



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR RESILIENCY



Understanding Resiliency

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According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many workers view their jobs as a main source of stress, and almost 25% of them view it as their #1 source of stress.

Now more than ever, workers are facing the daily challenges of navigating the “new normal,” while also dealing with heavy emotional baggage — worries about their company, their role within the organization, and the economy as a whole. If that CDC survey was taken today, who knows how much that percentage would grow?

But even in the midst of a crisis, there is almost always a silver lining. We know from both anecdotes and stress research that adversity can have positive effects. Adversity can prompt individuals, organizations, and communities to tap new resources, deploy existing resources in creative ways, and engage and reinforce social support systems. And a successful response to adversity can be empowering, giving us more confidence to deal with future challenges.

So, how do different people respond to adversity? One place where a wide variety of reactions and adaptations is on display is on social media. On any given day, you can log onto Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and see a mix of individuals engaging in catastrophic thinking, followed by those who seem carefree, often in response to the same situation.

Seeing this, many questions come to mind. What characteristics lead individuals to react in one way over the other? How do we support people who are really struggling? What might a healthy balance look like? And how, exactly, do we approach adversity with the seriousness it deserves, while still injecting that much-needed optimism?

When faced with these questions, our thoughts immediately went to the topic of resilience.

Resilience centers around two main concepts — facing adversity and adapting effectively. A wealth of research suggests that workers who are more resilient report higher levels of well-being, hope, satisfaction, organizational commitment, and even job performance.



On an average day, resilience is a good quality to have, but researchers emphasize that *in times of crisis, resilience is critical*. And while many do possess these traits naturally, it's important to know that individuals can *learn* to be more resilient, with leaders guiding them. Organizations can even implement systems to optimize the process.

For example, research highlights the benefits of fostering:

- Social support
- Trust and cooperation
- Optimism, positivity, and laughter

Leaders and organizations can promote these within their work teams — even when working remotely. Practices that promote mindfulness, gratitude, self-compassion, and increased emotional intelligence are all beneficial to increasing resiliency.

Building on these simple but useful ideas can help leaders create a collaborative climate and deliver a hopeful message, even when times are tough.

Does implementing these practices solve the problem? Not entirely. While enacting these ideas will likely help, adapting to adversity is very much a cognitive process, and it's worth recognizing that access to resources and social settings *do* impact a person's resiliency.

For some, support and inspiration may not be enough. Those most in need may require additional, more direct help to effectively adjust. Individuals who demonstrate resilience tend to realistically appraise adverse situations, calmly accept their circumstances, improvise, and still find meaning amidst all the chaos. To help facilitate this process, certain behaviors, skills, and attitudes are essential, including:

- Cognitive Reappraisal
- Emotion Regulation
- Active Coping
- Self-Efficacy



Making a Bottom-Line Case

For those in need, specialized programs aimed toward cultivating resilience may be warranted. Such programs have become more popular as of late, as employers begin to understand and appreciate the benefits not only at the individual level, but the organizational level as well.

For instance, one study suggests that organizations stand to save approximately \$6,000 per employee by investing in a wide-scale resilience program. Another estimate suggests that for every \$1 spent on a mentally healthy workforce program (which includes resilience-building components), organizations can realize a return of \$2.30 — primarily as a function of increased productivity and decreased healthcare costs.

Moreover, workers generally view resilience programs in a positive light. Based on a national survey, 76% of employees perceive them to be valuable. In addition, when such programs are offered, they tend to improve organizational perceptions, as employees view their company as being more committed to mental health and well-being.

Adopting Resiliency Practices

So, what's the first step to building organizational resiliency? A needs assessment is a good place to start. In the case of resilience-building programs, this step cannot be overstated. Strong evidence indicates that the effectiveness of such programs meaningfully improves when participants are those who are truly in need. Studies have even found that by doing this, the positive effects of the program became stronger (rather than weaker) over time.

To help identify which workers may need the most support, our team at Psychological Associates can leverage indicators such as personality characteristics, affective predispositions, and emotional states. In addition to improving program effectiveness, a sound needs assessment reduces the chances that someone in need will be overlooked. And because individuals may respond to adversity in different ways and across different timespans, clear behavioral indications might not be immediately apparent. Individuals who seem well adjusted now may struggle later. An evidence-based needs assessment can help ensure they receive support, too.

So, how exactly can Psychological Associates help? In our more than 60 year history, we'd like to think that we've been quite resilient ourselves. Our firm has faced many challenges, we have continuously adapted, and we have been able to help our partners do the same. Pairing our experience with research-backed methods, we focus on delivering solutions that are both flexible and impactful.

With respect to resilience-building programs, we can help organizations identify those in need, using a combination of interviews, surveys, and individual assessment tools. We can then construct a tailored program based upon specific organization needs.

In particular, we offer one-on-one coaching engagements, which current evidence suggests are the most effective way to help individuals become more resilient. And when the need is more widespread, our training and development experts can help implement programs at the team and organizational levels.



Whatever the need, we are here to help our clients adapt and adjust during these difficult times.

For more information on our resiliency-building solutions, contact Clay Hildebrand, President, at childebrand@q4solutions.com, or call us at (314) 725-7771.



*“On the other side of a storm
is the strength that comes from having
navigated through it. Raise your sail and begin.”*

Gregory S. Williams