

Thriving Under Pressure – Resiliency at Work
Participant's Guide



Business. Needs. People.

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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 humour, 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.”

A piggy-bank can be used as a metaphor for what it means to be resilient. It is critical that we make deposits into our “resiliency bank”. We accomplish this when we do things like:

- Participate in activities we think are fun and enjoyable;
- Spend quality time with friends and family;
- Occasionally unplug from the day-to-day hustle and bustle of life.



When we have enough credits accumulated in our resiliency bank accounts, we don’t go into “overdraft” or have to declare “bankruptcy” when we are faced with a stressful event.

Resilience is not a quality that you either do or do not possess; there are varying degrees of how well a person is able to handle stress. The good news is everyone can learn how to become more resilient.

WIIFM – What’s In It for Me?

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 a number of 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 are able to bounce back. Some of these factors are physiological, and others may be psycho-social. 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.

Examining Your Explanatory Style

Instructions:

Phase 1

1. Think of a past or current challenge (negative situation). Consider the following questions and record your answers in left-hand column in the table below.
 - 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?

Phase 2

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 in the right-hand column in the table below.
 - 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		
Beliefs		
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 Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century

<p>1. Build a supportive network</p>	<p>Do you have a Board of Advisors? After our basic physiological (air, water, etc.) and safety needs (safe neighbourhood, 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.</p>
<p>2. Focus on your strengths</p>	<p>What strengths contribute to your success? People who are resilient attribute their accomplishments to being able to effectively use their personal resources and strengths.</p>
<p>3. Know your limits</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>4. Better manage the things that frustrate you</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>5. Be mindful of your effect on others</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>6. Practice understanding while listening</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>7. Get out of the endless pursuit for more</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>8. Evaluate and adjust priorities</p>	<p>Are your scales tipped? Be sure to maintain a healthy balance between work, home, health, and fun.</p>
<p>9. Find the brighter side of life</p>	<p>What makes you laugh? When are you happiest? Developing a sense of humour 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.</p>
<p>10. Improve your physical health</p>	<p>What do you do to take care of you? Stay physically fit, eat a nutritious diet and set aside time for enjoyable activities.</p>

Additional Resources – Suggested Reading List

The Little Book of Stress Relief

Dr. David Posen

Thriving in the Workplace All-in-One for Dummies

For Dummies Series

The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be

Jack Canfield and Janet Switzer

Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity

David Allen

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Stephen R. Covey