Building and Maintaining a Positive Climate. CAPL, July 2020.

The Importance of Command Climate. Countless stories have been told by Soldiers and leaders on the importance of command climate on unit readiness and operational success. Climate – the shared perceptions and attitudes within a unit that command teams have a direct responsibility to manage and build (AR 600-100, AR 600-20). It is imperative that Army leaders understand their unit’s command climate as it significantly influences critical outcomes:

- Readiness
- Performance
- Morale
- Motivation and engagement
- Mutual respect
- Discipline

Units with a positive command climate trust each other, look out for each other, respect each other, and work better together.

The New Tools. While command climate is often a common topic in formal Army educational courses, there has been no means for command teams in the field to obtain a comprehensive assessment of all factors of command climate and no consolidated guidance on what to do to build, sustain, or restore a positive climate. Now the Army has resources to address this gap. The Center for the Army Profession and Leadership (CAPL) has created a handbook and online interactive media instruction (IMI) - Building and Maintaining a Positive Climate - that can be used by all Army leaders to understand, assess, create and sustain a positive command climate and increase unit effectiveness. These resources leverage an action-oriented approach to show why climate matters and tools and strategies to implement positive climate changes within their units. Ten factors that commonly affect climate in organizations are presented to assist Army leaders with diagnosing areas of strength, and areas in need of improvement. In addition, leaders are provided with brainstorming strategies and real world examples of how to enhance their climate. The instruction and handbook can be used with the previously fielded Command Climate Navigator tool to develop a clear action plan command teams can follow to build on strengths and address weaknesses. The plan also serves as a means for communicating to the chain of command the unit’s climate status and efforts to sustain or improve. Being proactive in planning and building climate is a great way to show the formation that its leaders are serious about team cohesion and individual well-being.

How the Tools Help.

- Understand the comprehensive factors that influence their unique command climate and individual and unit-level outcomes.
- Integrate findings from various formal and informal assessments, including the standard command climate survey and the command team’s own observations.
- Prioritize efforts to build a positive command climate leveraging existing Army resources.
- Provides a list of options for the command team to create an action plan that drive future results.
- Develop a clear action plan for how climate will be sustained or enhanced.

Who the Tools are Designed For. The Instruction and Handbook on climate can be used across all military preparatory courses, pre-commissioning sources, all Army education courses, and can be used as self-study materials for individuals, and references for all operational units and
institutional organizations. The Instruction and Handbook provide important background and action guidance to use with the Army’s Command Climate Navigator tool.