

Reinforcing Resiliency:

A series of exercises to strength individual resiliency in the midst of change

Objectives

Participants will :

- Perceive change as an opportunity for growth; to strengthen personal resiliency, professional and personal satisfaction, as well as health, stamina, and performance
- Discover creative solutions to daily problems and difficulties
- Recognize attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that undermine your performance, vitality and health
- Take decisive steps to manage daily challenges
- Accept things that can't be changed, while still finding ways to strengthen hardiness and personal effectiveness
- Obtain adequate social assistance and encouragement to enhance connections with others while strengthening hardiness

Module I:

“Stress and Resiliency”

“What are some examples of stresses you face at work?”



“How do you know that you are stressed?”



“What signs and symptoms do you experience?”

Stress - Relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/her resources and endangering his/her well-being.

Stressors - what happens to us (outside forces)

Stress - how we react to a specific situation or event

Common Symptoms of Stress

Cognitive - anxious thoughts, fearful anticipation, poor concentration, difficulty with memory

Emotional - feeling tense, worry, restless, depression, inability to relax

Behavioral - avoidance of tasks, sleep problems, crying, changes in eating, drinking or smoking behaviors

Physiological - tense muscles, sweating, headaches, faint feelings, stomachache, tired, weight gain or loss, loss of interest in sex

Social - seek out or withdraw from people; quality of relationships may change

Resilience

Strength in the midst of change and stressful life events.

The power of springing back or recovering readily.

Resilient individuals:

perceive challenge

make commitment

take control

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

-Charles Darwin

Module II:

*“Resiliency and The
Responsibility Model”*

“We can’t always wait for the storm to pass, sometimes we have to work in the rain”

- Unknown

The Responsibility Model

RESPONSIBILITY

owning the power of choice and creation

Shame

Justify

Lay Blame

Denial



Questions to Move

“Above The Line”

Primary Key Questions

“Do I play a role or contribute to this in any way?”

“What could I have done to create or choose this?”

Questions to Move

“Above The Line”

If justifying

“In spite of the justification, how did I end up here?”

If shaming

“How can I feel okay about having created or chosen this?”

“How would I feel if over time this ‘bad event’ turned out to be a ‘good event’?”

Questions to Move

“Above The Line”

If in denial

“How would I view this differently if I thought of it as a problem?”

If laying blame

“What if it isn’t their fault?”

“If I refuse to blame someone else, how would I evaluate the situation differently?”

WHERE ARE YOU ON THE RESPONSIBILITY MODEL?

Identify a problem or issue at work which you would like to see some improvement.

In this specific area, evaluate what percentage of your thoughts or statements are at each level of the Responsibility Model.

Responsibility: _____
Shame: _____
Justify: _____
Lay Blame: _____
Denial: _____

Using the questions on the previous page to move "above the line," describe how will you take responsibility.

Module III:

“Perception and Empowering Interpretations”

Disempowering Interpretation

**To understand or construe in
a way that diminishes power**

False

Evidence

Appearing

Real

REALIZING YOUR CONTROL

In the space provided, rewrite each of the statements to indicate that you are really in control. The first statement serves as an example.

1. My boss makes me upset.

When my boss does that I allow myself to become upset.

2. It was my insecurity that forced me to do that.

3. I was so anxious, I was helpless.

4. It's just a rotten habit that is part of my work style.

5. I'm just destined to be a failure.

6. If I were articulate, I'd be better at my job.

7. I was successful because I work well under pressure.

8. I'm the way I am because of my upbringing and parents.

Reframing

Creating a new frame of reference

- **Identify your interpretations as your frame of reference.**
- **Decide it is simply a point of view (as opposed to a fact).**
- **Move to the position of “I don’t know”.**
- **Ask, “How else could this be viewed?”**
- **Create several different frames of reference.**
- **In difficult situations, ask others to help you create several frames.**

Exercise 1: Creating your own Empowering Interpretation

- Identify a situation in your life where you have a disempowering interpretation.
- Write down a brief description of this situation.
- Choose a partner.
- Go through the reframing process to move from the disempowering interpretation to an empowering one.
- Write down your empowering interpretation.

RECOGNIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Indicate how the following stressful situations can be viewed as opportunities for growth:

1. Having to make a presentation before a group of people which do not see your project as a priority.
2. Being reassigned/redeployed to another department when you are making great progress on high visibility project in your current work group.
3. You are attending a meeting at work where key decisions are being made but your opinion is different than all others attending the meeting.
4. Waiting in a long line at the grocery store on Friday night when you are tired from the week.
5. Being stuck in traffic when you need to be preparing for a meeting.
6. Being rejected from a new assignment which you request at work.
7. Having to assist coworkers with a crisis which will impact the quality of the projects you are currently working on.

Module IV:

“How to be Successful when
Coping with Change”

Coping Behavior

A chosen response to a perceived threat to oneself.

Dealing successfully; fighting or struggling with some degree of success.

Emotion-focused coping

Give one example of each of the following ways of coping you have seen used at work

- **Denial** is refusal to believe that the stressor exists or trying to act as though the stressor is not real.
- **Behavioral disengagement** is reducing one's effort to deal with the stressor.
- **Mental disengagement** occurs when you distract yourself from thinking about the behavior or goal with which the stressor is interfering.
- **Focus on a venting of emotions** involves the tendency to focus on the distress or upset that one is experiencing and ventilate those feelings.
- **Seeking social support for emotional reasons** is getting moral support, sympathy, or understanding.

Problem-focused coping

Give one example of each of the following ways of coping you have seen used at work

- **Active coping** is the process of taking steps to either remove the stressor or to lessen its effects.
- **Planning** is thinking about how best to cope with the stressor.
- **Positive reinterpretation and growth** involves looking at the stressful situation in a different way, and/or trying to interpret the situation in a different light.
- **Suppression of competing activities** involves trying to avoid becoming distracted by other events.
- **Restraint coping** is waiting until an appropriate opportunity to act presents itself, holding oneself back, and not acting prematurely.
- **Seeking social support for instrumental reasons** is seeking advice, assistance or information.

How to Cope Successfully:

- Choose a stressful situation (ie. My job)
- Identify a specific stressful aspect of the situation (ie. Not agreeing with Coworker's decisions)
- Determine what aspects of specific situation are Changeable vs. Unchangeable.
- Brainstorm Problem Focused Coping techniques which could be used for the Changeable aspects of the situation.
- Brainstorm which Emotion Focused Coping techniques could be used for the Unchangeable aspects of the situation.
- Identify how these coping techniques may assist you in dealing with the changeable and unchangeable aspects of the situation.

Taking Care of Yourself: The Basics

- Moderate use of alcohol & caffeine, drink at least eight glasses of water/day
- Do some form of physical activity each day to maintain health, alertness and reduce tension
- Get plenty of rest, try to sleep 6-8 hours each night for recovery
- Avoid smoking
- Eat for performance, include a variety of fruits and vegetables, less sugar, fat and salt.
- Keep a sense of humor
- Schedule yearly health screenings to monitor physical health status
- Set aside some time for friends and family

Module V:

“Social Support and
Meaningful Connections”

Functions of Social Support

- **Emotional support:** words and actions that make a person feel cared about, understood, and affirmed. For example, emotional support may include empathy, caring, love, and trust from a significant other.
- **Informational support:** information, advice, or suggestions.
- **Tangible support:** money, labor, assistance, or aid in kind, for example Tangible - material aid.

Exercise: Recall a situation when each type of support helped you manage a stressful work situation. Write how meaningful connections made it easier for you to handle the situations.

- Emotional Support

ie. Coworker listening to an unchangeable work situation.

- Informational Support

ie. Supervisor's suggestion for a key contact to resolve a problem.

- Tangible Support

ie. Assignment of a budget for project completion

Group Discussion Exercise:

**What can you do.....
to build or maintain your meaningful
social connections both at work and
in your life outside work?**

Summary:

“The Resilient Individual= YOU”

The Resilient Individual:

- **Takes Responsibility**
 - owning the power of choice and creation.
- **Focuses on Empowering Interpretations**
 - placing attention on understanding situations, events
 - relationships, etc. in ways that bring power to as
 - opposed to ways that diminish power.
- **Has Meaningful Connections**
 - seeking and maintaining relationships which create
 - or add a great deal of significance to a person's life.