Resilience in the Workplace

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Introduction

- Resilience
- Strengths perspective
- Asset-Based Community Development
- Solution focused therapy
- Salutogenesis
- Resilience
- Children
- Individuals
- Families

Resilience – Definitions

- Resilience is the capacity to maintain competent functioning in the face of major life stressors.
  - (Kaplan, Turner, Norman, & Stillson, 1996, p. 158)
- George Vaillant (1993) defines resilience as the “self-righting tendencies” of the person, “both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back”.
  - (Goldstein, 1997, p. 30)

Resilience – Central Themes

- Adversity – major life stressors
- Flexibility – ‘bouncebackability’
- Over time – a process
- Health orientation – coping

Resilience means the skills, abilities, knowledge, and insight that accumulate over time as people struggle to surmount adversity and meet challenges. It is an ongoing and developing fund of energy and skill that can be used in current struggles.
  - (Garmezy, 1994 in Saleebey, 1996, p. 298)
- [Resilience is] the capacity for successful adaptation, positive functioning or competence … despite high-risk status, chronic stress, or following prolonged or severe trauma.
Resilience – Not!
- Just-shake-it-off
- Don’t-look-back
- Teflon-coated
- Invincibility

Resilience of Children
- Longitudinal studies of vulnerable kids
  - Werner & Smith (1955–) in Hawaii
  - Cederblad (1947–) in Sweden
- Children overcoming the odds, eg:
  - Outgoing, likeable, sociable personality
  - Early bonding with key caregiver
  - Range of alternate role models
  - Required helpfulness – household chores
  - Clear family boundaries

Salutogenesis
- Aaron Antonovsky
- Study of the ‘origins of health’
- Contrast with pathogenesis
- Sense of coherence is “a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that one’s internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected”
  - (Antonovsky, 1979, p. 123)

Other Resilience Constructs
- Thriving
- Hardiness
- Learned resourcefulness
- Self-efficacy
- Locus of control
- Potency
- Stamina
- Personal causation

Critique
- Deeply internal location
- Demographics
- Very little change literature
- Systems solely in service of individuals

Family Resilience
- Family as risk/protective factor
- Family as family
- Family stress research (1930–)
- Hill’s ABCX model (1949)
- Family strengths research (1970s–)
  - Cohesion, communication, problem solving, spirituality & values, family identity & rituals, boundaries, flexibility, support, autonomy, coherence
- McCubbin’s models (1983–)
Definitions

The path a family follows as it adapts and prospers in the face of stress, in the present and over time. Resilient families respond positively to these conditions in unique ways, depending on the context, developmental level, the interactive combination of risk and protective factors, and the family’s shared outlook.

(Hawley & De Haan, 1996, p. 293)

Key processes that enable families to cope more effectively and emerge hardier from crises or persistent stresses, whether from within or from outside the family.

(Walsh, 1996, p. 263)

Characteristics, dimensions, and properties of families which help families to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adaptive in the face of crisis situations.

(McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988, p. 247)

Van Breda’s Model

Workplace resilience refers to the characteristics and processes of organisations which help them to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adaptive in the face of crisis situations.

(Adapted from McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988, p. 247)
Stressors

\(^{\text{Any ideas?}}\)

Risk Factors

\(^{\text{Vulnerabilities: Pile-up}}\)
- External stressors
  - Recession, environmental changes, political uncertainty, trade requirements
- Internal stressors
  - Transformation, mismanagement, fraud, mergers, change of management, technology
- Elemental stressors
  - Family problems, health, family transitions, mental health, crises

Pile-up (Vulnerability)

Protective Factors 1

- Support systems
  - Social support systems are the quality of supportive networks within the workplace, and between the workplace and the broader community.

Protective Factors 2

- Problem solving
  - Problem solving is the ability of the organisation to collaboratively identify and respond to a range of instrumental and affective problems.
Protective Factors 3

- Stressor appraisal
  - Stressor appraisal is the organisation’s perception of the stressor and its consequent challenges as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful.

Protective Factor 4

- Harmony
  - Harmony is the balance that the organisation strikes between work and life, a holistic valuing of both spheres of life.

Outcomes

- The organisation’s achievement of the triple bottom line of profit, environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility/investment, while maintaining the wellbeing of the workforce.

Practice Implications 1

- Monitor levels of pile-up
  - The higher the pile-up the vulnerable the organisation is to breakdown

- Build supportive networks
  - Between employees
  - Between the workplace & the community (eg through CSR/I)

- Facilitate problem solving
  - Nurture a culture of participative problem solving

- Raise awareness of affective problems
**Practice Implications 2**
- Develop **Sense of Coherence**
- Run workshops to develop individual SOC through case studies
- Convene action groups to work through organisational problems, emphasising Comprehensibility, Manageability & Meaningfulness
- Develop **harmony**
- Facilitate establishment and monitor implementation of work-family/life policy

**Practice Implications 3**
- Promote **Triple Bottom Line**
- Establish senior workgroups to address environmental sustainability and CSR/I
- Monitor and report on employee wellbeing
- Work **salutogenically**
- Orientation towards health and wellbeing
- Proactive, preventive, promotive interventions
- Holistic attention to all facets

**Research Implications**
- Virgin territory
- Exploratory research on protective factors
- Theoretical research on similarities and differences between families and workplaces
- Exploratory research on organisation’s own definitions of outcomes
- Masters/Doctoral studies

**Conclusion**
- Stressor Pile-up
- Support Systems
- Stressor Appraisal
- Problem Solving
- Harmony
- Protective Factors
- Health
- Virgin territory
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