



U.S. ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH AND MATERIEL COMMAND

USAMRMC

Battlemind

Mission

The mission of the Battlemind Program is to develop, validate, and execute an integrated behavioral health resilience training system designed to support the Warfighters' mental health and well-being during training, operations, combat, and transitioning home.

Background and Environment

Battlemind is the only validated behavioral health resilience training system targeted to the Warfighter and is mandated Army wide. The objective of Battlemind Training is to help Warfighters identify the realities of challenging environments, develop skills to thrive and be resilient in the face of these realities, and know how to use these skills to help themselves, buddies, and those they lead. The Battlemind System trains Warfighters to manage cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions using specific skills to grow and thrive in the face of challenges in the military as well as to bounce back from adversity. The training system introduces these skills when Warfighters first enter the military, builds these skills across the deployment cycle, and consolidates these skills throughout a Warfighter's career as part of an integrated developmental approach to creating resilient Warfighters. In addition to Warfighters, Battlemind trains leaders, medical personnel, and military families. Battlemind reflects a strength-based approach, utilizing both self-aid and buddy aid and also focusing on the leader's role in maintaining the Warfighter's mental health and well-being.

The Battlemind Program has gone through iterative phases of product design, development, and testing. The Battlemind Program was initiated at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in 2005 and was originally based on data collected as part of the WRAIR Land Combat Study. Post-deployment Battlemind Training modules were validated in three group randomized trials with Soldiers who had returned from combat deployments in Iraq. These studies found Battlemind Training was effective in reducing mental health symptoms and decreasing the stigma associated with seeking mental health care. Results were used to design and improve subsequent modules as well as create training videos.

In 2007, WRAIR and the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Center and School formed a partnership to (1) develop a series of complete training packages targeted to different phases of the deployment cycle as well as different phases of the military lifecycle, (2) prepare training support packages for these modules, and (3) disseminate this training via Training and Doctrine Command and AMEDD courses.

Key Themes and Messages

Battlemind is a behavioral health resilience training system for Warfighters, medical personnel, and leaders—from pre-deployment to post-deployment and across the military lifecycle.

There are Battlemind Training products for families at pre- and post-deployment.

Battlemind Training has been tested and is effective in reducing mental health symptoms and decreasing the stigma associated with seeking mental health care.

Battlemind Training can be adapted for use by organizations in which employees are confronted with extreme stressors as part of their occupations, such as police officers and firefighters.

Questions and Answers

Q1. What is Battlemind?

A1. Battlemind is the Warfighter's inner strength to face the realities of the environment with courage, confidence, and resilience. This means meeting the mental challenges of training, operations, combat, and transitioning home. Warfighters with Battlemind take care of themselves, their buddies, and those they lead.

Q2. Who can benefit from Battlemind?

A2. The Warfighter, leaders, and military families may benefit from the mental preparation and support provided by the training program. The stressful conditions of deployment can negatively impact a Warfighter in the theater of operations and the Warfighter's transition home. Battlemind is designed to protect the Warfighter's mental health and build connections with buddies and to help the Warfighter's transition back to relationships with family, friends, and coworkers.

Q3. Why was Battlemind developed?

A3. The challenge of keeping Warfighters healthy is not limited to maintaining their physiological health but also maintaining their psychological health. The extremely stressful conditions of deployment affect people in different ways. This can be manifested in the theater of operations or after a Soldier has returned home after a combat deployment. Battlemind was developed to provide training for Warfighters, medical personnel, and leaders so they may recognize the signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues and reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health care, which can lead to more rapid identification and quicker treatment of behavioral health issues.

Q4. What products have been developed as part of the Battlemind Program?

A4. Training and educational materials have been developed for both the deployment cycle and lifecycle.

- Deployment cycle modules include:
 - Pre-deployment Battlemind for Warfighters, leaders, and spouses
 - Post-deployment Battlemind Training conducted during the Post-Deployment Health Assessment at reintegration
 - Post-deployment health Battlemind Training conducted during the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment at 3 to 6 months post-deployment
 - Pre- and post-deployment spouse Battlemind
 - Battlemind psychological debriefings during deployment (time and event driven) and post-deployment

- Life-cycle modules include:
 - Battlemind for Basic Combat Training
 - Battlemind for Junior Leaders
 - Battlemind for Mid-Grade Leaders
 - Battlemind for Senior Leaders
 - Battlemind for Pre-Command
 - Modules for medical personnel
 - Battlemind Warfighter resiliency (Battlemind First Aid)

In addition, key teaching points for both post-traumatic stress disorder and mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) from the Battlemind Psychological Debriefing of the Combat Operational Stress Control Course have been incorporated into Battlemind modules. Among these is a new concussion/mTBI patient information trifold that is now being printed by the Proponency Office for Reintegration and Rehabilitation for distribution to the Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) theaters.

Q5. What are some recent achievements of the Battlemind Program?

A5. Researchers at WRAIR, working with the AMEDD Battlemind Transition Office, made critical strides in 2008. The Battlemind Office conducted a large-scale pre-deployment training effort in May and June 2008 of approximately 1,030 Soldiers, medics, and family members from the 25th Infantry Division and Hawaii National Guard. The training provided an opportunity to identify needed modifications to training modules.

The Battlemind Office launched a variety of behavioral health training programs that target all phases of a Warfighter’s deployment cycle and lifecycle. These released training programs include highly realistic videos designed to reach this generation’s young Warfighter.

Q6. How have Battlemind products benefited the U.S. Army’s personnel during OIF/OEF?

A6. The Battlemind Program was mandated in 2007 and is provided to service members and made available to their families. All Army service members are trained prior to deployment to mentally prepare them for the demands of a combat deployment. Warfighters also receive Battlemind post-deployment training to assist with the transition back home. Post-deployment Battlemind Training has been shown to reduce Warfighter reports of behavioral health symptoms 4 to 6 months after returning home and shown to decrease the stigma associated with behavioral health issues.

Q7. Does Battlemind have civilian applications?

A7. Battlemind Training can be adapted for use by organizations in which employees are confronted with extreme stressors as part of their occupations, such as police officers and firefighters. Federal and state agencies, including the U.S. State Department, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the National Sheriff’s Association, are now starting to incorporate Battlemind concepts.

Q8. How was Battlemind validated?

A8. Three group-randomized trials have assessed the efficacy of post-deployment Battlemind modules and found that Battlemind Training and Battlemind Psychological Debriefing reduces reports of mental health symptoms months later compared to training as usual. While effect sizes are small, these studies demonstrate the potential for single-session mental health interventions to improve the adjustment of Soldiers returning from combat. Research is now

focused on (1) enhancing post-deployment Battlemind efficacy (e.g., expressive writing, Advanced Battlemind), (2) testing mental health training in basic combat training, and (3) testing Battlemind psychological debriefing for Soldiers in theater. Finally, Battlemind is being integrated into military mental health training programs in other nations as well.

Q9. Where can I learn more about Battlemind?

A9. The U.S. Army has developed a web site about the Battlemind Program (<https://www.battlemind.army.mil/>) that includes brochures, briefings, videos, and links to family resources.