

EAO Newsletter- August Issue

The end of August brings cooler temperatures, cozy sweaters, and seas of students back to campus. For many, this is an exciting time of renewal and new beginnings. However, the beginning of the fall semester can also be full of challenges. Supervisors can take steps to build a resilient workplace that weathers change and decreases employee burnout. In this issue of the EAO Supervisor Newsletter, we discuss the ways in which supervisors can promote a resilient workplace in the back-to-school season.

What is organizational resilience?

Simply put, organizationally resilient workplaces can stretch and adapt to new challenges. They are nimble, adaptable, and prioritize the psychological safety of their employees. These qualities are always helpful but can become particularly relevant in times of change or uncertainty. Resilient workplaces are not immune to the additional stress of a new semester, but they are better positioned to handle it with minimal burnout and disruption.

You may have also heard of resilience referred to as a quality possessed by individuals. While personal resilience can be a helpful coping tool, this newsletter concentrates on qualities of resilience possessed by organizations, **not** individual employees. Oftentimes, individual resilience or "grit" isn't enough to build a resilient team. As well, focusing exclusively on individual workers can cause leaders to ignore larger organizational or structural issues that negatively impact their work. By considering the big picture, supervisors can develop a culture that allows everyone to feel psychologically safe and ready to adapt.

Below, we dive deeper into the key qualities of resilient workplaces.

Understanding employee needs

Resilient workplaces have a strong sense of what their employees need to succeed. They initiate open, honest conversations about the current strengths and challenges of their organization, and what obstacles are in employees' ways. Supervisors can encourage their team to speak up when they are struggling, so that they can proactively address the issue and provide support. A workplace that acknowledges challenges and strives to meet employee needs will foster a sense of psychological safety and collective belonging on the team.

Resilient workplaces go beyond work-related needs. They also promote and provide space for employee well-being and self-care. Supervisors can model healthy boundaries and actively support employees in seeking out opportunities for self-care.

Accepting and implementing feedback

Organizations that handle change well often adapt based on the well-informed insights of their employees. As supervisors and leaders, make a public commitment to remain open to honest, constructive feedback. Give frequent, low-stakes opportunities for employees to share what is - and isn't - going well.

Managers can strive to "keep the door open" to their employee's ideas by thoughtfully listening and taking their feedback seriously. Employees will feel valued and trusted when their concerns are addressed.

Acknowledging failures as a learning experience

Every workplace will experience failure at some point, but resilient workplaces take a growth-oriented approach to challenges. Supervisors in a resilient workplace reframe mistakes or failures as opportunities to learn and do better next time.

Instead of being afraid to make errors or speak up when something's wrong, employees will feel empowered to ask for help and innovate when faced with new challenges. When faced with upheaval, resilient workplaces are already prepared to grow and change, even if there are bumps along the way.

Staying consistent

Maintaining your commitment to building a psychologically safe and resilient workplace culture may be challenging at first, but will pay dividends over time. By consistently championing these pillars of a healthy work environment, employees can trust that you and their team members have their back. They will gain a sense of psychological safety and will feel more comfortable speaking up, generating new ideas, and supporting each other through change.

Using your resources

For many people, building a resilient workplace culture can feel unnatural or awkward at first. You don't have to do it alone! Contact the EAO or LifeMatters for a free, confidential management consultation. Our trained counselors and consultants can help you to develop the skills that you need to lead a resilient organization.

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