Building Resilience for Leaders and Organizations

Talk by Graham Lowe, Ph.D.

CIRPD Effective Work Webinar
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My focus today

- What is resilience?
- Links to well-being (psychological health)
- Links to organizational performance
- How to build resilience
Resilience
Defining resilience

- Thriving despite adversity
- Bouncing ‘forward’
- Managing stress
- Adapting to change
- Finding new strength

Individuals and organizations can learn to be resilient
Flourishing

- Resilience training for 1.1 million US soldiers
- Goal = reduced PTSD by improving psychological “fitness”
- Strengths-based, positive psychology approach
- Global Assessment Tool provides data and common vocabulary
- Results = declining PTSD symptoms and health care costs

Resilience training in workplaces

Meta-analysis of 37 studies of resilience-building program effectiveness:

• Modest positive effects that diminished over time
• Similar to other primary prevention techniques
• Builds individual protective capabilities and resources
• Small individual effects can yield organizational benefits

Source: Vanhove et al., Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, June 2016
Crisis responses in organizations

- Crisis Management
- Crisis Preparedness
- Resilient Organization
A resilient organization…

- Communicates
- Collaborates
- Cooperates
- Improvises
- Supports
Resilient leaders are successful

Resilient leaders can...

- manage the complex demands of their role
- effectively respond to pressures
- learn from failure
- develop renewed strengths
- show others how to thrive despite challenges
- support employee wellbeing and performance
- foster resilience among their employees
Resilience is a personal capability

- Resilience is part of a leader’s *Psychological Capital* (PsyCap)
  - PsyCap also includes the capability to be:
    - Confident
    - Optimistic
    - Hopeful
- PsyCap helps leaders deal with change and complexity
- These capabilities can be learned
Measuring PsyCap

- Look on the bright side of things in my job
- Optimistic about the future regarding my job
- Manage difficulties at work
- Take stressful things at work in stride
- Feel successful at work
- Can think of ways to get out of a jam at work
- Feel confident contributing to strategy discussions
- Feel confident presenting to a group of colleagues

Based on: Luthans, Avolio and Avery, Psychological Capital Questionnaire-12: http://www.mindgarden.com/products/pcq.htm
Transformational leadership

• Transformational leadership is positively related to Psychological Capital
• Transformational leaders contribute to their organization’s success by:
  • Helping colleagues to see challenges in new ways
  • Motivating others to excel
  • Being admired and trusted
  • Stimulating creativity
  • Acting as a coach or mentor
Measuring transformational leadership

• Articulate a compelling vision of the future
• Express confidence that goals will be achieved
• Seek differing perspectives when solving problems
• Get others to look at problems from different angles
• Go beyond self-interest for the good of the group
• Act in ways that builds others’ respect for me
• Consider moral and ethical consequences of decisions
• Demonstrate a strong sense of purpose
• Help others to develop their strengths
• Spend time teaching and coaching

Based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, [http://www.mindgarden.com/products/mlqr.htm#mlq3605x](http://www.mindgarden.com/products/mlqr.htm#mlq3605x)
Mental Health and the Workplace
Changing perceptions of risk
Costs of inaction...

Treating mental health could boost Canadian economy by $48B a year

“The Canadian economy loses $47.6 billion each year due to poor productivity from employees with depression ($32.3 billion) and anxiety ($17.3 billion), according to a new report by the Conference Board of Canada’s Canadian Alliance for Sustainable Health Care.”

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Psychologically healthy & safe workplaces…

• Foster psychological well-being while enhancing organizational performance
• Promote respectful relationships between staff, customers, the public
• Support staff experiencing psychological difficulties

Source: Dan Bilsker and Merv Gilbert, *Psychological Health & Safety: Action Guide for Employers*
Happy employees are good for business

Evolution of healthy workplaces

- Individual risk factors
- Comprehensive workplace health promotion
- Healthy organizations
Healthy organization building blocks

- Inspired employees
- Vibrant workplaces
- Inclusive leadership
- Positive culture

Source: G. Lowe, *Creating Healthy Organizations*
Vibrant workplace ingredients promote well-being

1. Respect and fairness
2. 2-way communication
3. Autonomy and input
4. Adequate resources
5. Supportive supervisors
6. Engaging work
7. Recognition and rewards
8. Safe and healthy

Source: G. Lowe, *Creating Healthy Organizations*
Strengthen culture by living the values

This apple will remind us of our core values: respect, customer service, and teamwork.

The apple's core is the part you throw away.
A culture of health

Successful wellness programs establish a “culture of health,” defined as:

“…one in which individuals and their organizations are able to make healthy life choices within a larger social environment that values, provides, and promotes options that are capable of producing health and well-being for everyone…” (Goetzel et al., JOEM, 2014: 930)
Low-cost actions

1. Engage employees, developing a shared vision of a healthy and safe workplace.

2. Live the corporate values and model healthy behaviours.

3. Design change to be healthy.

4. Expand occupational health and safety management systems to promote psychological health and safety.

5. Collaborate with HR and OHS to develop integrated approaches to employee well-being.

6. Analyze your OHS and HR metrics to demonstrate connections between health, safety and performance.

7. Strengthen your organization’s culture as the foundation for a healthy, safe and high-performing workplace.
Achieving sustainable success

You can’t become a healthy organization by launching another program. **It must become how you operate.**
Questions & Comments
CREATING
Healthy Organizations
How vibrant workplaces inspire employees to achieve sustainable success
GRAHAM LOWE

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www.creatinghealthyorganizations.ca

www.redesigningwork.ca

The Graham Lowe Group | www.grahamlowe.ca | glowe@grahamlowe.ca