



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BUILDING RESILIENCE: FIVE KEY CAPABILITIES

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Executive Summary

'As businesses and technology move rapidly we all need to design mechanisms to cope with and respond to changing environments. We must be flexible, deal with ambiguity and be ready to respond'
HR Manager, Construction Industry

'I strongly believe workplaces need to do more to improve resilience at all levels.'
HR Manager, Financial Services

'We try to measure for resilience as part of the selection process for senior positions – this is difficult but it has become increasingly clear that it is an essential component to be effective'
Senior HR Manager, Local Government

These views are typical of the HR community seeking ways to equip their organisations' leaders with the ability to be more resilient and adaptable in the face of frequent and disruptive change. Developing leaders' capacity for resilience is one approach to supporting and enabling more effective responses to the ambiguity and turbulence of the modern business world, what some have dubbed a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) world.

We set out to explore what is known about resilience, drawing widely on literature from developmental psychology through to social neuroscience. From our reading, we have adopted a definition of resilience focused on capabilities and the dynamic interaction of the individual with his or her environment. Our exploration has culminated in the development of a statistically robust model of personal resilience (see Figure 1), based on five key capabilities that importantly, can be learnt and developed. The five key capabilities are:

PERSPECTIVE

Leaders exhibiting resilience are able to take a step back from a challenging situation, accept rather than deny its negative aspects whilst finding opportunity and meaning in the midst of adversity. Finding opportunity spurs active striving, the setting of goals and the taking of action to achieve them. Perspective-taking expands choice options, empowering rather than disabling. The act of gaining perspective allows resilient people to focus their efforts on those things they can change and accept those things they cannot.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Being aware of, understanding and regulating our emotions is essential to resilience. Not being overtaken by our emotions but allowing space and time to process them. Resilient leaders are also aware of emotions and

needs in others and are free and willing in the support they give. Helping others without explicit benefit to themselves, they care for and are compassionate towards both themselves and others.

PURPOSE, VALUES AND STRENGTHS

Having a clear sense of purpose in our work, a belief that the work that we do is congruent with our personal values, and plays to our strengths are all key to resilience at work. Holding a clear sense of our own values and our own moral compass help us to keep centred when all around there is change.

CONNECTIONS

Leaders who are able to stay resilient in challenging times have a wide network of friends and colleagues to draw on, both to get things done and to provide support. Connections are not only one way, however, and there is a great deal of evidence to support the strength that helping others give us.

MANAGING PHYSICAL ENERGY

Keeping physically fit, eating well, and giving ourselves the time away from work to engage in activities we enjoy and recuperate enables us to maintain our energy levels.

These five capabilities are inter-related. Developing capabilities in one domain is likely to have positive benefits in some or all of the other domains. For example, connecting with others is likely to help us maintain our perspective and generate options for solving problems that we experience. Equally, engaging in physically demanding leisure pursuits often provides the opportunity for connecting with others.

Through a survey of over 1,000 managers we have explored how current UK managers perceive their own resilience capabilities, with areas of strength and relative weakness identified. Our results suggest that, on the whole, managers may struggle most with both managing the boundary between work and home life, and taking steps to maintain their levels of physical energy. Our research has led to the development of an online Resilience Capability Index (RCI), available through Roffey Park's website (www.roffeypark.com/rci), which managers can use to assess their own resilience capabilities as compared with a norm group of their peers and receive practical suggestions on what they may do to boost their capacity for resilience. We hope that this report and the associated Resilience Capability Index will be helpful to managers, and the HR community, desiring to become more resilient in the face of change.

Resilience Capabilities Model

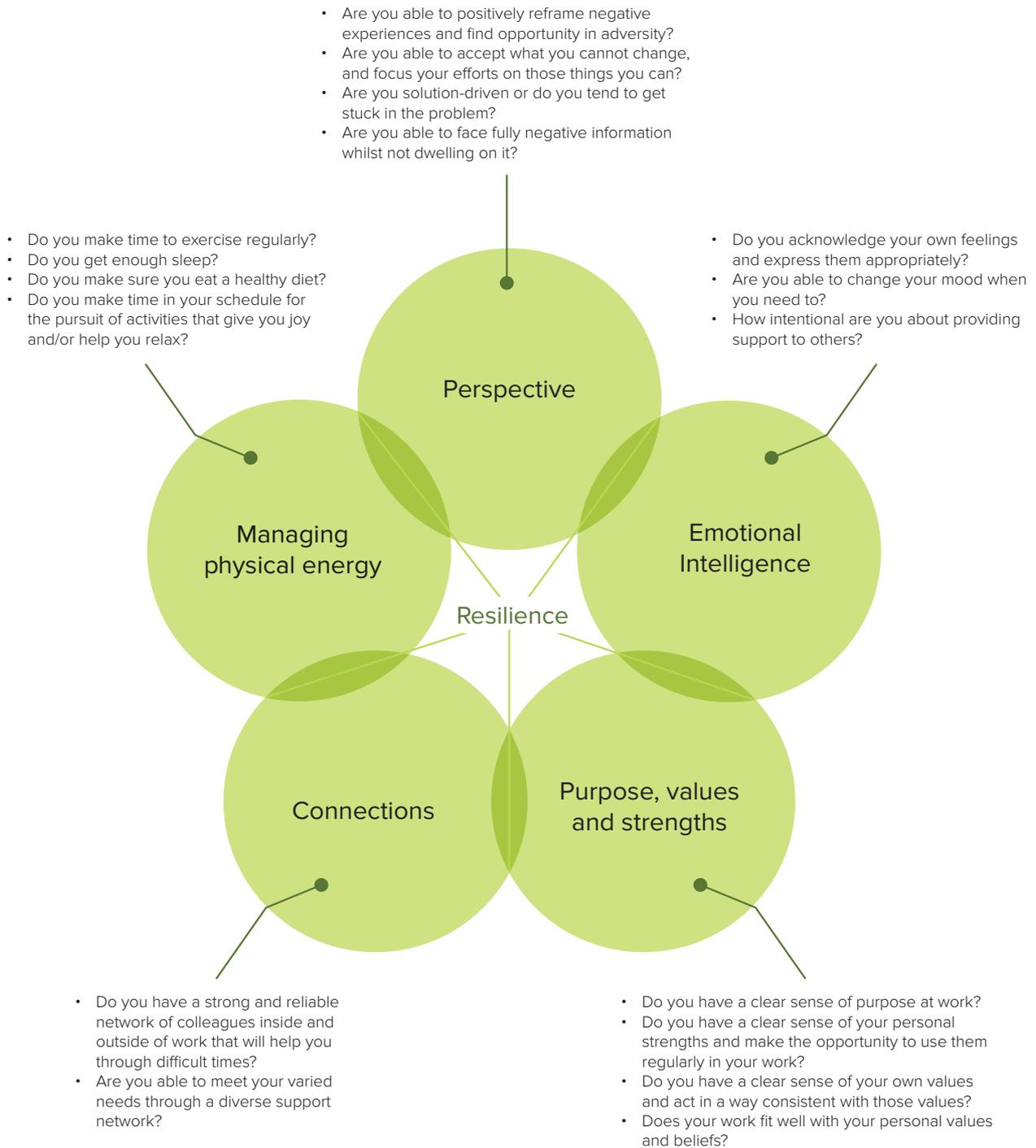


Figure 1 Resilience Capabilities Model

Download the full report at:

www.roffeypark.com/buildingresilience

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