THE CASE FOR RESILIENCE

Key considerations for improving outcomes
Organizations continue to deploy money and effort into initiatives to positively impact the health and well-being of their workforce. There are many competing priorities and all appear to be worthwhile. One of the hottest issues that is attracting this attention is resilience.

Yet many people still do not know what resilience is, what it relates to, or where it fits into their current health and human capital performance programming.

Let’s begin with a basic definition. Webster’s Dictionary defines resilience as “the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens.” Who among us does not have something bad happen to us on a fairly regular basis?

The purpose of this eBook is to help the audience better understand resilience: where it fits in the worksite, how best to teach it, and what outcomes can be expected.
Resilience can be positioned in many different areas within worksite programming. Because of its association with stress, it is not uncommon for resilience programs to be offered as stress management programs. And while that is an excellent place to start, resilience goes far beyond stress, greatly contributing to positive outcomes in many areas of life, health, and productivity.

A better category for resilience is human capital management, which transcends areas like wellness, disease management, treatment and medicine compliance, and behavioral health.

Many organizations use resilience as a way to improve outcomes in those programs.

Other organizations offer resilience training for performance management or productivity improvement.

Some position it for employee well-being, happiness, or mindfulness.

These are all perfectly appropriate uses for resilience training.
Let us consider how resilience relates to other worksite programs and also how it can be positioned as a stand alone program in your organization. There are five different areas to consider:

1. STRESS

Resilience strongly correlates with stress and is the true key to tackling the debilitating effects of stress. The more resilience a person has the greater their ability to handle the negative effects of stress. Improving resilience, therefore, lowers stress.

THE CORRELATION

- Higher Resilience
- Higher Job Satisfaction
- Higher Health Status
- Fewer Stress Symptoms
- Lower Burnout
- Fewer Absences
2. WELLNESS
If resilience is the ability to bounce back after something bad happens, think how resilience training can improve outcomes in weight management, physical activity, or smoking cessation. In all of these cases, people suffer setbacks. It is highly unusual for someone to undertake a weight management program without any setbacks. Same for physical activity, smoking cessation, or any other wellness initiative. Helping people bounce back and get back into the program—rather than quit—is critical to the success of these other wellness programs.

3. DISEASE MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT COMPLIANCE
It doesn’t matter if we are talking about a formalized disease management program for people suffering from chronic conditions or treatment compliance offered by the family doctor. When people are trying to manage a chronic condition, symptoms flare up or other factors negatively impact their success. Resilience training is crucial in helping patients overcome life’s hurdles and adhere to their clinical programs. Medication compliance can be impacted by forgetfulness but also by fear of side effects, medication costs, feeling that the medication is not working, overall treatment complexity, or the fact that the prescribed medication is not the most pressing issue the patient faces. Building strong resilience can help patients deal with these issues, lowering health care costs.
4. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Dealing with behavioral health issues like depression, anxiety, binge eating, substance abuse, and other problems is fraught with setbacks or negative events. Resilience training is therefore imperative to keeping people dealing with these issues actively engaged in these programs.

5. EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
Business is turning its sights to the impact that emotional well-being can have on the productivity, capacity and motivation of people. The new reality is that there are no hard lines between work and home, personal and professional. People now tend to bring their whole selves to work, including their stressors and emotions every day. When employees suffer poor emotional well-being, they are more likely to be chronically stressed. In that state, they are much less able to make (and hold onto) the practical, healthy changes that would make a positive difference. The constant juggling act, trying to manage the competing demands of work and life, is what erodes productivity and contributes to distraction, disconnection, depression, and ultimately, burnout.
There are several key factors that must be considered when offering resilience training to your workforce. Without properly considering these factors and proactively dealing with them, the resilience programming is not likely to succeed. These considerations can be generally applied to any health or performance program, but are especially important when considering resilience training.

If you ask participants what is critical to them, they will say quality, convenience, and privacy. Considering your own criteria, you might add scalability to cover many people, cost effectiveness, and measurable outcomes. These are all important criteria, as you want to balance the needs of your participants with your own needs.

An important consideration for user engagement is to promote the purpose of resilience training. Make sure that your potential users understand what resilience is and that you are offering it to help them better manage the ups and downs in their life.

Take note of the categories and score them based on their importance to you in your evaluation of alternatives.
1. INCORPORATING ESTABLISHED CLINICAL GUIDELINES

Obviously, the first criteria is a high-quality program that incorporates clinical guidelines for dealing with resilience, as well as understanding how coaching should work. A strong resilience program should be based on sound and published research from leading psychologists. Also, a great program will begin by understanding the unique circumstances of the individual, and will then build a unique plan to help that individual deal with their resilience and stress based on proven guidelines.

2. ESTABLISHING TRUST

Building trust with participants is essential for the success of any program. This can be accomplished with a communications plan that helps the individual understand both the purpose of the program, as well as the fact that they can get private, confidential, secure, and high-quality help when and how they need it.

3. BUILDING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned above, building trust is essential. And building a strong promotional program requires people who understand user engagement strategies. These are usually people with backgrounds in media and other consumer related fields. Effective and engaging communications is essential to participation.
4. PRIVACY

For an individual to honestly engage in any program, it is also essential to help them understand that, unless they allow access, no one will ever know that they have engaged in the program. Dealing with the stigma associated with health and emotional issues is a fundamental requirement. Digital options can offer a high level of privacy and confidentiality.

5. CONVENIENCE

People want to deal with health and emotional issues on their own terms: when they want to and how they want to. So, the convenience of digital coaching, available 24/7 on a computer, tablet, or mobile device, offers them the convenience they require.

6. SECURITY

The security of the participant’s information and the extensive measures taken to protect that information must be carefully explained to each potential user. Assurances must be provided that the information will be protected to the maximum extent.
7. SCALE

Health risk assessments typically show 70% of populations self-reporting some level of stress. Having a program that can deal with large numbers of people is a requirement. To do this, you need technology. A cloud-based solution provides the scale and deals with the convenience and privacy issue as well.

8. LONGITUDINAL SUPPORT

Any good resilience program won’t be a one-and-done exercise. It needs to support participants in a longitudinal nature and walk with them throughout their journey of dealing with the issue at hand.

9. OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

A good program will measure the key metrics that support an ROI. These metrics go far beyond participation and engagement and include factors like reduction in stress prevalence, stress levels, and improvements in productivity.
10. SUPPORT

Any program requires quality support to make it effective. Having a highly motivated and trained group of experienced professionals can be the difference between success and failure. Support can mean promotional support, customer support, technology support, or science support. Selecting a provider for resilience training that has experience with large and small business entities is a requirement. The success of a program depends upon trusting a vendor that has done this before.

11. COST

It is essential that quality treatment be provided without breaking the bank. A cost effective approach will provide for a reasonable pmpm model that will allow many participants to seek treatment at the same time. This will require both flexibility with respect to pricing and having a scalable solution.
Effective resilience training requires a proper fusion of science, technology, and media.

1. Resilience training should be based on validated science that delivers therapeutic efficacy to individuals through a comprehensive assessment and a customized treatment plan. Periodic reassessments should provide outcomes measurement.

2. Technology bridges the gap between the organization’s need for a scalable and affordable solution and the needs of participants who wish to deal with these highly personal issues on their own terms and on their own timing. A secure, HIPAA compliant, digital platform allows an organization to offer a private, convenient, and relevant program to employees.

3. Finally, a comprehensive and elegant promotional plan requires expertise from the media world. Creative people who understand how to connect with people will drive participation and engagement.
Any good health and performance program should produce some quantifiable results. The CFO expects it and most programs need to be justified in some way.

Let’s start with participation. Participation rates depend on your culture and your promotional plan. It is not uncommon to see up to half of those who enroll participate in resilience training.

Finally, a solid program should show good correlation to other key measures, such as productivity impairment, intent to quit, quality of life, and others. A good resilience program will show about a 1.5% improvement in overall resilience. Published research shows that this translates to a 0.68% improvement in performance, a 3% reduction in avoidable absence, and a 0.45% reduction in turnover. (Source: Luthens et al. Psychological Capital, 2011)

This means that for a population of 10,000 people with a 30% enrollment, and an average salary of $50,000, there could be a return of over $1,000,000 in improved productivity, turnover, and other costs.

Every 1.5% increase in resilience leads to:

- Performance Gain: $675
- Absence Avoidance: $72
- Avoided Turnover Costs: $153

Per Participants Savings: $900

This translates to a savings of over $1,000,000 for 10,000 employees, based on 30% enrollment, and $50,000 average salary.
Resilience training is a hot topic in corporate America and a hot issue with employees. A solid program will require a fusion of science, technology, and media to get the desired outcomes.

Improvements in resilience with employees has benefits in improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, reduced health care costs, and lower unplanned turnover rates. Resilience training also impacts an organization’s wellness, disease management, medication compliance, and behavioral health programs. It is a required solution for organizations that are serious about their employees well-being.

We hope that this eBook was useful and helped create a better understanding of some of the basics of resilience and invite you to learn more at www.mequilibrium.com.
Jan has a proven record in high growth start-ups and turnarounds, and has devoted much of last twenty years to pioneering new brands in health, wellness, consumer lifestyle, and holistic medicine. She has a passion for building strong business strategies and cohesive management teams that deliver results. She is widely recognized as an authority on women’s attitudes towards balanced healthy lifestyle and sustainable living. She also regularly speaks on business turnarounds and LOHAS business issues.

meQuilibrium is a digital coaching platform that delivers clinically validated and highly personalized resilience solutions to employers, health plans, wellness providers and consumers to help improve outcomes in managing stress, health, engagement, productivity and performance.