

developing  
our managers  
and leaders

# Resilience Workbook

*Building Bridges*

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



What do we mean by 'building bridges'? In the first instance, it is about our sense of *connectedness* to family and friends, professional networks and community. Do you have strong connections in all areas of your life? Can you list your five most important people or groups in each of these categories?

	Community and civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li></ul>
	Professional networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li></ul>
	Family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li><li>• .....</li></ul>

Connectedness is important to all of us.

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?

Leadership and Management Development [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 with your signature strengths. 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](#).

# Family and Friends



Family and friends are often the people we naturally bond with. In many cases, our links with family and friends outlive professional and community ties. Take a moment to think about the friends and family around you – how do they support you at home? At work?

These relationships can support us in our work life but can also feel in conflict with the demands of the workplace. In turn, work-family conflict can lead to physical and mental distress for the individual and drive up rates of absenteeism and staff turn-over.<sup>xxiii</sup> Work-life balance might seem a difficult goal at times, but here are some exercises that help 'build bridges' between the worlds.

Love  
Friendship  
Family  
Gratitude  
Thanksgiving  
and Support  
Gratefulness

## Building bridges between home and work

### *The conversation starter*

This involves bringing an object from your 'non-work' life (such as a family photograph, a travel memento, or a trophy) into the workplace. If a colleague mentions it, you explain what this part of your life means to you and how it helps you at work.

### Alternative ways to play -

- Asking a colleague, or your team, to bring their own conversation starters.
- Take something from your work to your home and talk to your roommates, spouse, kids, or dinner guests about it. Tell them about what you do and who you are in your role at work, focusing especially on what this might mean for them.
- Ask them to do the same thing, from their school, work, or another part of their life.<sup>xxiv</sup>

### *The talent transfer*

This involves writing a résumé listing all the skills you've developed at home or at work — from mentoring colleagues, organizing family activities, or running a church bake sale — and thinking of how you

might apply them in a different area of your life. How might the skills you developed at home help you at work, or your work skills help at home?<sup>xxv</sup>

How could you bring together two or more parts of your life? Is there a social connection you can make? You might invite a co-worker and their family to your home, or meet to go to the pictures, or a market, on the weekend.



## Playing the space between

Managing the boundaries between home and work is another key challenge.

Think about ways to create separation between your different roles. If your job keeps feeling like it is intruding on your home life, you might experiment with accepting that you need to think or do something job-associated after-hours, but set a limit on the amount of time you allow.

Alternatively, if family and friends are continually ringing or dropping in at work, you could try allocating a certain time in your day – let them know they can ring you at that time, and let your colleagues know that this is limited.

## Reflecting

After you've tried a new way of segmenting and a new way of merging, jot down your insights about what worked and what didn't, for both you and the people around you.

- Were you more or less productive?
- Did you find yourself more or less distracted?
- How did others react?
- Were they put off, or did they seem to feel closer to and more trusting of you?<sup>xxvi</sup>

# Professional networks

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Professional networks are the formal and informal relationships between people of the same profession, or in the same workplace. They bond people together to emphasise the things they have in common and help build bridges across the differences.

Professional networks can provide *networks of influence*. This is because they help us tap into the expertise of others, organisational information and resources. For example, in health services, the social capital developed through collegial, professional networks have been associated with increased influence and the ability to lead change initiatives. Change agents who were central in the organization's informal network had a clear advantage, regardless of their position in the formal hierarchy. People who bridged disconnected groups and individuals were more effective at implementing dramatic reforms, while those with cohesive networks were better at instituting minor changes.<sup>xxvii</sup>

What professional networks are most important to you? Are they local, national, international? Face-to-face or on-line? What contribution do you make to these networks? What benefit do you receive through being part of them?



Another kind of professional network is the *advice and counsel* network. This is a network of trusted advisers within and outside your workplace, with whom you can talk with about what you are experiencing. These colleagues give you honest feedback and provide an indispensable resource that can help you avoid becoming isolated and losing perspective. The literature suggests that you should draw on the three types of advice givers:

- *technical advisors* provide expert analysis relating to professional matters and organisational strategy
- *cultural interpreters* provide an understanding of organisational norms, mental models and guiding assumptions
- *political counsellors* provide a 'sounding board' for your ideas and strategies, sharing ideas and advice.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Think about how your workplace colleagues interact with you? Have you got an *advice and counsel* network? Who is on it and what roles do they play?



Professional networks may also be formed of *necessity*, driven by larger forces. The first is the growth of networked technologies. As these technologies grow, so do the interconnections of the people who use them – and in turn the technology provides faster and more extensive ways for people to be connected.

The second is the growth of service demand. If there is a limited resource and multiple calls on its use, interdependence of one form or another is inevitable.<sup>xxix</sup>

People who have good relations with others throughout the system in which they work have better networks and are more able to deal with the issues of resource scarcity. Do you have key professional contacts who help you achieve your business unit outcomes? How are you maintaining those networks?

**How are you using your networks to provide better services?**



Professional networks are becoming increasingly more important. They provide role models and sources of workplace support. Through this they contribute to a sense of self-efficacy and resilience.<sup>xxx</sup>

# Community and civic engagement



Volunteering in a community group or a civic body (such as local school, ambulance or fire station) provides meaningful and interesting experiences that can be an energizing break from the day-to-day routine of work, school, or family commitments. Community and civic engagement provides a sense of renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that can carry over into our personal and professional lives.

## How do you connect with your local community?



### Good for the community

One of the better-known benefits of volunteering is the impact on the community. Unpaid volunteers are often the glue that holds a community together. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. However, volunteering is a two-way street, and it can benefit you as much as the cause you choose to help. Volunteering also strengthens your ties to the community and broadens your support network, exposing you to people with common interests, neighbourhood resources, and fun and fulfilling activities.



## How do you normally like to get outside, relax and exercise?

### Good for you

While some people are naturally outgoing, others are shy and have a hard time meeting new people. Volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice and develop your social skills, since you are meeting regularly with a group of people with common interests. Once you have momentum, it's easier to branch out and make more friends and contacts.

Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. You are doing good for others and the community, which provides a natural sense of accomplishment. The better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life and future goals.

Reducing the risk of depression is another important benefit of volunteering. A key risk factor for depression is social isolation. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others and helps you develop a solid support system, which in turn protects you against stress and depression when you're going through challenging times.

Volunteering helps you stay physically healthy. Volunteering is good for your health at any age, but it's especially beneficial in older adults. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not, even when considering factors like the health of the participants. Volunteering has also been shown to lessen symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease.

## How do you start doing something completely different?



### Good for the future

A civic society is a voluntary body or society which aims to represent the needs of a local community. If you're considering a new career, getting involved with a group like this can help you get experience in your area of interest and meet people in the field. Even if you're not planning on changing careers, volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. You might feel more comfortable stretching your wings at work once you've honed these skills in a volunteer position first. Volunteering offers you the chance to try out a new career without making a long-term commitment.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Make a list of five new ways that you can engage with your community. What are your goals for this engagement? When can you start?

# Conclusion – my priority goal



In this Building Bridges workbook we looked at the relationship between your home and work, your family and friends, and how these interact. We looked at the three types of professional networks that you might be engaged with. We looked at the benefits of engagement with the community and how you may link into these wider groups. This doesn't mean that you have to do everything, all at once!

Doing these exercises provide you with some 'time out' - where you have time to think and plan – what are your priorities, how much time to do you need make them happen.<sup>xxxii</sup>

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

List your number one Building Bridges priority goal below.

Insert your goal here:		
<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



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