

Building Resiliency in Uncertain Times

What Does it Mean to Be Resilient?

- Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors.
- It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.
- Before we head into our resiliency work for today...

Linking Morale to Resiliency

- Observation: When morale drops, resiliency at work can plummet
 - Competitions/Rivalry
 - Increased grievances
 - Harassment complaints
- People become reactive and anxious
- Illogical thought patterns and communication break-downs
- Slow erosion of professional ideals and productive/quality work
- Catastrophic thinking, dismissing the positive, generalizations, etc.

Causes Of Low Employee Morale

Concerns for Favouritism

- Share your time equally
- Feedback system that promotes equality
- Promote collaboration between departments/teams
 - Create a social group
 - Create an interdepartmental task group
 - Be a part of this group
 - Be humble
- Train all teams and departments simultaneously

Lack Of Growth/Opportunities

- Employees can become bored and demotivated.
- The research shows that employees need growth to stay engaged, and if they don't get it, they'll start to become disengaged.

Lack Of Clarity

- When employees don't fully know what's expected of them, or those expectations are misaligned, that leads to unnecessary stress and employees will lose morale.
- This is why it's important to set clear goals with each member of your team and use monthly one-on-ones as a way to check in to see if there are any clarity issues.

Change In Leadership

- Any type of change is hard to handle.
- If there was a recent shakeup at the senior leadership level, that can easily lower morale as that confidence is shaken, the culture will likely change, and morale can take a hit.
- Change management is one of the hardest things an organization will have to go through, so it's important to keep a close eye on morale throughout any major change.

Leadership Issues

- More often than not, leadership issues are one of the biggest reasons for low morale.
 - Incohesiveness
 - Lack of transparency
 - Misalignment
- Leaders need to understand how their behavior is affecting the team.
 - Good leaders lead by example
 - Evaluate your team's culture
- It's tough for front-line managers that are situated between their team and the senior leaders, but low morale can have such a dramatic effect on your team that it's worth bringing up to senior leadership.

Uncertain Funding Futures

- Threats of impending job loss leave employees feeling vulnerable, anxious and reactive.
- Managers need to be mindful of what feelings of uncertainty create for employees and proactively communicate what is known and what is being done to prevent job loss.
 - Share what can be shared
 - Admit when you don't know
 - Discuss interim plans and solutions

Major Systemic Changes

- Staff can feel like their “worlds have been rocked” by major changes
- Change is frightening for many
- Change management is crucial
- Listen to the ideas and advice of your employees.
- Front line and direct client facing employees can provide substantial input into areas for improvement if granted the opportunity to effectively problem solve with their managers.

Hostile Employees or Cultures

- Competition for positions or jobs in an economy of scarce resources can lead to the “narcissism effect”
 - Lies
 - Deceit
 - Sabotage
 - Theft
 - Allegations
 - “Cut throat” mentality

Building Morale

“A high-morale environment is one built on trust, respect, autonomy, and recognition.”

No Small Task

- Hard work
- Takes time and energy
- Takes personal commitment
- Requires creativity
- Training may be required
- Be open to suggestions and feedback
- Q-TIP

What can you do?

- Talk about morale issues openly with staff
- Seek their input
- Seek solutions
- Reference past successes
- Talk openly about what works and what doesn't
- Seek professional support for severe team dysfunctions

Give Them a Reason to Believe

- Your employees are part of something bigger than themselves, but do they know it?
 - Positive feedback is crucial
- Employees need to understand and share in the vision of what you are doing as an organization.
- Sharing in this vision will motivate and inspire your team which comes back full circle in effectively facilitating client support.

Show You Care

- Recognize important events.
- Send gifts for new babies and weddings.
- Be involved in employees' lives to let them feel loved and valued not only as employees, but also as family members and as human beings.
- Sit with them at lunches and breaks to share 'stuff'
- Invite them to meetings off site
 - Supervisions
 - Lunches
 - Ice cream socials
 - Share 'good news' stories

Recognize The Good

- When someone is doing something awesome, tell them.
- Recognize the individuals on your team who receive good feedback from their clients.
- It's important for employees to feel their efforts are being recognized, and the recognition further perpetuates their desire to go above and beyond for their clients.
 - Share in meetings
 - Ask for good news stories in meetings
 - Share what "felt awesome" or inspirational

Learn the value of “fringe” benefits

- Aside from their regular benefits, get creative!
- Spa Packages
- Massage packages
- Gift cards for dinners and movies
- Online fitness trainers
- Surprise gift baskets

Encouraging Involvement

- Select employees who regularly demonstrate initiative and appoint them as leaders of a task group.
- Provide stimulating and advanced training opportunities.
- Permit training 'outside of the box' to encourage dynamic skill development.

Recognize Personal Milestones and Losses

- Individuals experience higher morale when employers appreciate them as people first and employees second.
- You can still recognize personal milestones and losses while respecting privacy -- even a simple note would do.

Come Together as a Team

- Start with agreeing on the issue at hand
- Creative brainstorming
- Define potential short-term and long term solutions
- Engage in training together
- Create something!

Bring on the Fun!

- Family events and picnics
- BBQ's
- Potluck lunches
- Healthy competitions
- Talent Shows
- Yoga groups
- Walking/running groups
- Fitness training

How to Deal with Workplace Rivalry

- Reward hard work and quality work equally
- Share successes
- Reinforce learning from others and accepting new ideas
- Promote teamwork and propose ways for teamwork
- Encourage recognition of others work
- Work toward common goals
- Encourage relationship building and appreciation of differing viewpoints as options versus opposition

Strategies For Building Resilience

Developing resilience is a personal journey.

The Road to Resiliency

- Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience.
- Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress.
- Emotional pain and sadness are common in people who have suffered major adversity or trauma in their lives.
- In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress.
- Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have ~ It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

Factors That Contribute to Resiliency

- Primary factor in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships within and outside the family.
- Relationships that create love and trust, provide role models and offer encouragement and reassurance help bolster a person's resilience.
- The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out.
- A positive view of ones self and confidence in your strengths and abilities.
- Skills in communication and problem-solving.
- The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses.

Make Connections

- Good relationships with close family members, friends or others are important.
- Accepting help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you strengthens resilience

Avoid Seeing Crises As Insurmountable Problems

- You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events.
- Try looking beyond the present to how future circumstances may be a little better.
- Note any subtle ways in which you might already feel somewhat better as you deal with difficult situations.

Accept That Change is a Part of Living

- Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations.
- Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Move Toward Your Goals

- Develop some realistic goals.
- Do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals.
- Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"

Take Decisive Actions

- Act on adverse situations as much as you can.
- Take decisive actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Look For Opportunities for Self-Discovery

- People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss.
- Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

Nurture a Positive View of Yourself

- Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience.
- Engage in self-esteem boosting activities and exercises
- Clarify goals and personal/professional values

Keep Things in Perspective

- Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.
- Avoid blowing the event out of proportion.

Maintain a Hopeful Outlook

- An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life.
- Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.

Take Care of Yourself

- Pay attention to your own needs and feelings.
- Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.
- Exercise regularly.
- Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Allow Yourself to Feel Your Emotions

- Vent pent up emotions
 - Close family member, friend, therapist
- Restructure these emotions into more productive points of action
- Get off the “triangle”

Have Compassion for Yourself

- Practice self-forgiveness
 - Today is the oldest you have ever been
- Recognize you are perfectly imperfect
- Acknowledge and learn from your mistakes
- Admit your limits and seek professional advancement
- Make amends for mistakes and wrong doings

Take Action

- SMART goals
- Defined steps
- Start small
- Start now

Remember You're Not Alone in Your Experience

- It can be helpful to recognize the universality of our human emotions, remembering that others also feel vulnerable and overwhelmed from time-to-time.
- Talk with others in the same position
 - Keep conversations productive
 - Solution focused and goal oriented

The Power of Self-talk

- Create a mantra
- Come up with a slogan or a brief statement of your intentions, so that you can come back to this when needed
- “Expect the unexpected”
- “This too shall pass”
- “I got this... I will survive”

Take Care of Your Mental Health

- Uncertainty feeds our fears.
 - Your brain likes being in control.
 - The hunger for certainty is one of the brain's five functions.
 - Uncertainty generates a strong alert response in our limbic system resulting in excessive worry and speculations
- Re-write your narrative
- Seek professional supports

Managing Team Anxiety

- Model and encourage well-being practices
 - Offer personal development tools, like mindfulness and resilience training; explicitly encouraging people to take time for exercise or other renewal activities, such as walking meetings
- Encourage staff to allow time to disconnect outside of work
- Train the brain to deal with chaos
 - Mindfulness exercises
- Emphasize “monotasking” for better focus
- Exercise empathy and compassion

Thank you!

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