



Resilience – the key to engagement

The term resilience is becoming very popular. In this article we thought we would describe what is meant by the term and provide information on how organizations can help to build resilience.

'Resilience' is a term borrowed from the world of mechanical physics. It is about the capacity of a substance to recoil or spring back, enabling it to regain its original shape after bending, stretching, compression, etc. Resilience is the ability of an individual or organisation to maintain and enhance effectiveness in the midst of a fast-paced, high-pressured and continuously changing environment. The need for resilience increases in direct proportion to the pace of change and the number and complexity of the challenges we face.

Quite simply building resilience is a positive way to enhance mental and physical wellbeing. We run a number of resilience training sessions for managers and employees and find them a lot more positive and solution focused than the traditional stress management sessions.

To build resilience, one needs to look at four main interventions:

- **Audit on resilience** - before starting on a journey it's important to understand where you are now. Stress audits can be adapted slightly to become Resilience audits and information can feed into the following interventions
- **Develop personal resilience** - screening programmes such as those offered by Harely Street Group help individuals to identify how well they are coping with everyday life. Additional screening service and behaviour change programmes where the individual has a desire to change, for example to stop smoking, reduce waist size also help the individual to improve their resilience.
- **Management and employee training** - workshops on resilience are very popular with employees. Management training on building resilience of their team and action planning to address any resilience affecting issues such as relationships, management practices, career and personal development make resilience a clear part of leadership frameworks.
- **Treatment/support services** - Confidential helplines with additional counseling for individuals along with Occupational Health Services help individuals who are at higher risk.

Case study

The global pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) found that employees with mental ill-health are likely to be absent from work 7.5 times longer than those with a physical illness. GSK developed a Resilience programme and since its introduction GSK has experienced a 60% reduction in global incidences of new cases of work-related mental illness and a 29% reduction in days lost due to work-related mental ill-health.