen.

²⁰ When factors are presented in grids together (as streamlined in the factor presentation), both factors are presented in the same profile.

²¹ For the DEOCS 5.1 survey instruments that reflect each survey population (military, civilian, MSA, and MSA prep school), see the sample DEOCS survey instruments on the Assessment to Solutions web page (<https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>).

Figure 3.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile Example

1. Factor Details

a. Name(s): Cohesion and Inclusion
b. Type: Protective
c. Factor Presentation: Grid
d. Definition(s):

- Cohesion* assesses whether individuals in a workplace care about each other, share the same mission and goals, and work together effectively. Cohesive organizations are linked to improved readiness and retention, and a lower likelihood of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicide.
- Inclusion* indicates whether individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. Inclusive work environments ensure that it is safe for an individual to voice their different opinions, perspectives, and/or suggestions. Inclusive organizations are linked to a lower likelihood of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, improved readiness, and higher retention.

e. Response Type: 5-point, *Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*
f. Question Text^a: People in my unit...
g. Subitem Text^a:

Subitem	Text	Factor
a.	Work well as a team. (COHESA)	Cohesion
b.	Trust each other. (COHESB)	Cohesion
c.	Believe that everyone has value, regardless of their sex, race or ethnicity, or sexual orientation. (INCLUSIONG)	Inclusion
d.	Build on each other's ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process. (INCLUSIONC)	Inclusion
e.	Would speak up if someone was being excluded. (INCLUSIOND)	Inclusion
f.	Believe that communication goes up and down the unit chain of command. (INCLUSION)	Inclusion

h. Variable Name:
i. Factor: Cohesion and Inclusion

2. Streamlining Summary

Factor	DEOCS 5.1 Total Items	DEOCS 5.1 Items Edited	DEOCS 5.1 Items Removed	DEOCS 5.0 Total Items
Cohesion	2	2	0	2
Inclusion	4	4	3 ^b	6

n. Factor Presentation Change? ☒ Yes ☐ No

(d) Factor Definition: Provides the definition for the factor(s) documented in the profile. The factor definitions appear in the DEOCS reports but are not included in the DEOCS survey instrument (i.e., these definitions are not shown to respondents).

(e) Response Type: Identifies the response scale for the factor. The DEOCS survey items use both yes–no response scales and leverage multiple Likert-type response scales, such as level of agreement and frequency.²²

(f) Question Text: For a single item factor, the question text represents the entire question. When the factor items are presented in a grid, the question text represents the question stem and must be read with the subitem text (see section g) to form the entire question. All subitems share the same lead-in text portion of the question stem displayed at the top of the grid. Text that is shown in bold to participants is shown as such within the profile.

(g) Subitem Text: Used when the factors are presented in a grid. When paired with the question text, the subitem text forms the complete question. Each line represents an item that a participant is asked to answer.

(h) Variable Name: Denotes the variable name associated with each item. When the profile presents a single-item factor, the variable name is found in section f. When the profile presents a factor with subitems, the variable name for each subitem is found at the end of the subitem text

²² All subitems presented in a factor profile (regardless of whether multiple factors are grouped together) will share the same response option.

in section g. Variable names are not shown to participants, nor are they included in commander's reports, but the variable names are used to label variables within DEOCS datasets.

(i) Factor: Identifies the factor associated with the subitems shown in the profile.

(j) Total Number of items (DEOCS 5.1): Indicates the number of items used to measure the factor on the DEOCS 5.1.

(k) Number of Edited Items: Indicates the number of items edited for the factor on the DEOCS 5.1 compared to the wording for the corresponding item on the DEOCS 5.0.

(l) Number of Items Removed: Denotes the number of items removed from the factor compared to the DEOCS 5.0.

(m) Total Number of Items (DEOCS 5.0): Indicates the number of items used to measure the factor on the DEOCS 5.0.

(n) Factor Presentation Change: Identifies whether the presentation of the factor on the DEOCS 5.1 differs from the presentation of the factor on the DEOCS 5.0. As the grid presentation is a new format for the DEOCS 5.1, all factors presented in a grid are identified as having a factor presentation change.

Factor Profile: *Morale*

Overall, *Morale* remains a two-item factor, with minimal edits (Table 2). The introduction text was modified to ask about beliefs and experiences over the past three months, referencing the standardized timeframe (i.e., three months). Qualitative testing showed participants were confused about the difference between the two-factor items, as the items were previously presented on separate pages. The new grid format is intended to help respondents understand the difference between the two items.

Additionally, the dynamic text (i.e., pipe text tailored to the respondent; seen in the words that are in boldface in the item text) in the first item (MORALEA) was modified to be more specific about who respondents should consider when thinking about the current level of morale among their working group. This edit was made in response to a theme identified in the qualitative evaluation, which showed that many Service members expressed how hard it is to grasp the morale for their whole unit because units can include a large number of people with whom the respondent may have limited interactions.²³ With this modification, respondents should be able to more easily rate the morale of the people they work with in their unit or organization rather than rating their unit or organization as a whole.

²³ Dynamic text, or piped text, tailors wording so that it is personalized to the respondent, depending on their unit/organization's information, such as Service Branch or title, which is selected during the registration process.

Table 2.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Morale*

Name: <i>Morale</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definition: <i>Morale</i> is the confidence, enthusiasm, collective pride, and willingness to persist in the activities of the group. Organizations with high morale are linked to improved readiness, higher retention, and a lower likelihood of sexual assault.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Very low</i> to <i>Very high</i>					
Question Text: Overall, how would you rate...					Factor
Subitem Text	a. The current level of morale among the people you work with in your unit? (MORALEA ^a)				<i>Morale</i>
	b. Your own current level of morale? (MORALEB)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Morale</i>	2	1	0	2	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^a Factor item contains dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

Factor Profile: *Engagement & Commitment*

Table 3 details the protective factor *Engagement & Commitment*. During the streamlining effort, the factor was reduced from four to three items, with a small number of additional edits made for increased consistency and alignment across DEOCS populations (e.g., civilians). Specifically, one item was removed (ENGAGED²⁴), as the interpretation of the item varied and/or caused confusion, which was supported by both the quantitative and qualitative evaluations. The introductory text was moved to the question stem and was edited to include the standardized timeframe. Finally, piped text was added to item ENGAGEC. Previously, the item asked about committing to a military career. The qualitative evaluation identified that this question was hard for non-military populations to answer. To address this, piping was added to differentiate between military and government service.²⁵

Table 3.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Engagement & Commitment*

Name: <i>Engagement & Commitment</i>	Type: Protective	Factor Presentation: Grid
Definition: <i>Engagement & Commitment</i> measures the extent to which one finds their work fulfilling and is committed to their job and organization. Engaged and committed individuals demonstrate enthusiasm for, and dedication to, the work that they do. Higher levels of engagement and commitment are linked to improved readiness, higher retention, and a lower likelihood of suicide.		

²⁴ I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with. (ENGAGED, DEOCS 5.0)

²⁵ Specifically, the piped text was updated for civilian members to read “I am committed to making Government Service my career,” opposed to “...making the military my career,” which is asked to military members.

Name: <i>Engagement & Commitment</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text: Thinking about the past three months, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work?					Factor
Subitem Text	a. I am proud of my work. (ENGAGEA)				<i>Engagement & Commitment</i>
	b. My work has a great deal of personal meaning to me. (ENGAGEB)				
	c. I am committed to making the military my career. (ENGAGEC ^a)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor		DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
		Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Engagement & Commitment</i>		3	1	1	4
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^a Factor item contains dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

Factor Profiles: *Cohesion* and *Inclusion*

Table 4 details the protective factors *Cohesion* and *Inclusion*. *Cohesion* and *Inclusion* were combined into a single grid. Each factor shares substantive similarities and, when combined, mirror the length of other factors. Introduction text was added to include the standardized timeframe. For both factors, the piped text defining the people the respondent should consider when answering was updated to include an option for both civilian and military populations, so the questions would be applicable across all DEOCS populations.

We did not remove any items from *Cohesion*, which was already a short two-item factor. The qualitative evaluation did not identify any concerns with the items, and the quantitative evaluation indicated the factor was unidimensional.

Changes to *Inclusion* were derived from both the quantitative and qualitative efforts. *Inclusion* was reduced by two items: Two items (INCLUSIONA²⁶ and INCLUSIONB²⁷) were consolidated into one item (INCLUSIONG), and one item was removed (INCLUSIONE²⁸). Quantitative analyses determined that participants were answering the two consolidated items very similarly and that the removed item (INCLUSIONE) was underperforming. The grouping of the *Cohesion* and *Inclusion* factor items into a single grid also required a change to the order of presentation for the *Inclusion* items. In the DEOCS 5.0 instrument, one of the *Inclusion* items was not in the same section of the survey as the other *Inclusion* items. We consolidated the presentation of the *Inclusion* items by grouping all *Inclusion* items together. Lastly, a

²⁶ The people I work with believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of how they identify (for example, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identities). (INCLUSIONA, DEOCS 5.0)

²⁷ The people I work with believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of their occupation and rank. (INCLUSIONB, DEOCS 5.0)

²⁸ Among the people I work with, the quality of ideas matters more than who expresses them. (INCLUSIONE, DEOCS 5.0)

grammatical edit was made to one other inclusion item (INCLUSIOND), increasing comprehension for participants.

Table 4.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Cohesion and Inclusion

Names: <i>Cohesion and Inclusion</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definitions:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Cohesion</i> assesses whether individuals in a workplace care about each other, share the same mission and goals, and work together effectively. Cohesive organizations are linked to improved readiness and retention, and a lower likelihood of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicide.<i>Inclusion</i> indicates whether individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization’s success. Inclusive work environments ensure that it is safe for an individual to voice their different opinions, perspectives, and/or suggestions. Inclusive organizations are linked to a lower likelihood of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, improved readiness, and higher retention.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text^a: People in my unit...					Factor
Subitem Text^a	a. Work well as a team. (COHESA)				<i>Cohesion</i>
	b. Trust each other. (COHESB)				
	c. Believe that everyone has value, regardless of their sex, race or ethnicity, or sexual orientation. (INCLUSIONG)				<i>Inclusion</i>
	d. Build on each other’s ideas and thoughts during the decision-making process. (INCLUSIONC)				
	e. Would speak up if someone was being excluded. (INCLUSIOND)				
	f. Believe that communication goes up and down the unit chain of command. (INCLUSION)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Cohesion</i>	2	2	0	2	
<i>Inclusion</i>	4	4	3 ^b	6	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^aFactor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^bTwo of the three items were consolidated into a single item.

Factor Profile: *Work–Life Balance*

Work–Life Balance remains a single-item factor (Table 5). In the DEOCS 5.0, the question asked about “work and personal life.” Cognitive interviews and stakeholder feedback identified that this language was not applicable for MSA and MSA prep students. Therefore, piping was included to identify the type of demands (i.e., work and personal life), making the question

applicable across all DEOCS populations. Additionally, instructional text was added to mirror the consistent reference period across factors.

Table 5.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Work–Life Balance

Name: <i>Work–Life Balance</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Single item	
Definition: <i>Work–Life Balance</i> measures one’s perception that the demands of their work and personal life are compatible. A work–life balance is linked to higher retention, improved readiness, and a lower likelihood of suicide.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text^a: I can easily balance the demands of my work and personal life. (WORKLIFE)					
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Work–Life Balance</i>	1	1	0	1	
Factor Presentation Change? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					

^aFactor item contains dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

Factor Profile: *Workplace Hostility*

Table 6 details the risk factor *Workplace Hostility*. The factor was reduced from six to four items, with a grammatical edit to one item. The removal of the two items (WORKHOSTC²⁹ and WORKHOSTE³⁰) was supported by both the quantitative and qualitative evaluations. One item was removed because it did not align with clear conceptions of hostility (WORKHOSTC). The other item (WORKHOSTE) was removed because the quantitative analyses indicated there was a high overlap between two items and the item that was easier for respondents to understand and respond to was retained (WORKHOSTA). Additionally, the introductory text was edited, and the question stem was edited for consistency within the grid, including a reference to the standardized timeframe.

Finally, one item was modified to differentiate forms of yelling (WORKHOSTF). The qualitative analysis indicated that understanding the directionality (i.e., “yelling when they are angry *with you*”) may help clarify interpretation. This edit also aligned the wording with the wording of the analogous item asked on other OPA surveys.

²⁹ How often does someone from your unit gossip or talk about you? (WORKHOSTC, DEOCS 5.0)

³⁰ How often does someone from your unit not provide you with information and assistance when needed? (WORKHOSTE, DEOCS 5.0)

Table 6.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Workplace Hostility

Name: <i>Workplace Hostility</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definition: <i>Workplace Hostility</i> measures the degree to which individuals in the workplace act in a hostile manner toward others. It includes behaviors such as insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate a member as well as the perception of others interfering with one’s work. Organizations with frequent workplace hostility are linked to lower levels of readiness and retention, as well as a higher likelihood of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>					
Question Text^a: How often does someone from your unit...					Factor
Subitem Text	a. Intentionally interfere with your work performance? (WORKHOSTA)				<i>Workplace Hostility</i>
	b. Take credit for work or ideas that were yours? (WORKHOSTB)				
	c. Use insults, sarcasm, or gestures to humiliate you? (WORKHOSTD)				
	d. Yell when they are angry with you? (WORKHOSTF)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Workplace Hostility</i>	4	1	2	6	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^a Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

Factor Profiles: *Sexist Behaviors* and *Sexually Harassing Behaviors*

Table 7 details the risk factors *Sexist Behaviors* and *Sexually Harassing Behaviors*. The two factors were combined into a grid, since the factors are substantively similar. The *Sexist Behaviors* factor remains a one-item factor and was edited to remove “ignore” from the list of behaviors due to its similarity to other behaviors listed in the question text. The *Sexually Harassing Behaviors* factor was reduced from seven items to five. Validation analyses identified one item (MEOBEHF³¹) as the lowest performing due to an overlap with other inter-factor items. Given that the validation analyses suggested the strength of the factor would not be harmed, this item was removed.

Even with the removal of one item, the *Sexually Harassing Behaviors* factor remains one of the longest factors in the survey. To reduce survey burden, the remaining items were reviewed to assess if there were any concerns with the wording. As a result, one other item (MEOBEHI³²) was removed because feedback from the field on previous OPA surveys indicated some survey respondents found this item was difficult to answer. The quantitative analyses did not indicate this item functioned poorly; however, the removal did not harm the overall factor structure. The

³¹ How often does someone from your unit ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? (MEOBEHF, DEOCS 5.0)

³² How often does someone from your unit make attempts to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships with you? *These attempts could range from asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a “hookup.”* (MEOBEHI, DEOCS 5.0)

final change to the *Sexually Harassing Behaviors* factor was removing the follow-on text from MEOBEHD to simplify the question. The item has been used with and without the text on previous OPA surveys without issue.

Table 7.

DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: Sexist Behaviors and Sexually Harassing Behaviors

Names: <i>Sexist Behaviors</i> and <i>Sexually Harassing Behaviors</i>		Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definitions:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Sexist Behaviors</i> measures prejudicial, stereotypical, or negative attitudes and opinions based on perceived sex or gender that occurred over the past three months. <i>Sexist Behaviors</i> also includes verbal and/or nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, offensive, or condescending attitudes based on the perceived gender of the individual. The presence of sexist behaviors in organizations is linked to a higher likelihood of sexual harassment and sexual assault, as well as lower levels of readiness and retention.<i>Sexually Harassing Behaviors</i> measures unwelcome sexual advances and offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature that occurred over the past three months. The presence of sexually harassing behaviors in organizations is linked to a higher likelihood of sexual harassment, racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination, sexual assault, suicide, as well as lower levels of readiness and retention.				
Factor Item Details				
Response Type: 4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>				
Question Text ^{a,b} : Thinking about the past three months, how often does someone from your unit...				Factor
Subitem Text ^a	a. Mistreat, exclude, or insult you because of your gender? (MEOBEHO)			<i>Sexist Behaviors</i>
	b. Tell sexual jokes that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? (MEOBEHA)			<i>Sexually Harassing Behaviors</i>
	c. Embarrass, anger, or upset you by suggesting that you do not act how a man or a woman is supposed to act? (MEOBEHB)			
	d. Display, show, or send sexually explicit materials (such as pictures or videos) that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? (MEOBEHD)			
	e. Make sexual comments about your appearance or body that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? (MEOBEHG)			
	f. Intentionally touch you in unwanted sexual ways? (MEOBEHJ)			
Factor Streamlining Summary				
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Sexist Behaviors</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>Sexually Harassing Behaviors</i>	5	0	2	7
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

^a Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^b Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) referencing the timeframe for answering each item.

Factor Profile: *Racially Harassing Behaviors*

Table 8 details the risk factor *Racially Harassing Behaviors*. The factor remains a five-item factor; however, the factor underwent a transformation during the streamlining effort to improve its performance. To improve the readability of the items, the descriptors were moved to the middle of each question stem rather than the end. For one item (REBEHB), the possessive adjective “your” was removed from in front of “racial/ethnic groups” to generalize the behavior to any racial/ethnic group rather than limited to the race/ethnicity of the respondent. One item (REBEHD³³) was removed because it overlapped conceptually with the other items, and the validation analyses indicated the removal would not harm the factor performance. Finally, an item (REBEHX) was added based on stakeholder feedback to better encapsulate the experience of racially harassing behaviors.

Table 8.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Racially Harassing Behaviors*

Name: <i>Racially Harassing Behaviors</i>		Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definition: <i>Racially Harassing Behaviors</i> measures the experience or witnessing of offensive behaviors based on race or ethnicity that occurred over the past three months. These behaviors create a workplace that is intimidating, hostile, offensive, or unreasonably intrusive. These behaviors are representative of the types of behaviors included in the DoD’s official past-year prevalence estimates of racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination collected on the <i>WEO</i> surveys.				
Factor Item Details				
Response Type: 4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>				
Question Text ^{a,b} : Thinking about the past three months, how often does someone from your unit make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset by...				Factor
Subitem Text	a. Telling racial/ethnic jokes? (REBEHA)			<i>Racially Harassing Behaviors</i>
	b. Expressing stereotypes about racial/ethnic groups? (REBEHB)			
	c. Using offensive racial/ethnic terms? (REBEHC)			
	d. Excluding you because of your race/ethnicity? (REBEHX)			
	e. Showing you a lack of respect because of your race/ethnicity? (REBEHE)			
Factor Streamlining Summary				
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Racially Harassing Behaviors</i>	5	1	1	5
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

^a Factor item contains dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^b Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) referencing the timeframe for answering each item.

³³ How often does someone from your unit make insults about racial/ethnic groups that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset? (REBEHD, DEOCS 5.0)

Factor Profile: *Fairness*

Table 9 details the protective factor *Fairness*. The factor remains a two-item factor. The qualitative evaluation did not identify any concerns with the items, and the quantitative analysis indicated the factor was unidimensional. As a result, the only change to *Fairness* is the addition of a piped timeframe to the introduction text to remain consistent with the standardized reference period.

Table 9.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Fairness*

Name: <i>Fairness</i>		Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid	
Definition: <i>Fairness</i> is the perception that formal and informal organizational policies, practices, and procedures regarding information sharing, job opportunities, and promotions are based on merit, inclusion, equality, and respect. Organizations with fair treatment are linked to improved readiness, higher retention, as well as a lower likelihood of sexual harassment and racial/ethnic harassment and discrimination.				
Factor Item Details				
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>				
Question Text ^a : How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your unit?				Factor
Subitem Text	a. Training opportunities, awards, recognition, and other positive outcomes are distributed fairly. (FAIRNESSA)			Fairness
	b. Discipline and criticism are administered fairly. (FAIRNESSB)			
Factor Streamlining Summary				
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Fairness</i>	2	0	0	0
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

^a Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

Factor Profile: *Leadership Support*

Table 10 details the protective factor *Leadership Support*, which is measured at the immediate supervisor level. The factor was reduced from nine to six items, with a small number of additional modifications. Specifically, three items were removed (IMMED_SUPPF³⁴, IMMEDIATE_SUPPG³⁵, and IMMEDIATE_SUPPI³⁶). One item was removed during the formal coordination process based on feedback from stakeholders (IMMED_SUPPG), and another item (IMMED_SUPPF) did not pass validation analysis due to lower item loadings (at individual and

³⁴ My immediate supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my performances. (IMMED_SUPPF, DEOCS 5.0)

³⁵ My immediate supervisor supports my career development. (IMMED_SUPPG, DEOCS 5.0)

³⁶ My immediate supervisor puts the interests of subordinates above their personal interests. (IMMED_SUPPI, DEOCS 5.0)

unit levels) and lower scale reliability. Another item was removed (IMMED_SUPPI) because it aligned with the *Toxic Leadership* factor. Qualitative testing found that some participants had varying understandings of “reprisal,” so the item (IMMED_SUPPH) was reworded to also include the term “retaliation.” Finally, the introductory text was removed,³⁷ and the question stem was edited for consistency within the matrix and to include the standardized timeframe.

Table 10.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Leadership Support

Name: <i>Leadership Support</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Leadership Type: Immediate Supervisor					
Definition: <i>Leadership Support</i> is the perception that leaders build trust, encourage goal attainment and professional development, promote effective communication, and support teamwork. Organizations with supportive leaders are linked to improved readiness, higher retention, as well as a lower likelihood of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and suicide.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text ^{a,b} : Thinking about the past three months, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your immediate supervisor?					Factor
Subitem Text ^a	a. I have trust and confidence in my immediate supervisor. (IMMED_SUPPA)				<i>Leadership Support</i>
	b. My immediate supervisor listens to what I have to say. (IMMED_SUPPB)				
	c. My immediate supervisor treats me with respect. (IMMED_SUPPC)				
	d. My immediate supervisor cares about my personal well-being. (IMMED_SUPPD)				
	e. My immediate supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills. (IMMED_SUPPE)				
	f. I would not experience reprisal or retaliation from my immediate supervisor if I went to them with concerns. (IMMED_SUPPH)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Leadership Support</i>	6	1	3	9	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^aFactor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^bFactor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) referencing the timeframe for answering each item.

³⁷ For example, the introductory text for the military DEOCS was, “In this section, please report how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your immediate supervisor. When responding, consider only time spent over the past three months serving under your immediate supervisor.”

Factor Profile: *Toxic Leadership*

Table 11 details the risk factor *Toxic Leadership*, a factor measured at both the immediate supervisor level and the senior NCO/SEL level. Changes to the items were mirrored across both leadership levels for consistency. The factor was reduced from five to three items. Quantitative analyses informed the removal of one item (IMMED_TOXB³⁸/NCO_TOXC³⁹) that overlapped with the factor *Workplace Hostility*. The quantitative analyses also recommended the removal of a second item (IMMED_TOXC⁴⁰). Although our analyses did not identify NCO_TOXD⁴¹ as the highest-ranking item for removal, it was removed to keep the consistency across the factor for both leadership levels. The quantitative analyses did not, however, indicate that the factor performance would be detrimentally affected without this item. Additionally, to standardize the language across the factor and to narrow the scope of reference, edits were made to two of the items. Piping was added to one item (e.g., “people in my unit”), clarifying who is being ridiculed (IMMED_TOXA/NCO_TOXB). For the other item (IMMED_TOXE/NCO_TOXE), qualitative testing identified confusion among participants regarding the question’s wording. Specifically, the use of “contrary” was identified as hard to understand; therefore, the item was reworded, including updating the piping in the question to provide more clarity.

Table 11.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Toxic Leadership*

Name: <i>Toxic Leadership</i>		Type: Risk		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Leadership Types: Immediate Supervisor and Senior NCO/SEL					
Definition: <i>Toxic Leadership</i> measures the perception that leaders disregard input, ridicule others, and have self-promoting tendencies. <i>Toxic Leadership</i> also includes behaviors that are demeaning, marginalizing, degrading, and/or deceptive. Organizations with toxic leaders are linked to a higher likelihood of sexual assault and suicide, as well as lower levels of retention and readiness.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>					
Question Text ^a : My immediate supervisor.../My unit's senior NCO/SEL...					Factor ^b
Subitem Text ^a	a. Ridicules people in my unit. (IMMED_TOXA/NCO_TOXB)				<i>Toxic Leadership</i>
	b. Acts only in the best interest of their own advancement. (IMMED_TOXD/NCO_TOXA)				
	c. Ignores input from people in my unit that they do not agree with. (IMMED_TOXE/NCO_TOXE)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor ^b	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Toxic Leadership</i>	3	2	2	5	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

³⁸ My immediate supervisor has explosive outbursts. (IMMED_TOXB, DEOCS 5.0)

³⁹ My unit’s senior NCO/senior enlisted leader has explosive outbursts. (NCO_TOXC, DEOCS 5.0)

⁴⁰ My immediate supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement. (IMMED_TOXC, DEOCS 5.0)

⁴¹ My unit’s senior NCO/senior enlisted leader has a sense of personal entitlement. (NCO_TOXD, DEOCS 5.0)

^a Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^b Streamlining to the factor *Toxic Leadership* was consistent for both leader populations (immediate supervisor and senior NCO/SEL).

Factor Profiles: *Transformational Leadership* and *Passive Leadership*

Table 12 details the protective factor *Transformational Leadership* and the risk factor *Passive Leadership*. Both factors are measured at two leadership levels, the commander/leader level and the senior NCO/SEL level. For each factor, changes to the items were mirrored across both leadership levels for consistency. *Transformational Leadership* was reduced from four to three items. Although *Passive Leadership* remains a two-item factor, one item was added, and one was removed. The factors were combined into a single grid but presented separately across leadership levels.

Cognitive testing informed the removal of one item from *Transformational Leadership* (LDR_TRANSFB⁴²/NCO_TRANSFB⁴³), since participants struggled with answering the question because they were unclear on what their “Service values” are. Piping was added to two items (LDR_TRANSFC/NCO_TRANSFC and LDR_TRANSFD/NCO_TRANSFD) to give respondents a more specific reference point to think about how leadership is affecting members and to provide consistency in language across the types of leadership. Stakeholder feedback recommended the addition of “professional” to clarify the type of development for one item (LDR_TRANSFC/NCO_TRANSFC).

In DEOCS 5.0, the *Passive Leadership* items were negatively worded, meaning that agreement with these items indicated an unfavorable response. For DEOCS 5.1, since *Passive Leadership* is presented with *Transformational Leadership* (a positively worded protective factor), *Passive Leadership* was edited so that agreement with the statement indicates passive leadership. One item was removed (LDR_PASSIVA⁴⁴/NCO_PASSIVA⁴⁵) and replaced with a different item (LDR_PASSIVX/NCO_PASSIVX), because it was not clear what “early action” meant in the original item wording.

Table 12.

DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: *Transformational Leadership* and *Passive Leadership*

Names: <i>Transformational Leadership</i> and <i>Passive Leadership</i>	Type: Protective, Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid
Leadership Levels: Commander/Leader and Senior NCO/SEL		
Definitions:		

⁴² My unit’s leader takes actions that are consistent with [Service Component] values. (LDR_TRANSFB, DEOCS 5.0)

⁴³ My unit’s senior NCO/senior enlisted leader takes actions that are consistent with [Service Component] values. (NCO_TRANSFB, DEOCS 5.0)

⁴⁴ My unit’s commander takes early action in addressing problems. (LDR_PASSIVA, DEOCS 5.0)

⁴⁵ My unit’s senior NCO/SEL takes early action in addressing problems. (NCO_PASSIVA, DEOCS 5.0)

Names: <i>Transformational Leadership</i> and <i>Passive Leadership</i>		Type: Protective, Risk		Factor Presentation: Grid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Transformational Leadership</i> measures the perception that leaders encourage, inspire, and motivate others to meet new challenges and accomplish tasks beyond what they felt was possible. Characteristics of a transformational leader include idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Organizations with transformational leaders are linked to improved readiness and higher retention.<i>Passive Leadership</i> measures the perception that leaders avoid decisions, do not respond to problems, fail to follow up, hesitate to act, and are absent when needed. Organizations with passive leaders are linked to lower levels of readiness and retention, as well as a higher likelihood of sexual harassment.					
Factor Item Details					
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text^a: My unit’s commander.../My unit’s senior NCO/SEL...					Factor^b
Subitem Text^a	a. Communicates a clear and motivating vision of the future. (LDR_TRANSFA/NCO_TRANSFA)				<i>Transformational Leadership</i>
	b. Supports and encourages the professional development of people in my unit. (LDR_TRANSFC/ NCO_TRANSFC)				
	c. Encourages people in my unit to think about problems in new ways. (LDR_TRANSFD/ NCO_TRANSFD)				
	d. Will not take action until negative behaviors become bigger problems. (LDR_PASSIVX/ NCO_PASSIVX)				<i>Passive Leadership</i>
	e. Does not address problems brought to their attention. (LDR_PASSIVB/ LDR_PASSIVB)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor^b		DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
		Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>		3	2	1	4
<i>Passive Leadership</i>		2	1	1	2
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

^a Factor items contain dynamic text (i.e., piped text) to tailor questions to different populations, and the dynamic text in the profile is demonstrative of the military population.

^b Streamlining the factors *Transformational Leadership* and *Passive Leadership* was consistent for both leader populations (commander/leader and senior NCO/SEL).

Factor Profile: *Stress*

Table 13 details the risk factor *Stress*, which was reduced from a four-item factor to a two-item factor. Although *Stress* was a unidimensional factor (as identified by the quantitative analyses), the quantitative evaluation indicated the factor could be reduced in length without significant degradation in the performance. Since no items were identified as underperforming, we identified two items to prioritize for removal because the items did not have a known association with suicide (from prior research), which is a strategic target outcome (STRESSB⁴⁶ and

⁴⁶ In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? (STRESSB, DEOCS 5.0)

STRESSC⁴⁷). Additionally, language regarding confidentiality was removed from the introduction of the text. The removal of the confidentiality language was consistent with the qualitative analyses, which found that respondents were confused about the overall level of confidentiality of their responses, when some items had additional confidentiality language and others did not.

Table 13.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Stress

Name: <i>Stress</i>		Type: Risk		Factor Presentation: Grid		
Definition: <i>Stress</i> measures the feeling of emotional strain or pressure. Stressed individuals may feel unable to predict or influence valued and prominent aspects of their lives. Higher levels of stress are linked to a higher likelihood of suicide, as well as lower levels of readiness and retention.						
Factor Item Details						
Response Type: 4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>						
Question Text: In the past three months, how often have you...					Factor	
Subitem Text	a. Felt nervous or stressed? (STRESSA)					<i>Stress</i>
	b. Found that you could not cope with all of the things you had to do? (STRESSD)					
Factor Streamlining Summary						
Factor	DEOCS 5.1				DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items		
<i>Stress</i>	2	2	2	4		
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No						

Factor Profile: *Connectedness*

Table 14 details the protective factor *Connectedness*. The factor remains a four-item factor. The quantitative analysis indicated that all four items were needed, which also aligned with stakeholders' feedback. The introductory text was removed, and the question stem was edited for consistency within the matrix and to include reference to the standardized timeframe. "These days" was removed from three of the items to align with the matrix display and to remove repetitive question stems.

Table 14.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: Connectedness

Name: <i>Connectedness</i>	Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid
Definition: <i>Connectedness</i> measures perceptions of closeness to a group and satisfaction with one’s relationship to others in the group. Higher connectedness is linked to improved readiness, higher retention, and a lower likelihood of suicide.		
Factor Item Details		

⁴⁷ In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? (STRESSC, DEOCS 5.0)

Name: <i>Connectedness</i>		Type: Risk		Factor Presentation: Grid	
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>					
Question Text: Thinking about the past three months, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?					Factor
Subitem Text	a. I feel like I belong. (CONNECTA)				<i>Connectedness</i>
	b. I feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need. (CONNECTB)				
	c. I think I make things worse for the people in my life. (CONNECTC)				
	d. My future seems dark to me. (CONNECTD)				
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Connectedness</i>	4	3	0	4	
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					

Factor Profiles: *Binge Drinking* and *Alcohol Impairing Memory*

Table 15 details the risk factors *Binge Drinking* and *Alcohol Impairing Memory*. The two-factor items were combined and presented in a grid to align with global streamlining updates. The introductory text was removed, and the question stem was edited for consistency within the matrix to include a reference to the standardized timeframe. The timeframe referenced in one item was modified to keep it consistent with the standardized three-month timeframe (DRNKMEN).

Binge Drinking was revised based on feedback we received from the field. When presenting DEOCS results to commands across the DoD, the difference in sex-based amounts of alcohol was often viewed as confusing and was sometimes upsetting to respondents. A review of the item indicated that when sex-based amounts of alcohol are presented on other federal surveys, skip logic is used to pipe the specific number of drinks for male and female respondents. The sex of the respondent is not collected until the end of the DEOCS; therefore, it is not possible to appropriately pipe the number of drinks for male and female respondents. As this question was historically included on prior OPA surveys with a threshold of five or more drinks until the sex-based thresholds for male and female binge drinking were established, we decided to remove the differing sex-based amounts of alcohol and to standardize the question to how often respondents have had five or more drinks on one occasion (previously the male standard; OFTENBINGE).

Table 15.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profiles: *Binge Drinking* and *Alcohol Impairing Memory*

Names: <i>Binge Drinking</i> and <i>Alcohol Impairing Memory</i>	Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid
Definitions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Binge Drinking</i> measures how often, during the last three months, one consumed five or more drinks on one occasion. This pattern of drinking alcohol within two hours brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08% or higher for typical adults. Frequent binge drinking is linked to a higher likelihood of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and suicide. 		

Names: <i>Binge Drinking and Alcohol Impairing Memory</i>		Type: Risk	Factor Presentation: Grid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Alcohol Impairing Memory</i> measures how often, during the last three months, one was unable to remember what happened the night before due to drinking alcohol. Frequent memory loss due to alcohol is linked to a higher likelihood of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and suicide.				
Factor Item Details				
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Never to Daily or almost daily</i>				
Question Text: Thinking about your alcohol use in the last three months, how often have you...				Factor
Subitem Text	a. Had five or more drinks on one occasion? (OFTENBINGE)			<i>Binge Drinking</i>
	b. Been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking? (DRNKMED)			<i>Alcohol Impairing Memory</i>
Factor Streamlining Summary				
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items
<i>Binge Drinking</i>	1	1	0	1
<i>Alcohol Impairing Memory</i>	1	1	0	1
Factor Presentation Change? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

Factor Profile: *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*

Table 16 details the protective factor *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*. The factor remains a single-item factor. The qualitative testing indicated that this question was extremely difficult for respondents to answer. The original question included several examples of what could be considered “lethal means,” and respondents indicated they would respond differently for each example if provided the opportunity to do so. Rather than increase respondents’ burden to ask about each type of lethal means separately, the question was substantially reworded and reframed to focus only on safe storage of firearms.⁴⁸ A definition was added to clarify what “safe storage” entails. These changes were made to improve participants’ comprehension with the goal of gathering more accurate and informative data. The question is framed as a hypothetical because the Department is not permitted to collect data regarding personal firearm ownership from military members who reside off base nor from DoD civilians, under current federal law.

Table 16.
DEOCS 5.1 Factor Profile: *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*

Name: <i>Safe Storage of Lethal Means</i>	Type: Protective	Factor Presentation: Single Item
Definition: <i>Safe Storage of Lethal Means</i> measures whether one would keep a firearm safely stored (i.e., unloaded or in a secure storage container/device) if they had one in their living space. Keeping lethal means safely stored is linked to a lower likelihood of suicide.		
Factor Item Details		
Response Type: 5-point, <i>Strongly disagree to Strongly agree</i>		

⁴⁸ Use of a firearm is the most commonly used form of lethal means in cases of Service member suicide, and promoting safe storage of firearms is a priority for the Department of Defense.

Name: <i>Safe Storage of Lethal Means</i>		Type: Protective		Factor Presentation: Single Item	
Question Text: If I had a firearm in my living space, I would store it unloaded or use a secure storage container/device. (LETHAL_B)					
Factor Streamlining Summary					
Factor	DEOCS 5.1			DEOCS 5.0	
	Total Items	Items Edited	Items Removed	Total Items	
<i>Safe Storage of Lethal Means</i>	1	1	0	1	
Factor Presentation Change? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No					

Streamlining Results: Nonfactor Items

To further enhance the DEOCS, the streamlining effort also included updates to nonfactor items, such as open-ended questions, MSA-specific items, demographics, and the custom question bank (CQB) items.

Open-Ended Question Streamlining

The DEOCS contains five open-ended questions that were revised for consistency and conciseness during the streamlining effort. As previously mentioned, we removed the confidentiality reminders throughout the instrument, which included removing them from the open-ended items. We reiterated ways to maintain confidentiality in open-ended responses without specifically mentioning confidentiality. As part of these changes, the instruction text of the open-ended items was also shortened to remove the text reminding participants that their leadership would be able to see what they write but not who wrote it. The need for this additional change was identified during the cognitive interviews. Respondents indicated that the inclusion of this text on some items but not others raised doubts about the confidentiality of their responses rather than providing reassurance that confidentiality would be maintained. Additional edits to questions were made, including providing clearer direction on the type of negative behaviors that participants should focus on in their responses. Edits were also made to include immediate supervisor piping in the third open-ended question to be more specific across each survey population. These revisions aimed to remove unnecessary wording while also allowing participants the opportunity to express their comments.

Streamlining Demographic Items

Although the DEOCS asks relatively few demographic questions, many require multiple decision points. We identified opportunities for streamlining demographic items without losing key information.

Demographic items were removed or combined to ask fewer follow-on questions across populations (see Appendix A for all removed demographic items). Several of the paygrade items, for both respondents and their immediate supervisor, were combined to reduce the number of follow-on items, which decreased the overall number of questions on the instrument from nine to six for civilian paygrades and from eight to three for military paygrades, although the removal of items did not alter the decision points for these questions for participants (still ranging from two to three decision points; Table 1).

Two additional MSA demographic items were removed: One self-reported MSA item identifying the specific MSA (SRACAD) was removed given its redundancy with information that is already gathered when a DEOCS is registered. Additionally, one leadership demographic item identifying the respondent's immediate supervisor's position at the MSA (SRSUPPAYMSA) was removed because it is not used for reporting DEOCS results by the leader's paygrade.

In addition to the removal and streamlining of some demographic items, there were also a few demographic items added to the DEOCS 5.1 instrument. The DoDI 6400.11 expanded the population of interest for the DEOCS to include foreign national employees, who were not eligible to take the DEOCS 5.0. Therefore, an item was added to the DEOCS 5.1 asking about the foreign national employee status of the participant. Military populations also have an additional demographic item in the DEOCS 5.1 for which they are presented an opportunity to verify that they are located at the installation, base, ship, or location identified during the DEOCS registration process. Respondents who indicate their location does not match the registration information are asked to provide their assigned location. These questions were added based on stakeholder guidance to better identify how participants are associated with a unit/organization completing a DEOCS.

Finally, other additions to the survey instrument include items measuring sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). These items were also added based on DoDI 6400.11 guidance. The SOGI items that were added align with the recommended measurement of SOGI items from OMB. Furthermore, an edit was made to the item asking about the respondent's sex. Previously, the respondent was asked if they are male or female. Now, the respondent is asked about their sex assigned at birth that appears on the respondent's original birth certificate. This modification was driven primarily from the addition of the SOGI questions because asking about sex is no longer mutually exclusive with the gender identity demographic question.

Streamlining Military Service Academy (MSA)-Specific Items

Within the DEOCS 5.0 instrument, MSA cadets and midshipmen were asked many more items than other populations, such as active duty personnel. We reviewed the nonfactor MSA-specific items to identify opportunities for streamlining to reduce redundancy and to increase consistency in factor measurement.

Streamlining to the MSA-specific questions resulted in three edited items (REBEHMSA, LDR_MSAH, LDR_MSAJ), the removal of 19 items (see Appendix A for all the removed MSA-specific items), and the addition of two items (MSA_TOXD and MSA_TOXE). The removal of MSA items was based on multiple conditions: redundancy, consistency, and data quality.

Items were removed to reduce redundancy among the MSA items, particularly for items that overlapped with core factor items. Five items were removed to reduce redundancy in MSA items: One item was removed that aligned with *Engagement & Commitment* (MSA_A), one item was removed that aligned with *Passive Leadership* (IMMED_NEG), and three items were removed that aligned with *Leadership Support* (MSA_B, IMMED_MSA, and LDR_MSAL). Furthermore, all MSA items related to alcohol use (MSA_J, MSA_K, MSA_L, MSA_M, and

MSA_N) were removed, since alcohol use is measured with *Alcohol Impairing Memory and Binge Drinking*.

Items were removed and added to the DEOCS to increase consistency in the MSA-specific items with other items in the survey. Items were removed if analogous streamlined factor items were also removed (i.e., if a factor item was removed, the same MSA-specific item was removed). Three items were removed to mirror the removed items from *Leadership Support* (LDR_MSAF, LDR_MSAG, and LDR_MSAI), and one item was removed to mirror a removed item from *Toxic Leadership* (MSA_K). To add consistency across factor measurement, two items were added to the MSA-specific items, reflecting the streamlining that was made to *Toxic Leadership* (MSA_TOXD and MSA_TOXE). This addition provides MSA students with the opportunity to evaluate their permanent party command team on toxic leadership similarly as other DEOCS populations evaluate their leadership (e.g., senior NCO/SEL).

Items were removed for data-quality concerns when the quantitative analysis suggested that respondents “straight lined” when answering (e.g., marking “strongly agree” across a set of similar items), which suggested that respondents could be bored or unmotivated to differentiate across items, that they have difficulty differentiating across items, or that there is no variability across items. Regardless of why straight lining occurs, it is indicative of a problem in the survey items and the design, which is why rewording or removing items was recommended. Five additional items were removed due to straight lining because there was redundancy and a lack of variability in responses for a battery of MSA-specific questions (MSA_C, MSA_D, MSA_E, MSA_F, MSA_I).

Finally, there were edits made to three of the MSA-specific questions. We expanded one item to ask about slurs, jokes, or comments related to both sexual orientation and gender identity to be more inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity (REBEHSMAS). Previously, this item only asked about sexual orientation. To align with the *Leadership Support*, two items were edited to use the same language, apart from the piping (IMMED_SUPPH, LDR_MSAH). One item was edited to align with the *Toxic Leadership* item IMMED_TOXA/NCO_TOXB (LDR_MSAJ).

Custom Question Bank (CQB) Items

The DEOCS has the option for units and organizations to customize their survey by selecting up to 10 closed-ended and five open-ended questions from the DEOCS CQB to add to the survey instrument.⁴⁹ Although the streamlining effort did not make changes to the structural features of the CQB (i.e., the number of possible items that can be added to the survey), an item reduction analysis was conducted on the closed-ended CQB items. These analyses had the goals of (1) reducing the number of closed-ended items in the CQB and (2) editing these items for clarity and consistency.

The DEOCS 5.0 CQB contained 703 items with various question categories, making question selection an overwhelming process for survey administrators and the unit/organization leaders (Table 17). During reduction analysis, each item was evaluated on multiple criteria to determine

⁴⁹ The customizable items of the DEOCS are not included in the decision points of the overall DEOCS because their addition is optional and can vary across DEOCS registrations.

if it should continue to be included in the CQB. The process considered both the frequency of item selection and the item quality (as determined by DEOCS SMEs). The items that were most selected by users from January 2021 to March 2022 were prioritized for retention. Additionally, to account for both depth and breadth, the top 100 selected questions and the top five most-selected questions in each thematic category were retained.⁵⁰ Questions were also individually evaluated by DEOCS SMEs. In this evaluation, redundant or poorly worded questions were removed from the bank and substantively valuable questions, while not necessarily the most selected, were retained for their potential utility. Additionally, question edits were made to improve the items' clarity, formatting, and consistency. Stakeholders reviewed the DEOCS 5.1 CQB to assess the edits, to confirm the removal of items, and to identify gaps in the topics covered in the CQB.⁵¹ Overall, the DEOCS CQB was reduced by 40% (Table 17), resulting in a more distilled and higher-quality DEOCS 5.1 CQB.

Table 17.
DEOCS CQB Item Reduction Summary

	DEOCS 5.1	DEOCS 5.0
Closed-ended^a	270	540
Open-ended^b	151	163
Total	421	703

^a DEOCS legacy language from the redesigned survey identifies the closed-ended questions as “Locally Developed Questions” (LDQ).

^b DEOCS legacy language from the redesigned survey identifies the open-ended questions as “Short Answer Questions” (SAQ).

⁵⁰ Given the variation across the units and organizations in DoD that administer a DEOCS, this effort wanted to retain the use of these item for users, especially given their high frequency of selection.

⁵¹ The CQB and the CQB Reference Guide can be found on the Prepare menu of the Assessment to Solutions website: <https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/>. The CQB document contains all closed-ended and open-ended questions available on the DEOCS 5.1 CQB. Alternatively, the CQB Reference Guide lists a share of the most relevant topically specific CQB items (e.g., harassment) to assist with the selection of closed-ended CQB questions.

Conclusion

This report described the process and results of the DEOCS streamlining effort, evolving from version 5.0 to 5.1 and launched on August 1, 2023. The streamlined DEOCS 5.1 instrument was informed by a multitude of efforts that assessed the efficacy of the instrument, specifically the validation analyses and the qualitative testing of the DEOCS 5.0 instrument. Additionally, enhancements and the streamlining processes were coordinated with stakeholders to ensure that the changes met the needs of the variable DEOCS populations. In conjunction, these efforts identified areas where the survey instrument could be improved; for example, removing low-performing factor items and updating survey wording to improve respondent comprehension.

The overarching goals of the DEOCS streamlining effort were to reduce survey burden and to retain the valid and reliable measurement of the DEOCS factors. The streamlining effort included changes that affected items across the survey, factor-specific adjustments, and modifications that consolidated nonfactor items. Changes that affected items across the survey were made to reduce survey burden and to provide more consistency in item- and factor-level measurement. Additionally, user experience was significantly improved with the factor presentation change from single items to a grid format. Finally, in streamlining the DEOCS, none of the 19 risk and protective factors were removed, nor were any factors reduced by more than 50%.

Overall, the streamlining effort reduced the overall survey length by nearly 30% (140 to 101 items) and the average decision points for participants from 101 to 73. More specifically, the average military and civilian survey decision points were reduced by about a quarter (94 to 70), and the average MSA and MSA prep school survey decision points were reduced by 30% (108 to 76; Table 1). For core factor items specifically, the protective and risk factor items were reduced by 25% (67 to 50; Table 1). Additionally, MSA-specific items were reduced from 30 to 12, and the total number of demographic items decreased from 28 to 24. Importantly, all streamlined DEOCS protective and risk factors can be trended between survey versions 5.0 and 5.1, aside from *Safe Storage of Lethal Means*.

The culmination of efforts has produced an improved, more efficient survey instrument that will benefit survey respondents and their leadership. Even so, future enhancements can be made. There are additional considerations for enhancements to the DEOCS survey instrument that were either de-prioritized in this streamlining process or were out of scope for the current enhancements of the instrument. One future consideration is to improve the population specificity. Although the survey uses piped text to personalize and clarify the items, there are areas where population specificity could be improved. These updates may help respondents more accurately answer items. For example, the informal feedback from the field and qualitative analyses indicated that additional population-specific piping would be particularly beneficial for the MSA population. Lastly, future analyses are being conducted to inform the necessity of measuring all 19 factors on the DEOCS, which may inform additional streamlining of the instrument over time.

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Appendix A.

Removed DEOCS 5.0 Items

**DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS**



Removed DEOCS 5.0 Items

Table A-1.
Removed DEOCS 5.0 Items

Item Type	Factor (if applicable)	Variable Name	Question Text	Response Option
Protective Factor	Engagement & Commitment	ENGAGED	I feel like “part of the family” among the people I work with.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Inclusion	INCLUSIONA	The people I work with believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of how they identify (for example, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identities).	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Inclusion	INCLUSIONB	The people I work with believe that everyone has worth and value, regardless of their occupation and rank.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Inclusion	INCLUSIONE	Among the people I work with, the quality of ideas matters more than who expresses them.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Workplace Hostility	WORKHOSTC	How often does someone from your unit gossip or talk about you?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Risk Factor	Workplace Hostility	WORKHOSTE	How often does someone from your unit not provide you with information and assistance when needed?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Risk Factor	Sexually Harassing Behaviors	MEOBEHF	How often does someone from your unit ask you questions about your sex life or sexual interests that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Risk Factor	Sexually Harassing Behaviors	MEOBEHI	How often does someone from your unit make attempts to establish unwanted romantic or sexual relationships with you? <i>These attempts could range from asking you out on a date to asking you for sex or a “hookup”.</i>	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Risk Factor	Racially Harassing Behaviors	REBEHD	How often does someone from your unit make insults about racial/ethnic groups that make you uncomfortable, angry, or upset?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Protective Factor	Leadership Support (Immediate Supervisor)	IMMED_SUPPF	My immediate supervisor provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my performance.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>

Item Type	Factor (if applicable)	Variable Name	Question Text	Response Option
Protective Factor	Leadership Support (Immediate Supervisor)	IMMED_SUPPG	My immediate supervisor supports my career development.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Leadership Support (Immediate Supervisor)	IMMED_SUPPI	My immediate supervisor puts the interest of subordinates and subordinates' families above their personal interests	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Toxic Leadership (Immediate Supervisor)	IMMED_TOXB	My immediate supervisor has explosive outbursts.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Toxic Leadership (Immediate Supervisor)	IMMED_TOXC	My immediate supervisor has a sense of personal entitlement.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Toxic Leadership (Senior NCO/SEL)	NCO_TOXC	My unit's senior NCO/SEL has explosive outbursts.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Toxic Leadership (Senior NCO/SEL)	NCO_TOXD	My unit's senior NCO/SEL has a sense of personal entitlement.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Transformational Leadership (Commander/Leader)	LDR_TRANSFB	My unit's commander takes actions that are consistent with [Service Component] values.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Protective Factor	Transformational Leadership (Senior NCO/SEL)	NCO_TRANSFB	My unit's senior NCO/SEL takes actions that are consistent with [Service Component] values.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Passive Leadership (Commander/Leader)	LDR_PASSIVA	My unit's commander takes early action in addressing problems.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Passive Leadership (Senior NCO/SEL)	NCO_PASSIVA	My unit's senior NCO/SEL takes early action in addressing problem.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
Risk Factor	Stress	STRESSB	In the past month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Risk Factor	Stress	STRESSC	In the past month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?	4-point, <i>Never</i> to <i>Often</i>
Self-Reported Demographic		SRACAD	Which Military Service Academy or Military Service Academy Preparatory School do you attend?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Military Academy (USMA) US Air Force Academy (USAFA) US Naval Academy (USNA) US Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) US Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS)

Item Type	Factor (if applicable)	Variable Name	Question Text	Response Option
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Air Force Academy Preparatory School (USAFAPS) Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS)
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYE	What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?	E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7, E-8, E-9
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYO	What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?	O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9, O-10
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYW	What paygrade is your immediate supervisor?	W-1, W-2, W-3, W-4, W-5
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYCIVG	What paygrade is your immediate supervisor's paygrade?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYCIVW	What paygrade is your immediate supervisor's paygrade?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
Leader Demographic		SRSUPPAYMSA	What is your immediate supervisor's position at the Military Academy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AD-1: Instructor AD-3: Assistant Professor AD-5: Associate Professor AD-7: Professor AD-9: Admin Faculty AD-11: Supervisory/Professor Dean/Academic Dean
Self-Reported Demographic		SRPAY	You are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlisted (including non-commissioned officers [NCOs]) A commissioned officer A warrant officer
Self-Reported Demographic		SRRANKENL	What is your paygrade?	E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7, E-8, E-9
Self-Reported Demographic		SRRANKOFF	What is your paygrade?	O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9, O-10
Self-Reported Demographic		SRRANKWO	What is your paygrade?	W-1, W-2, W-3, W-4, W-5
Self-Reported Demographic		SRCIVPAYGS	What is your paygrade?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Self-Reported Demographic		SRCIVPAYWS	What is your paygrade?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Item Type	Factor (if applicable)	Variable Name	Question Text	Response Option
Self-Reported Demographic		SRSEX	Are you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male Female
MSA Specific Item		MSA_A	Choosing to attend the Academy was a good decision for me.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_B	If I were to report a cadet for misconduct, I would expect negative social outcomes (for example, being the center of gossip or rumors, being ignored, or being bullied) from other cadets.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_C	I trust that my academic success is supported by Academy faculty.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_D	I trust that my academic success is supported by Academy coaches and staff.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_E	I trust that my development as a leader of character is supported by Academy faculty.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_F	I trust that my development as a leader of character is supported by Academy coaches and staff.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MA_I	The Academy provides cadets with an effective mentoring program.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		IMMED_NEG	The first cadet in my chain of command allows negative behavior to occur.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		IMMED_MSA	If I were to report the first cadet in my chain of command for misconduct, I would receive negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations or opportunities for leadership would suffer).	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		LDR_MSAF	My company permanent party command team provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my performance.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		LDR_MSAG	My company permanent party command team supports my development.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		LDR_MSAI	My company permanent party command team puts the interest of their cadets above their personal interests.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		LDR_MSAK	A member of my company permanent party command team has explosive outbursts.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		LDR_MSAL	If I were to report someone in my company permanent party command team for misconduct, I would receive	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>

Item Type	Factor (if applicable)	Variable Name	Question Text	Response Option
			negative outcomes (for example, poor evaluations, decreased opportunities for leadership, become the center of gossip or rumors, ignored, or bullied).	
MSA Specific Item		MSA_J	At the Academy, peer pressure makes me drink more than I would otherwise.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_K	At the Academy, unauthorized drinking is condoned by my sponsor.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_L	My permanent party leadership enforces the Academy's alcohol use policy.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_M	My cadet leadership enforces the Academy's alcohol use policy.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>
MSA Specific Item		MSA_N	If I needed help to control my drinking, I would feel comfortable seeking help from on-campus resources.	5-point, <i>Strongly disagree</i> to <i>Strongly agree</i>

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