



Dr. Dora Kingsley Vertenten
Professor
Sol Price School of Public Policy
University of Southern California

Leading in Times of Crisis: Building your Resiliency Skills

**Presentation made to
Los Angeles County Management Council**

July 30, 2020

Leading in Times of Crisis: Building Your Resiliency Skills

BIO: Dr. Dora Kingsley Vertenten

- Practitioner: Founder of a national research and consulting firm
- Teaching Faculty: Since 1996 in Los Angeles, Sacramento, online
- Faculty Coordinator: Master in Public Administration online
- Outstanding Faculty Performance 2020, USC Price School
- Member: Association of Public Policy and Management (APPAM)
- Elected Fellow: National Academy of Public Administration (2006)
- Interests: data privacy, digital literacy, participatory democracy, public administration and management, public policy analysis
- Resides with husband Jim in Alexandria, Virginia
- Email: Kingsley@usc.edu
- Twitter: @DoctorDora

Leading in Times of Crisis: Building Your Resiliency Skills

AGENDA

- Adapting to dynamics in the workplace
- Managing a diverse workforce during a crisis
- Leadership within a socially distant environment
- Fostering Resilience with Innovation

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Adapting to Dynamics in the Workplace

ADAPTING TO DYNAMICS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Our “Black Swan” Moment
- Crisis Management
- Defining the Canary in your Coal Mine
- Adaptation Questions



COVID-19: Our “Black Swan” Event



What is a “Black Swan” Event?

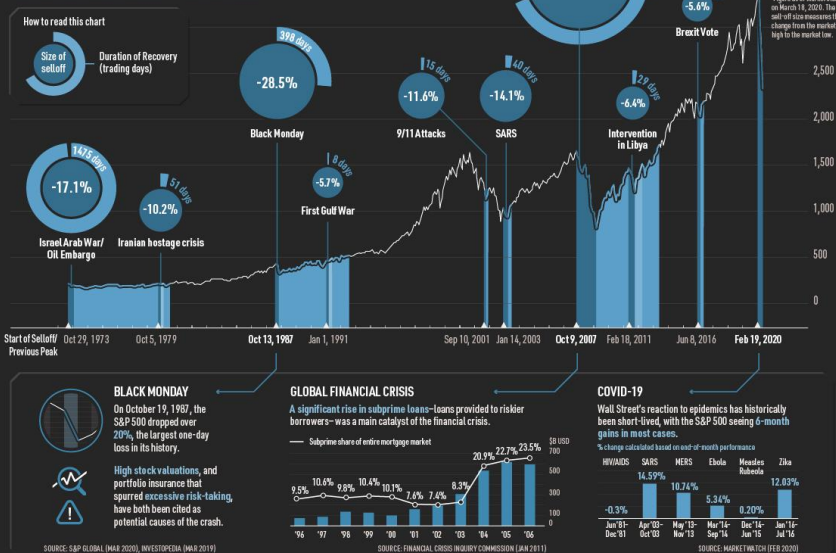
First set forth by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, he defines three attributes that are **common** to all black swan events:

1. The event is **unpredictable** (to the observer)
2. The **event** has widespread ramifications
3. After the event has occurred, **people** will assert that it was indeed explainable and **predictable** (hindsight **bias**).

BLACK SWAN EVENTS SHORT-TERM CRISIS, LONG-TERM OPPORTUNITY

Rare, unexpected events—known as Black Swans—can have severe consequences in the stock market. Below, we compare the COVID-19 reaction with other historical events, charting their downturn and length of recovery.

S&P 500 Performance (October 1, 1973 to March 18, 2020)
SOURCE: BAYER, DEUTSCHE BANK VIX ZEROEDGE (SEP 2017), WUOD FINANCE (MAR 2020)



The S&P 500 index is an index of 500 stocks listed as a market-wide indicator of the overall U.S. equity market. Past performance is not indicative of future results. An investment cannot be made in an index. Value Capital is not affiliated with New York Life Insurance Company (NYSE:NYL). Past performance is not indicative of future results. This material represents an assessment of the market environment as of a specific date, is subject to change and is not intended to be a forecast of future events or a guarantee of future results. This information should not be relied upon by the reader as investment or treatment advice regarding the funds or any particular investment security.

This material contains general information only and does not take into account an individual's financial circumstances. This information should not be relied upon as a primary basis for an investment decision. Neither an investment should be made in an investment based on the information in this material nor should an investment be made in an investment based on the information in this material. New York Life Investment is a service mark and the common trade name of the investment advisors affiliated with New York Life Insurance Company.




Building Your Resiliency Skills: Crisis Management

2020: Not all Crises are created equal

- 47% of employers say they have the capabilities or processes needed to meet a crisis with the best possible outcome
- 77% of finance leaders plan to change safety measures during the COVID-19 crisis
- The top 4 issues on employee's mind in April 2020 were: financial security (81%), health and wellbeing (56%), family (25%) and productivity and work (24%)
- 50% of American organizations have no remote work policy
- 30% of crisis professionals believe that employees are the most overlooked stakeholders when their organizations deal with a crisis.
- 62% of work emails received are deemed not important

Source: Crisis Management in the Workplace, <https://blog.smarp.com/ultimate-coronavirus-crisis-management-checklist>



Coronavirus Crisis Management Checklist by smarp

- Create a coronavirus crisis management plan
- Appoint a designated crisis management team
- Keep employees informed (with accurate and updated information)
- Give employees useful advice and keep them connected
- Consider implementing remote work (if you haven't implemented it already)
- Create an environment that fosters online collaboration
- Answer all your employees' questions
- Stop the spread of misinformation in the workplace
- Use proper employee communications tools
- Define a central internal communication channel
- Give special attention to your non-wired and remote employees
- Update your corporate travel policy
- Perform routine environmental cleaning
- Update employees' contact numbers and emergency contact details
- Respect self-isolation guidelines and stay in touch with your self-isolated employees
- Evaluate your coronavirus crisis management plan

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Canary in a “Coal Mine”



What can the canary tell us?

From the 18th century mining idiom, we know of four suggestions for extra diligence during all [black swan](#) events.

The canary can...

1. Offer advanced warning of some danger (not readily evident to the observer)
2. Point to oddities, anomalies and unexpected actions which can be integrated into understandings of the Civic landscape
3. Identify those most susceptible among our populations in advance of the majority experiencing adverse effects or widespread ramifications
4. Document failure to predict outcomes



Building Your Resiliency Skills: Adaption Questions

Who is the “**canary in the coal mine**” that most often offers me the early warning and detection signals to aid adaptations?

1. **Family, friends or trusted colleagues** who mention their discomfort with someone’s action, belief system or a current event.
2. **Anomalies in daily work experiences** which don’t fit into my budget models or expected outcomes... such as a run on services or changes in normal patterns of behavior by others.
3. **The elderly, disabled or underemployed that I know**, and the homeless or jobless report having new difficulties or experiences which are more challenging than usual for them.
4. **When plans don’t work out** more often than they do, when I feel like I’m pushing a rock uphill and not getting anywhere.

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Managing a Diverse Workforce during Crisis

MANAGING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE DURING A CRISIS

- Inter-Generational Organizations
- Generational Characteristics
- Generational Strategies
- Unconscious Bias
- Diverse and Inclusive Strategies
- Diversity Questions

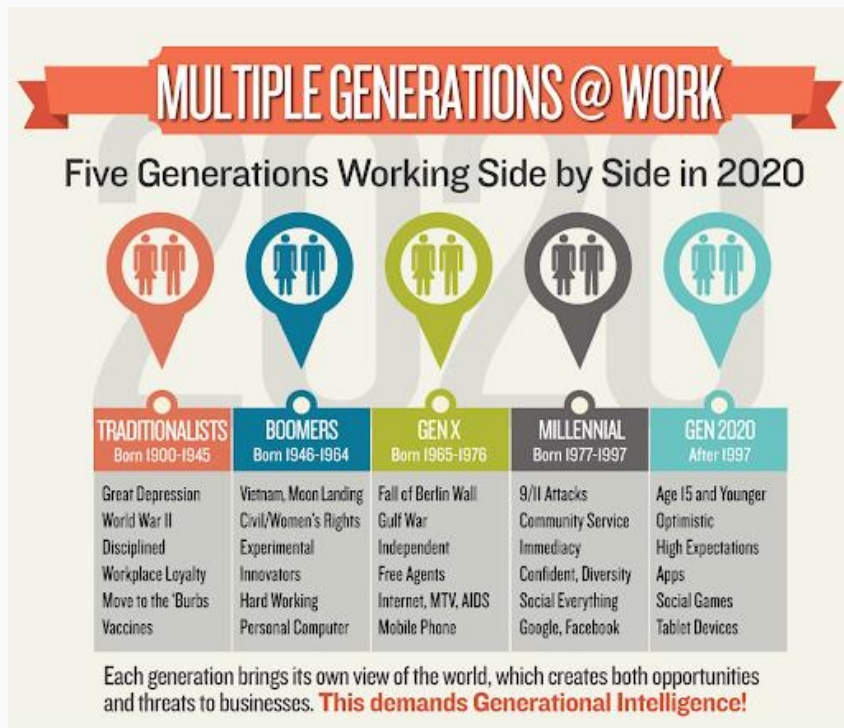


Building Your Resiliency Skills: Contemporary Colleagues

Inter-Generational Organizations: The 5 Contemporary Office Colleagues

- **Silent Generation** known for “lacking ambition” as they learned to “**make things work.**” Raised in an era of economic boom with high prospects for employment. Born circa 1925-45
- **Baby Boomers** raised in an era of change and questioned social norms and behaviors. Inherent traits of experimentalism, activism, **individualism** and free spiritedness. Desire for acquired wealth creates tendency to continue working. Born circa 1946-64
- **Generation X** has entrepreneurial tendencies and the first generation to be “peer” oriented, which encourages **team-driven environments**, seeking work-life balance, willing to accept reductions in compensation for external benefits. Born circa 1965-80
- **Millennials** have preference towards meaningful work, a flat corporate culture, social consciousness, **flexibility**, less stability with enhanced short-term opportunity, and instantaneous feedback. Born circa 1981-2000
- **Gen Z’ers** are seeking more than a job; seeking professional fulfillment. Social media has redirected their focus from collective experiences, to **one-on-one interactions**. Born circa 2001-???

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Generational Characteristics



MULTIPLE GENERATIONS @ WORK SURVEY

Generational Characteristics:

Silent Gen & Baby Boomers: Optimistic, Enjoy mentoring, Strong work ethic

Gen X (and Xennials): Independent, Innovative, Strong communicators

Millennials: Tech-savvy, Collaborative, Focused on the greater good

Gen Z (and Gen 2020): Digitally fluent, Practical, Flourish in diverse workforces

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Generational Strategies

5 Tactics for Working with Cross-Generational Teams

Rethink the Boring Stuff

Explore new technology offered up by tech-savvy younger employees to reduce repetitive and rote work for everyone.



Flex the Hours

No matter their age, employees want a life outside work, so balance off-hours coverage so no one has to work 24/7.

Help Them Learn

Older & younger employees can mentor each other in different ways (eg, being organizationally vs. technologically savvy).

Give Good Reasons

Don't insist on doing something just because that's the way it's always been done.

Learn From Each Other

Both age groups can offer wisdom to one another, if they're open to hearing it.



Generational Strategies:

Silent Gen & Baby Boomers: Leverage their optimism, utilize suggestions & experience.

Gen X (and Xennials): Take advantage of their ability to think innovatively, leverage their communication skills

Millennials: Ask for digital and collaboration ideas, utilize their knowledge of digital sources

Gen Z (and Gen 2020): Get input on ways to socialize while working remotely, leverage their digital literacy

Source: "5 Generations in the Workforce", <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/the-secret-to-working-with-millennials/>

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Unconscious Bias



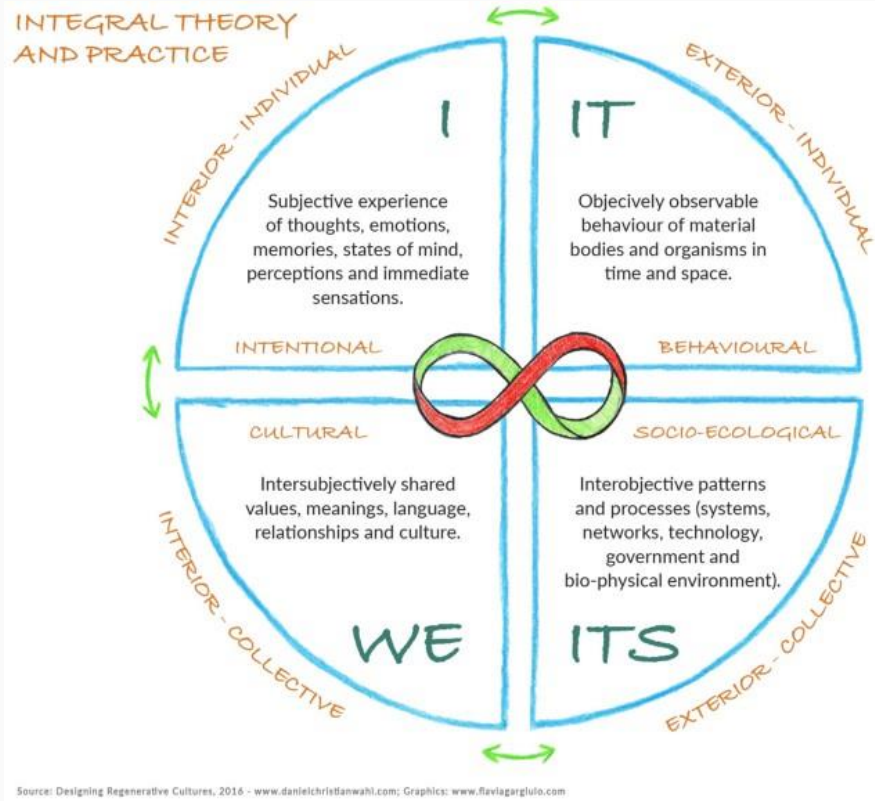
Source: "Practicing inclusive leadership in times of crisis"

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-thrive-tal-start-employee-education-training-in-crisispdf2.pdf>

Unconscious Biases to Watch Out for in Crisis

- **Affinity bias:** Like individuals vs. Seeking talent outside of "go-to" circles for assignments and opportunities.
- **Confirmation bias:** Information which confirms our beliefs vs. Lack of information picked up casually from "others" requires creating spaces to connect more deeply.
- **Personality error bias:** Assuming behavior is core to personality without considering external factors vs. not all situations are equal, understanding behavior may be a product of circumstances not the person.

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Diverse and Inclusive



Diverse and Inclusive Strategies Designing a Regenerative Culture:

- Get educated
- Get comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Build trust and acceptance
- Provide for different approaches to work
- Generate Creative Friction
- Expand ways in which people can contribute
- Support people with tools and practices
- Invite people to the table
- Excel at Experimentation (... and failure)

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Diversity Questions

What best practices can we adopt to foster inclusivity and support our diversity?

1. What surveys or mechanisms do we have to validate any new policies or guidelines promotes equitable treatment of all employees and to consider whether employees have equal access to the resources needed to perform their jobs?
2. Given remote work and the nature of working new schedules (if possible), are there low-cost, high-impact practices to foster psychological safety and show appreciation for or recognize employees of all types for their contributions?
3. What conditions can we create for employees to speak up and confidently make professional concerns and personal needs known?
4. How can we leverage the collective brain power of our diverse workforce to help expose policies or behaviors that are unintentionally exclusive?

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Leadership within a Socially Distant Environment

LEADERSHIP WITHIN A SOCIALLY DISTANT ENVIRONMENT

- Binary Choices
- Banking on Leadership
- Bodies in Motion
- The Opposite of Meh
- Engaging in Return to Work Planning
- Sample Communication Calendar
- The Power of Yet
- Preparation Questions



Building Your Resiliency Skills: Binary Choices

Decision making in crisis mode: A public servant's unique role

- Prior decisions have consequences and are (mostly) binary choices
- Define the crisis as your opportunity
- Pivot your perspective
- Make a new decision
- Manage toward your future vision
- Execute a solution

Suggested for more reading:

- [Leadership in Times of Crisis](#)
- [What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers](#)



Building Your Resiliency Skills: Banking on Leadership

Building a Reservoir of Personal Good Will

- Prepare the organization and stakeholders in advance
 - Outreach
 - Be consistent
 - Garner trust
 - Actively engage
 - Always remember
- Create space for support and supporters to go on record, to be 'deposited' for storage and safekeeping.
- Pivot "business as usual" to the acts of resiliency.

Suggested for more reading:

- [6 Challenges Leaders Face](#)
- [Thoughts about Followership](#)
- [TED Talk: How to Start A Movement](#)



Building Your Resiliency Skills: Bodies in Motion

A body in motion, stays in motion

- Draw upon your preparation
- Ask a LOT of questions
- Identify gaps in service, ravages to the system and failing delivery technologies
- Find others willing to help, aka the “80/20 Rule”
- Never let doubt slow you down
- Don’t stand still

Suggested for more reading:

- [Leadership Theory and Practice \(Northouse\)](#)
- [GAP Analysis Tools Help Identify Opportunities \(a blog\)](#)

Principles of Responsible Leadership

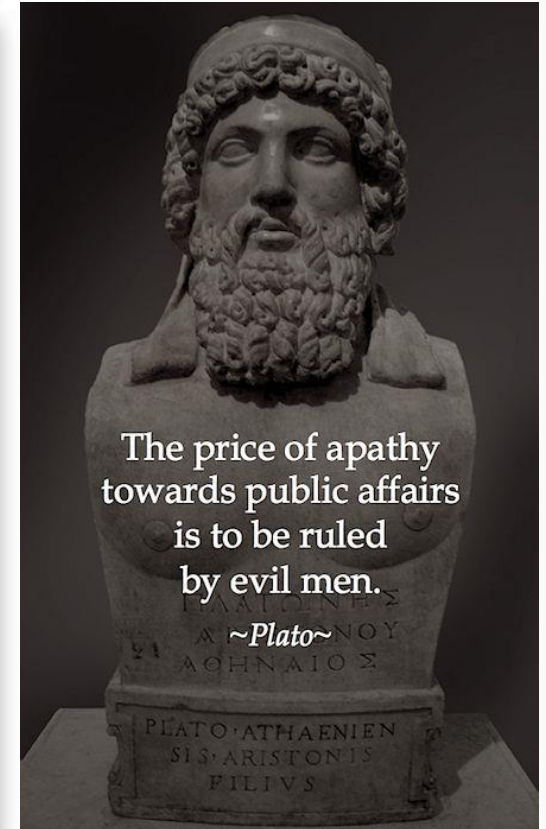
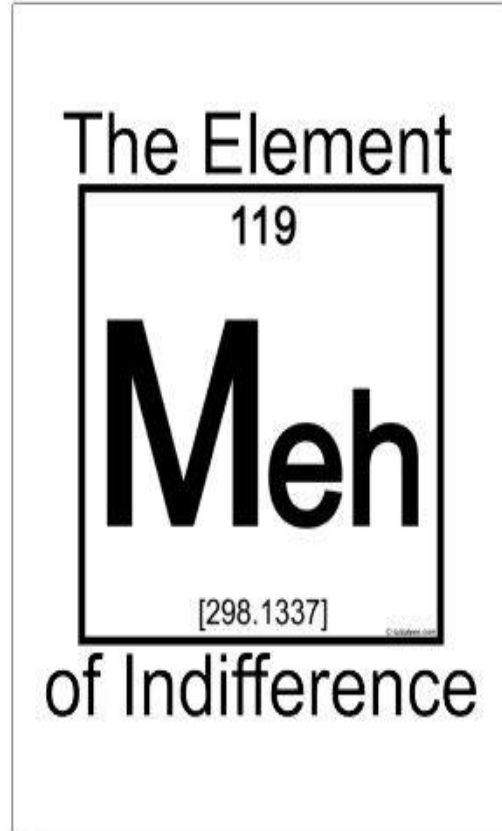


(Northouse, 2012, p. 431)

Building Your Resiliency Skills: The Opposite of Meh

The opposite of love is not hate,
it's indifference

- Take Action
- Revitalize old project management skills
- Don't Give UP,
Don't stop moving
- Outcomes are ultimately determined by the tenacity of our leaders



Building Your Resiliency Skills: Engaging in Return-to-Work

Practical planning steps include:

- Start or renew discussions on agency purpose, based on discoveries from the crisis.
 - For **survivors**, how do we retain our purpose in a changed world?
 - For **adapters**, how do we move quickly to new ways of working?
 - For **thrivers**, how do we maintain our current success as the world slowly returns to normal?
- Set the strategic direction in context by developing, articulating, and sharing the organization's new/refreshed change story—the “How do we get there, and why will it be worth it?” This will help people understand what the future looks like:
 - What has changed over the last few months?
 - What has stayed the same? (This includes the enduring values story.)
 - How do we prioritize?
 - What are new expectations of leaders? Of employees?
- Commit/recommit to organizational health. This could include new or updated diagnostics and surveys.
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of communication over the course of a few months; evaluate and adjust as needed.

Source: Engaging Employees during a Return to Work <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/communications-get-personal-how-leaders-can-engage-employees-during-a-return-to-work>

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Engaging in Return-to-Work

Sample of a Communication Calendar Idea

Create a communication calendar with steps that can help make returning employees more comfortable.

McKinsey
& Company



On day 1

- Welcome back those who are returning
- Focus on discovery from the crisis, and celebrate values
- Highlight how employees and the company have rallied through the crisis
 - For survivors—how have we stayed afloat and who has helped us do that?
 - For adapters—how did we pivot to our new model and who drove that?
 - For thrivers—how did we rally to help our customers/users when they needed us most?
- Honor the past

This will ideally be an in-person event for as many people as possible, as well as streamed (and recorded) for those unable to be present



During week 1

- Identify unexpected positive outcomes and cultural changes to retain for when the crisis ends
- Continue activities to honor the past
- Encourage random acts of kindness
- Leaders need to be physically present—perfect the art of the walkaround; communicate in small groups

Ideally the week 1 activities will be in person and typically in working groups



During month 1

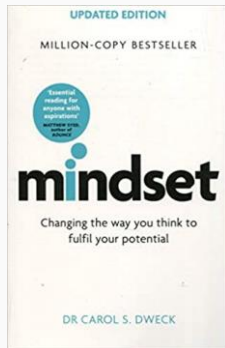
- Hold conversations about ways we have worked during the crisis. What do people want to keep, what do they want to adapt, and what do they want never to experience again?
- Showcase "my isolation transformation." Transformation could be anything—physical, a new skill. Feature folks in various communications vehicles; award swag for coolest transformation
- Prepare to look to the future by moving the focus of messaging to new opportunities and strategic questions rather than the transition itself (by analogy, talk about married life rather than the wedding ceremony)

Monitor the effectiveness of communication through regular pulse surveys, probably weekly; evaluate; adjust

Building Your Resiliency Skills: The Power of Yet

Read or watch Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck discuss decades of research on achievement and success to learn more about her idea -the power of our mindset.

On Youtube: *"The Power of Yet"* with Carol Dweck, PhD.



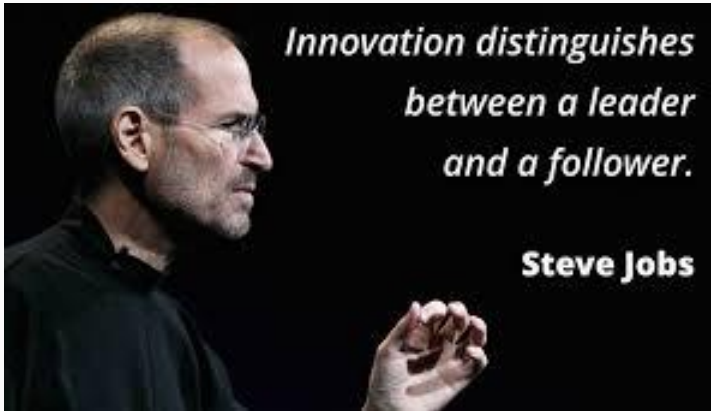
TED
Ideas worth spreading

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Preparation Questions

What are strategic ways to prepare for the work world we are returning to?

1. What strategy have you seen used to build social capital in advance of needing organizational and/or community supports?
2. What have you changed in your public role or managerial role to pivot your focus on opportunities for the organization?
3. What new actions have you initiated to revitalize and energize your team, organization or constituents?
4. What gap has been exposed and who might help you move forward?
5. Who can you empower to help?

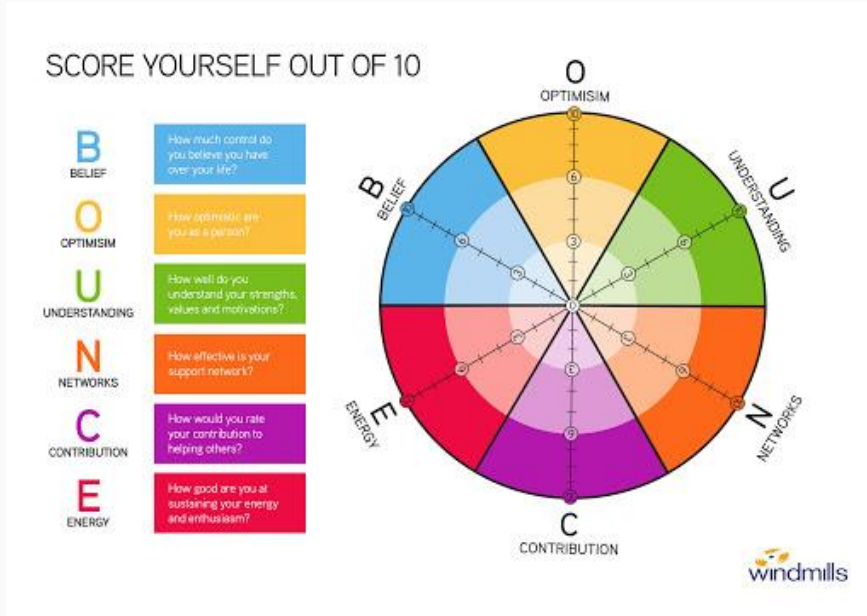
Building Your Resiliency Skills: Fostering Resilience with Innovation



FOSTERING RESILIENCE WITH INNOVATION

- Establishing the Skill Set
- Fostering Resilience
- Managing for Innovation
- Organizational Resilience
- Innovation Questions

Building Your Resiliency Skills: The Ability to Bounce Back



Establishing the Skill Set: Resilience

- Hardiness
- Learned Habits
- Reducing Vulnerabilities to Stress
- Effective Communications
- Team Player who enables others to succeed
- Builds Trust
- Authentic
- GRIT: A fighting spirit
- Acts Mindfully

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Fostering Resilience

 **American Heart Association**
life is why

Resilience In the Workplace

Workplace stress and its effect on employees

2 in 3 EMPLOYEES REPORT **WORK** IS A SIGNIFICANT SOURCE OF STRESS¹

1 in 5 U.S. adults are affected by **depressive ILLNESSES**, including major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder.² Routine stress can play a role in its onset.³

Annual Expenditures ARE HIGH

\$190 billion for work-related stress

\$211 billion for poor mental health⁴ (depression & anxiety)

What is resilience?

RESILIENCE: The ability to **WITHSTAND, RECOVER** and **GROW** in the face of stressors and changing demands⁵

WITHSTAND: deal with a challenge

RECOVER: bounce back (including to levels better than pre-stressor levels)

GROW: Thrive in the face of adversity

Bouncing back after stressful situations is a helpful skill for a thriving workforce

The World Health Organization names **STRESS** the **HEALTH EPIDEMIC of the 21st Century**⁶

Workplace stress is linked with increased:

DIABETES HEART DISEASE

DISABILITY ABSENTEEISM TURNOVER

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREMATURE DEATH

But resilient people appear to be better able to cope with stress and:¹¹

Remain Calm And Lower Risks

Manage Emotions

Guard Against Burnout

Remain Productive

How can employees improve resiliency skills?

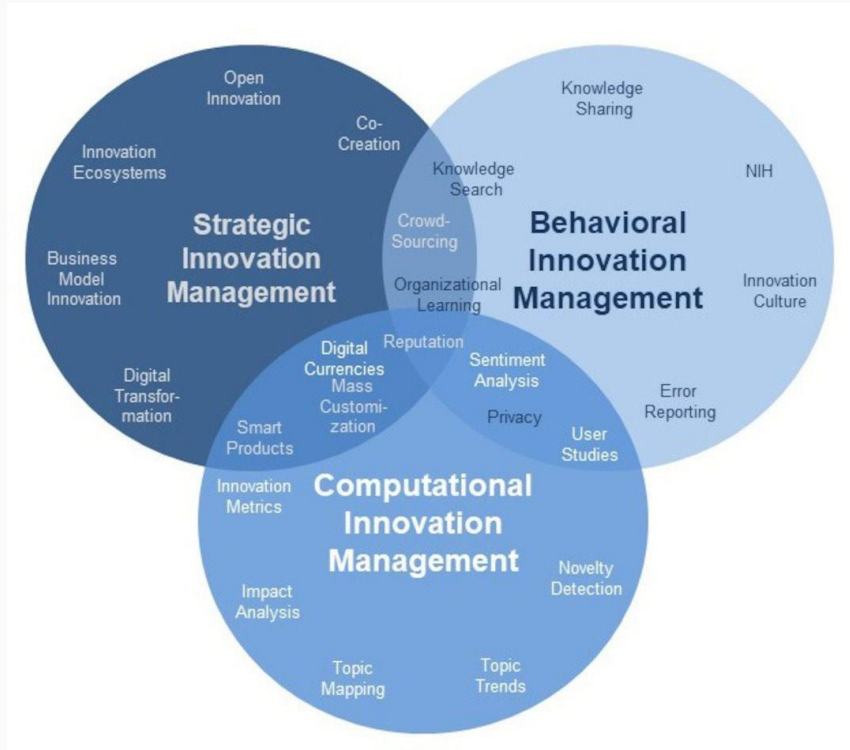
Sources: ¹Source: ²Source: ³Source: ⁴Source: ⁵Source: ⁶Source: ¹¹Source:

Why Foster Resilience?

- Personally cope with stress and unexpected challenges
- Help buffer workplace stress and frustration that leads to burnout
- Increase physical and psychological wellbeing
- To thrive is to ADAPT

Source: Journal of Organizational Behavior, J. Organiz. Behav. (2015) Published online in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/job.2063

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Managing for Innovation

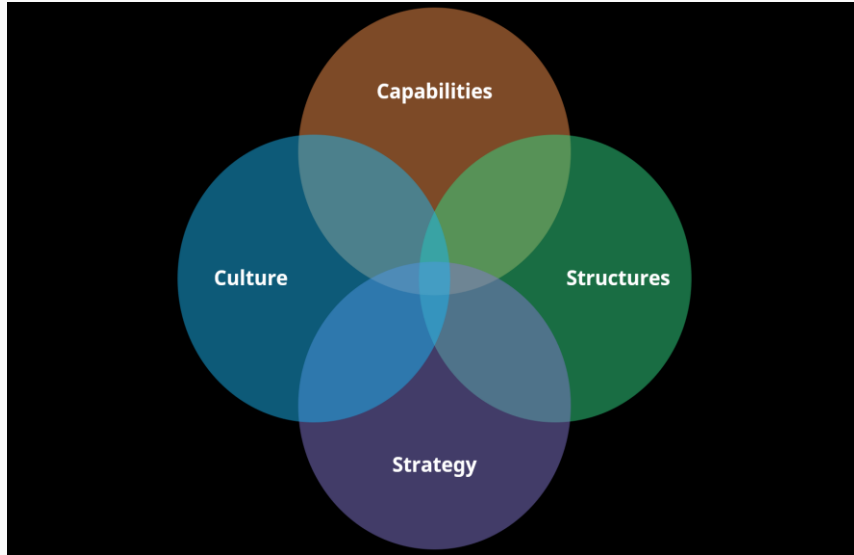


Managing for Innovation

- A bewitching problem that demands fresh thinking
- Novel principles or paradigms that have the power to illuminate new approaches;
- A careful deconstruction of the conventions and dogma that constrain creative thinking;
- Examples and analogies that help redefine what's possible.

Source: Harvard Business Review, February 2006, "The Why, What and How of Management Innovation."

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Organizational Resilience



Key Elements of Organizational Resilience in the Face of COVID-19

- Prioritize Safety
- Create Structure
- Improve Trust and Transparency
- Collaborate with Mutuality
- Give Voice and Choice
- Provide Peer Support

Source: "Building Organizational Resilience in the Face of COVID-19"
www.TheNationalCouncil.org

Building Your Resiliency Skills: Innovation Questions

What approaches will you consider for building resilience with innovations?

1. How well did employees handle remote work? Will they feel safe returning? How can you ensure employees follow your advice?
2. Did employees feel informed all the time? Have you designed and implemented new practices and structure to enable success?
3. Were you fast enough in answering employees' questions? Was the information useful to them?
4. What new activities have you undertaken to connect employees? What tool or practice have you adopted to ensure transparency?
5. Did employees actually read updates? Can you engage more employees in providing information and new activities in future updates?
6. What real choice are you providing to employees? Does the choice that they are given relate to a top concern as expressed by employees?
7. Were you able to control the spread of misinformation in the workplace?
8. What new program or activity have you introduced to provide peer support?

Leading in Times of Crisis: Building Your Resiliency Skills

IN CONCLUSION

- Adapting to dynamics in the workplace
- Managing a diverse workforce during a crisis
- Leadership within a socially distant environment
- Fostering Resilience with Innovation

Sources for More Information- All Citations Available Upon Request

- [Tracking the Global Impact](#)
- [Six Challenges Leaders Face](#)
- [Thoughts about Fellowship](#)
- [TED Talk: How to Start A Movement](#)
- [Outbreak Morphs into a Political Minefield](#)
- [Pandemic Confusing Uncertainty](#)
- [Political Systems Resiliency from Systems Innovation](#)
- [How to Increase and Sustain Political Engagement](#)
- [Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Framework for Assessment](#)
- [Northouse, P. G. \(2012\). Leadership theory and practice.\(Vol. 978-1-4522-0340-9\)](#)
- [What Every Leader Needs to Know About Followers](#)
- [GAP Analysis Tools Help Identify Opportunities \(a blog\)](#)
- [USC Price School Master in Public Degree online program](#)

Leading in Times of Crisis: Building Your Resiliency Skills

Thank you!

- QUESTIONS & ANSWERS