



Resiliency at work

Reflection guide

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Overview

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Explore factors that contribute to resilience
- Recognize how attitudes, actions, and choices contribute to resilience
- Implement strategies for thriving under pressure, including in the face of organizational change

Key takeaways



Main points:



Learning insights:



What areas do I need to improve on?



My action plan:

Resilience – what is it and why is it important?

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style”

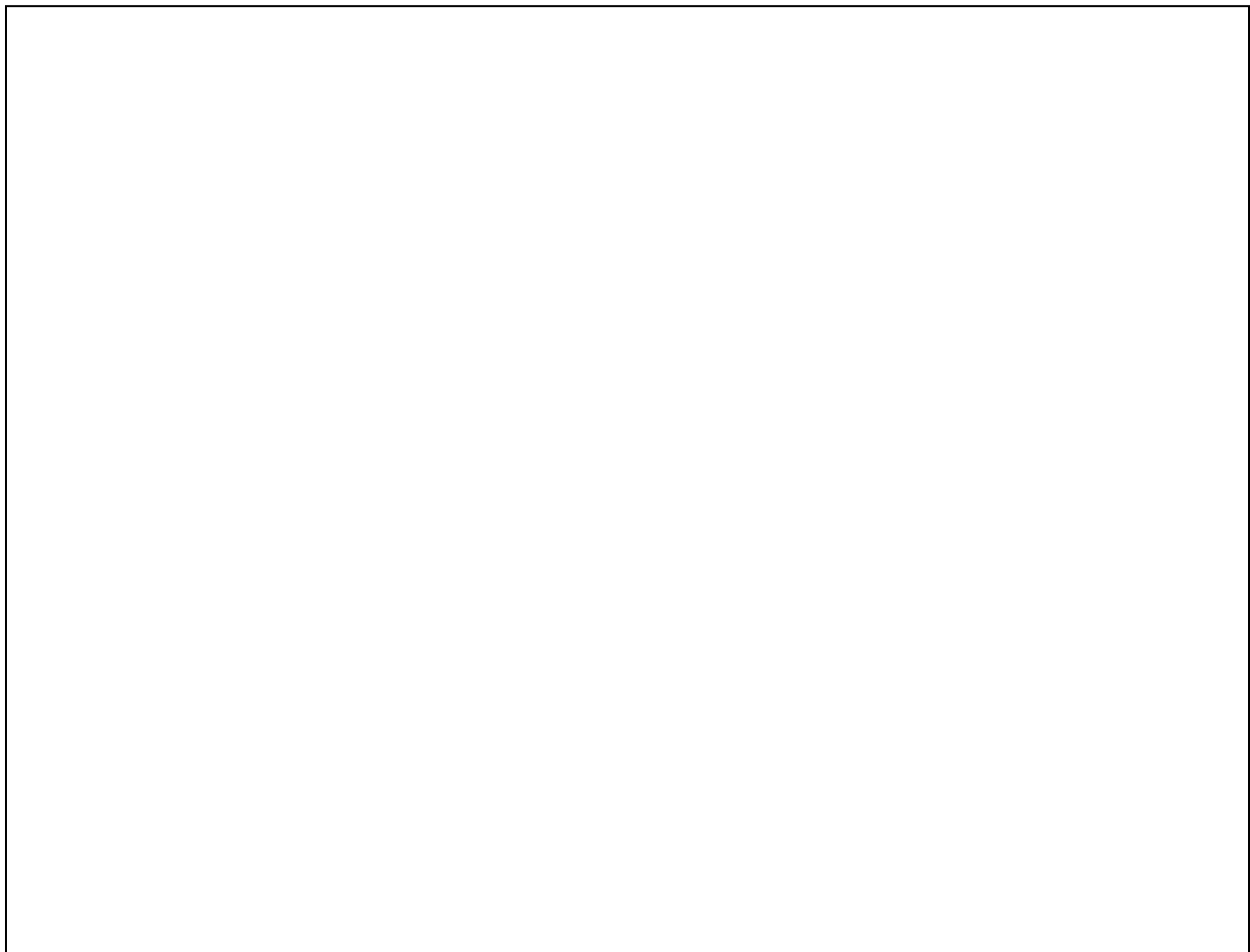
Maya Angelou

The word resilience is rooted in the Latin word “resilio” – meaning “to jump back”. While numerous definitions exist, in this workshop we will define resilience as...

“The positive capacity of people to withstand stress and to cope with adversity.”

Reveich and Shatté, 2007

WIIFM – What’s in it for me?



Thought starter

1. What does the word resilience mean to you? What words/phrases would you use to describe “resilience/resiliency”?

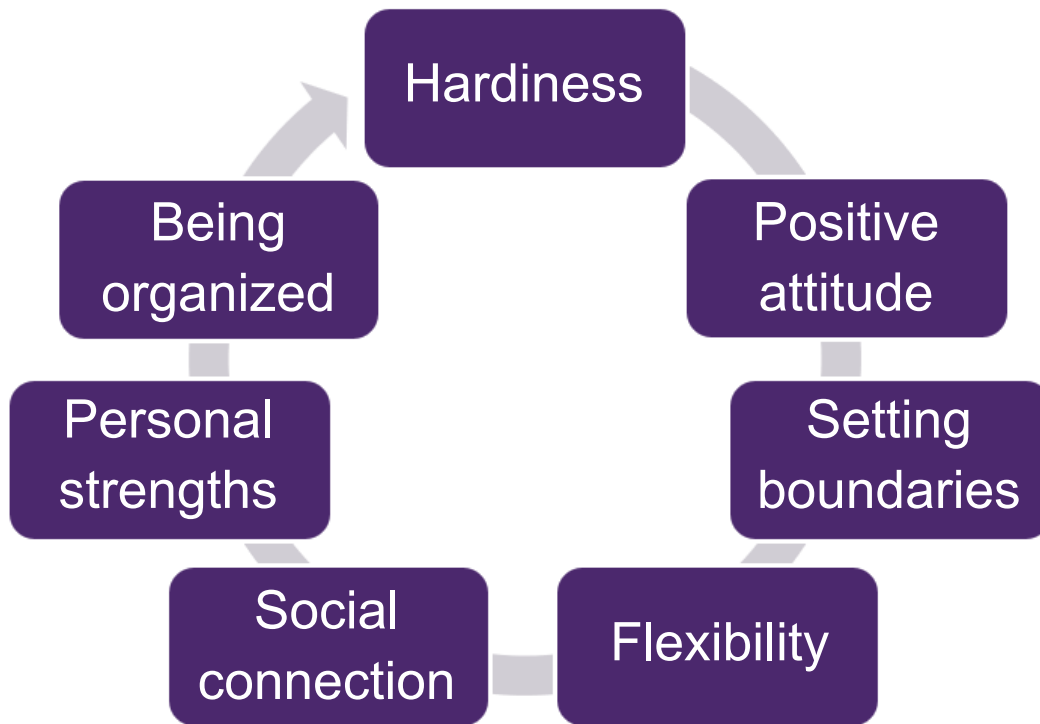
2. Why is it important to be resilient at work?

3. Why is it important to be resilient in your personal life?

Resiliency resources

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”

-Charles Darwin



Change is inevitable and often we go through a variety of emotions when things around us change. Denial and resistance are frequently negative reactions to change.

Resilience makes it possible for us to be more prepared for change and equipped with resources and skills that will help us do more than just survive – we will be primed to thrive.

Resiliency is made up of several factors – each one playing a role in building us up to handle stress; and better prepare us for future adversity. These factors, or resources, determine how quickly and effectively we can bounce back. Some of these factors are physiological, and others may be psychosocial. We may be strong and confident with using some of these resources, and not as effective at using others. The goal is to determine which factors we use often, and which ones we could be accessing to build higher levels of personal resiliency.

The ABCs of resilience – Your explanatory style

Being able to survive, and thrive, under pressure has a lot to do with your perspective – or the way you see “it”. How you perceive and interpret your life events can be explained by the ABCs of Resilience – a concept published in the book *Learned Optimism*.

The model suggests that:

- When we encounter adversity (or a less than ideal situation).
- Our thoughts or beliefs, influence the choices (positive or negative) we make for how we will act (or re-act).
- These choices then lead to consequences (good or bad).

Another way to think of this is: What I THINK impacts what I DO; and what I do impacts the results I GET. The stories we make up or the messages we send ourselves in the B, or beliefs, segment of this model is called our explanatory style.

Adversity: Lemons.

Negative belief: I can't do anything with these- I hate lemons and lemonade. I want orange juice.

Negative consequence: I'm in a bad mood all day, people don't want to interact with me, I have to eat lunch alone.

Adversity: Lemons.

Positive belief: I can make lemonade and I can make lemon cake. I don't like either of these things, but my sister does.

Positive consequence: My sister would enjoy a refreshing beverage to drink and delicious cake to eat. I am happy to do this for her.

Examining your explanatory style

Phase 1: Think of a past or current challenge (negative situation). Consider the following questions and record your answers.

- a) What is the challenge? Why is it an adversity? Why is it stressing you out?
- b) What are your beliefs in response to this challenge? What do you think about it? How do you feel?
- c) What have been the consequences resulting from your beliefs? What actions have you taken (or not taken)? What have you said (or not said)? What impact has this had on you?

Adversity: _____

Negative belief: _____

Negative consequence: _____

Phase 2: Revisit your current challenge/negative situation. Re-frame and re-write your situation using a positive explanatory style. Consider the following questions and record your answers.

- a) Your adversity remains unchanged. The circumstances of the situation are still the same.
- b) What alternative beliefs could you consider? How can you view these circumstances in a more productive way? What other possibilities exist? This is where you begin to re-frame and re-write your story.
- c) What will be the consequences of re-framing and re-writing your beliefs? What alternative outcomes will result from exploring more productive ways of viewing your circumstances? What new actions will you take? What will you say? What impact will these actions have on you?

Adversity: _____

Positive belief: _____

Positive consequence: _____

“If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude”
-Maya Angelou

Additional resources

10 tips for thriving in the 21st century

1. **Build a supportive network.** Do you have a Board of Advisors? After our basic physiological (air, water, etc.) and safety needs (safe neighborhood, job security etc.) are met, we need to feel a sense of belonging to a larger social group and feel connected to our family and friends. Identify who you can rely on for advice and encouragement during difficult times.
2. **Focus on your strengths.** What strengths contribute to your success? People who are resilient attribute their accomplishments to being able to effectively use their personal resources and strengths.
3. **Know your limits.** How much is too much? Know when you've reached your tipping point. If you continue beyond this mark, you run the risk of becoming ill and stressed.
4. **Better manage the things that frustrate you.** What other, more productive responses, could you choose in the moment? Be sure to focus on the ABC's of resilience. Check what your beliefs are telling you. Look for opportunities to re-frame and re-write your perspective.
5. **Be mindful of your effect on others.** How do others respond to you? Ask yourself whether the things you say or do will motivate others to be willing to listen and respond positively to you.
6. **Practice understanding while listening.** Do you listen to understand, or do you listen to respond? Focus on "active" or "effective" listening. Be sensitive to what is being said, and what is not being said. A lot of the "real" message can be conveyed in the speaker's body language and voice tone.
7. **Get out of the endless pursuit for more.** Do you set realistic goals for yourself, or are you striving to achieve something that is well out of your reach at the moment? As you set and achieve reasonable goals, you will become more confident – take things in stride, you can't achieve every goal overnight.
8. **Evaluate and adjust priorities.** Are your scales tipped? Be sure to maintain a healthy balance between work, home, health, and fun.
9. **Find the brighter side of life.** What makes you laugh? When are you happiest? Developing a sense of humor and knowing what makes you smile can help lift you up when you're feeling down. Be sure to view mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow.
10. **Improve your physical health.** What do you do to take care of you? Stay physically fit, eat a nutritious diet and set aside time for enjoyable activities.

Suggested reading list

1. The little book of stress relief. Dr. David Posen.
2. Thriving in the workplace all-in-one for dummies. For Dummies Series.
3. The success principles: How to get from where you are to where you want to be. Jack Canfield and Janet Switzer.
4. Getting things done: The art of stress-free productivity. David Allen.
5. The 7 habits of highly effective people. Stephen R. Covey.