

Developing, Maintaining, and Restoring Team Cohesion

Steve W. J. Kozlowski, Principal Investigator

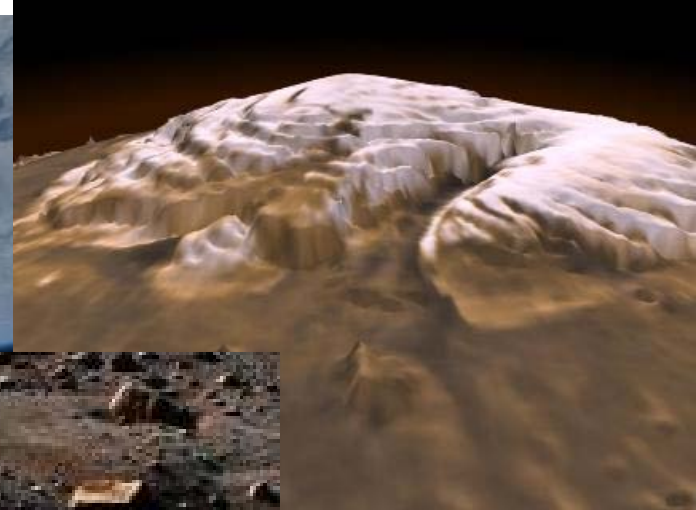
Richard P. DeShon, Neal Schmitt, and Subir Biswas, Co-Investigators

Leaetta Hough, Consultant; James Locke, Collaborator

Grant selected for funding (\$1,199,857) contingent on protocol modifications and NASA funding

NASA is planning long duration human missions to the Moon and Mars...maintaining team cohesion and effectiveness is critical

[Photos courtesy of NASA]





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Team cohesion is an essential ingredient for the coordinated synchronicity that characterizes effective teams, particularly those “high reliability” action teams that perform critical tasks under the stress of extreme environments. Although there is considerable research on team cohesion and team effectiveness, there is little research that examines cohesion formation, maintenance, or restoration after fracture.

This ground-based research is designed to accomplish three goals:

(1) develop and evaluate training interventions to enhance the development of team cohesion and promote its restoration; (2) create psychological and physiological measurement systems that monitor team cohesion and can trigger dynamic interventions to maintain it and restore it; and (3) provide recommendations for training on (a) critical knowledge and skills (i.e., teamwork competencies, conflict management, trust repair) and (b) monitoring/regulating interventions for cohesion maintenance and restoration.

The research necessitates multilevel theory and methods to model cohesion emergence (individual level to the team level) over time, complex task simulations, and access to long duration teams operating in extreme environments. Project goals will be accomplished using a multidisciplinary team and a combination of research strategies:

(1) Laboratory research using a complex task simulation will be used to (a) develop and evaluate training interventions to enhance cohesion formation and repair, and (b) develop measurement techniques to monitor psychological states supporting team cohesion and, (c) prototype sensor-based physiological monitoring systems to assess team cohesion threats and to prompt regulatory processes to restore it. (3) Promising training interventions and monitoring/regulation techniques will be examined in the field with long duration teams operating in extreme environments to evaluate proof of concept.

The research is designed to resolve IRP Gap BHP 2.3.1 by identifying training content, design, and delivery to build and maintain team cohesion and BHP 2.2.1 developing a monitoring system designed to support, regulate, and repair team cohesion and maintain performance.