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and leaders

# Resilience Workbook

*Self Matters*

February 2015



## Background

### Leadership and Management Development

Leadership and Management Development within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) aims to increase the capabilities of DHHS managers and leaders, 'enabling our workforce to be properly educated, trained and developed, motivated and appropriately supported to give of its best'.<sup>i</sup> All activities expand the core themes:<sup>ii</sup>

- **Leads Self:** Leaders are self-aware; seek out opportunities for personal development; have strength of character.
- **Engages Others:** Leaders value diversity and model cultural responsiveness; communicate with honesty and respect; strengthen consumers, colleagues and others.
- **Achieves Outcomes:** Leaders influence and communicate the direction; are focussed and goal oriented; evaluate progress and are accountable for results.
- **Drives Innovation:** Leaders champion the need for innovation and improvement; build support for change; and positively contribute to spreading innovative practice.
- **Shapes Systems:** Leaders understand and apply systems thinking; engage and partner with consumers and communities; build alliances.<sup>iii</sup>



### What is resilience?

Resilience is the capacity to cope with change and challenge and bounce back during difficult times.<sup>iv</sup> Resilience requires leaders to take care of business and themselves while taking action in new realities. Resilient leaders flexibly improvise in response to unexpected situations.

According to the *Tasmanian State Service Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework*, a leader -

- Deals resiliently with work pressures and negative criticism by maintaining an optimistic outlook and developing and applying effective wellbeing strategies.
- Remains focused on the objectives even in difficult and uncertain circumstances and in a rapidly changing environment or changing priorities.
- After setbacks, remains positive, motivated and focussed.
- Maintains energy and willingly invests extra effort when required.<sup>v</sup>

### How resilient are you? -

1. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.
2. I have a hard time making it through stressful events.
3. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.
4. It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.
5. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.
6. I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.

Scoring for 1, 3, 5:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Scoring for 2, 4, 6:

5 = strongly disagree, 4 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 2 = agree, 1 = strongly agree

Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P. and Bernard, J. (2008). The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back, *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 15: 194-200, 2008

A higher score indicates greater resilience.<sup>vi</sup>

### To access our resilience coaching and leadership resources:

Go to the DHHS intranet site:

[http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/intranet/scwr/nursing/education\\_and\\_training\\_unit/resilience\\_leadership](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/intranet/scwr/nursing/education_and_training_unit/resilience_leadership)

Contact the Leadership and Management Development Unit at: [mandlprogram@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:mandlprogram@dhhs.tas.gov.au)

# Our approach to resilience



*Tasmania's health system needs to change ...*  
 Hon Michael Ferguson MP Minister for Health

While valuable in and of itself, we see staff resilience as part of the bigger picture of change, and our contribution to making it successful and sustainable. Research indicates that this kind of change requires:

- First, it can inform policy leadership through policy-oriented learning.<sup>viii</sup>
- Second, it can promote organisational change management and culture management.<sup>ix</sup>
- Third, it can control for the negative impacts of organisational change by supporting staff resilience.<sup>x</sup>

- Shaping behaviour: leadership team thought and action.
- Framing change: communication throughout the change journey – organisational change management.
- Creating capacity: building individual capability – in order to ensure organisational change success.<sup>vii</sup>

We believe we can establish this kind of change through *education* (with providers like the University of Tasmania) and *training* (programs within the DHHS/THS).

The value proposition of education and training is that it can help develop and support these long-term, sustainable changes in three ways:



Individual responses to organisational change are often complex and multi-faceted. During and after change that involves staff downsizing, employees are generally less motivated to contribute to organisational success and are less willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplishing tasks important to the organisation.<sup>xi</sup> This is related to a rise in employee stress, health issues and voluntary departures after downsizing.<sup>xii</sup> Addressing both the cognitive and affective elements of individuals' response to change is essential for the successful implementation of change.<sup>xiii</sup> Specifically, building employee resilience has been shown to increase employee engagement and support for change.<sup>xiv</sup>

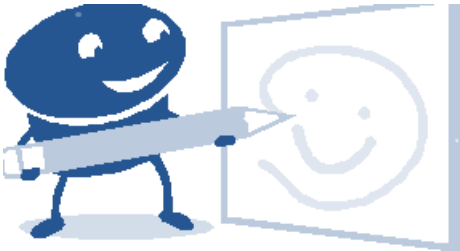
## Three Keys to Resilience

Human Capital <i>Signature Strengths</i>	Social Capital <i>Building Bridges</i>	Psychological Capital <i>Self Matters</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities</li> <li>• Refreshing career strengths with SMART personal goals</li> <li>• Physical and mental fitness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends and family</li> <li>• Professional networking and resilient role models</li> <li>• Community and civic engagement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hope</b> – the will and the way – expect the best and have a plan to achieve it</p> <p><b>Efficacy</b> – ‘can do’ – the confidence to succeed</p> <p><b>Resiliency</b> – bouncing back and beyond</p> <p><b>Optimism</b> – realistic and flexible</p>

Individual resilience can be conceptualised as being developed through the ‘three capitals’: human, social and psychological or identity.<sup>xv</sup> **Human capital** is the experience and expertise that the individual brings to their working life.<sup>xvi</sup> It can be developed through higher education<sup>xvii</sup> and in-house training programs.<sup>xviii</sup> **Social capital** provides the networks and relationships that support individuals in their work, home and community.<sup>xix</sup> Activities such as coaching develop peer professional networks and new professional role models and have been shown to increase social capital within the workplace.<sup>xx</sup> Developing the **psychological capital** of staff speaks to the links between individual psychological and physical health; organisational health and culture; and productivity.<sup>xxi</sup> The HERO (hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism) attributes of identity or psychological capital are particularly valuable in times of change.<sup>xxii</sup> **Change resilience, developed through a focus on the three capitals, is a key element of successful, sustainable change.**

# Overview

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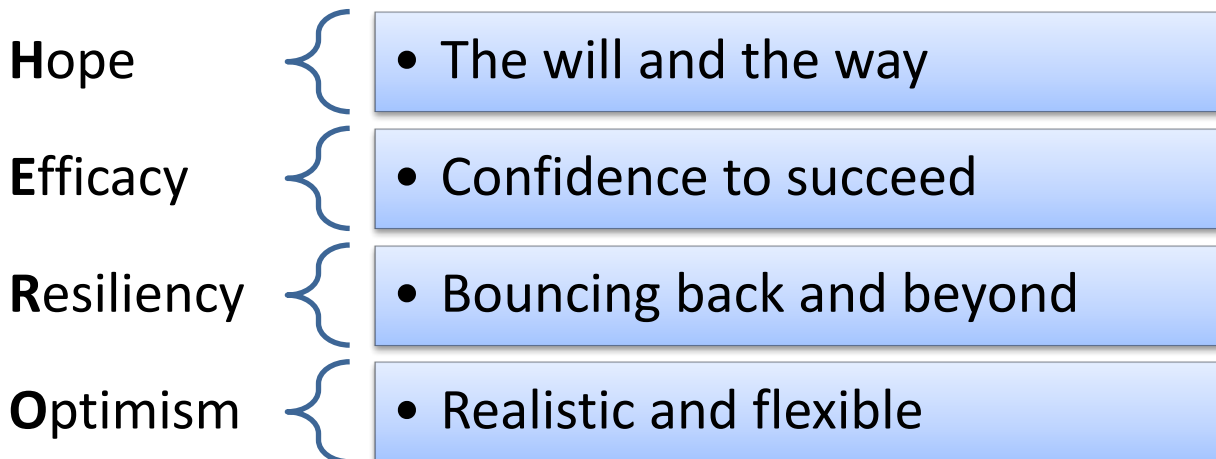


We all know that *self matters* – to ourselves, to other people. Sometimes it is harder to know just how we can take the best care of ourselves and others.

Positive psychology suggests that our emotional resources have four components – the ‘HERO’ formula, pictured below. Each of these components will be ‘unpacked’ further in this booklet.

When we start thinking about ourselves as a ‘workplace HERO’ we step back, assess our strengths, and develop goals to increase our capabilities.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The workplace HERO has four ‘super-powers’:



While you can go through the exercises listed in this booklet by yourself, there are many reasons why it may be more effective to work with another person. The process of communicating to another person makes the ideas being described clearer, while the other can reflect back to you and help you explore new ideas.

Maybe you can ‘buddy up’ with a work colleague to do the exercises together? Or your whole team might decide to build resilience leadership by doing this as a group?

Management and Leadership Development Program [Coaches](#) may also be able work with you, on a one-to-one basis, to do the exercises.

Contact the Leadership and Management Development Unit at: [mandlprogram@dhhs.tas.gov.au](mailto:mandlprogram@dhhs.tas.gov.au) if you want help.



The rest of this booklet will suggest different exercises you can do to work on your ‘workplace HERO super-powers’. You can follow these or make up your own. (If you do, please tell us about them and we can share them around!) You can find more resilience leadership coaching handbooks on the DHHS [intranet](#).

# Hope – the will and the way

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**Hope is a positive motivational state based on goal-directed agency ('the will') and planning to meet goals ('the way').<sup>xxiv</sup> One way we can develop realistic goals is to focus on our circle of influence.**

Steven Covey talks about the circle of influence which provides us with some helpful insights about maintaining perspective in challenging situations.<sup>xxv</sup>

His model encourages us to focus our energy on things we can do something about rather than worry excessively about things over which we have no influence. By doing this we are able to be proactive, set goals, take control and experience resultant well-being benefits.

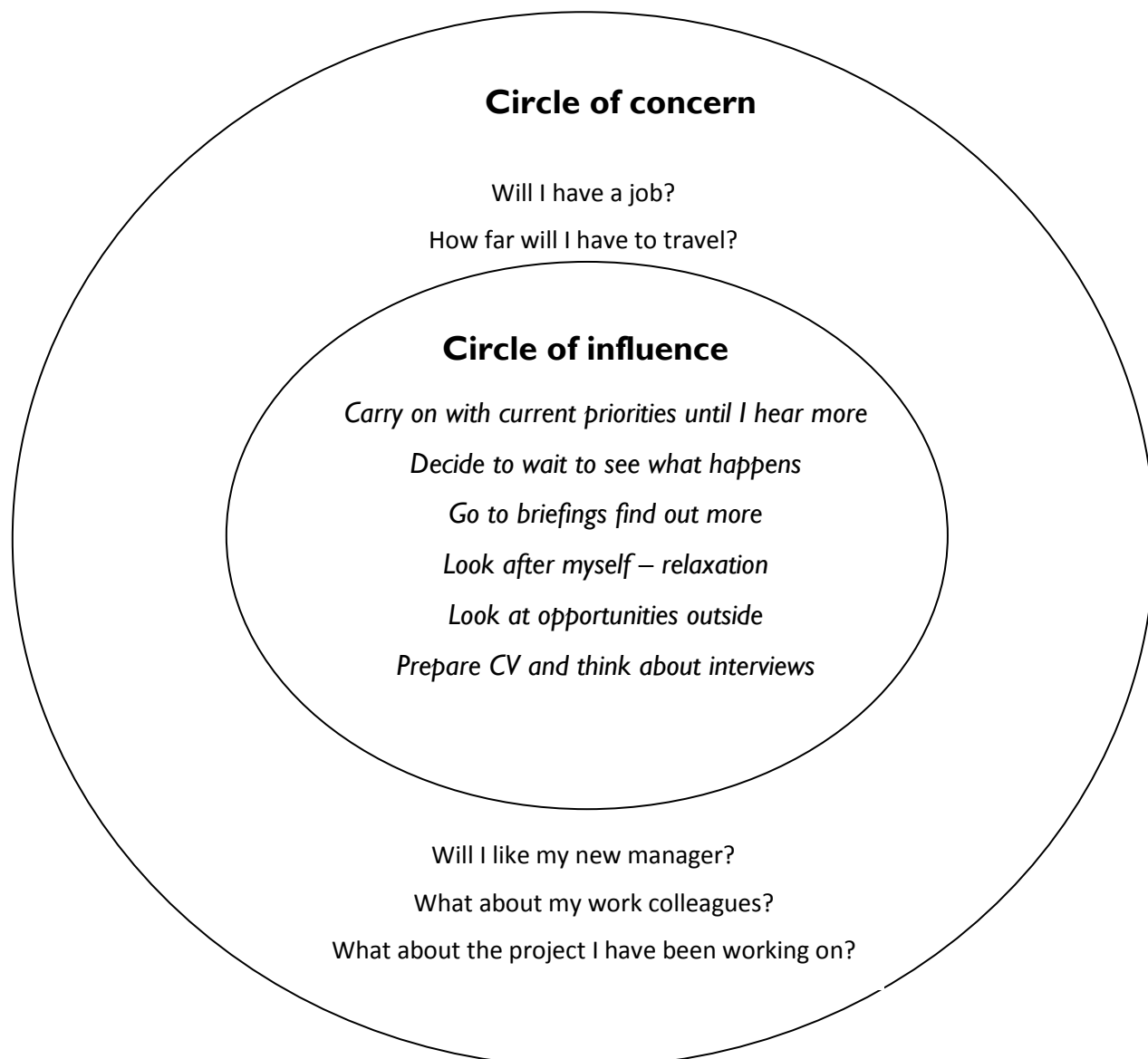
This can be a useful approach for the many people in workplaces experiencing enforced or unavoidable changes as ultimately in such situations we may have control only over our own actions and responses.

Consider the example concerns below of someone who faces significant changes at work, possibly redundancy.

In these circumstances it would be easy to become overwhelmed by the concerns they have, many of which are beyond their control and influence.

The circle of influence encourages us to focus upon the things we can act upon, focusing our attention and energy on these whilst recognising but “parking” factors beyond our control.

The circle of influence is a way of achieving a helpful perspective. In this way we are able to be proactive and focused in the face of a challenge rather than reactive, apathetic or just simply exhausted and overwhelmed.



# Your Circle of Influence

Think about your current workplace. Is there a specific issue or challenge you are facing? Or can you just think about your working environment more generally? What are the things that are important to you?

What do you observe about the factors outside your control? These all go in the 'circle of concern'.

What are the actions you are able to effectively take in this situation? These go in your own circle of influence,

In exceptionally challenging situations we may feel there is nothing we can do, In these situations it may be helpful to note that self-care and our emotional responses (e.g. anger) are always within our circle of influence.

In most situations, however, we can do both – solve problems within our circle of influence and consider our reactions to things in our circle of concern.

Finding solutions puts us back in control and helps to remedy the situation. In order to effectively explore our options, however, we need to be calm and rational.

Moving from the 'gut' to the 'head' level can sometimes be difficult to do. Questioning yourself can help:

- What are the absolute facts in this situation?
- What is my perception?
- What evidence supports or contradicts my perception?
- How else can I perceive this situation?



**Circle of concern**

**Circle of influence**



# Efficacy - Confidence

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**Efficacy motivates us to choose and welcome challenges and to use our strengths and skills to meet those challenges. Efficacy encourages and energizes us to pursue goals and invest the time and hard work that may be necessary to accomplish them. It is a 'can do' attitude - developed over time.<sup>xxvi</sup>**

Think of a time recently when you faced a challenge at work where you initially felt daunted by the task and lacked confidence in your ability to succeed, but eventually arrived at a place of 'can do' thinking (ie feeling you could/would take on the challenge).

Make a brief note of the situation below.

What got you to 'can do' thinking? Think about what helped you to get there and what it felt like:



A good question to ask is – **Does thinking the way I am help me to feel good or to achieve my goals?**

Normally, the way we automatically behave *emerges from*, and *reinforces* the continuation of, our usual thoughts and feelings – our perceptions.

Confidence creates confidence!

When we feel confident, our actions are more likely to lead to the results we wish to achieve. This makes us more likely to believe we 'can do' things.

But what if we are not confident?

If we avoid doing things that involve the possibility of failure we never challenge our fear. Nothing changes.

We can deliberately **change** our normal behaviour, and observe the results, to discover if our perceptions are correct.

We can change our own thoughts and feelings, at a deeper level, by trying new things and succeeding. This increases our efficacy.

We can be realistic and confident.

We can give ourselves the best possible chance at success by drawing on our workplace and social networks of support (building bridges) and by getting the education and experience (signature strengths) to succeed.

# Resiliency – bouncing back



Resiliency is not only the ability to bounce back from adversity but also very positive, challenging events, and the will to go beyond the normal, to go beyond the equilibrium point.<sup>xxvii</sup> Resiliency depends on having a strong body, mind and spirit.

## Strong body

### Strong body self-assessment exercise<sup>xxviii</sup>

For each of the following statements, circle a number to indicate how true the statement is for you.

1 = not true at all. 3 = somewhat true, 5 = very true.

I make a conscious effort to look after my health	1	2	3	4	5
I do some form of exercise (walking, swimming, etc.) at least four times per week	1	2	3	4	5
I don't smoke	1	2	3	4	5
I drink no more than a moderate amount of alcohol, consistent with recommended guidelines	1	2	3	4	5
I eat a balanced and healthy diet	1	2	3	4	5
I avoid eating 'junk' foods and foods that are high in saturated fat	1	2	3	4	5
I do not have a highly stressful lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5
I don't push myself too hard – I make sure I get lots of rest	1	2	3	4	5
Most nights I sleep well and get adequate sleep	1	2	3	4	5
I rarely feel stressed to the point of experiencing physical symptoms	1	2	3	4	5

### Scoring

If you scored **40 or more**, your physical wellbeing will be contributing to your general levels of resiliency.

If you scored **between 30 and 40** your physical wellbeing may not be quite as strong as it could be, and making some changes within those areas could improve your resiliency.

If you scored **below 30** you probably so need to make some changes to improve your physical wellbeing and strengthen your resiliency. *What kind of things can you do to improve your health?*

### The effect of 90 day administration of a high dose vitamin B-complex on work stress<sup>xxix</sup>

This study examined the effects of three months administration of two forms of high dose vitamin B complex on mood and psychological strain associated with chronic work stress. Sixty participants completed double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled trial in which personality, work demands, mood, anxiety and strain were assessed.

After individual differences in personality and work demands were statistically controlled, the vitamin B complex treatment groups reported significantly lower personal strain and a reduction in confusion and depressed/dejected mood after 12 weeks. There were no treatment-related changes in other measures of mood and anxiety. The results of the study are consistent with two previous studies examining multivitamin supplementation and personal (nonwork) feelings of strain and suggestive of significant decreases in the experience of workplace stress after 90 day supplementation of a B multivitamin.

Given the direct and indirect costs of workplace stress, these findings point to the utility of a cost-effective treatment for the mood and psychological strain effects of occupational stress. These findings may have important personal health, organisational and societal outcomes given the rising cost and incidence of workplace stress.



# Strong mind

## Strong mind self-assessment exercise

Think about where you are at the moment – what will be the best way to move forward from here?<sup>xxx</sup>

where am I now?

- in what way am I 'bouncing back'?
- how am I moving forward?

where do I want to be?

- what information do I need?
- what options do I want?

how do I get there?

- what plans and strategies do I need?
- what kinds of support do I want?

how am I doing now?

- how am I stronger?
- in what ways am I wiser?

# Strong spirit

## Strong spirit self-assessment exercise

Prayer, meditation and mindfulness are practices that have been used for thousands of years to quiet and discipline the mind. Research has found two practices of particular benefit.<sup>xxxii</sup>

**Reception** (opening) has significant positive effects on self-esteem, optimism and the meaning of life

Reception may be developed in any number of ways. Focus on the breath is a common entry point. Just observing natural respiration calms the mind. Mindfulness of breathing, and *observation of* (not *reaction to*) the thoughts and feelings that arise, develop composure.<sup>xxxii</sup> Due to the popularity of techniques such as Vipassanā meditation, mindfulness of breathing has gained further popularity in the West as simply 'mindfulness'.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

*Stop for a moment and observe the sensation of your breath – can you sit in 'mindfulness' for five minutes? How does it feel afterwards?*

**Thanksgiving** (appreciation) is a significant predictor of subjective wellbeing, self-esteem and optimism. A daily 'gratitude list' is one way of generating these strengths. *How many examples can you think of that fit in the right-hand side of this table?*

Thoughts that make us feel miserable	Thoughts that make us feel happy
All the things that have gone wrong	All the things that have gone right
Injustices	Our good fortune
Rejections	People who care about us
Our failures	Our achievements
Our shortcomings	Our strengths and qualities
Things we've missed out on	Things we've been lucky enough to have or experience
What we've lost	What we've gained
Other people's faults	Other people's qualities

Development of these practices provide resiliency across all areas of life.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

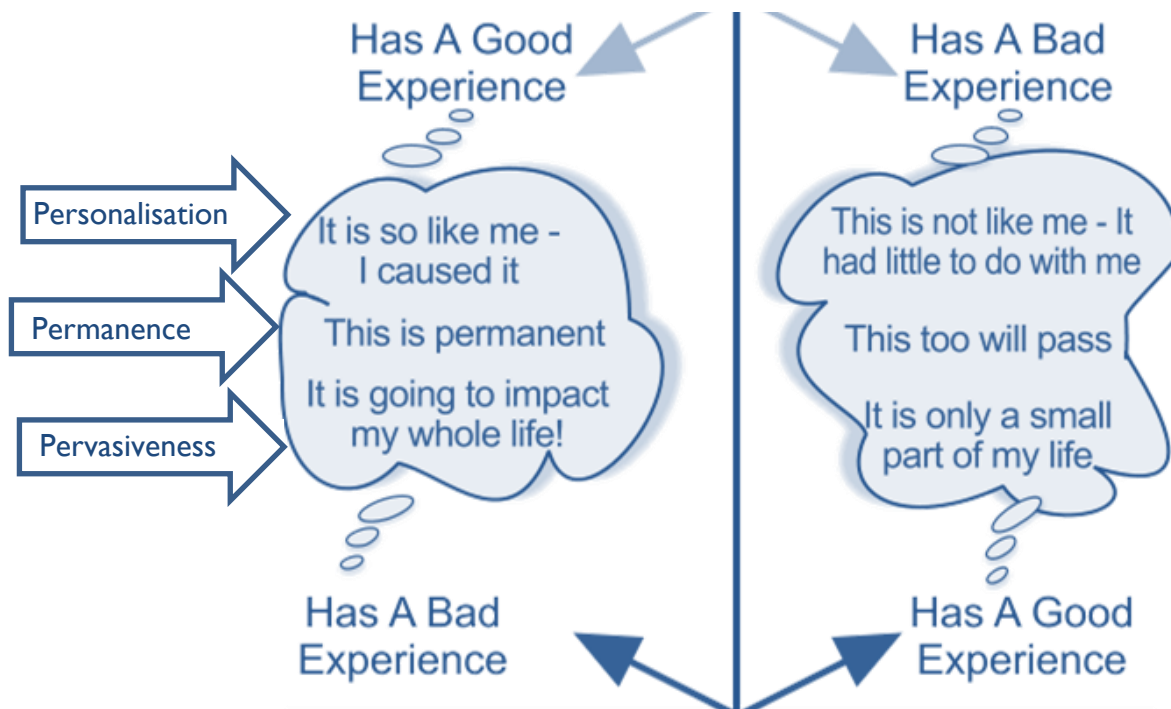
# Optimism – realistic, flexible

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An optimistic style supports resilience as it enables us to bounce back from setbacks, adopt 'can do' thinking and experience the positive emotions that come with success.<sup>xxxv</sup>

The good news is that we can *cultivate* an optimistic style. The diagram below explains this clearly.

## Optimistic (Helpful) Thoughts



## Pessimistic (Unhelpful) Thoughts

An individual with an optimistic style of explaining a positive outcome/experience will tend to feel that they had an impact on the outcome (it is personal) that will continue (it is permanent) and that have a wider impact beyond the immediate situation (it is pervasive).

An individual with a pessimistic style will tend to feel that the outcome was not influenced by them but by external factors, the experience is not permanent and is confined to the specific situation.

The situation reverses for negative experiences/outcomes.

Our explanatory style can have critical impact upon a number of factors including:

- How we bounce back from a setback
- Our confidence to take on challenges
- Our general well-being

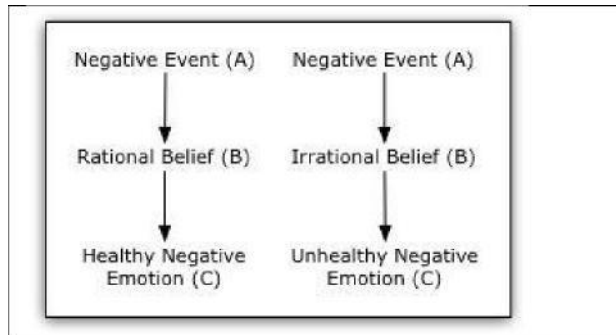
It is important to tune in to our thinking (particularly following a negative experience or event) to develop self-awareness and exercise more control over thinking that may be self-defeating or undermine us.

**Addressing Explanatory style –The “ABC” model – Thoughts influence feelings**

**A = Activating Event**

**B = Beliefs**

**C = Consequences**



The “ABC” model following can be a helpful framework to support us in becoming aware of when and how our thinking may serve or undermine us.

**Our beliefs about an event are what determine how we feel about it**

**ABC, Thinking/Feelings Identification Log- Example**

<b>(A)</b> <b>Activating event, write down details of the event</b>	<b>(B)</b> <b>Beliefs/self talk, thoughts, attitudes, assumptions, opinions about event</b>	<b>(C)</b> <b>Consequences/Emotions, write down your resulting emotions</b>
<i>My manager says he is unable to share details about the planned changes</i>	<i>I am going to be made redundant</i>	<i>I feel, anxious and depressed and angry at my manager for withholding information</i>
<i>Alternatively ...</i>	<i>My manager is not being given all of the information about changes</i>	<i>I am disappointed that information is not forthcoming but request my manager keeps me informed</i>
<i>I have to convey difficult messages to staff</i>	<i>They will blame me. I am not sure how to handle this.</i>	<i>I feel anxious and try to avoid unnecessary contact with staff</i>
<i>Alternatively ...</i>	<i>This will be challenging but providing information and support is critical to people and performance</i>	<i>I think about how best to communicate with staff and brace myself for some of the challenges</i>

**ABC, Thinking/Feelings Identification Log- Your Examples**

Can you identify any scenarios where you experienced a negative emotion at work recently?  
Try to identify what beliefs/self talk may have contributed to the feelings

<b>(A)</b> <b>Activating event, write down details of the event</b>	<b>(B)</b> <b>Beliefs/self talk, thoughts, attitudes, assumptions, opinions about event</b>	<b>(C)</b> <b>Consequences/Emotions, write down your resulting emotions</b>
<i>Alternatively ...</i>		
<i>Alternatively ...</i>		



# Conclusion – my priority goal



In this Self Matters workbook we looked at how to develop the four 'super-powers' of the workplace HERO:

- Hope { • The will and the way
- Efficacy { • Confidence to succeed
- Resiliency { • Bouncing back and beyond
- Optimism { • Realistic and flexible

If you had to take **one thing** away from this workbook – what would it be?

List your number one Self Matters priority goal below.

<b>Insert your goal here:</b>		
<i>Progress markers/milestones? How will you or others know you are getting there?</i>	<i>What barriers might stop you achieving this goal? How might you address these?</i>	<i>What benefits will result from achieving this goal?</i>

## Further reading



DHHS Leadership and Management Development would like to thank Mandi Sherlock-Storey for her generosity in sharing her work in this area and her advice to 'feel free to use and adapt as you see fit'. A description of her work may be found at:

Mandi Sherlock-Storey, Mark Moss and Sue Timson. (2013). Brief coaching for resilience during organisational change – an exploratory study, *The Coaching Psychologist*, 9(1): 19-26.

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