Factor Rating Interpretation Guide
Morale

What is Morale?

Morale is the confidence, enthusiasm, collective pride, and willingness to persist in the activities of the group. It is also an individual's perception that members of their unit or organization are confident, enthusiastic, have collective pride, and are willing to persist in the activities of the unit or organization.[3,4,5]

The following items are used to assess *Morale* on the DEOCS using a five-point response scale from *Very Low* to *Very High*. Participants are asked to think about the past three months when responding, or to think about their time with their current unit/organization if they joined less than three months ago.

- Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale among the people you work with in your unit?
- Overall, how would you rate your own current level of morale?

Note: Survey questions may differ depending on whether the organization is a military unit, Military Service Academy, or civilian organization. Please see the sample survey for each population on the Assessment to Solutions web site (https://www.defenseculture.mil/Assessment-to-Solutions/A2S-Home/) for exact wording.

Why is it important?

Research has shown that higher *Morale* is linked with increased readiness and retention within military environments. For example, among members of the armed forces from the United Kingdom, higher *Morale* was related to better mental health (i.e., fewer symptoms of PTSD, less psychological distress), which in turn suggests improved military readiness. The study examined Service members deployed to high optempo locations at war and found that self-reported greater levels of unit cohesion, *Morale*, and perceived good leadership were associated with lower levels of common mental disorders, PTSD, and helped to promote military readiness and reduced sickness absence.[1] Similarly, a 2015 study of Canadian armed forces found *Morale* to be a predictor of trust in teammates, willingness to deploy, and lower turnover intentions. The study concluded that *Morale* is highly relevant and important to military organizations.[2]

Through an independent item reduction analysis, the Office of People Analytics (OPA) also found that an individual's morale was a significant predictor of sexual assault.
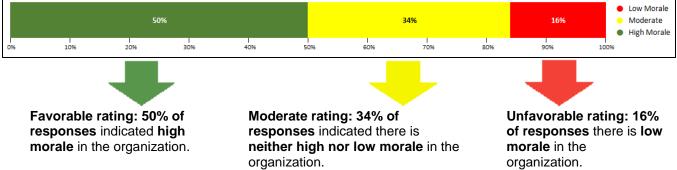
For more information on how to review your DEOCS results with these key outcomes in mind, please see the "Strategic Target Outcome Guide" in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.
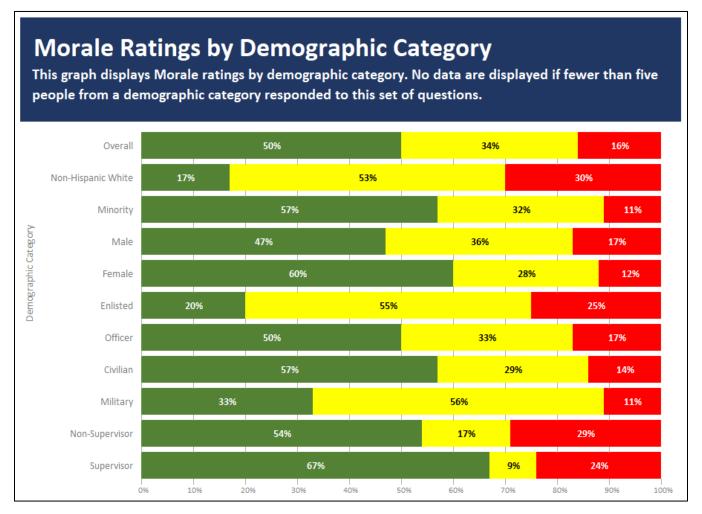
How do I read my factor ratings?

The DEOCS dashboard displays results for *Morale* in a stacked bar graph showing ratings for **Low Morale**, **Moderate**, and **High Morale**. Because *Morale* is a factor that is measured by multiple questions, you should interpret the results as "X% of responses" (not participants). An example is shown below:

Morale

Morale 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.

50%	34%	16%

Legend: ● Low Morale ● Moderate ● High Morale

Favorable rating: 50% of responses indicated **high morale** in the organization.

Moderate rating: 34% of responses indicated there is **neither high nor low morale** in the organization.

Unfavorable rating: 16% of responses there is **low morale** in the organization.

For the graph showing results by demographic categories, the percentages represent the percentage of responses from each demographic category that were favorable, moderate, or unfavorable.

Morale Ratings by Demographic Category

This graph displays Morale ratings by demographic category. No data are displayed if fewer than five people from a demographic category responded to this set of questions.

Demographic Category	High Morale	Moderate	Low Morale
Overall	50%	34%	16%
Non-Hispanic White	17%	53%	30%
Minority	57%	32%	11%
Male	47%	36%	17%
Female	60%	28%	12%
Enlisted	20%	55%	25%
Officer	50%	33%	17%
Civilian	57%	29%	14%
Military	33%	56%	11%
Non-Supervisor	54%	17%	29%
Supervisor	67%	9%	24%

The first bar will always show the overall results and will be the same percentages that are shown in the stacked bar graph. The next bars will represent various demographic categories for your organization. These results can help determine whether some groups of people in your organization have particularly high or low perceptions of climate factors. In addition, you may have different categories than in the example above. If your organization did not have any participants from a particular demographic category or had fewer than five participants

from a particular category, you would not see those categories in your graph. For more information on how the demographic groups are created, please see the "Data Overview" in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

In this example, the favorable ratings (marked in green) can be interpreted as:
- 17% of responses from non-Hispanic White participants indicated high morale in the organization, while 57% of responses from minority participants indicated high morale;
- 47% of responses from male participants indicated high morale in the organization, while 60% of responses from female participants indicated high morale;
- 20% of responses from enlisted participants indicated high morale in the organization, while 50% of responses from officers indicated high morale;
- 57% of responses from civilian participants indicated high morale in the organization, while 33% of responses from military participants indicated high morale;
- 54% of responses from non-supervisor participants indicated high morale in the organization, while 67% of responses from supervisory participants indicated high morale.

The moderate ratings (marked in yellow) can be interpreted as:
- 53% of responses from non-Hispanic White participants indicated neither high nor low morale in the organization, while 32% of responses from minority participants indicated neither high nor low morale;
- 36% of responses from male participants indicated neither high nor low morale in the organization, while 28% of responses from female participants indicated neither high nor low morale;
- 55% of responses from enlisted participants indicated neither high nor low morale in the organization, while 33% of responses from officers indicated neither high nor low morale;
- 29% of responses from civilian participants indicated neither high nor low morale in the organization, while 56% of responses from military participants indicated neither high nor low morale;
- 17% of responses from non-supervisor participants indicated neither high nor low morale in the organization, while 9% of responses from supervisory participants indicated neither high nor low morale.

The unfavorable ratings (marked in red) can be interpreted as:
- 30% of responses from non-Hispanic White participants indicated low morale in the organization, while 11% of responses from minority participants indicated low morale;
- 17% of responses from male participants indicated low morale in the organization, while 12% of responses from female participants indicated low morale;
- 25% of responses from enlisted participants indicated low morale in the organization, while 17% of responses from officers indicated low morale;
- 14% of responses from civilian participants indicated low morale in the organization, while 11% of responses from military participants indicated low morale;
- 29% of responses from non-supervisor participants indicated low morale in the organization, while 24% of responses from supervisory participants indicated low morale.

You may also see trends over time for your *Morale* favorable rating if there are previous surveys with the same unit identification code (UIC) and the same commander/leader.

When applicable, trends over time are available in the dashboard by clicking on this icon: . They also appear in the PDF reports as a table. Even if your report includes trends over time,

the results may not be comparable in certain circumstances. It is important to understand differences in roster size and roster composition at different time points as these items may impact comparability of trend results. Take a close look at the number of participants registered, surveys returned, and the response rate for any surveys for which trends are available to report; use caution when comparing trends over time if there are big differences in these numbers between surveys. Other things, such as deployments or changes in policy, may also make trends less comparable. For more information on factor rating trends, please see the "Data Overview" in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

Finally, you may see an alert ⚠ for your *Morale* ratings. This means that your unit's/organization's favorable rating for *Morale* is **very low** compared to the other favorable ratings for this factor from all other units/organizations that completed a DEOCS. When applicable, this alert icon appears in the dashboard inside the "Protective Factors – Favorable Ratings" heading; click on the icon to see if *Morale* is listed in the table. The alert icon may also appear in the *Morale* section of the PDF reports. To identify whether your *Morale* ratings receive an alert, cut-off scores were created by rank-ordering all favorable ratings for this factor. If your favorable rating for *Morale* is below the cut-off score, this icon will appear in your report. There are unique cut-off scores for each factor. Because of this, you may notice that some of the factors for which you have an alert have very different ratings. For more information on how these alerts are created, please see the "Data Overview" in the Quick Links menu of the DEOCS dashboard.

How are my unit's/organization's ratings created?

Morale ratings are created by combining responses to two questions from a five-point *Very High* to *Very Low* scale, as shown in the example below.

Morale Questions	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Total
Overall, how would you rate the current level of morale among the people you work with in your unit?	6% (5)	11% (9)	29% (24)	37% (31)	18% (15)	100% (84)
Overall, how would you rate your own current level of morale?	4% (3)	11% (9)	39% (31)	28% (22)	18% (14)	100% (79)
	Low Morale		**Moderate**	**High Morale**		Total responses **163**
	(5+9+3+9) / 163 = **16%**		(24+31) / 163 = **34%**	(31+15+22+14) / 163 = **50%**		

The table above displays the percentage of responses (and number of responses in parentheses) for each question across the five response options (*Very Low*, *Low*, *Moderate*, *High*, and *Very High*). For the first question, five participants selected *Very Low*; this represents 6% of participants that responded to this question (5 / 84 = .059 or 6%).

Note that percentages are calculated out of the total number of participants responding to that question and not the total number of participants taking the survey. Participants can skip questions, so you may notice that total responses to questions vary. In the above example, 84 people responded to the first question so all percentages in this row use 84 as

the denominator. Only 79 people responded to the second question, so all percentages in this row use 79 as the denominator. In addition, factor ratings may not always add to 100% due to rounding.

- The **unfavorable** rating, named **Low Morale**, is a combination of all responses of *Very Low* and *Low* from **both** questions in the *Morale* scale.
  - o For this example, five people selected very low to the first question, while nine selected low. In addition, three people selected very low to the second question and nine selected low. In total, 26 responses were either *Very Low* or *Low* to these two questions (5+9+3+9 = 26).
  - o To produce an overall score for **Low Morale** representing unfavorable reactions to these two questions, the total number of responses (26) is divided by the total number of people who responded to both *Morale* questions. 84 people responded to the first question, and 79 to the second, for a total of 163 responses to both questions. **This produces a Low Morale rating of 16% (26 / 163 = .1595).**

- To create the **Moderate** rating, the same process above is followed, except the score is created from only one response option. The *Moderate* responses are added from both questions.
  - o For this example, there are 55 *Moderate* responses across both questions (24+31 = 55). This total is divided by the total number of responses to all of the questions (55 / 163 = .3374). **This rounds to a Moderate rating of 34%.**

- To create the **favorable** rating, named **High Morale**, the *Very High* and *High* responses are combined.
  - o For this example, that is 31+15+22+14 = 82 total responses of either *Very High* or *High*. This total is divided by the total number of responses to all of the questions (82 / 163 = .5031). **This rounds to a High Morale rating of 50%.**

How do I know if my factor ratings are good or bad?

The DEOCS team is working on a data-driven approach that will help you understand what a rating means for an organization's likelihood of positive or negative outcomes. In the meantime, we recommend using the following strategies to help put your *Morale* ratings into context and understand whether actions should be taken to address low favorable ratings:

1. If applicable, review the information in the alert icon to see if your *Morale* ratings are called out. This icon would appear in the dashboard and in the PDF reports if your unit's/organization's favorable rating for *Morale* is very low compared to all other units/organizations that completed a DEOCS. You should consider taking action to raise this rating.

2. Look at the Item Summary table on the *Morale* details page to understand which questions may be driving your favorable rating. This factor is created from two questions, so compare the percentage of participants who selected *Very High* or *High* to each question. If there is one question that has a lower percentage of participants who selected *Very High* or *High*, this question is the one driving a lower favorable rating and could help you pinpoint more specific actions to increase your favorable rating for *Morale*.

3. Examine the bar graph showing the overall favorable rating for *Morale* and the favorable ratings by various demographic groups. Look at each group's rating in relation to the overall unit/organization rating. If any groups have particularly low favorable ratings for *Morale*, this could help you plan actions to increase your favorable rating within areas of your organization.

4. If applicable, review your *Morale* favorable rating trends over time. You can view these trends by clicking on this icon ⬛ in the dashboard; they also appear as a table in the PDF reports. Take note if your ratings are going down over time. You may need to take action to reverse this trend.

Factor Improvement Tools for Morale

The following resources may be useful as you make plans or take action to improve your *Morale* ratings. Each resource listing contains a description, a link, and the relevant audience. Some resources may be more appropriate for the commander/leader, unit/organization personnel, survey administrators, or the Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW); the relevant audience advises which group may benefit from use of the recommended resource.

- **Got Morale?** Provides tips for leaders on boosting morale.
  https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2017/November/Got-Morale/
  Audience: Commander/Leader, unit personnel, survey admin, IPPW

Scientific Research References on Morale

1. Jones, N., Seddon, R., Fear, N. T., McAllister, P., Wessely, S., & Greenberg, N. (2012). Leadership, Cohesion, Morale, and the Mental Health of UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan. Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 75(1), 49–59. https://doi.org/10.1521/psyc.2012.75.1.49

2. Ivey, G. W., Blanc, J.-R. S., & Mantler, J. (2015). An assessment of the overlap between morale and work engagement in a nonoperational military sample. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 20(3), 338–347. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038559

3. Banyard, V. (2008). Measurement and correlates of prosocial bystander behavior: The case of interpersonal violence. Violence and Victims, 23(1), 83–97.

4. Manning, F. J. (1994). Morale and cohesion in military psychiatry. Textbook of military medicine, part I: Military psychiatry: Preparing in peace for war (pp. 2 – 19). U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Surgeon General