Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Building your personal resilience as a manager



Resilient managers, like resilient people, can bounce back from adversity, stay focused and productive through change, and thrive when things get tough. In this article, you'll read about key ways to build your personal resilience as a manager.

Examining your personal resilience

People who are resilient tend to display some common traits. They are able to deal with uncertainty, they seek to understand and engage with alternate perspectives, and they choose to react positively to adversity and change. Resilience is about learning how to keep yourself recharged and grounded, not just simply enduring or coping.

Here are some questions to ask yourself as you examine your own personal resilience and way to keep yourself recharged. Do you:

- Take care of yourself by monitoring how you react to overload, adversity, and stress?
- Intentionally seek out and find ways to decompress (rest, rejuvenate, eat a healthy diet, exercise)?
- Try to influence the outcomes of the changes going on around you?
- See change as instrumental in opening up new, fulfilling pathways for living?
- View your work and personal life as important and worthwhile enough to warrant your ongoing commitment, and attention to each as separate and distinct?
- Evaluate and maintain your personal and professional boundaries?
- Understand the power of engaging and empowering others, finding win-win solutions, and establishing personal support systems?

If you said yes to these questions, you probably have a strong sense of resilience. However, if you feel there may be room for improvement, it is possible to work toward greater personal resiliency.

Building your personal resilience

It's important for you to develop your own resilience because maintaining your health, energy, and focus are key to getting the work done and motivating the people you manage. If you constantly feel exhausted and overwhelmed, it will be difficult to do these things.

Here are some ways you can build your resilience:

Take care of yourself. Get regular medical checkups. Exercise regularly. Meditate. Maintain a healthy diet. Make time for personal priorities and relationships.

Be familiar with the signs of stress and overload in yourself. These include:

- sleep problems
- trouble concentrating
- physical discomfort such as headaches; stomachaches; neck, shoulder, or back pain
- heart palpitations
- lack of energy

- irritability
- withdrawing from family or friends
- tearfulness or frequent crying
- drinking, eating, or smoking more than usual
- lower productivity at work.

Pay extra attention to taking care of yourself during stressful times. Maintaining a sense of balance between work and personal life can be challenging, particularly for managers in challenging times. But if you're physically exhausted, overloaded, or overextended, it's more important than ever to disconnect, rest, eat well, exercise, and find ways to rejuvenate.

Force yourself to take a lunch break. Consider scheduling a permanent appointment on your calendar at lunch and leave the workplace so that you recharge and take a break.

Make sure to take periodic "detachment breaks" in your day. It is easy to become so focused in your work that you lose track of time and your own well-being. Be intentional about stepping away for 5 or 10 minutes throughout the day to breath, stretch, and momentarily disconnect. Studies show that this keep you fresh and will help you better focus when you return to your tasks at hand.

Be intentional about nurturing your own resilience. It may be tempting to start early in the morning and crash your way through a long to-do list without a break, but too many days of doing that is counterproductive. Whatever you do to recharge your batteries, do it intentionally.

Be a role model while making time for things outside of work. Let your team know what you're doing to nurture your own resilience. Maybe let them know you schedule regular sessions in the gym. Or maybe there's a hobby or personal commitment that renews your spirit. Make it clear by word and action that you are paying attention to your own well-being which builds resilience. This empowers your team to do the same.

Spend quality time and energy with the people you care about. This reinforces your commitment to your values and helps you achieve satisfaction from meeting personal priorities and commitments.

Carve out "me" time. You'll function much more effectively in your role as a manager if you designate time for yourself, whether it's to work on a craft, exercise, listen to music, try out a new recipe, or read.

Have regular meetings with your manager to ask for what you need. This is particularly important if you feel your workload is unreasonable or overwhelming. Ask for what you need and be open to new ways of addressing your workload and stress.

Foster a positive attitude. Work with employees to help them turn challenges into opportunities.

Building your resilience will help you have confidence in your ability to influence positive outcomes for you and your team while being productive and refreshed at work.

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