Foundations of Resilience Training: Moving to Personal Balance[1]

A mini-informational guide to acquiring knowledge and steps for correction.

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I. Introduction

Daily, our lives are impacted by all manner of social, political, interpersonal, and environmental stress and adversity. These impact all aspects of our lives both at work and at home. Continual stress erodes our health and well-being and results in increased anger, violence, use of alcohol and drugs, suicide, and other manifestations dysfunction.
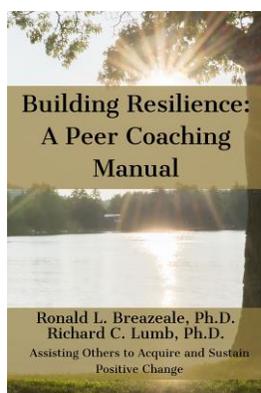
Unacceptable and affects not just the individual but those with whom he or she interacts with at home, at work, and in the community. We have created a manual that describes the application of the Skills & Attitudes of resilience to building personal resilience to be further applied to the communities and organizations to which they belong. Learning these skills and coaching others on their application can improve the individual's performance as well as the performance of others and can help the individual and others to reestablish balance in their lives. We have recently revised this manual with updated information and guidance. We will follow it with a train-the-trainer package to enable those who have become well-practiced in these strategies to become certified to coach others.

I. What is Resilience?

Resilience is the power to adapt well to adversity and to cope with stress, tragedy, and crisis in your life. It means you can get back to a sense of normalcy and feelings of well-being. You regain control of your life as it relates to family, friends, work, and other commitments. As is the case with high-stress occupations, outward behaviors that present as a result of stress and adversity may cause discomfort on the part of fellow employees' and have a significant impact of family and others around you.

Organizational culture is multi-layered, both positive and negative. Positive cultural events may be non-threatening to the employee, whereas negative influences

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[1] . [Samsung USB [H] **File:** Publishing/article pending completion/Foundations of Resil Trng/08.04.19 Foundations of Resil Trng
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are usually harmful. Some occupations expose personnel to more negativity than others, necessitating acknowledgment by the individual and those in control to requisite programs designed to reduce the effects of stress and adversity. Emergency response personnel are an excellent example of job-related exposure to situations that often result in elevated pressure. Accumulated Stress, Adversity, and Trauma (ASAT) may reach critical levels causing harming the individual and the group of which they are part. Physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially and may result in injury, death, deviance, and other detrimental manifestations.

Not addressing the presence of ASAT, denying their existence, often leads to employees using excessive sick leave, performance issues, substance abuse, illness, and possibly death. We are experiencing an elevated suicide and homicidal rate emerging from mental health issues, some caused by exacerbating exposure to stress without relief. Much effort will be required to return "balance" to the working conditions of employees. One solution is to provide employees with resilience training, improving the environment, and supplying a toolkit containing the Skills & Attitudes of resilience to address and reduce the consequences of ASAT. Resilience is the power to adapt well to adversity and to cope with stress, tragedy, and crisis in your life. It means you can get back to a sense of normalcy and feelings of well-being. You regain control of your life as it relates to family, friends, work, and other commitments in life. When we are not broadcasting our stress and accompanying manifestations, those significant others in our life maintain their sense of balance. As with the high-stress occupations, outward behaviors that represent stress and adversity may cause fellow employees' discomfort, due to personal dysfunction.

II. Resilience Training

Resilience training is a way to provide essential skills to assist in managing crisis and reducing everyday stress and ultimately improving their effectiveness in meeting job and personal demands associated with work, family, and community.

We cannot simply wait for things to get better. While this may be possible, we see increasing strife, polarization, and angry outbursts that may turn into mass violence. Many are living in an unhealthy environment with elevated stress and adversity and diminished balance in their personal lives. There are five guiding principles to reduce the effects of ASAT that are of value to the individual, group, and organization.

Five Guiding Principles

1. When we talk about resilience, we are referring to a set of behavioral strategies for responding to challenges, adversity, and crisis. It is an ongoing process, not a result nor achievement. It is the ability to act with immediacy when called upon to do so in a way that minimizes ASAT and restores balance following exposure to adversity.

We begin by addressing personal resilience. Organizations and communities are a collection of individuals who have characteristics in common. You cannot create resilience on an organizational or community level without building the personal resilience of its members.

2. Our strategies for managing adversity and crisis have been learned (or not) through exposure to adversity. Individuals who lead challenging lives (i.e., people living with disability and immigrants) may often present as gritty or more resilient. They become well-practiced by managing adversity and challenge daily. But just as we build resilience through practice, resilience can be broken down by accumulated stress, adversity, and trauma without tools to manage them over time. We look at our past to see what has been learned about managing hardship and traumatic encounters and ask, "Did it work? Was it helpful?"

Peer Coaching and resilience skills training is an interactive experience. It involves small group exercises; sharing stories and examining how others might have responded, learning to connect and communicate with peers, and practicing the application of the Skills & Attitudes of resilience to relevant challenges. The beauty of this approach is that it allows us to come together, discuss difficult challenges, and coach one another based on our own life experiences.

3. What has been learned can be improved upon. We explore new options. Training in the Skills & Attitudes of resilience and basic peer coaching concepts are vital to promoting and enhancing health and well-being in the individuals that make up our organizations and communities. We must first assist individuals within the organization/community to cope with personal stress, adversity, and trauma (SAT). Resilience Skills & Attitudes are taught where they are lacking and further developed in others. The peer coaching basics allow individuals to begin the practice of reaching out, connecting to share what works and what does not in an environment where the challenges are relevant and familiar. These beliefs build peer coaching network and help maintain the Skills & Attitudes acquired in training.

4. As individuals within an organization and community become well-practiced in the Skills & Attitudes of resilience and supporting one another in the face of adversity, we expect to see less ASAT and more balance among the ranks. As balance improves among the classes, the organization/community becomes stronger, more balanced. Strong, resilient organizations/communities are not possible without with well-balanced and resilient members. We expect to see decreased absenteeism, decreased complaints/grievances/disciplinary actions. We also expect an increase in job satisfaction, independent/creative thinking, and problem-solving.

Most organizations must provide ongoing staff development. Vocations that expose employees to adversity, crisis, and trauma must do so to address the presence of A.S.A.T. Training that is narrowly focused on skills that are not used on a day-to-day basis but fulfills staff development requirements is not only a waste of employee time and energy but a waste of the organizations training budget. Training that provides something useful that can be used daily both personally and vocationally offers a far greater return. ASAT's ignored can lead to a litany of problems resulting in employee discipline, suspension, termination, or even prosecution. The costs related to these situations far exceeds the expense of the program we offer.

5. Once practiced and assimilated into the work environment, these skills & attitudes must be shared within the organization/community. Key personnel can participate in a train-the-trainer program to provide ongoing initial and refresher

training to their peers. The beauty of this step is that it allows those who have become skilled in applying these concepts to share them with others in a relevant and trusted environment. There will be no concerns on behalf of employees, who might otherwise have sought out therapeutic support to deal with ASAT's, that they may be jeopardizing their reputation and job.

Seeking out support in some vocations such as the public safety/first responder community is a sign of instability which may lead colleagues to question their peer's ability to "have their back" during crises. Uncertainty of this kind is at least unnerving and at worst destructive to the strength of teams to respond effectively with confidence and mutual trust. Peer coaching builds trusting relationships. Whether you are on the front-line or in the administrative offices, peer coaching offers support where there might otherwise have been none. Lack of appropriate support leads to burnout and high rates of turnover. Resilience training for personnel is a primary focus area to provide essential skills to assist managing crisis, reduce everyday stressful situations, and improve effectiveness in meeting job and personal demands associated with daily work and individual living.

We cannot exist with hope and anticipation that if we wait long enough, all will improve. While that is a possibility, we see increasing strife, polarization, impatience, and angry outbursts at anything disagreed with. It is an unhealthy environment that many encounters, elevating stress and adversity, and diminishing personal life balance. There are five guiding principles to reduce the effects of A.S.A.T. and found to be of value to the individual, group, and organization.

The principles simplified are:

1. Resilience is a set of learned behaviors.

2. Learned behaviors either work or they don't.

3. Our peers are a valued source of learning and support.

4. Practice is key to assimilating new behaviors.

5. Community/organizational resilience is built through ongoing internal training and peer support.

III. Overview of Program

The purpose of "Foundations of Resilience Training[2]" is to achieve the following objectives:

- Describe what "resilience" is and the critical role it plays in individual lives. This involves understanding the concept of resilience as a learned response to crisis and adversity.

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[2] . **Note**: Building Resilience, LLC. Calls their program, "Building Resilience Community Training Program." See: www.facebook.com/building .resilience 2015.

- Learn from the past. Examine past coping strategies and evaluate why they did or did not work to manage adversity through interactive individual and small group exercises.

- Identify current challenges/stressors. Evaluate their impact on personal and vocational life in the company of one's peer through interactive individual and small group exercises.

- Introduce options for developing new strategies and changing mindsets through practice applying the Skills & Attitudes of resilience to important challenges in the company of one's peers using interactive individual and small group exercises.

- Recognize the value of connecting with one's peers. Peer support is a powerful thing for frontline employees and administrators/supervisors as well. Peer coaching requires support one step further by providing a wealth of options and resources that are immediately available as needed.

- Introduce basic coaching concepts that will allow peer coaching to evolve naturally through practice. Group discussion and pairing are used to practice these strategies.

- Maintain what has been learned and share with new members by participating in our train-the-trainer program. Maintaining resilience within an organization/community means taking care that each of its members has the Skills & Attitudes necessary to cope and coaching and support are available to them on an ongoing basis.

- Build a resilient organization/community. Research supports the affirmation that resilient people are the foundations upon which resilient societies are built. The process is simple. Train key individuals who then practice the Skills & Attitudes of resilience in their response to day-to-day adversity. Through observation and peer coaching, these skills spread within an organization/community. Promote and practice the concept of peer coaching and support to maintain the newly acquired skills. Build these concepts into your future organization/community through ongoing internal training and administrative support; providing employees the skills and knowledge needed to perform their duties reduce the impact of accumulated stress, adversity, and trauma (ASAT).

Importance

Employee stress diminishes productivity, sense of wellbeing, and can damage relationships, and motivation. We witness confrontation with customers and fellow employees and an elevated agitation that brings imbalance to those who must work with an individual displaying such behaviors. Excessive sick leave is used. Late for work leads to added coverage (at overtime rates). Lack of concentration causes costly mistakes that must be corrected. Excellent customer service and the motivation to provide it suffers and in its wake are dissatisfaction and diminished outcomes. In public safety, there is an added element of danger and the potential to harm self or others.

Work environments have become increasingly concerning due to the angry outbursts of some employees who cause injury and death. We have argumentative employees who raise issues with procedures, alleging unfair and expect preferential

treatment, and whose disrespect of management and fellow employees raise red flags of concern. When an employee is careless or disregards safety and rules of conduct, they create an environment of disruption and anxiety. Observed by others, their behavior generally results in increased stress and confusion in the work environment.

Wallis (2018)[3], discussed the cost of stress on today's business in Australia citing the impact of anxiety, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorder, and gastrointestinal disorders; all of which when experienced affect the individual's life and workplace performance. Business and organizations, in general, are concerned with the results of stress (and should be), due to the myriad of costs associated with employees who are less energetic, agitated and who experience psychological and physiological symptoms. Wallis, citing work by Stanford professor Jeffrey Pfeffer, found the use of overtime hours lowers average output per hour worked for all industries, indicating a ten percent increase in overtime results in a 2.4 percent decrease in productivity. Sick leave use and lower attendance at work due to stress-related illness lead to overtime.

Financial Cost of Stress (Wallis, 2018).

- Stress-related depression and anxiety cost Australian businesses approximately $10.9 billion a year, a substantial cost because of stress.

- Absenteeism costs Australia around 92 million working days each year, with the average daily cost rising from $308 in 2013 to $340 in 2014. The direct cost to employers was found to be around $10.11 billion per year.

- The cost of presenteeism (not fully functioning at work because of medical conditions) is estimated at almost $26 billion in 2005–06 (Medibank Private, 2005)

- The average total cost of a mental stress claim is $140,000 (Aust. Govt. Compendium of OHS and Workers' Compensation Statistics, 2009)

- Stress is a significant cost to companies across the developed world: it's estimated that in Australia, US, UK and Germany, $200-$300 billion a year is lost on absenteeism employee turnover diminished productivity accidents, and medical, legal and insurance fees.

- Additionally, stress is now shown to be responsible for 80% of all diseases and illnesses. In the US, 60%-90% of all visits to doctors relate to stress.

Employees are an expensive business cost when all is functioning well. Add to that the cost of stress-related illness, loss of productivity, and the increase in the goods we purchase to cover the costs of lost time and other expenses and the amounts are significant.

Farris[4], in his article, "The Cost of Stress on Your Business," discusses the effect of stress on job performance. He cites the estimated cost of job-related stress costs

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[3] . https://www.griffithconsulting.com/blog-1/2018/10/16/the-cost-of-stress-on-business-today

[4] . https://www.smallbusinessbonfire.com/cost-stress-business/ Ferris (2018).

business upwards to 300 billion dollars annually.   To this cost, he attributes common reasons within the workplace itself that contribute to stress.

- 83% of American's say that work is a significant cause of stress.

- An estimated 40% of workers say they are unproductive at work as a direct result of stress.

- One million people are absent every day from work due to stress.

- 40% of employee turnover is directly related to stress.

- For the average company, turnover can cost almost 40% of total earnings.

- The top workplace stressors include low pay, unrealistic job expectations, long and inflexible hours, lack of opportunity for growth and advancement, lack of participation in decision making, job insecurity, and undefined job expectations.

There are many contributors to stress, and we often focus on the responsibility of the workplace to reduce them and improve the work environment for the employee. We rationalize that the employee also must manage stress, and with the proper tools would be able to do so. Address this, the need for resilience training is being promoted, providing the employee with self-management skills and abilities for self-improvement.

Resilience Training

Providing employee resilience training will likely reduce stress-related costs. Training and peer coaching offer the organization a defensive approach, one that improves the employee's psychological and physiological health, leads to higher productivity. Training contributes to improvement in the following ways.

- Increase coping skills available to manage hardship and traumatic encounters.

- Enhances Skills & Attitudes such as flexibility and problem solving that allows people to bounce back from difficult times.

- Sharpening skills are critical factors in health and wellness maintenance programs.

- Helps an individual to manage adversity and to live a balanced life.

- Helps organizations and employees to manage stress, promote wellness, and accept change while building available support networks leading to increased job satisfaction.

- Provides an interactive program that includes small group exercises allowing participants to share examples and examine other strategies used to respond to traumatic situations and generate internal reflection.

- Provides individuals with proven ways to "pull oneself up by their bootstraps" and begin to manage stress and strong emotions.

Self-Management.

"The ability to know and recognize your feelings and to differentiate between them, to know what you are feeling and why and to know what caused the feelings are

emotional self-awareness" (Stein & Book, 2000:53[5]). What you are feeling has observable physical signs; indicators that you are experiencing stress, troubled thinking, or emotional distress. Your feelings and bodily responses are signals to what is occurring with your thoughts and emotions.

1. **Experiencing Anger**.

   Physical Signs:

   a. hands on hips posture
   b. Pounding heart
   c. Sweating and rapid breathing
   d. Eyes flared open
   e. A tight set of the mouth
   f. Some flushing
   g. Directed attention to a person or others

2. **Rage & Fury.**

   Physical Signs:

   a. Clenched fists
   b. Cold focused stare
   c. Loud and rapid speech
   d. Not listening well
   e. Oblivious of surrounding

3. **Depression / Despair / Despondency**

   Physical Signs:

   a. Fatigue
   b, Weighed-down posture
   c. Slouching
   d. Staring into space
   e. A slow and hesitant voice
   f. Frequent sighing

4. **Anxiety.**

   Physical Signs:

   A. Restlessness,
   b. Pounding heart
   c. Rapid breathing
   d. Nervous energy

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[5] . Stein, S., & Book, H. (2000). The EQ Edge. Canada, Toronto. Stoddart Publishing.

e. Unable to sit still
f. Eyes look around rapidly
g. Look of tension on the face

5. **Fear / Panic**

   <u>Physical Signs</u>:

   a. Feeling weak, faint, or dizzy.
   <u>b</u>. Tingling or numbness
   <u>c</u>. Aching muscles and headaches
   d. Tension in neck and shoulders
   e. Seemingly over-awareness keeps cautious looking around oneself
   f. Desire to blindly flee if fear becomes overwhelming
   <u>g</u>. Sense of terror
   <u>h</u>. Chills, chest pains, breathing difficulty

When we experience undue stress and other emotional pressure, our body will often show signs of that discomfort. A careful observer will see these bodily signals and gain a greater understanding of the issues. If you are the person exhibiting these symptoms and can recognize and acknowledge the emotion driving them, steps can be taken to calm and reduce their impact.

If you have a strong sense of self-awareness and recognize when you are angry, happy, fearful, anxious, sad, irritable, seductive, distressed, depressed, and many others; if you can identify these emotions in others, you have an understanding of what is inherent in each of us. The ability to manage these emotions, in the hands of a peer coach, is invaluable. It provides real-world experience to draw from and is immediately available as needed.

Being conscious of our feelings and the reasons underlying them is crucial to our physical and mental health. Humans strive for happiness and well-being and to find balance in the world we live in and with the people who share it with us. Understanding and removing the barriers to achieving it is the goal.

Emotional health is more natural to achieve when we have the knowledge and appropriate tools to do so. Resilience training offers tools to help recover from distress and discouragement. Armed with the Skills & Attitudes of resilience, understanding of how to apply them and the provision of proper support; we are generally on a firm footing to be successful.

IV. Self-Management

<u>Performance Behaviors</u>

Stress results in preoccupation and distraction from current focus and negatively impacts on carrying out one's duties. When unable to resolve issues arising from stress and adversity, we may find ourselves at odds with work policy and other performance issues, that could result in discipline or termination. Trauma at any level diminishes a

person's ability to perform their work with adequacy and effectiveness, detracting from the organization's expectations. The organization has a responsibility to monitor its employees and when observed to take steps to correct employee deficits affecting work performance. Resilience skills allow an individual to head off these symptoms and to assist in reducing them if present.

When our normal life balance is affected, we are not able to resolve issues, solve problems, and experience physical and affective discomfort. If longstanding and of a severe nature, we may experience physical discomfort or illness, frequent anger, and other dysfunction that impact our daily lives, work, and standard engagement in life. Stress creates distraction and preoccupation, which in turn may lead to minor confusion and lethargy. It is the responsibility of each organization to monitor employees taking appropriate steps to assist with observed distress when identified. Resilience skills allow an individual to divert from these symptoms, effectively reducing their impact.

BounceBack

One of the tools we use to teach the Skills & Attitudes of resilience is BounceBack. BounceBack is a serious game, a tool to help build mental toughness by asking people to respond to real-world challenges, using the Skills & Attitudes of resilience. It was developed as a tool to practice responding to life's challenges. Challenges are presented, and the user chooses Skills & Attitudes that he or she wishes to apply to reply to that challenge. It's straightforward. It's practice. With 35 decks and 680 challenge questions, it's a lot of practice.

Each BounceBack deck focuses on challenges faced by particular people. People of differing race, color, religion, national origin, socioeconomic standing, sexual orientation, occupation/vocation, and state of physical/mental health, to name a few. How do we know what challenges are faced by whom? By listening to the stories of others who have offered to share them with us. The struggles are real.

Not all challenges are unique to only one individual/community, but some are. Police officers, immigrants, and those who live in poverty certainly face challenges unique to their situations. While not quite as unique, there are challenges relevant to ones' age. Adolescents and teens face a different set of challenges than Baby Boomers do. Individuals with health/mental health concerns may share similar challenges related to illness and disability and yet still have unique challenges directly related to their condition(s). What we provide by creating many decks, is something that speaks to some while asking others to empathize with and practice responding to novel situations. We offer a tool that initiates the conversation that speaks directly to some of those unique challenges that may be difficult to discuss and even harder to navigate.

The BounceBack game is unique in that it allows us to come together, discuss difficult challenges, and coach one another based on what we have learned about the Skills & Attitudes of resilience. A facilitator, teacher or coach would certainly bring structure and direction to that discussion, but it is not required. A new hire is not necessary to carry out this program. We know that resilience can be learned. Once learned, we

support/promote peer coaching as a means of maintaining a resilient organization/community. In the face of adversity, there will not always be someone to provide structure and direction. We must depend upon ourselves and our peers. That's who will be there before the first responders arrive on the scene of any disaster and that is who will be beside us as we face more and more 21st century challenges.

IV. Fifteen Strategies to Help Overcome Stress, Adversity, and Trauma[6]

The fifteen strategies illustrate how an individual, supervisor, and organization can apply them to help regain balance following a traumatic event.

Opening Statement

People who respond to stress and adversity have coalesced to provide the individual with response mechanisms, and they include family, work, social engagements, training, education, and experience in managing past incidents. Of the following list, at least one strategy should feel comfortable and can be used to help return the individual to a more balanced state following a traumatic or stressful event.

List of Fifteen Steps

1. Connecting with others is better than isolation.
2. Flexibility is better than rigidity.
3. Communicating better than silence.
4. We can help ourselves and others to solve problems.
5. Recognize and deal with feeling and not ignore them.
6. Show self-confidence and act on values, not fear.
7. Find purpose and meaning in what you do.
8. Engage in networking with others.
9. Be optimistic and not pessimistic.
10. Seek professional help.
11. Write about the issue/s.
12. Tell your story to others.
13. Use of humor.
14. Take care of self.
15. Take care of others.

The following information provides an overview of applications for each of the strategies. The individual reading them will find that he or she can discover compatibility among one or more and apply the concept in helpful ways to their needs.

Strategies

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[6] . Strategies expanded by Richard Lumb for use in an academic class at UMA.

1. **Connecting with others is better than isolation.**

    a. <u>Individual</u>

    ▪ When facing demons, it is helpful to seek out a person or persons you are comfortable with and talk out the issue and seek guidance and support.

    ▪ Loneliness is painful and it does not allow you the opportunity to work through issues as you tend to dwell on them, sometimes excessively. Push yourself if necessary, to talk with someone you trust and like and who will listen to your story.

    ▪ Being with people you know and feel comfortable with helps diminish the negative feelings and enhances working through problems and issues.

    ▪ Overcoming the depression or stress that is troubling by sharing with someone helps, can make a huge difference in your life and allows you to feel another's helpful presence. You need to get over the "*I can handle this on my own"* for that does not work sometimes.

    b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

    ▪ As a <u>supervisor,</u> your responsibility is to step into the breach and address performance issues. When a subordinate is not performing as expected, or his or her work is affected others, the responsibility is clear. If the employee is not willing to talk with you, then explain what you are seeing, how it is affecting others, and that you are eager and will assist the employee work through the issue.

    ▪ If the refusal is the response and the behavior is likely to continue, then mandatory referral to EAP or another service may be the next step. The critical point, you have a responsibility to address the issue and find a resolution. This is not hard-hearted; it is reaching out to help someone you have an obligation with who are experiencing problems. At work, performance issues are the opening for a discussion.

    ▪ And, it is also essential to let the individual know that you are concerned and want to help. If you are trusted, generally good things emerge.

2. **Flexibility is better than rigidity.**

    a. <u>Individual</u>

    ▪ A rigid and unyielding attitude and behavior turn people off, and eventually, you find yourself alone.

    ▪ Unsmiling, grim, griping, and other negative activities are harmful to your health and to those who must deal with you.

- Attempt to see a broader and more open perspective. Look for the good and not only the bad or negative aspects. You can help your attitude by saying to yourself, "*I want to feel more positive, and I will look for the good and not the negative!*" Sometimes this creates a mindset that opens new feelings of optimism.

- Do not seek that everything must be 100% or you will not participate, and you will miss out on a lot. You might find that 60% turns out well and that you are satisfied at that level.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- With frustration comes simmering anger or disquiet feelings. When a subordinate's behavior is irritating and necessitates action, it is usually at the end of a period when you hoped the problem would resolve itself. Guard against overreaction.

- When discussing an employee's behavior and its effect on the workplace, assuming a more open attitude to seek understanding, may open the employee to a more willing partnership. When people are in a confrontational situation, it is difficult for either party not to bring up defensive mechanisms. Each party tends to shut down hearing the other person, raise the level of being "on guard" and other influences that will diminish and reduce communications.

- Start from a comfortable position if possible (safety issues leave no room for negotiation) and seek the employee's compliance and weigh into problem-solving.

3. Communicating better than silence.

a. Individual

- Sitting alone mulling over your problems and troubles leads to deeper levels of despair.

- Talk with people you know and respect, seek input, ask questions, find out the names of people who may be able to help.

- Telling your story helps by itself and when others weigh in and aid the real benefit to become therapeutic.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- Silence, waiting for a change, or facial expressions of disapproval is meaningless. Step into the breach and address the issue/s when you have enough information to make your case.

- Tell the employee what you are seeing and know, for their input. Seek solutions to the identified problems both from you as a supervisor and from

the individual you are talking with. Their contribution is critical for it should not all come from you to them with an expectation. Their buy-in can lead to successful change.

4. We can help ourselves and others to solve problems.

    a. <u>Individual</u>

- Take a piece of paper and write down the issue or problem.

- Identify any variables of aspects that you feel are contributing to the issue.

- Make sure you understand the real situation and facts and do not leave out any important aspect.

- Make a "solutions chart" showing issues and problems and then list ways to overcome them. Be specific.

<u>Solutions Chart</u>

<u>Issue or Problem</u> Clearly state and define the parts. Be specific. Prioritize if it will be helpful. Provide a timeline to maintain progress.	<u>Potential Solutions</u> What are probable solutions? Be open-minded as you can always cross some of them off.	<u>People that can help</u> List names and telephone numbers of people who might be able to help or who can make a referral to someone who can.
1.	1.	1.

- Frequently update your chart as new information and changes begin to take place. This can become a living or track record of how you overcome issues and problems.

    b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- When during an issue or problem, it is challenging to see a solution. The power of a supervisor working with someone to find answers and to map out a path that will help resolve and reduce the trauma is un-precedented. You must be willing and have skills appropriate for helping someone.

- Get the employee to complete a solutions chart.

- Review with him or her and add in your suggestions and information.

- Agree with the employee on a timeframe to work on a resolution.

- Conduct follow-up discussions and track progress.

5. Recognize and deal with feeling and not ignore their presence.

   a. <u>Individual</u>

- Keeping your feelings tightly wrapped and insulated from addressing them will lead you further into your gloom.

- Acknowledge that you are feeling stressed, uncomfortable, edgy, and any number of other sensations. Look for them and if present you will recognize you are discomforted.

- Self-help may work, or it might become necessary to talk with a professional or service (EAP) to get proper help. There is no shame in that whatsoever.

   b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- Getting employees to discuss feelings is burdensome. It becomes challenging with males and with employees of public safety organizations. Nonetheless, unless the discussion on what the employee is feeling is explored, there is little hope for resolution.

- If the discussion is not working and your concern is deep enough, use the organization's policy to direct the employee to professional help.

6. Show self-confidence and act on values, not fear.

   a. <u>Individual</u>

- Have faith in yourself and trust your judgment.

- No shortcuts. Follow straightforward self-advice.

- Fear driven decisions are often wrong as they are made in haste and without full information that is considered and weighed for accuracy

   b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- Most organizations have a value statement to guide employees. The unit within which a person works or his or her immediate may also have a values statement. If one exists, it should be put on the table and discussed with the troubled employee. I also suggest doing the same with the organization's mission and goals.

- See how the value coincides with the individual and where adjust must be made.

- Be sure to explain everything in clear terms clarifying where needed.

- The goal is to give the employee confidence and to help him, or she formulates a plan they can follow that is going to have positive results.

- Fear of the unknown or anticipated results that may not occur can diminish the freedom to seek solutions or to reach out to bring about the appropriate change. Fear paralyzes if not controlled.

7. Find purpose and meaning in what you do.

a. Individual

- While sometimes challenging to find the motivation during times of trouble, doing something that has value to you and others that you respect and like can result in a positive pay off to you personally.

- Look for the positive outcomes in what you are doing. If it helps, make a list that states the meaning of it all. Who is supported, what is the extent of that help, what can be done to make it more meaningful, etc.?

- Talk with others who share the work and see what their thinking is about the value in what you and they do.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- A supervisor can help an individual explore how a job or assignment is of value and ways to find meaning.

- This is done through discussion and questions and clearly explaining and clarifying questions.

- Writing down key points and where issues exist allows for later clarification and resolution of contracting positions. The goal is to eliminate barriers and difficulties to the extent possible.

- Renewing the employees' commitment and personal fulfillment in what they do is a positive outcome.

8. Engage in networking with others.

a. Individual

- Powerful tool. Find others who can offer help or suggestions and who may know someone or organizations that provide ideas and help to move you forward in meeting your goals and needs.

- The more people you engage with, the more important the information and options that can lead to quality outcomes.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- As a supervisor, you may want to assist the employee meet with and talk to someone else who can offer insight and help. Arranging that contact is helpful.

- The follow-up to see that the meeting occurred. No need to inquire to the outcomes as they may/is outside you need to know.

- You can continue to move the employee forward from the issue or problem to a more balanced work environment.

9. Be optimistic and not pessimistic.

a. Individual

- Look for and see the bright side and avoid the negative that is all too easy to find. When the mind jumps to a negative response or image, stop, take a minute and think consciously, "what is good with what I am seeing or confronting?"

- Pessimism takes valuable energy from the emotions and body and diminishes creative thinking.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- It is not unusual for individuals experiencing miserable work conditions or stress-related trauma to embrace negativity as it helps justify already unhappy feelings.

- Supervisors, in the discussion, should also point out positive aspects and to seek understanding that all is not hopeless. Look for and share program or other information that can help and provide an uplifting experience for the employee.

10. Seek professional help.

a. Individual

- When issues are more significant than the individual can cope with, it is essential to seek professional help from someone trained and certified.

- Emotional and psychological trauma can be debilitating and harmful in many ways. Letting the symptoms persist only worsen the conditions and lead to further dysfunction.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- Supervisors must be aware of organizational policy and services to which an employee is directed.

- When situations persist, and additional assistance is needed, the supervisor should not hesitate to direct the employee to seek that help.

- Supervisors have a responsibility to the organization and the employee, and while not always popular, appropriate action is required.

11. **Write about the issue/s.**

a. <u>Individual</u>

- Writing can be therapeutic. Writing helps reduce the chaos of thinking by utilizing a more focused and linear approach to understanding what happened. Writing allows one to begin the process of mapping out where one wants to be.

- Writing allows the writer to sort through and to edit and revise as the story becomes more evident. Without this, sorting out the detail is difficult when it is running in an endless loop in one's mind, causing more frustration and confusion.

- Writing is a process. To understand complexity, putting it on paper and using a word processor allows a person to make distinct categories and lump like information together. Writing also allows us to note where relevant information is missing and to make notations or side notes where additional thinking identify take place.

- Writing for oneself is private and allows total honesty of feelings, expression of anxiety, anger, and doubt – to name a few emotions. What you may hesitate to say to others can be said in private to yourself. Reliving, considering and examining again, and seeking to make sense of something can take place as you write. You need not fear what others might think, for you are your reviewer and critic. You can best judge where you must go to bring about clarity and help with life planning.

b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- Many of the same principles for the individual apply to the supervisor. If a situation is conflicting or confusing, it helps to write down what is known, what remains unclear or unknown and to make notes to help organize.

- Supervisors can also recommend that the individual he or she is assisting write about the incident. The writer has the *option* to share with the supervisor.

12. Tell your story to others.

a. <u>Individual</u>

- Telling one's story is commonplace with acts of heroism or extraordinary bravery or accomplishment. It allows others to share in the detail, and it permits the storyteller the opportunity to not only share but process the information as it relates to one's personality, soul, and place in the world. It may well help others in their quest to seek placement in the occupation and career.

- Storytelling can be entertaining, a teaching moment, a lesson on what to do or not to do and generally beneficial to the student of example and experience.

b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- Supervisors and the organization can share relevant information with other members of the profession using the experiences of other members. A story that is well told by the person who experienced the incident or learning outcome is believable and brings grounding of peer to peer or another employee to a stronger point of reality.

13. Use humor.

a. <u>Individual</u>

- To lighten the moment is to reduce stress. When the pressure of an incident or event is oppressing, a moment of levity may shake loose the mood. We do not advocate a public display of levity rather a quiet and private moment of appropriate humor to break the tension. It must be done in the right frame and moment. Humor must not be executed in a demeaning manner or harm someone involved or present.

b. <u>Supervisor/Organization</u>

- Supervisors have a dual role. One is to establish that humor at the expense of others is not acceptable. The other is to find humor in appropriate places to illustrate camaraderie and fond concern for one of their subordinates or themselves. A supervisor who can find humor reflecting some action or behavior that is relevant to them and funny can be endearing and demonstrate the level of humanness they possess.

- Supervisors that can use balanced self-deprecation will be successful in stress reduction. Those that can laugh at themselves put others at ease. The balance comes in between clownish self-bashing and the act of taking oneself too seriously. And the wise supervisor will be able to strike a balance in almost all situations.

- We note that humor must be tastefully done, appropriate to the moment, and not to harm others. If this is accomplished correctly, it has a positive outcome on others.

14. Take care of self.

a. Individual

- While assistance is essential and often necessary, each person who experiences the effects of stress, adversity, and trauma must self-engage in overcoming the negative impact on their emotions and physical health. Without self-engagement, any process is more difficult to assimilate into the healing process.

- With the right attitude and with an optimistic outlook, it is easier to recover. This is not easy at times and takes grit to tough it out requires a personal commitment to oneself.

b. Supervisor/Organization

- Supervisors also carry the responsibility to assist an employee under their charge. While this may conflict with other related duty requirements, balancing the two can be accomplished. One need not compromise duty and responsibility with compassion. Understanding the dividing line and being open and honest are useful tools to use when facing this dilemma.

- The organization, too, id responsible for helping an employee who is experiencing issues and problems. The time for this to happen is as a preventive model heading off a problem before it occurs. We do not invest enough time, effort, and resources in preventing employees from being overwhelmed with stress and adversity. The traditional model of "suck it up and move on" has no place in today's world where the level of trauma is often over the top for people working in emergency services.

15. Take care of others.

a. Individual

- One of the excellent services you can provide to peers and other agency employees is to help when problems arise. Assistance must be with sincerity, honesty, and without any self-aggrandizement.

- Comfort is given simply by making a call to determine how someone is if there is anything you can do to assist, run errands, look after the needs of other family members. We often assume that when an incident is over that healing is instantaneous. This is frequently not the case! Depending on the depth of

trauma, a familiar and friendly face is a vast dimension of comfort. That leads to a reduction of stress and a gradual return to health.

- There have been many instances where more than one fellow employee joined together to do such chores as cut grass, go grocery shopping, help with other physical tasks that cannot be done by the injured party. A few hours of regular help reduced cost increases feelings of well-being and removed additional worry. What a great gift!

b. Supervisor/Organization

- The first duty of a supervisor is to care for those under his or her leadership. This means holding people to standards, to meeting the mission and goals of the agency or performing their duties in an exemplary manner. It also means that when problems arise to step up and take the lead in ensuring conditions do not get worse.

- Some people who report to a supervisor often consider that individual the closest person in the organization to whom they relate. Given that, who better to step to the plate and make sure all bases are covered with the level and type of assistance needed and that includes health, domestic, property, and other influences on the life of a person who is unable to step up and care for them him or herself.

V. Applying Resilience Factors Emotional and Physical Well-being: Accumulating Negative Residue

Public safety practitioners are not ASAT immune and experience burnout, fatigue, depression, other disorders, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Prominent signals will be apparent with employees suffering these maladies. With increasing stress and accumulating negativity, there is a breakdown in the human immune system that affects physical and mental health. This leads to behavior problems, ineffectiveness, decreased job satisfaction and feeling that equates to a loss of social support. This growing and lingering weariness destroys motivation, feelings of well-being, and leads to dysfunction. We all have worked with colleagues who display symptoms that are recognizable and if left unattended end up tragically.

As an example, we will call him John, was undergoing a divorce, and the effects of that trauma and a job as a police officer were overwhelming. Traveling on the Interstate, in his truck and with another police officer from a different jurisdiction came up behind a vehicle in the outside lane going the speed limit. Both lanes were busy with traffic, and John was unable to pass. He resolved to blow his horn and as there was no place to get to the right lane, the vehicle he was following remained where he was, neither increasing nor decreasing speed.

When able to pass, he did so with horn blowing, giving the other driver the bird, and shouting obscenities through the open window. The driver of the other vehicle was a black male, and he was verbally assaulted with obscenities.

The other vehicle was being operated by an off-duty Highway Patrol Trooper who pulled into the first exit of the Interstate and called 911 to report a tailgating and obnoxious driver, providing the license plate number. The call went to the County Sheriff's Office and the operator there on looking up the name called the police department as the vehicle was registered to our department member. A later conference with that individual resulted in a suspension for unbecoming conduct on or off duty. This behavior was acceptable to the Highway Patrol Troop Commander.

A second incident involved this officer leaving his assigned patrol area, seeking coverage from another officer, while he drove to his former residence to see if his wife, now in a divorce, was with another person. On discovery, a hearing was held, and with other issues of disciplinary behavior, the officer's employment was terminated.

In hindsight, stress and adversity were contributing factors. Reliance on a policy that was discipline-focused has merit; however, adept observation coupled with knowledge of what the individual was experiencing, should have triggered prevention steps by the department, a prevention model where the individual was assisted through the period of high stress. Work assignments, supervisor intervention, and other measures might well have resulted in a different outcome, as the incidents would not have occurred.

Functioning Amidst Chaos

During times of high stress, it is usually accompanying intense and non-routine encounters with severe weather, high-risk situations, the danger that is over the top such as encountering someone with a weapon, a fire burning out of control, multiple injuries demanding immediate attention, a disaster scene that is overwhelming and other like examples. The need for a resilient response requires the depth of those skills to be adequate, personal courage to bring them forth, and sustaining a level of courage to work alone or with others to bring the situation under control.

How is this possible when all around you are scenes of chaos? The first step is to do a quick observation, take in what you can, and not focus too in-depth on an aspect unless it poses an immediate threat. Next, do a quick prioritization, where are continuing threats existing, what are the greatest needs, how do you prioritize, what assistance is needed, and ensure it is dispatched. Telling yourself to act calmly, with purpose, utilizing training and experience establishes a mindset that guides action. Succumbing to panic or chaos will not serve the needs of the situation, people present, or yourself.

Addressing Job Stress & Trauma.

Your job presents challenges that others in your community do not encounter. You are exposed to danger, demands, and challenges that can harm or kill you or others who you have sworn to protect. You accepted these duties in taking the oath of office, and over time, you accumulate layers of experience that are positive or negative, some unbelievable, and others are so traumatic that they keep you awake at night. You are subject to stress, mental and physical health issues, and potential changes to your attitude that causes loss of family, friends, and opportunity. You can succumb to these influences, or you can learn resilience skills and make them an active part of your conscious life, leading to a healthier life and nurturing relationships. Unlike other knowledge and skills, resilience training strengthens your life and extends longevity.

Applied Resilience.

You have and will encounter events that are challenging evoking fear and confusion. When all people about you are in a panic or afraid to the point of inertia, you must perform and perform well. How is this done?

Reivich & Shatte (2002)[7], offer four principles of how people can improve and change their lives through resilience.

Four Principles.

1. Life: Change is Possible.

- Learning shapes who we are and what we do. Direct new learning to overcome the past. When change is needed to change past occurrences, people can change positively and in an appositive manner. Our thoughts and emotions lead to our behavior. Reivich and Shatte believe that our thinking is of more importance to determining resilience, and that is turn will manage emotions and behavior.

2. Thinking is the Key to Boosting Resilience.

- According to Dr. Aaron Beck, a Psychiatrist was known for his cognitive therapy. His research determined cognitions cause emotions and emotions matter in determining who remains resilience who succumbs (Reivich and Shatter, 2002:53).
- Cognitive therapy is a dialogue between the client and therapist to examine inaccurate belief systems, e.g., thoughts.
- Thoughts and emotions are at the core of who we are.

3. Accurate Thinking is the Key.

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[7] . Reivich, K., & Shatte, K. (2002). The Resilience Factor. NY, New York, Broadway Books.

- The early work by psychologists Taylor and Brown, (1988[8]), stated that people process the world in ways that often lead to positive illusions leading to unrealistically positive self-evaluation, exaggerated perceptions of control and unrealistic optimism. They posited the illusions might improve mental health as healthier people overestimate the degree of control they have and see themselves in an overly positive light resulting in unrealistic optimism.
- Unrealistic optimism has been found to decrease resistance to stress.
- Maintaining a positive outlook without denial of reality, to see the positive aspects of a situation, without ignoring the negative aspects, is healthy.
- Realistic optimism does not assume a positive outlook without also seeing the negative aspects. That balance is healthier that blind belief all is well.

4. Refocus on Human Strengths.

- Resilience skills and knowledge allow the individual to deal with the world and the situations that we encounter as humans.
- It assists us with issues at work, home, and other situations in which we engage. Nothing is perfect all the time, and when an item is troubling, we can mesh with it and adapt to worry, fear, and hopelessness; or to take a more positive outlook and work with optimism and a more positive path forward.

Fortifying Personal Resilience and Hardiness.

Maddi, S. (2006: abstract) [9], stipulates that hardiness *"is a combination of attitudes that provides the courage and motivation to do the hard, strategic work of turning stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities."* Life and occupational engagements can and do present situational stress that may affect performance, meeting obligations, introduce problematic issues that impact on psychological, physiological, emotional, and social engagement.

Maddi & Kobasa (1986)[10] proposed the concept of personal "hardiness" to manage stressful circumstances. They argue that a person should acquire a self-perception of <u>commitment</u> (to family, friends, work, colleagues and other engagements), <u>control</u> of (emotions, activities, behavior) and in finding renewed interest in what is important to them, to get involved and avoid feelings of alienation. In this way, they

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[8] . Taylor, S.E., & Brown, J.D. (1988).   Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. Psychological Bulletin, 193-210. 103,

[9] . Salvatore R. Maddi, Department of Psychology and Social Behavior, School of Social Ecology, 3340 Social Ecology II, Irvine, CA 92697-7085, USA. E-mail: srmaddi@uci.edu ISSN 1743-9760 print/ISSN 1743-9779 online/06/030160−9   2006 Taylor & Francis DOI: 10.1080/17439760600619609.

[10] . Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., Puccetti, M., and Zola, M. (1986). Relative effectiveness of hardiness, exercise and social support as resources against illness. Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 29, 525-533. (Reprinted in A. Steptoe & J. Wardle (Eds.), Psychosocial processes and health: A reader. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

influence the course of events they engage in and are not self-viewed as victims of circumstance.

Referring to hardiness training, requires the engagement of cognition (thinking), emotion (feelings), and action to effectively cope with stressful circumstances and to use self-assessment to deepen and strengthen commitment and resiliency in facing life's challenges (Maddi, 1987)[11]. These factors are critical to high-stress occupations and engagements, where the likelihood of chaos, deviance, disaster, and unusual events take place.

VI. Lessons of Experience and Examples.

If we are to have an impact on the wellbeing of ourselves, and others, it must emerge from the knowledge and an accumulation of "what works" based on experience and observation. It is our opinion and experience that when we have knowledgeable individuals conducting the training, we can effectively transfer learning to others, which in turn take that forward to their group and lead similar successful professional development.

A train-the-trainer program is cost-effective, builds linkages, strengthens collaboration, and encourages partnership. In this model, we have knowledgeable and familiar individuals working within their organization, community, group, and other purposeful gatherings to build knowledge and skills in all other individuals. Contact with the authors and foundational trainers establishes access for assistance, additional information, problem-solving, and reference resources. The concept, *"From the Center Outward"* is the key to total communications and support. No gaps in seeking help, or to obtain needed information, to pose questions and receive answers, and to address problems and issues and emerge with sustainable solutions. That is the concept we provide in the delivery of resilience training development, the revised book, and the depth of information accompanying the total package.

The goal is communications and the exchange of information with the single purpose of strengthening individuals, who are often associated with groups and generally in an organizational structure. We have found that the causes of denial are many.

- Denial
- Resistance to change
- Concerns for further challenges
- Too much reliance on discipline
- Lack of dedication to employees to maintain their health and wellbeing

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[11] .

Maddi, S. R. (1987). Hardiness training at Illinois Bell Telephone. In J. P. Opatz (Ed.), Health promotion evaluation. Stevens Point, WI: National Wellness Institute.

- An administration that is not committed to preventing problems before they occur

With an inhouse trainer, someone familiar with the material, the authors and creators of the professional development, access to assistance and information; we create a train-the-trainer environment that others are familiar with and comfortable in attending the training by that individual. Issues of time, convenience, accommodation, and access are dissolved and do not pose a problem to overcome. This model also provides "on-site" consultation and requests for assistance, which are less burdensome than seeking outside help.

As described earlier, we are no longer patient with many of the issues facing people who encounter stress, adversity, and trauma! We have developed a response that works and have found satisfaction from many diverse groups of people, validating our approach. It is all about sustainable change, overcoming barriers, diminishing problems, and elevating people to new knowledge, change motivation, and preparation for situations that may be chaotic and harmful and with some – devastating. We can reduce the impact through professional development, and in that belief, we present this information and program proposal.

Authors/Instructors.

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Ronald Breazeale, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist with over 30 years of experience in the fields of mental health and alcohol and drug abuse. Dr. Breazeale has worked with public safety organizations in several capacities since the mid-1970. He helped in the development of a program for public safety supervisors and managers to recognize employee issues and problems and devise strategies to address them before they became a significant concern. This program was taught by the Carolinas Institute for Community Policing, a project funded by the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing, Washington, D.C. Dr. Breazeale is the author of "Reaching Home," a book that discusses conquering fear, a story of resilience, of bouncing back from adversity. His current project, "*Maine Resilience: Teaching 21st Century Survival Skills*" collaborates with the American Red Cross of Maine, Emergency Management Agencies, and Alpha One.

Charlene Fernald Moynihan, B.A., attended the University of Southern Maine as a non-traditional student graduating with a B.A. in Psychology with a minor in Philosophy in 1992. She spent 44 years working in the field of human/social services. Those years of direct service to individuals managed by systems that cannot meet all the needs of the many served have led to her current interest in building resilience. Since 2015, Charlene has studied the subject and helped to create training and tools to teach resilience Skills & Attitudes under the mentorship of Dr. Ron Breazeale. She finds this to be a practical way to facilitate meaningful change in the lives of individuals and communities. Charlene is currently pursuing her National Board Certification as a Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC). Once certified, she will begin offering Strategic Personal Resilience Coaching to both individuals and small groups. She has an interest in working with individuals facing recently diagnosed and potentially disabling conditions as well as individuals and groups having a loved one affected by addiction