

Resilience and Leadership

Definition

Deals effectively with pressure. Maintains focus and energy and remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

Resilient Leaders

Resilient leaders are able to problem solve with a calm, confident sense of being able to overcome adversity. They approach challenges with learning agility: the ability to learn from each experience, positive or negative.

Resilient leaders maintain a focus on the things that matter when the going gets tough; whether organisational change, meeting tight deadlines or pressure to perform.

Interestingly enough, during these times it is noted that these leaders also pay attention to their values, maintain and honour a life balance and work to ensure sure that there is congruence between what they believe and how that is reflected in behaviour.

At these levels of “Emotional Health”, leaders recognise and make conscious choices in the behaviours they will use. These choices reflect their knowledge of and compassion and empathy with those they are leading and with whom they work.

The integration of thinking, feeling and “knowing” is also present in resilient leaders. They rely on all three aspects of relating to inform and guide them in their relationships and in the way they work.

Key Capabilities

Presence: A leader who is “present” exhibits self-confidence, optimism, clarity and responsiveness. All of these characteristics assist the leader in responding to key issues, building support and working with others in ways that engage and enable. Being present can sustain a leader at a time when they may be contending with their own personal reactions to a transition and change.

Transparency: A leader who is transparent acts ethically and with integrity. They admit their own mistakes and build trust with others through their reliability and authenticity. They take tough principled stands (even when these are unpopular) and are open and objective in the way they communicate. They meet commitments, keep promises and hold themselves accountable in achieving what they agree to do. Whilst being open and honest, they are also very aware of their impact on others and find constructive ways of delivering and sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Empathy: A resilient leader accepts that others deal with and respond to a variety of situations from a very personal perspective and with a wide spectrum of emotions. They also respect and appreciate the diversity of world views and are sensitive to group differences. In fact, they see diversity as an opportunity and create an environment where diverse people can thrive. The capability to empathise with how others are feeling whilst remaining “present” and supportive in the midst of this is a key characteristic of resilience.

Collaboration: A leader who connects and involves others in solving problems, approaching challenges, making decisions, contributing to projects and planning etc. ensures that each person maintains a high level of engagement and control over their own work environment. Recognising and combining the strengths and talents of individuals and teams not only ensures that the desired outcomes will be realized but also builds relationships and networks and create new opportunities for the organisation.

Coaching: A leader who uses their coaching capability will listen actively, be responsive, show a focus on results, demonstrate confidence that employees will handle the situation, encourage positive action and celebrate successes. Their desire is for others discover their own answers to the issues and situations they experience and recognize their own capability and development opportunities in the process.

