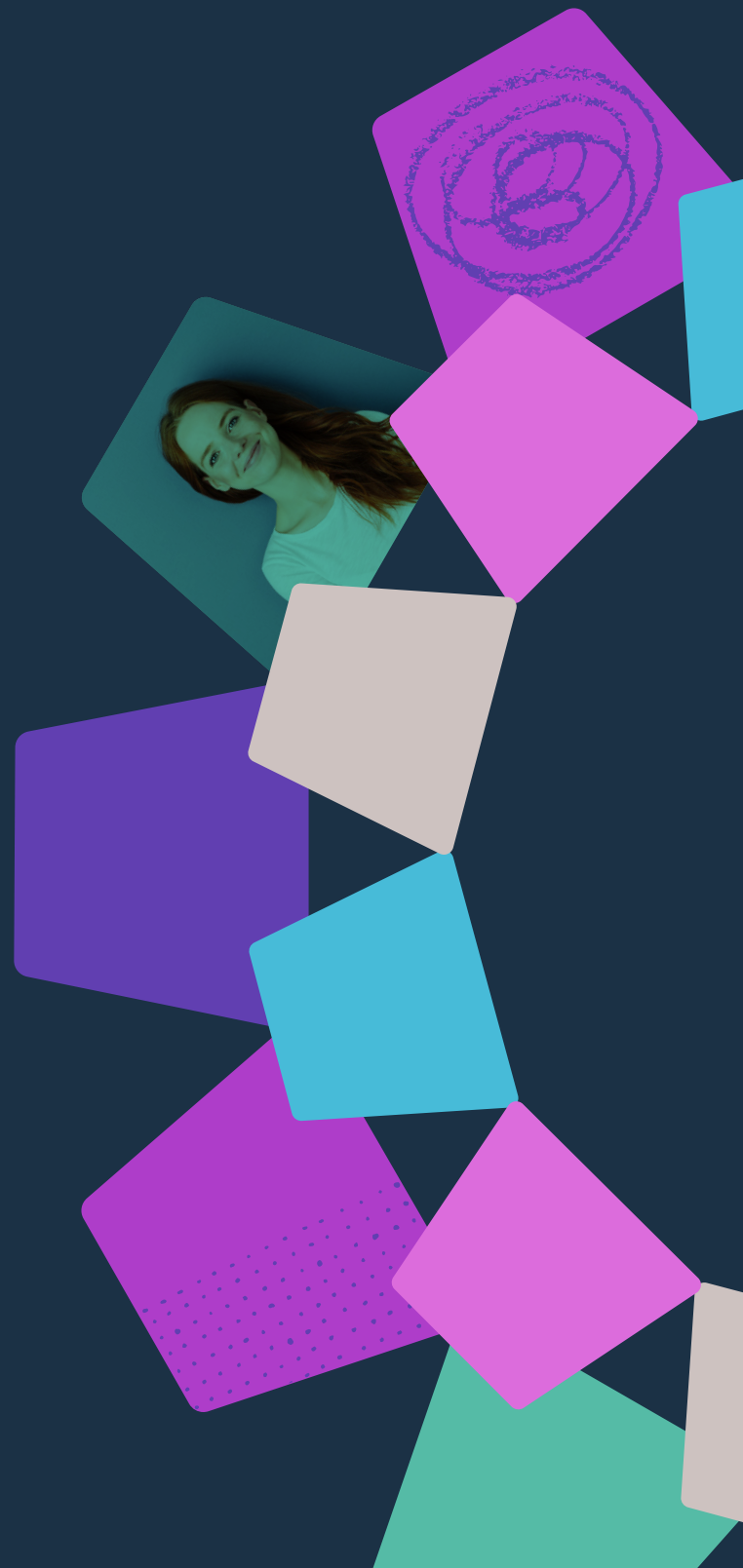




# The art of resilience

A short guide to understanding  
and nurturing our resilience



**A series of e-guides  
on Mental Fitness**

Cognomie Ltd

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# Introduction

## A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO RESILIENCE

“Resilience: The ability of an individual or organisation to adjust to or recover from disruption, change, challenge, adversity or crisis.”

We live in challenging times.

How many challenges have you faced as an individual in the last week, month, year, decade or lifetime?

Challenge can be a negative experience. It can feel disruptive and traumatic and make us feel like our life is in crisis. Or it can be something

that shapes us and help us grow.

The difference can be down to our resilience, our ability to adapt to change and reshape ourselves to it. It's a term that we find ourselves using more and more. But what is it, how do we create it and nurture it? For ourselves. And for the organisations and businesses we are part of.

Resilience is one of our 12 foundations of Mental Fitness, and will be the focus of this e-guide. If you want to learn more about the other foundations and Mental Fitness in general, there's more detail at the end of this guide and we'd encourage you to sign-up for our newsletter.



## MENTAL FITNESS FOUNDATIONS



Sleep



Confidence



Happiness



Motivation



Optimism



Resilience



Physical Fitness



Relationships



Work Life Balance



Anxiety



Stress



Communication



# Resilient people are the raw materials of resilient businesses. Resilience helps people and organisations flex, change and keep performing in challenging times.

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People make businesses. People drive performance. Resilient people create resilient businesses. One of the reasons we think the concept of resilience is so powerful is because it applies to organisations as much as individuals. The language, metaphors, theories and literature around business resilience parallels that of individual resilience.

Businesses and organisations thrive and succeed by being able to rapidly change and adapt to the challenges and opportunities the external environment throws at them.

Resilience carries with it the idea of flexibility, agility, an inner strength or energy that allows whoever or whatever is experiencing the challenge or crisis to adapt, to change around the challenge rather than be broken or damaged by it.

Again, these principles apply as much to organisations, as they do individuals. The more the organisation is made from resilient people, themselves able to flex, change and respond to challenges, the more the organisation itself will be able to.





# Growing through challenge: Resilient individuals

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Individual resilience can best be understood by comparing the way two different people might respond to the same situation.

Let's say the challenge is a major life event, such as redundancy.

Both individuals experience the event as stressful, challenging and potentially damaging to their ambitions, finances and relationships outside work.

Over time individual 1 is able to frame the event as a challenge that has shaped them. It has caused them to adjust their path and adapt their goals. But they have learned from the experience, created an opportunity to try something different and in the end brought opportunities that would not have arrived had their path been maintained.

Individual 2 however continues to frame the same event negatively, seeing it as damaging, a setback and unable to find opportunity out of the challenge presented.

The event is the same for each individual, however the outcomes can be completely different.

Resilience is both the capacity to adapt to and adjust to the challenges of life, but also the ability to find opportunities within challenges.







## COACHING CASEBOOK: JOHN

We recently coached a newly promoted middle manager in a large public sector organisation. The coaching conversation started with a discussion about John's self-assessed resilience and mental fitness.

"I don't feel very resilient. In fact, I feel drained. It's been a very long year, my junior colleagues are acting out and I'm trying ever harder to remain optimistic in front of them, but the harder I try, the more they pull away from me. I'm losing confidence and I just want a holiday"

John brought a high level of self-awareness and openness to the coaching conversations, which helped him identify the specific ways in which he struggled:

"I feel like I've lost my balance, not because of the environmental difficulties we're facing, I'm actually really good in a crisis, but because of my own anxiety."

The difficulty which he felt required his greatest resilience had changed – it had become an emotional difficulty as well as an environmental challenge. This new perspective enabled the coaching conversation to progress into an exploration of his beliefs about himself, what he was trying to achieve

and what mattered to him about his work. He identified a split between the type of manager he was trying to be in response to his work challenges, and why he had come into the profession and decided after many years to move into a management role.

In the next session, John reported a breakthrough.

"It was a simple but powerful insight. I realised that I'd somehow lost touch with what makes me tick and this was why the management challenges felt too much. I do understand how everyone in the team is feeling. I feel it too. It's tough and I think I need to acknowledge that"



# Shared resilience: Resilient teams

## WORKING TOGETHER TO SHARE THE LOAD OF THE CHALLENGE

Resilience isn't only an internal characteristic. We affect other people and they affect us. We co-create our collective perceptions and perspectives, including about challenge and resilience.

Resilience isn't only something we develop alone. We are more resilient if we have a strong support network, that we know how to utilise and contribute to (a problem shared is a problem halved).

How then do we build resilience with the people we work with.

One of the reasons it's easier to identify new ways to bounce back from challenges with colleagues, is that the difficulty becomes less difficult – the burden is shared, we remember we're not alone, that we have colleagues we can trust, colleagues with which we have shared values and common goals.

Whilst it's important to be able to take responsibility for our own resilience, it's even more powerful when we hold this responsibility in common with our colleagues.





## COACHING CASEBOOK: THE TEAM

In one of our recent Mental Fitness workshops, a well-established operational team reflected on what they found difficult and how they wanted to develop their collective resilience.

During one of the discussion sessions many of the team echoed each other's sentiments until one person, and then another commented "I didn't know you felt that way too", "Why don't we talk like this in our team meetings?", "I feel better already".

Sometimes it takes an external facilitator and an appropriately targeted workshop to create the space for us to engage with this awkward question "What do you find difficult?".

The experience of talking, being heard, being accepted and offered support, builds resilience.

// "When I say it out loud, and hear my colleagues talking about similar difficulties, they don't seem so impossible. When it's outside, in other people as well as in me, it's easier to recognise and understand why we're struggling"





# Modelling resilience: Resilient leaders

**Being resilient is vital to being a successful leader in challenging times. If leader's cannot cope with challenge and change, then they cannot navigate their organisation through it either. Leaders are always under the spot light. Their behaviour sets the tone of corporate culture, as does their level of engagement with, or distance from, the challenging realities experienced by their junior colleagues.**

One of our research partners, themselves a leader in researching understanding and building resilience in the workplace, found themselves concerned that their own workplace was not doing a particularly good job in helping employees find and build resilience as they faced the multiple challenges of adapting university working and teaching practices, in response to the Covid pandemic. Then the Vice Chancellor of their institution communicated with the staff in a video address.

// “They showed their own vulnerability. They told everyone how hard they were finding it. They talked about how they were trying to reframe the challenges they were experiencing as something that in the end they would look back on as positive, but acknowledged they were finding it hard”.

There were still things that the organisation could have done better in terms of implementing a “textbook response” to supporting resilience. But in that act of showing vulnerability the Vice Chancellor took a huge step in being a role model for resilience and allowing people to see their own vulnerable, human responses to the challenges.

Leadership isn't just about BEING resilient. It's about modelling resilience. Showing what it means and helping other people to find their path to greater resilience by being that example.





## COACHING CASEBOOK: JANE

We worked with Jane on a 1-2-1 executive coaching programme, following feedback from her senior management team.

//  
“I need to carry out my role effectively.  
But also support others in the senior  
team if they ask for my help. I want the  
Chief Executive to hear some of the  
difficulties other team members are  
struggling with so she can support them.  
The problem is that they’re not speaking  
up and telling her how much they are  
struggling”

In the coaching conversations Jane recognised a gap which her distant leadership style had left in the organisation and she thought about how to best move into this gap, specifically: how to enquire, discuss and acknowledge the realities her colleagues worked with on a day to day basis; how to recognise and celebrate the shared values and aspirations that underpinned the senior teams’ hard work; and how to be more explicitly interested and supportive of the various organisational development projects which members of her senior team led on. Jane realised that she needed to visibly acknowledge the reality of her team’s difficulties, and that this was how she could then participate in what would bolster her team’s resilience in managing the organisation forward and out of a very challenging period.





A photograph of a young girl with brown hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt with white polka dots, applying pink blush to her father's cheek with a brush. The father, wearing a teal button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk with a laptop and looking down at a stack of papers. He has a purple flower headband on his head. The background shows a pink sofa and a window with white curtains. A purple semi-transparent box is on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Resilience in challenging times'.

## Resilience in challenging times





# How the Covid pandemic impacted on our resilience



**Living through a global pandemic has, for many of us, undeniably strained and tested our resilience.**

Many of the challenges we face in our lives, from work, relationships, family and personal achievements have been amplified with the added load of home working, home schooling, interrupted routines and disconnection from our support networks. The paradox of resilience is that, to some extent, the more we make use of it, the more we realise we have it. Our growing awareness of the importance of resilience has perhaps made all of us more aware of the importance of supporting it and nurturing it. Put simply, the Covid pandemic has shown us that we can be good at looking out

for one another to monitor and support each other's resilience. UCLA psychologist Shelley Taylor's research shows that people are more pro-social rather than aggressive in stressful times. Transformation can come from tragedy, as people can turn personal crises into ways to help others. Telling our lockdown stories about how we have gone through challenges and found ways to deal with them potentially helps others deal with them too, and reminds us of our own resilience as we face challenges in the world beyond Covid.



# The impact of a pandemic on resilience in data

## EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON OUR COGNOSIS DATA

### MFQ Survey - FOUNDATIONS DATA

A review of core Mental Fitness data from Cognosis

Jan 2020 - May 2022

Mental Fitness Foundations  
with greatest movement

#### Negative movement



Happiness  
-1.2



Work/Life  
-0.99

#### Positive movement



Resilience  
 $+0.54 = 0.54$



Confidence  
 $+0.41$



Physical  
Health  
-0.72

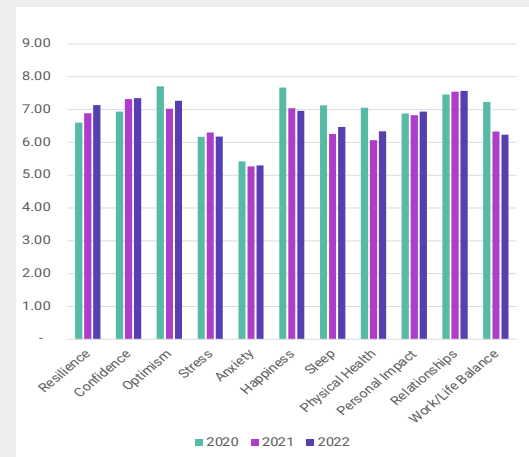


Optimism  
-0.43

Data from clients engaged with ongoing wellbeing  
and performance assessment from Cognomie

### Cognomie Coaching

Leadership data - from EMEA population of c.3000



Data from clients engaged with ongoing wellbeing  
and performance assessment from Cognomie

The data above is taken from our Cognosis Mental Health analysis tool that allows us to assess, measure and report on the current state of an organisation's wellbeing, helping us to identify key areas for development. Using this tool we've been able to analyse the impact of Covid on various aspects of organisational Mental Fitness throughout the pandemic.

Overall we saw an increase in resilience, this was across all age groups and female respondents, however there was a small decrease in male respondents. During this same time, we also saw Confidence and Relationships

trending upwards. Inversely we've seen Sleep, Work / Life Balance and Happiness trend downwards.

Overleaf, we've taken data from the ADP Research Institute's Global Workplace Study 2020, which shows similar trends. With those facing greater complexity with Covid infections being more likely to exhibit Highly Resilient traits. More importantly, in an area that organisations can influence and build into strategy, those that are more highly engaged at work are more resilient when facing challenge.

## Resilience during the pandemic generally increased, across all age groups.





 **Just Coming to Work**

 **Fully Engaged**

 **Highly Resilient**

**5%**

**10%**

 **Vulnerable**

**80%**

**5%**

This illustration is taken from the ADP Research Institute - Global Workplace Study 2020 -

Engagement and Workplace Resilience are positively correlated: Engagement explains 64% of Resilience. Overall, we found that 10% of workers are both Fully Engaged and Highly Resilient. And yet, each is independent of the other. It is possible to be Fully Engaged but not Highly Resilient, and vice versa.

Data taken from ADP Global Workplace Study 2020 – see reference for details

## THE EFFECT OF COVID ON WORKPLACE RESILIENCE

The data illustrated that those that were personally exposed or experienced Covid themselves, actually exhibited greater levels of resilience in the workplace.

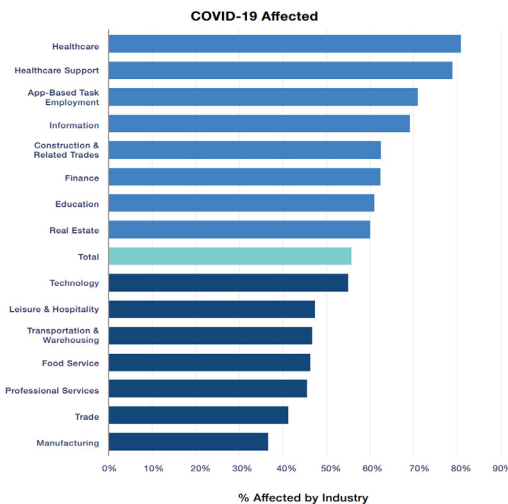
The results indicated that **59% of workers had no direct personal experience of COVID-19**, while **41% replied “yes” to one or more of the items:**

- 4% had COVID-19 themselves
- 7% had a family member with COVID-19
- 12% had a work colleague with COVID-19
- 18% knew non-work acquaintance with COVID-19



Workers who answered “yes” to all of the COVID-19 experience questions were **3.8x** more likely to be Highly Resilient.

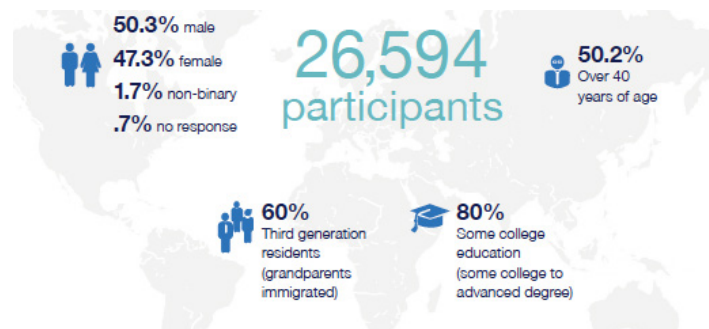
Data taken from ADP Global Workplace Study 2020 – see reference for details



Unsurprisingly, the sectors most affected by Covid (those with staff that personally experienced Covid) during 2020 were those in the healthcare sector and supporting sectors. With manufacturing being least affected.

## ADP RESEARCH INSTITUTE GLOBAL WORKPLACE STUDY 2020

A global workplace study that usually focusses on engagement, but during the pandemic expanded to include their Workplace Resilience Scale, to assess the two in combination. This was a stratified random sample of 26,594 participants globally.

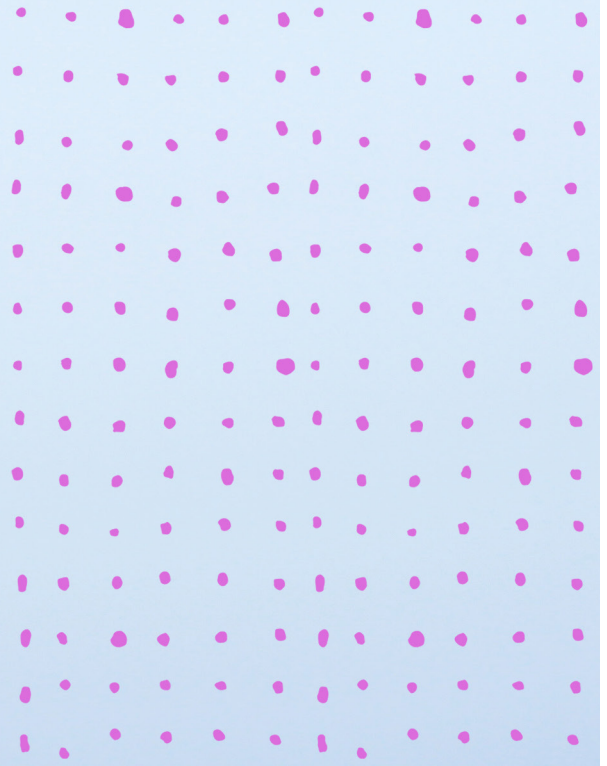


Data taken from ADP Global Workplace Study 2020 – see reference for details

“People with high levels of emotional resilience will perform better. Research indicates boosting emotional resilience in the workplace requires three levels of intervention: the individual level, the organisational level, and the level of interface between the two.”



# SOURCES OF RESILIENCE





# 7 ways to build resilience

If resilience is so important, what can we do to understand it, nurture it, and sustain it?

## No.1

### Turn negatives into positives

You can change the narrative around the challenges you face

Frame the things that confront you in a positive manner

## CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

It's a natural tendency to ruminate on the negative aspects of a challenge. How can you rewrite the story to emphasise the positive – what good things occurred that wouldn't have happened without this challenge?

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### LOOK TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES

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## No. 2

### Purpose is powerful

With purpose we can navigate challenges that would otherwise become overwhelming

Shared purpose can drive motivation

## KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

Having a clear sense of purpose for what you do can be the bedrock of resilience. Having purpose makes it easier to bounce back in challenging times by providing perspective, stability, confidence and determination. It's much harder to be defeated when you are passionate and purposeful about your journey.

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### WITH PURPOSE WE CAN MANAGE TO DEAL WITH GREATER ADVERSITY

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## No. 3

### Challenges are learning opportunities

Look to learn from the times we're under pressure, building resilience for the future

Resilience can be gained from change and challenges

## EMBRACE CHALLENGE

Resilient people see change and challenge as an opportunity to learn and develop. Mistakes and failures are not reflections of your self worth, they are the outcome of trying something and an opportunity to develop and grow.

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### LOOK TO LEARN AND DEVELOP DURING CHANGE AND CHALLENGING PERIODS

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## No. 4

### Practice on small problems

Start small and then move to bigger objectives

Be practical in your approach

## DEVELOP PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Practice problem solving skills on small problems. Make a quick list of some of the potential ways you could solve day to day challenges. Experiment with strategies and focus on developing a logical way to approach problems. Practicing problem solving on a regular basis will prepare for when bigger challenges emerge.

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### PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS CAN ENABLE PROGRESS

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## No. 5

### Take power from your network

Ask yourself why and where your stress occurs and how it makes you feel.

We're all stronger when supported by others

## BUILD CONNECTIONS

One of the most powerful sources of resilience is other people. They can help us reframe problems, provide new perspectives, remind us of our capabilities and generally put challenges in perspective. Nurture your networks and they will nurture you.

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### WITH STRONG NETWORKS COMES GREATER RESILIENCE

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## No. 6

### Focus on can not can't

Identify the things that need to change. Be realistic but firm about how you can begin to change them.

Avoid wasted energy on things you can't control

## KNOW WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

Being clear about what you can change about a problem and what you can't allows you to focus on the things that CAN make a difference and lets you stop the things you can't change damaging your self worth.

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### FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU CAN CHANGE AND CONTROL

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## No. 7

### Look for space

Activate things that help us renew, don't get swamped in the problems

Be kind to yourself to allow you to grow and become more resilient

## SELF RENEW

Often the first thing we forget to do in times of challenge is look after ourselves. It's a natural instinct to think that we need to devote all our time to "the problem". In fact good sleep, exercise, nutrition, social connection and taking pleasure in small things ARE the things that will help with the challenge.

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### FIND SPACE TO RENEW RATHER THAN GET LOST IN THE CHALLENGE

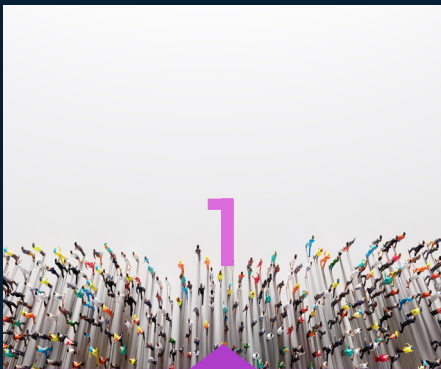
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# Resilience is personal

Where does our resilience come from? It is a form of inner strength and flexibility that allows us to get through the challenges life and work can throw at us. But what helps us find it, nurture it and grow it. We explore lots of ways to find resilience in this guide. We think there are 3 things that are fundamental to resilience. But the nature of those things, what those things mean, how they materialise, the form they take. They are always personal. So what do these 3 things mean to you?



## YOUR NETWORK

Our personal networks are powerful sources of resilience. It might be networks of friends and family who are 'there for you' or 'have your back.' It can be our peers and colleagues who are going through the same experiences. Having people to share things with who 'get it' and 'get you'. Who helps sustain your resilience? Who gets what you go through?



## YOUR RENEWAL

Time to be you. Time to reflect. Time to have space. Time to move or exercise or do the things you love doing. Having space to process our challenges, to renew ourselves, to breathe and remind ourselves what it's all for. Personal renewal is a vital part of resilience and later in the guide we will explore how organisations can help individuals build renewal into their lives. What works for you? How do you renew? One person's 'walk in the fresh air' might be another person's 'time with my kids' or another's 'doing my hobby'.



## YOUR PURPOSE

One important way to find our resilience is the simple act of reminding ourselves why we are going through the challenge. Whether our motivation is sustaining a lifestyle for our families, achieving personal goals, making the world a better place, or whatever our own version of purpose may be, reminding ourselves about the why can make the challenge seem easier and keep us moving on and through it. Are you clear what your purpose is? Sometimes simply having it written down as a simple statement or a list or a set of images, can itself be the source of our resilience.



# The strength of resilience found in networks

**Resilience is not purely an individual characteristic, but is also heavily enabled by strong relationships and networks. We can nurture and build our resilience through a wide variety of interactions with people in our personal and professional lives.**

- A well-developed network of relationships can help us rebound from setbacks by:
- Helping us shift work or manage surges
- Helping us to make sense of people or politics in a given situation
- Helping us find the confidence to push back and self advocate
- Helping us see a path forward
- Providing empathic support so we can release negative emotions
- Helping us to laugh at ourselves and the situation
- Reminding us of the purpose or meaning in our work
- Broadening us as individuals so that we maintain perspective when setbacks happen





# Supporting each other through change and challenge

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**One of the best sources of resilience for all of us is, well, each other. We've explored above how our personal networks can support and sustain our resilience. But how can we all help create and strengthen these networks of support?**

## SHOW VULNERABILITY

By being open about what we're going through we help others to be open too. And we help create an environment where experiences can be processed and talked about. Sharing and the challenges we face helps normalise them, bring them down to a level where they can be talked about and encourages others to do the same. When challenges are known support and empathy can flow.

## SUPPORT SELF RENEWAL

Getting time for self renewal is hard. Family and work commitments always feel more important and take priority. But renewal is a vital part of resilience. Supporting self renewal by encouraging others to find time, emphasising how much it is a priority, helping deprioritise competing workplace issues and celebrating acts of self renewal when they occur helps create a culture of renewal in your network.

## TOUGH LOVE

Helping others to frame scenarios that present a challenge or a moment of change in a positive light can sometimes require illustrating some of the elements in a way that might be hard for them to hear. But this tough love can help people to frame a situation better, find the positive in the moment and move on constructively, building resilience as they do so.



# Daily resilience routines

Having small daily routines that you can consider adopting, can help you build your personal resilience for times of need.



THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT CAN HELP ON A DAILY BASIS TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR RESILIENCE

## Allow space for reflection and renewal

Make a list of the things you use for self renewal - exercise, chatting, reading, playing games, being in nature. Do one thing on the list everyday. This helps us create and protect the habits we need to renew when our resilience comes under pressure.

## Manage and channel your stress

Practice approaching stressful situations as challenges rather than threats and reflect on how stress feels when you use it as an ally or inner power

## Give time to your friends and network

Reflect daily on who the people are who help sustain your resilience. And take note of the ways in which you may be supporting the resilience of other people. Being conscious of our network makes it easier to turn to when we most need it.

## Develop a language for your emotions

We feel emotions all the time, every day. Developing a more sophisticated language for our emotions helps us know what we are feeling and be able to reflect on why. Practice with daily emotions to be more fluent with the bigger ones when they arrive.

## Practice active optimism

Optimism is one of the key foundations of resilience. And like resilience its not innate, its a methodology. Check out our handy ABC of optimism here and practice using disputation and energisation to reframe everyday occurrences and frustrations

## Be aware of your purposeful actions

Reflecting on our purpose and what gets us out of bed and keeps driving us forward is at the heart of our resilience. Every day gives us something that we can regard as another small step towards what we're aiming for. Measuring the small steps helps keep our purpose front of mind.

“Small daily actions, make building resilience a conscious process. Taking these small steps can ensure, that when we need it, we're able to draw on our resilience and achieve things that previously would have challenged us beyond our capability”





# THE RESILIENT BUSINESS



# Organisational resilience

So far we've spoken of individual, team and leadership resilience, but resilience at an organisational level is just as important. Organisational resilience is especially important today because the business environment is becoming more dynamic and unpredictable. Much of what is required to ensure business resiliency overlaps with the kind of structural and operational design required for business continuity planning and putting in place responses and processes to ensure workflow are preserved in order for organizations to survive unexpected events.

Business Resilience is a more strategic and holistic approach than simply continuity, influenced by a unique interaction and combination of strategic and operational factors. Companies can structure their organizations and decision processes for resilience by embracing six principles of long-lasting systems:

1

## REDUNDANCY

Designing systems to have multiple elements that achieve the same end

2

## DIVERSITY

Creating an environment that fosters multiple ways of thinking and doing things.

3

## MODULARITY

A modular organization divided into smaller chunks can be rewired rapidly

4

## ADAPTABILITY

Processes and structures are designed for flexibility and learning to allow evolution through trial and error.

5

## PRUDENCE

Scenario planning around the precautionary principle that if something could happen, it eventually will.

6

## EMBEDDEDNESS

Articulating a purpose to align a company's goals and activities with those of broader systems.





# Work as a drain on resilience

Work is rarely seen as a source of resilience. Instead it tends to be seen as a place where employees need to “spend their resilience” to get by. A drain on resilience not something that helps people gain it. Instead of a source of resilience it is seen as

That’s a pity. Firstly because for many people work should be a source of resilience. It is what gives them purpose and meaning. It is where they experience many of life’s challenges and turn them into achievements. And secondly because the more businesses can create and enable resilient employees, the more resilience, agility and ability to improvise they have as a business.

## WHAT’S THE BIGGEST DRAIN ON RESILIENCE AT WORK?

Survey responses from 835 British employees.

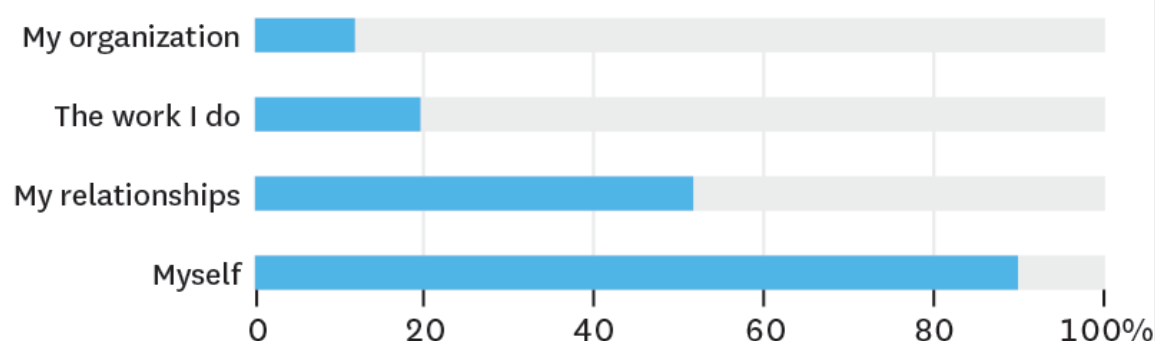


SOURCE “TOUGH AT THE TOP,” BY SARAH BOND AND GILLIAN SHAPIRO

HBR.ORG

## WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR RESILIENCE FROM?

Survey responses from 835 British employees.



SOURCE “TOUGH AT THE TOP,” BY SARAH BOND AND GILLIAN SHAPIRO

HBR.ORG



# The business of the future

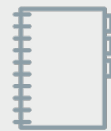
**How can businesses change this? What can the business of the future do to nurture rather than drain resilience?**

**Here are some ideas:**

No. 1

## OPEN DIARIES

Separating work and home life means separating out the challenges of each of them as though they don't inter-relate and influence each other. Having a culture of open diaries that show things like school runs and child care as well as work meetings helps make the challenges we are all really facing visible. And helps co-ordinate work commitments effectively around life.



No. 2

## SCHEDULED SELF RENEWAL

Building resilient teams means making time for self renewal. Gym membership is often provided as an employee benefit as a form of physical self renewal. Busy lives can mean the most precious commodity is time to self renew. Scheduling in renewal time in the same way that team meetings or social events might be scheduled helps create a culture of self renewal.



No. 3

## SAFE EXPRESSION

Pretending we are invulnerable and that our resilience is somehow infinite and can get us through any challenge actually undermines and weakens resilience. Sharing vulnerability creates resilience rather than reducing it. Creating a safe environment that encourages sharing and reflection and supports vulnerability creates a more resilient business.



No. 4

## RESILIENCE MENTORS

We have mentors for leadership and personal development. Resilience mentors can help share their own experience of resilience and be part of building 'networks of resilience' across the organisation.



No. 5

## KPI'S

That which can be measured can be improved. Tracking team and individual resilience across the organisation over time will help identify the triggers and challenges that cause resilience to wane. As well as see how positive changes within the organisation can help resilience to grow.





**Resilient business are able to deal with challenges they might face with greater agility. Greater resilient in individuals can be taught and nurtured with good support. Resilience in business needs to be part of an organisations core strategy, ensuring at every step resilience is considered, if when it's needed.**

No. 6

#### **NURTURE DIVERSITY**

Diverse workplaces create diverse ideas and diverse solutions. These are the foundations of flexibility. So as well as ensuring diversity of background in teams, creating structures and forums to allow diverse ideas to be flourish and be shared helps organisations flex and respond to challenge.



No. 7

#### **ENABLE SOCIABILITY**

The workplace can be a stressful and overwhelming place, especially when undergoing changes or disturbances. Employees are taught to separate work from personal lives, and to check their feelings at the door. Instead of encouraging employees to keep to themselves, build a more social and safe work environment.



No. 8

#### **SHARE VULNERABILITY**

One of the best ways to be a role model for resilience is to be open in communicating the realities of how challenges can be, well, challenging. Pretending that resilience and overcoming challenge is easy is one of the best ways to undermine resilience. Be open. Share.



**“Resilience is the strength and speed of our response to adversity – and we can build it. It isn’t about having a backbone. It’s about strengthening the muscles around our backbone.” Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO**



# Building resilient foundations that last

Resilience is a core Mental Fitness foundation, a foundation that many other areas are reliant on. Building your resilience as an individual will give a strength to call on at times of need.

But resilience isn't simply an individual skill or capability, resilience and being resilient is relevant and important to organisations and teams, as it is to the individual.

We've spoken about some of the core areas to focus on in this guide, but it's important to recognise, as with many aspects of Mental Fitness that it's an ongoing requirement that builds with time and becomes available to be called on when needed.

Additionally, resilience is finite, we can't all be resilient to all things, everyone of us will eventually reach a limit of our resilience. This guide just helps us to grow our resilience boundaries.

We need to allow ourselves space to encourage our resilience to renew and gain strength.

We need to spend time to allow our support networks to grow, to ensure they're there when we need them. We need to focus our energy on areas that we can change and not to be distracted by those beyond our control. We should embrace positive change and frame it in a positive manner, so that we can reflect and learn from what otherwise might be challenging to us. We also need to hold our purpose near to us, to remind us why we might need to face challenges we might otherwise wish to avoid.

All of these considerations can help us become more resilient to whatever we may encounter in our lives, be it at work or in our home lives.

In reference to the title, resilience is an art that we need to fine tune ourselves. It's a conscious process that we need to engage with that will enable us to become more resilient. But part of that art is recognising when we need take that space to renew and reflect and not to take every opportunity to challenge ourselves.





// Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again” **Nelson Mandela**





# Useful tools

A selection of tools, from books and audio files to web resources and apps that we like and found useful in gaining a better understanding of stress and how we might manage it.



## SOME GOOD READS...

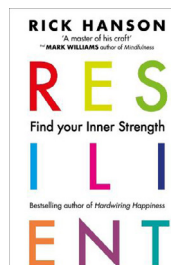
## WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU? BOOKS, APPS, AUDIO...



### Developing Resilience

Michael Neenan

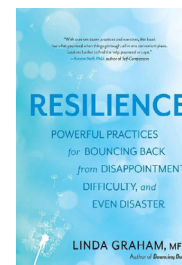
A cross between a text book and a self help book, this brings a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approach to strengthening our resilience, with reflections on stoicism, positive psychology and personal metaphors.



### Resilient - Find your Inner Strength

Rick Hanson

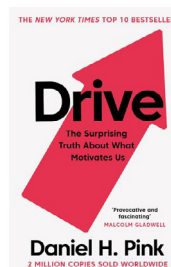
By the author of Hardwiring Happiness, Rick Hanson builds on his ideas of 'positive neuroplasticity' with 12 ways in which we can train our brains to develop more resilience in everyday life.



### Bouncing Back

Linda Graham

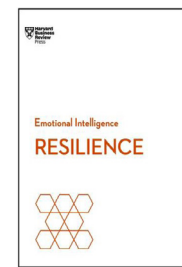
Clear exercises and examples to help build clarity, connection, competence, calm, and courage and develop resilience to support core wellbeing.



### Drive

Daniel Pink

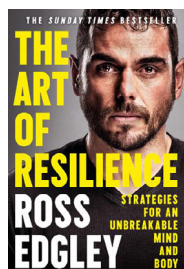
A powerful exploration of what really motivates in life (clue: it tends to be more about being self direction, learning and creativity) and a valuable read for any of us trying to gain clarity around our own purpose and the reason why we get up in the morning.



### Emotional Intelligence

Harvard Business Review

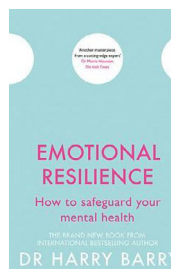
A collection of essays and ideas from leading thinkers in the field as part of the influential Harvard Business Review Emotional Intelligence Series.



### The Art of Resilience

Ross Edgley

Round Britain swimmer Ross Edgley examines the performance of extreme athletes, military specialists and psychologists to uncover the role of resilience, persistence and a disciplined mindset in overcoming adversity.



### Emotional Resilience

Dr Harry Barry

A comprehensive guide to the skills needed for resilience and covering self-acceptance, problem solving, empathy, dealing with anxiety, pragmatism, conflict resolution and many more besides.



### Positivity

Paul McKenna

With 30 years working as a therapist, Paul McKenna has developed a unique approach - guiding you towards a feeling of positivity - putting you into optimal states of mind, building up resilience and enabling good decisions and actions that lead to successful results in life.

## HELPFUL APPS AND WEB RESOURCES...



### Resilience, Recovery, Renewal

Law firm, Baker McKenzie created a podcast series during the pandemic that covered a range of topics around resilience..



### Wild Journey

Meditation journey's to find space in nature. Helping with stress, anxiety and building resilience.



### Brilliant

Brilliant is a world renowned web platform to help you build your problem solving skills. They have a daily challenge to help invigorate thinking and aid problem solving.





## HOW WE ASSESS YOUR ORGANISATION'S MENTAL FITNESS



Cognosis Questionnaire



Matching



Evaluation



Personal Development



Improved Performance

# What is Mental Fitness?

"Mental Fitness helps to prevent poor mental health. It helps us to perform better at work and, ultimately to lead happier lives."

## A framework to help us to address all the components in our lives that contribute to wellbeing

**From our happiness to managing stress and improving our physical health, it's an holistic approach to how we conduct and improve our lives.**

Mental Fitness is the capacity and ability to improve your performance through taking control of your state of psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Mental Fitness is generated through the ability to identify and manage your internal capacities such as focus, attention, presence, perspective, confidence, the ability to appreciate strengths, positivity, determination and to achieve balance.

Secondly, Mental Fitness enables an individual to engage productively with their environment (whether work and home), to manage relationships positively, communicate well, and to feel fulfilled, motivated and optimistic.

A combination of all of these factors results in foundations of resourcefulness across the different skills and competencies important in a business setting.

These include: the ability to maintain a healthy sleep pattern, work-life balance and personal confidence and to communicate effectively and manage through uncertainty.

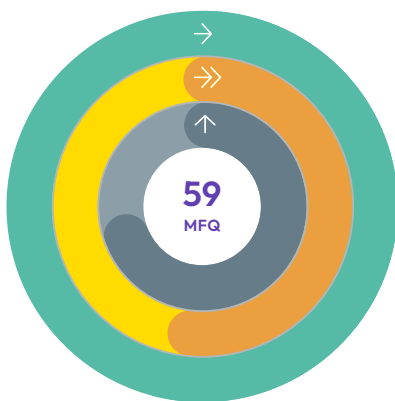
Developing a greater awareness of our Mental Fitness results in the development of a sense of wellbeing and happiness, valuable to each individual and invaluable to an organisation looking to sustain and improve business performance.





# Learn more about Cognomie

**A global coaching consultancy with a difference. Using our unique digital platform, we're able to assess, measure and adjust your specific needs and then bring to bear our coaching network of experts and consultants on a global scale**



## MEASUREMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS ENSURES OUR COACHING WORK ALWAYS REMAINS ON TRACK

Our proprietary analysis platform allows us to identify the most effective way we can help your organisation, then match coach to coachee and provide ongoing performance analysis throughout the project lifetime.



A broad range of services, from coaching to consultancy



Our platform ensures tailored approaches to the coachee's needs



From healthcare, to cosmetics brands, to global consulting organisations - we've got the expertise to help

IMPROVING MENTAL FITNESS FOR EVERYONE

## Providing Mental Fitness for the world's forward thinking organisations.

We specialise in online coaching, training and consultancy to improve the wellbeing and performance of individuals and teams across a broad range of organisations.

We are powered by Cognosis - our data driven profiling and benchmarking tool. And supported by our global network of coaches, wellbeing and performance experts.

We use our proprietary Cognosis platform to benchmark individuals and use these insights to tailor personalised

coaching and support at scale.

Our consulting-led process tailors this service to the needs of individual organisations.

Our approach is currently making a profound and sustainable difference to the wellbeing and productivity of teams and individuals all around the globe.

If you'd like to find out how our data-led approach can help your organisation improve productivity by strengthening the Mental Fitness of your team, we'd love to talk.

## SOME OF THE SECTORS WE WORK IN

1 Pharmaceutical

2 Telecommunications

3 Food retail

4 Healthcare

5 Hospitality

6 Consulting



# +90%

**Very good / excellent  
lasting results  
+6 months post  
coaching**

**REDUCED ABSENCE RATE  
DOWN 35% FOLLOWING INTERVENTION**

Increased wellbeing & satisfaction, reducing workforce absenteeism.

**INCREASED PERFORMANCE  
UP 60% ON MEASURABLE INDICATORS**

Improved workforce performance following coaching and consultancy intervention for reported clients.



**IMPROVING MENTAL FITNESS FOR  
EVERYONE**





# Meet Cristy & Shaun, our contributing authors

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## CRISTY LEASK - COUNSELLING & ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Cristy Leask is a transformation executive with extensive experience of creating purposeful strategies and delivering results that accelerate business growth.

Cristy is passionate about enabling leaders and executive teams to get to the future faster by co-creating the fit-for-purpose solutions of our time.

Navigating the current world requires leaders to become authentic, shift mindsets, redefine models and place purpose at its heart.



## SHAUN RUGGUNAN - ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Shaun is an academic trained in industrial psychology and industrial sociology. His PhD is the interdisciplinary field of Industrial, Organisational & Labour Studies. His thesis examined the changing nature of the labour market for Filipino, South African and British seafarers. He has been published on globalisation and labour, race classification in South Africa and most recently on the changing nature of professional work in South Africa, with a specific focus on medical specialists.

Shaun has worked both in Sociology and Management schools and is currently an academic in the Discipline of Human Resources Management. His teaching ranges from Research Methodology to Industrial relations and Globalisation.

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Whilst we covered some details on building resilience, this is just a guide. If you would like to explore ways to strengthen resilience in your organisation, then get in touch

# About this guide, references & other information

## OUR THANKS

### Cristy Leask and Shaun Ruggunan

Contributing authors and source of research and insight through the report

### ADP Research Institute - Global Workplace Study

An invaluable insight resource that can be read in full below.

<https://www.adpri.org/research/global-workplace-study/>

<https://www.adpri.org/research/workplace-resilience-study/>

### Business in the Community - Emotional Resilience and Productivity of the Working Age Population 2011.

<https://www.bitc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/bitc-wellbeing-report-emotional-resilience-productivity-workingagepopulation-revisedMarch20.pdf>

## REFERENCES

### Harvard Business Review

HBR have explored resilience widely in their articles and research. We drew on a number of works to inform our e-book

<https://hbr.org/2015/01/what-resilience-means-and-why-it-matters>

<https://hbr.org/2011/04/building-resilience>

<https://hbr.org/2020/07/a-guide-to-building-a-more-resilient-business>

<https://hbr.org/2021/01/the-secret-to-building-resilience>

<https://hbr.org/2016/06/627-building-resilience-ic-5-ways-to-build-your-personal-resilience-at-work>

### OTHER REFERENCES

We have referenced or quoted from the following texts.

Business Continuity vs Business Resilience – BMC Blogs

5 Points for a Resilient Organisational Culture – Lumapps

5 Science Backed Strategies to Build Resilience – Berkeley Greater Good Magazine

10 Ways to Build Your Resilience – Very Well Mind

Resilience – American Psychological Association

Developing Resilience – Mind Tools

Resilience Building Tools and Activities – Positive Psychology

New rules of resilience for women's leadership success – Sharpire Consulting

## GET IN TOUCH



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