

Leading for Resiliency

What is resiliency in the workplace? Why is it important? How can I influence this as a leader?

Resiliency:

1. The power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.
2. The ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyancy.

Employees take cues from those around them to assess what state the work environment is in at any given point in time. If the person “leading the group” is in a negative state, it has an impact on how calm and/or reactive they feel about a situation. If the leader feels confident about the abilities of staff to effectively handle a situation, then staff also demonstrates calmness and confidence in offering solutions and problem solving.

This calming effect can only be authentically created. If you want people to trust you as a leader, this happens through you demonstrating trust for employees who report to you. If you want people to have faith in your decisions and your motivations, then your inner faith in those within your work unit must be positive. What are some of the things that you can do to build the foundation for creating a resilient workforce?

- Communicate everything you can share with employees. This sends a clear message of trust and transparency.
- Help employees understand all stakeholders and how we take into account the long term impact of decisions. Have people debrief situations as case studies to learn how we can improve in our decision-making by thinking through implications of options before making decisions.

- The larger the decision, and the more at stake, the more important it is to get multiple viewpoints. For anyone weighing in, help them understand all the different nuances of the situation. This can be used for developing the maturity and political astuteness of the work unit.
- Be willing to be vulnerable, and talk about how you deal with the unknown in situations. You should be willing to be human, yet demonstrate how to effectively deal with the stress of handling many things at once, delegating appropriately, developing options and keeping things on track.
- Offer learning and resources in areas that will help manage operational and psychological stressors:
 - Project management
 - Having difficult conversations
 - [EAP - Employee Assistance Program](#)
 - [Wellness resources](#)
 - [Employee Relations](#)
 - Change management

Change used to be something that happened only during certain periods in the workplace. Now it is a daily occurrence.

Agility is an indispensable competency in all positions. *Resiliency is the result of the ability to be physically and emotionally agile.* If you are resistant and “set in your ways,” then this will cascade to everyone around you. It is much easier to see resistance in others than in ourselves. If you find yourself defending the way things have been done, or if you find yourself reacting negatively to a person offering up new ways of doing things ... there is a strong possibility that you may be obstructing overall resilience in your section of the work environment.

It is tough to be honest about our own impact, yet necessary to be a positive influence as a leader.