



Austrian Armed Forces TRE Research Project Outline

Models to overcome stress in the Austrian Armed Forces (AAF)

The psychosocial support in the Austrian Armed Forces is described similar to the "*Guidelines for military leaders about psychological support in modern military operations*" of the NATO document of 2007. As a preventive measure Officers and NCOs are trained in stress management. Relaxation techniques such as muscle relaxation according to Jacobson, autogenic training and Qigong are offered among other things. Furthermore, there are additional programs, such as the definition of criteria for the selection of personnel and the establishment of a 24-hour helpline services in 1995 for the immediate psychological support.

In preparation for international missions the military psychological specialists of the foreign assignment base carry out brief trainings in stress and stress management. Apart from other things, during the military training programs, relaxation and breathing techniques that should be applied to relevant incidents are introduced. A more comprehensive, practical training is currently not taking place.

Education in methods to overcome stress in the Austrian Armed Forces

The AAF offers many activities, ranging from prevention to treatment after incidents. But it is precisely in the area of primary prevention, the findings of **Health Development** (a project team that developed "*Health of the Heart*"), recognized that improvement can be achieved, by using relaxation techniques. **TRE** was taught in the research project "*Health of the Heart*" as a relaxation technique.

Proposed research

After the individual employees were trained in TRE a research project was developed in which the following questions should be answered:

- To what extent can TRE-trainings be implemented in the preparation for missions support coping with stress during or after military operations?
- To what extent is TRE an appropriate method in the preparation of a mission, to mitigate or even prevent the potential of traumatic experiences that are triggered by stress?
- How can the TRE exercise program be integrated into the mission preparation in the future?

Furthermore the potential lead-time for certified/identified TRE training elements or modules in course of immediate mission preparation, as well as during mission review, must be estimated. Also the usability and necessity of TRE for Austrian missions should be evaluated.