

ENHANCING STAFF RESILIENCE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER DAY-TO-DAY STRESSORS AND MAJOR EMERGENCIES

A TOOLKIT FOR HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS



Organizations have a crucial role to play in creating a living network of systems and support mechanisms that help individuals be more resilient during daily stressors and major disasters.

Don't know how your organization could do that?
This toolkit is for you.

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PROLOGUE

Do you want to create an environment in which healthcare workers are more resilient?

Do you want healthcare workers to be able to recover faster from large and small incidents?

Have you offered staff support services like meditation and yoga, and they go unused?

Do you see a lot of staff quitting?

Do you know how healthcare organizations as systems play crucial roles in improving staffs' ability to handle regular stressful moments in their everyday work environment?

Do you know how healthcare organizations as systems play crucial roles in inoculating staff against stress prior to, during, and after, a major emergency?

Do you recognize that building staff resilience is not an individual responsibility but requires an organization-wide effort?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES (OR EVEN “MAYBE”) TO ANY OF THESE STATEMENTS, THIS TOOLKIT IS FOR YOU.



Research has demonstrated that resilience can be learned, reinforced, and spread through an organization.



Resilience is a learnable skill. There are structures within organizations that support a resilient workplace culture.



Resilience helps both organizations and individuals recover from both minor setbacks and major traumatic events.



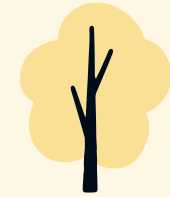
And, people with high levels of resilience are healthier, happier, more effective and more engaged employees.

Human beings are not islands, and an individual's stress and resilience are not solely influenced by their own actions. In fact, external factors and systems play a major role in determining how an individual recovers from setbacks.

There are many resources available for individuals to help reduce their stress levels and increase their resilience. However, meaningful staff resilience is also greatly impacted by the organizational

structure and systems at play within a healthcare organization. To that end, healthcare organizations can implement effective structural and systems improvements that help inoculate staff from long-term stress and foster faster recovery from daily stressful events as well as acute or prolonged events. This toolkit walks users through the steps to do just that.

TOOLKIT OVERVIEW



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience includes an individual's wellbeing and ability to deal with stress and improves their creativity and engagement with work. **Resilient employees can adapt, cope, respond, and positively and quickly recover from daily stressors in the workplace, as well as major adverse events.** They survive and flourish through the traumas, stressors, responsibility shifts, and challenges they experience.

Resilience is not the absence of setbacks or stressors. Rather, resilience allows us to handle those disruptions easier and return to a centered baseline faster.

A resilient workforce includes staff that are self-aware, mindful, problem-solvers, and connected to social support networks. They have learned the tools and have an environment that supports them to work through the minor stressors or larger adverse events they encounter



¹ <https://www.mequilibrium.com>

² <https://go.mequilibrium.com/rs/553-GRV-433/images/meQ-Resilience-in-Uncertain-Times.pdf>

Highly resilient people are:¹

3X
MORE LIKELY TO DEVELOP
A POSITIVE SENSE OF
PURPOSE IN WHAT THEY DO

60%
LESS LIKELY
TO STRUGGLE
WITH BURNOUT

47%
LESS LIKELY TO
QUIT IN HIGH-STRAIN
SITUATIONS

5X
MORE LIKELY TO REPORT
GOOD HEALTH THAN PEOPLE
WITH LOW RESILIENCE

Resilience empowers us to accept, adapt and move forward in difficult situations, and it is the core strength that makes bearing the load of life possible.

WHY FOCUS ON A CULTURE OF STAFF RESILIENCE?

You might be wondering--WHY? Why should leadership and human resources invest time and energy on this when there are so many competing priorities?

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT
40% OF TURNOVER IS DUE TO
EMPLOYEE BURNOUT, AND THAT IT
COSTS AN AVERAGE OF **213% OF
ANNUAL SALARY** TO REPLACE A
HIGHLY-SKILLED EMPLOYEE.²

WHY MAKE STRUCTURAL/ SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS THAT PROMOTE A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE?

Simple: It improves your bottom line.

This is done through:

- Better health outcomes for patients.
- Reductions in staff turnover.
- Increase staff work satisfaction which in turn, reduces staff turnover.
- Which also saves you time and money on hiring and training new people.
- Retainment of historical knowledge, experience, and expertise.

All of which, collectively, as well as individually, help improve your organization's bottom line.

WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT INTENDED TO DO?

This toolkit is intended to help leaders like you identify concepts to enhance cultural resilience within your organization. To do this, an environment that fosters behavioral changes for staff needs to be created.

Foster Behavior Change

BEHAVIOR CHANGE IS INFLUENCED BY FOUR KEY AREAS:

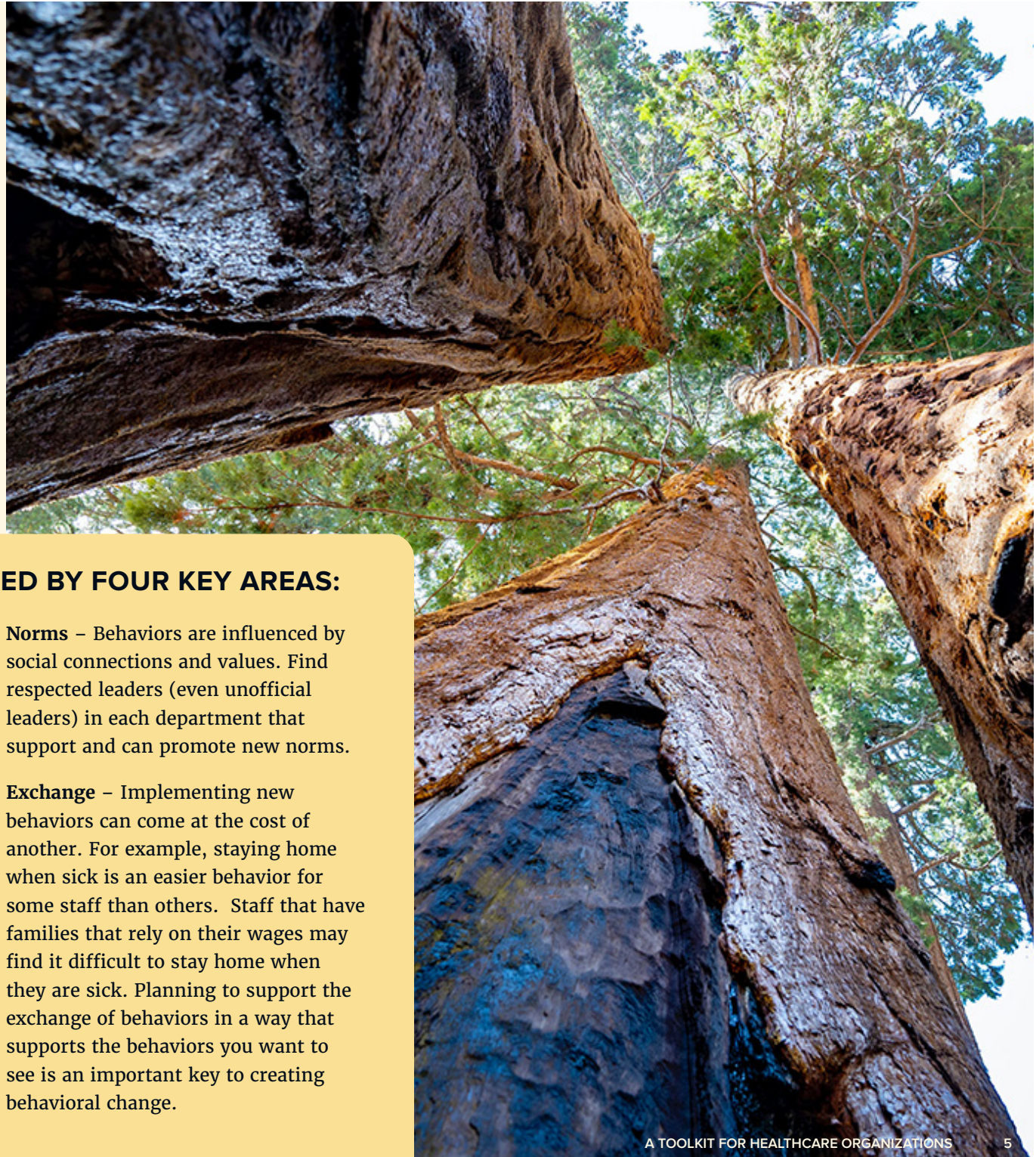
Knowledge – All staff need to have knowledge about stressors and threats, the knowledge to apply appropriate response behaviors, and trust new information as situations change.

Ability – All staff need to have the ability to do what is asked of them. Ensure that staff have the skills or resources to apply in certain scenarios and their work environment is supportive of this change (e.g., paid time off or flex time to practice social isolation; accessible buildings and public transportation to reach and participate in emergency prophylaxis clinics).

Norms – Behaviors are influenced by social connections and values. Find respected leaders (even unofficial leaders) in each department that support and can promote new norms.

Exchange – Implementing new behaviors can come at the cost of another. For example, staying home when sick is an easier behavior for some staff than others. Staff that have families that rely on their wages may find it difficult to stay home when they are sick. Planning to support the exchange of behaviors in a way that supports the behaviors you want to see is an important key to creating behavioral change.

Ozbay F, Johnson DC, Dimoulas E, Morgan CA, Charney D, Southwick S. Social support and resilience to stress: from neurobiology to clinical practice. *Psychiatry (Edgmont)*. 2007 May;4(5):35-40. PMID: 20806028; PMCID: PMC2921311.

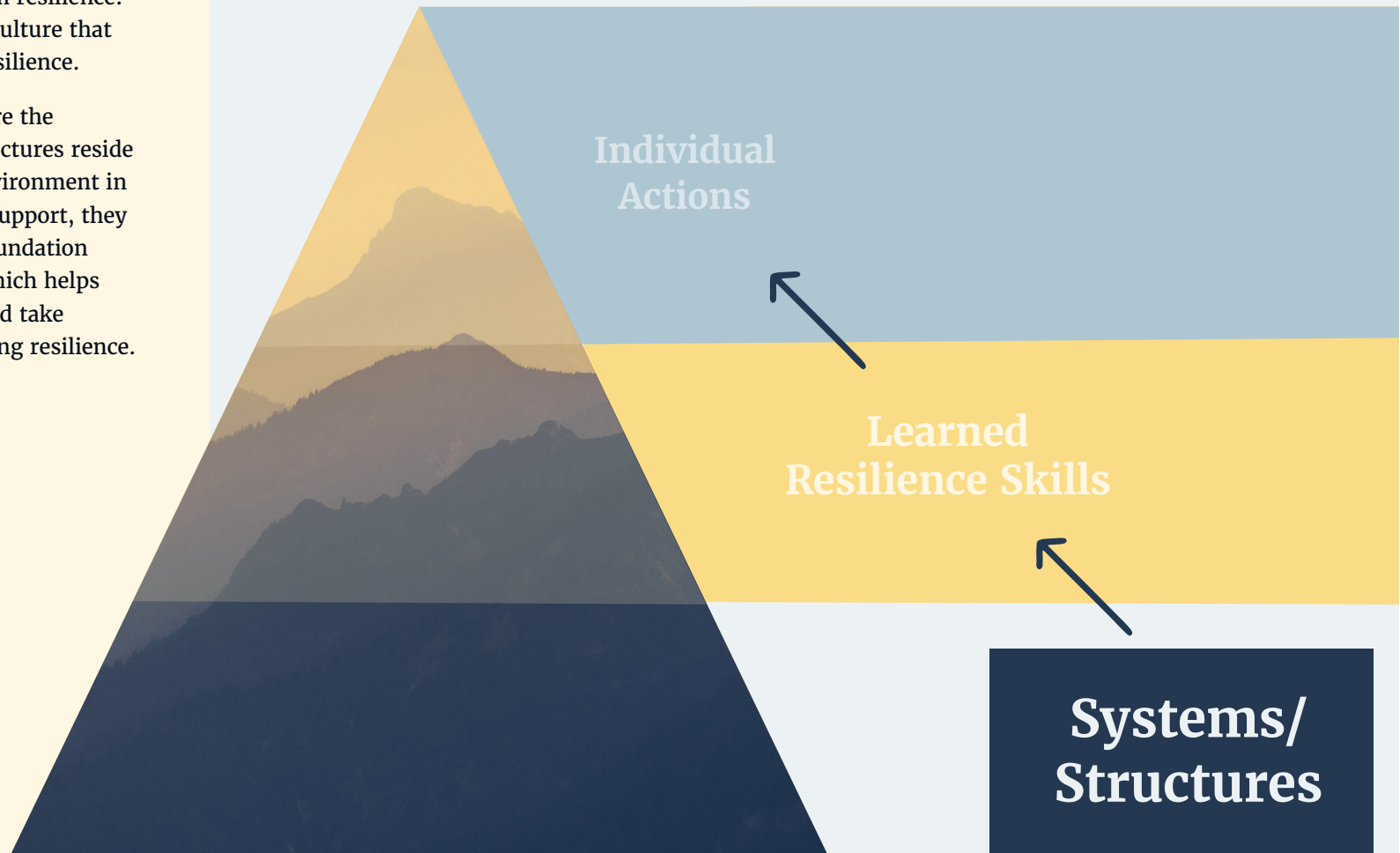


This toolkit helps create a culture of resilience by improving systems and structures within your organization.

Research has clearly demonstrated that support factors contribute to resilience while risk factors take away from resilience. Your organization can create a culture that promotes and enhances staff resilience.

The base of the pyramid is where the organization's systems and structures reside and is the foundation for an environment in which staff have the tools and support, they need to be resilient. A strong foundation supports a culture resilience, which helps people learn resilience skills, and take individual actions toward building resilience.

There are a range of factors that are linked to resilience – such as employees' confidence, optimism, sense of coherence, and level of social support. Organization-wide systems and structures play a key role in creating the conditions that create a culture of resilience.



WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

Any initiative in healthcare requires a diverse group of participants. This toolkit is for the Champion that sees the impact a resilient staff can have and wants to make meaningful change in staff resilience.

It has been designed to be implemented by a team of Champions that will provide energy and coordination. It also describes ways to incorporate input from all levels of stakeholders: executive leadership, department managers, and frontline staff.

HOW IS THIS TOOLKIT STRUCTURED?

There are seven steps in this toolkit. By following the toolkit steps, you will walk through how to implement a comprehensive, systematic resilience improvement program for your healthcare organization.

1

STEP

Identify Your Champions

Champions are individuals within your organization that volunteer or are selected to drive this program. They should see the vision, and they will advocate for and promote change from within. They are key to a successful outcome. Champions for a resilient workforce should come from all levels of the organization.

2

STEP

Perform a Needs Assessment

An organization-wide **needs assessment** will identify your resilience baseline and identify the areas of greatest need. This forms the foundations for Steps 3 through 7.

3

STEP

Understand System & Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

This section walks you through **Seven Focus Areas** of systems and structures that help cultivate an atmosphere that promotes and provides for resilience.

4

STEP

Match Your Needs Assessment Results and Structural Level Improvement Knowledge to Identify Action Steps for Change

Use your Needs Assessment results, as well as the knowledge acquired in Step 3, to identify action items your organization may begin to implement to address gaps. [The Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk Attachment 2](#) serves as a guide to help you begin to think about possible next steps.

5

STEP

Regularly Teach Resilience Skills

There are a number of educational opportunities that help teach, reinforce, and support resilience skills. This section highlights examples of these opportunities. It also helps identify ways in which department managers and leaders can teach resilience skills as part of their daily work. This section also provides examples of how to introduce resilience touchpoints and continually train staff on the skills related to increased resilience.

6

STEP

Provide Individual Resources

While much of this toolkit is focused on organization-wide efforts, everyone can take action to develop their own resilience skills. This section provides a repository of actions and activities for individuals to enhance their personal resilience strategies.

7

STEP

Reassess your efforts

This section provides information on how to continue to reassess and make iterative improvements.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THIS TOOLKIT, YOU WILL NEED:



Leadership Support

An Executive Sponsor to provide oversight and support for the program. This can include allocating resources for the program, reviewing program documents, and approving training and program components.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Incorporate this work into existing wellness campaigns.

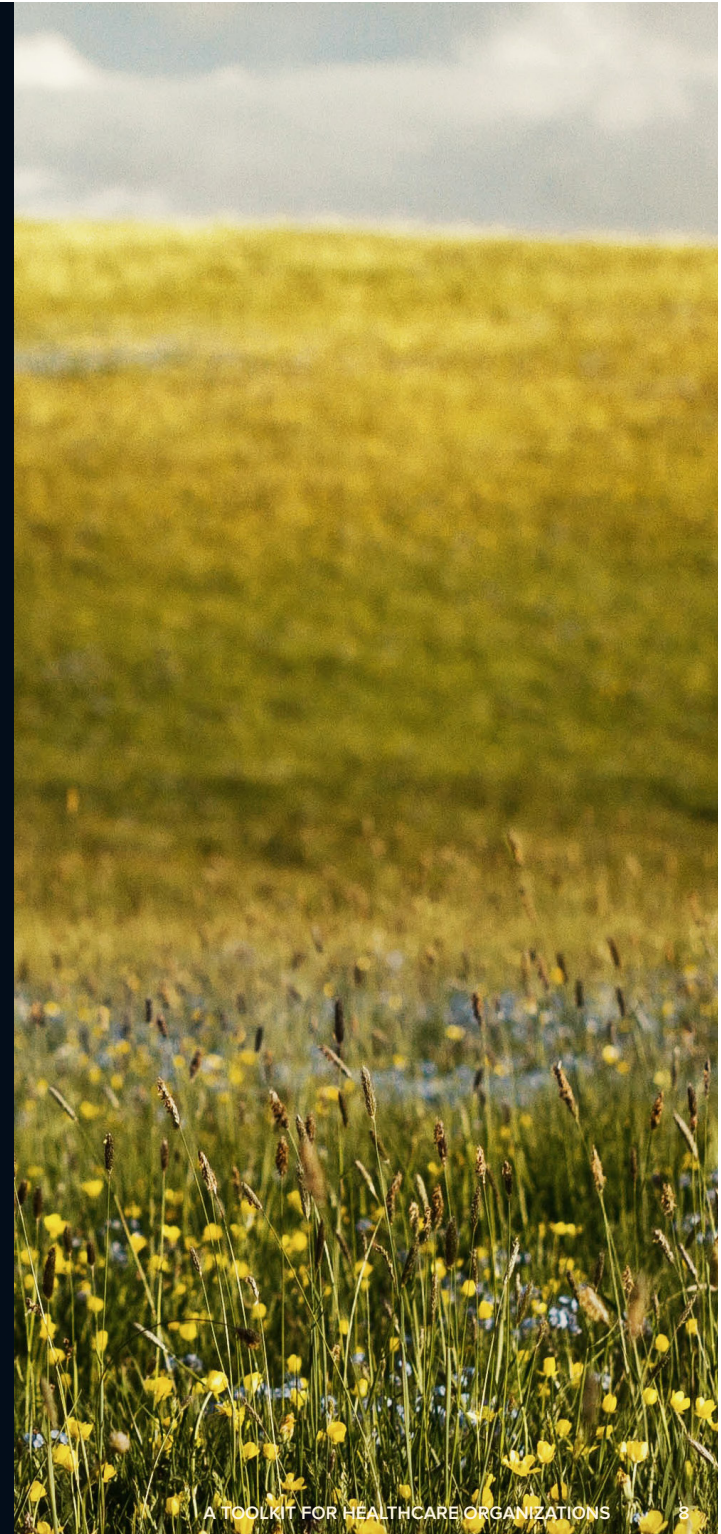
Create a committee to manage, create and implement the activities below.

A willingness to co-create policies and procedures WITH your staff.

All too often, program designers lead with packaged interventions that don't really engage their target audience to understand what their needs are to enact change.

Be willing to bring your staff into the design and development process. This helps create plans that resonate with staff, reflect their lived experiences, and address root issues and concerns while building trust.

Engage with both official leadership and non-traditional respected 'leaders' within staff hierarchy—this better enables you to create an environment and foster supportive environment norms that address staff needs, worries, and support mechanisms.



1 Identify Your Champions

STEP

Champions are individuals within your organization that share the vision of a resilient workforce. They desire to actively advocate for the benefits of resiliency and will support the organization in integrating these strategies. While they may not be the originators, they show enthusiasm for the project at an early stage. They may be recognized for their expertise.

The Impact of Your Champions

Recruiting the right champions can create a culture open to new ideas and alternative solutions. Building a resilient workforce is a cultural change, and a group of involved champions is a strategy for promoting and managing a change in culture. They can have a positive influence on the efforts and actions of this project which has been noted to reduce resistance to change.

ATTRIBUTES OF A CHAMPION

Several attributes are recommended for a Champion to be successful in their role. Attributes beneficial to a Champion are the abilities to:

- Communicate effectively with a variety of peers at the grassroots level, across disciplines, and as part of a committee.
- Develop relationships with key individuals across the organization.
- Contribute ways to overcome barriers and solve problems that may occur.
- Commit and persevere until completion of the project.
- Be respected and have the ability to positively influence others.
- Contribute knowledge or experience with the topic.
- Sustain the efforts after implementation.

All of which, collectively, as well as individually, help improve your organization's bottom line.



SELECTING YOUR CHAMPIONS

Effective committees typically are small groups (most effectively 5–8 members but no more than 20). This group of Champions should represent a wide variety of your staff:

Begin with a list of the roles, skills, talents, and diversity that would benefit your mission. Consider:

- Leadership and frontline staff
- Clinical and non-clinical staff
- Salaried and hourly staff
- Staff with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Paying staff for their time, especially staff whose jobs are not as high paying.

Create a short “job description” for your champions.

- Clearly define the mission and goals of the committee.
- Identify meeting frequency and length.
- Other potential time commitments (staff meetings, trainings, etc.) the champions may need to contribute.
 - **Play to the champions skills. Champions will remain engaged if they can use their unique skillset and provide their point of view.**
 - **Show your gratitude in a variety of ways. Understand that not all people like to be recognized in public, and work to show how important their contribution is to the effort.**

2 Perform A Needs Assessment

STEP

To start, it is important to understand your baseline and how staff feel about their resilience. A strategic needs assessment can query staff to help you identify, understand, and prioritize their needs. With a prioritized list of needs, you can move through the other steps and focus your efforts on what is most important to staff.

TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

- This needs assessment is designed to gather input from all staff. It could be administered by an electronic survey for ease of data analysis.
- This needs assessment can be conducted in conjunction with staff engagement or other initiatives focused on staff input.
- Consider having staff complete the survey anonymously.
- A lead department (typically Human Resources) should create, edit, and manage the data collection process.
- Data should be analyzed by the lead department.
- Use your Champions to analyze the data and direct future efforts.
- Incentives (such as a raffle or gift cards) for filling out the assessment may help increase participation.

Attachment 1 provides a list of questions that can be used to query staff.

STEP 3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

Now that you have your assessment complete, let's use your results. First, let's learn more about how to begin improving resilience structures and systems within your organization and identify action items you can take to begin to make improvements.

Each Focus Area provides an explanation as to why it's important and tips, tricks and best practices for how to begin making improvements.

You will use the results of your Needs Assessment to make improvements in each Focus Area in Step 4.

There are Seven Focus Areas that improve resilience systems at the organizational level. These are:



1. Leadership



2. Communication



3. Human Resource Policies



4. Physical & Safety Systems



5. Practical Needs



6. Psychosocial Needs



7. Training and Education

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

The importance of leadership cannot be understated in creating an organizational environment in which staff feel supported, heard, understood, and valued. Effective leadership is essential to building a work environment that promotes staff safety, meaning in the workplace, autonomy, well-being, growth, and empowerment.

TIP: Having leadership at every level that employees feel like is in their corner and has their back during small events, helps employees to feel secure that they will be supported during large emergencies.



FOCUS AREA 1: Leadership

When defining “Leadership” and what that means, there are three main leadership categories:

Senior Leadership (Executive Level Leadership)

This group ensures the hospital continues operations despite any interruption and that the organization can meet the changing needs of staff. There should be built in mechanisms and flexibility to respond to events that occur during normal their day-to-day work as well as during and after an emergency. This group is vital to new initiatives (such as the one described in this toolkit) and would approve the time and resources needed to make it successful.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Subject Matter Experts provide trusted, accurate, and honest information to staff regarding a variety of topics that staff may encounter during their day-to-day work as well as during and after an emergency. There should be a way for SMEs to honestly engage with staff and share important information.

Department-Level Leadership

Department-level leaders (including the formal leaders, the informal networks of leaders among coworkers, the trusted leaders

within coworker groups) can provide the most direct information and support to staff.

Effective Leadership

Research has shown that organizations that have demonstrated effective leadership have staff that function more resiliently in their day-to-day work and have lower rates of staff absenteeism during a large emergency. A culture of leadership support at every level helps employees to feel secure that they will be supported during large emergencies.

Building Trust

Creating a culture of trust can be challenging for both new and existing leadership. Cultivating a [culture of interpersonal trust](#) is especially important. Interpersonal trust is the trust we have in one another—the trust your staff has in their leadership and their coworkers. In a culture of interpersonal trust, staff willingly take measures to protect themselves and each other in their day-to-day work and during large-scale emergencies. Believing (trusting) that their peers are trying to do the right thing, and no one is being left out helps foster feelings of solidarity and encourages staff to be present at work.

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Frequent, accurate, honest, bilateral communication is a driving force that helps staff feel both like a trusted partner and a key player within their organization. Having communication pathways that are trusted sources of information in day-to-day work environments helps to reinforce those same pathways during a crisis. Therefore, building pre-existing communication plans with staff (rather than for staff) related to both day-to-day needs and expectations as well as emergency communication plans is key to helping ensure communication mechanisms are in place that work.



FOCUS AREA 2: Communication

Your communications plans should: Provide Consistent and Accurate Information

- Leadership can build and maintain the trust of their workforce by providing consistent, accurate communication to all staff with opportunities for staff to provide feedback. Accurate information may come from a variety of sources, including internal SMEs, local, state, and national health departments, news agencies, and trusted leadership. You can acknowledge gaps and uncertainties when they exist.

Share Information Swiftly and Effectively

- To maintain the credibility of your communications, consistent and accurate information should be shared swiftly and effectively with all staff. It is equally important that your staff receive prompt updates if information or instructions change, and that they see you as a trusted source.

Acknowledge Uncertainties and Fears

- Some incidents can create an environment of uncertainty and fear among staff. The fear may be directly related to the threat (e.g., the misunderstanding of how a disease is spread and why certain health behaviors are effective to combat that threat). Mistrust and fear may evolve and change during the event, and it is valuable to monitor and address staff concerns as they change.
- Understanding this, you can leverage your communication plans and pathways to intentionally address each area prior to, during, and after an event.

Consider What Fosters Behavior Change

Finally, it is important to understand how your communication plan can foster and support needed behavior change among your staff in the face of adversity.

- Knowledge – Your efforts should include a variety of communication methods (such as translation services and formats accessible to those with low literacy and/or reading challenges) to help ensure staff knowledge of the event.
- Ability – Communication often includes an action to take in an event. Ensure that staff have ways to communicate what they need to perform the actions they are asked to do.
- Norms – Utilize respected leaders (even unofficial leaders) in each department that support and can advocate and model the culture and norms you are promoting.
- Exchange – Acknowledge the need to exchange actions and activities in your communications to staff.

RECAP: Having communication plans and pathways that are trusted sources of information in staff's day to day work environments helps to reinforce those same pathways when an emergency happens.

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Human Resources (HR) policies are a critical and often overlooked piece of the workforce resilience puzzle.

RECAP: HR policies are a critical and often overlooked piece of the organizational resilience puzzle. HR Policies that support enhancing and improving staffs' resilience should focus on equity to ensure that all staff have what they need to be able to work effectively.



FOCUS AREA 3: Human Resources Policies

HR Policies that support enhancing and improving workforce resilience include:

Sick Leave

Having sick leave policies in place should be clearly defined in advance of an event. Engage your Champions in these policies and decisions.

Sick leave policies should include:

- Who makes the decisions on additional sick leave and any exceptions.
- When employees may be sent home from work because of an illness or an exposure and when they may return to work. Determining how a staff member contracted an illness can potentially become contentious and can create discontent if not handled with care and consideration.
- Compensation for those staff that are sent home from work.
- A plan for staff that may not have enough sick time for their time away from work.

Staffing Models

Adjusting staff numbers or ratios can be an effective response to an emergency. Clearly outline criteria for when and how staffing models can be adjusted. Any plan to adjust staffing ratios should include local, state, and regulatory authorities to understand and comply with existing regulations.

Options to consider including are, but not limited to:

- Reassignment of staff to different job functions and/or different locations.
- Increase length of shifts.

- Use retired staff.
- Use students (in an appropriate capacity) to support support efforts such as contact tracing and case investigation.
- Create a rapid onboarding processes that allow for outside staff from medical staffing agencies and/or qualified volunteers to support staffing needs.

Compensation and Benefits

Determining compensation and benefits for those directly responding to and indirectly supporting your organization's functioning during an emergency should be clearly outlined ahead of an emergency. Challenges arise if different groups of employees receive different benefits (e.g., contract nurses are not required to work longer shifts, etc.).

- Hazard pay is an option; however, consideration should be given to ensure this policy is applied equitably among different groups of staff types and across the organization/facility.
- Attendance Policies
Establish equitable, consistent, considerable attendance policies for all staff. Extra emphasis should be placed on providing incentives for staff to come to work, rather than providing punishment for staff who do not work.
- Equity-Centered Policies
Ensuring that HR policies are equitable (not equal) for all employees is critical.
 - Sample resources about what equity means and how to work towards equity in the workplace can be found [here](#).

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Your staff must not only be well protected and prepared to respond to stressful events, but they must also feel like they are well protected and prepared to ensure their attention and attendance at work. Safety networks include a variety of physical safety supports.

RECAP: Planning for staffs' physical sense of safety with staff helps your staff better understand their safety is important to your organization. Mitigating staffs' worries about their physical safety helps them to be more engaged and present at work.



FOCUS AREA 4: Physical and Safety Systems

Examples include:

Security/ Protective Services

Staff concerns about security services and response should be incorporated into your program. In your needs assessment, staff may identify various types of workplace violence as a stressor they have or may encounter. With solid procedures, staff can be confident in the response to a physical security event.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Protocols

Your hospital likely has a list of protocols to prevent the spread of infection. Developing, updating, and communicating the importance of these protocols and the 'why' behind them helps to increase staff trust.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Your hospital provides certain supplies and equipment that can protect staff from a variety of stressors. Staff should have access to the right PPE to protect them from what they may face. Protocols that describe the use of PPE should be simple and easy to understand to increase compliance and confidence for all PPE users. Complex or varied protocols can cause confusion, create mistrust, and lead to incorrect actions that are fear-based among staff.

Mass Prophylaxis

A well-designed plan for mass prophylaxis of your staff and their families can create an incentive to come to work. Create this plan with staff engagement and incorporate staff feedback to increase compliance.

Workplace Violence (Plans for Handling Minor and Major Verbal and Physical Threats from Patients, Their Families, and/or Staff).

Staff concerns about minor and major threats they experience from patients, patients' families, and/or staff should be addressed through proper planning, including reporting procedures and de-escalation training.

Build in Best Practices

When thinking through creating physical safety systems, it is equally important to prioritize **both** actual and perceived safety, preparedness, and well-being. All the plans and processes above should be developed with your staff, rather than for your staff. Particular groups of staff may have specific expertise and/or expectations that can be leveraged when developing plans and processes. By centering their expertise and needs in your planning process, you both make sure they are educated about what these plans are, as well as obtain staff buy-in about these processes ahead of time, ensuring that staff are better able to show up to work and do their job well during an event.

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Anticipating factors that may affect staff behaviors and their ability to perform their work functions includes planning to meet the practical needs (such as housing, family care, etc.) of all your staff. It especially works to be equitable in its approach—acknowledging that staff of different pay levels may have different resource opportunities available to them and extra planning and care should be given to ensure that the needs of your lowest paid staff members are heard and met.

RECAP: Your staff are not robots. They are human beings with real lives and practical needs that affect their ability to show up to work and be engaged and productive. Making plans with staff to support their practical needs (family care, housing, food security, transportation, etc.) during minor and major traumatic events will help staff to fully show up for work when it counts.



FOCUS AREA 5: Practical and Personal Needs

Plan for Everyday Disruptions

Efforts to support staff when they experience a disruption to everyday services (such as eldercare, childcare, and reliable transportation) furthers staff resilience by allowing them to feel supported in their work environment. This type of disruption can directly impact both their ability and their willingness to report to work. Therefore, making plans with staff to identify the stressors that may prevent them from reporting to work and/or wholly performing their duties is key to minimizing absenteeism.

Provide Consistent Acknowledgement of Practical Needs

Simple day-to-day measures matter too—providing staff with food, being understanding of family emergencies and necessary time off, regular recognition of staff, and asking what support staff need to help with their day-to-day functioning and practical needs goes a long way in helping staff believe they will be supported during a larger event.

Plan for Family Safety

Staff worry about their families. This can be on a day-to-day basis with food insecurity or if they will be able to take time off to care for a loved one. Asking what support staff need to help with their day-to-day functioning and practical needs goes a long way to helping staff believe they will be supported during a larger event.

The demonstrated ability to keep or help keep healthcare workers' families safe may be the most significant determinant of willingness to

work of healthcare staff. Doing this allows organizations to ensure they are prepared for both the short-term functioning of their organization during an emergency, and this also helps to maintain the loyalty of your staff.

Plan with staff to identify housing support needs due to the emergency itself and/or quarantine and isolation requirements (if it is an infectious disease outbreak emergency) can help staff to feel supported by their organization. This is especially true if the organization is requiring quarantine or isolation due to exposure to or confirmation of a disease. Important equitable emphasis should be placed on supporting staff in lower income brackets, as they may not have as many self-resources that allow them to meet these requirements.

Work with Your Staff

Working with staff to identify their practical needs ahead of time and ensure plans will work for them is a best practice. Preparing to meet these needs early, educating staff on existing plans often, and touching base with staff to ensure plans functionally work with their self-identified needs can help staff show up to work in a more engaged, productive way when an emergency happens. Creating a work environment in which staff health is supported through protocols, policies, procedures, and environments is another way to meet staffs' practical needs.

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Psychosocial needs acknowledge the ways in which social, cultural, and environmental factors influence the mind and behavior. A resiliency program aims to create an environment in which staffs' stress burden is reduced, which increases staffs' ability to function both in their day-to-day work and during times of enhanced stress.

It is useful to think about **planning for three phases**, as the actions taken in each phase are not all the same, although they all have the same goal—to increase staff functioning and support staff's psychosocial needs. Normal day-to-day plans, processes, and procedures that are put in place and reinforced **before** a major stressor occurs; plans processes and procedures that help increase staff functioning **during** a stressful event, and finally, proactively planning to aid in recovering from a traumatic event that staff experience in the work environment.



FOCUS AREA 6: Psychosocial Needs

Day-to-Day | Before A Major Stressor

This is the key time to provide education, as brains under extra stress do not process and retain information in the same way that brains do under normal circumstances.

TIP: Regular, routine, structured staff care practices provide non-verbal cues of trusted routine, safety, and familiarity when high stress situations occur, which help signal to the brain that it is safe.

Establish peer-support networks (aka buddy systems) that staff feel comfortable using, to create a habit for staff to have a sense of community ahead of stressful events can be a helpful way to support staffs' sense of engagement, community, and connectedness.

Create [respite zones](#) within the organization's [work environment](#), that support opportunities for staff to pause, reset, reflect, and learn more about how to practice the skills associated with resilience.

The above are examples of actions and concepts that help to support staffs' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs that their organization is invested providing support to them as whole human beings.

In the moment | During a Response to a Major Stressor

Once a stressful environment has been created, education is no longer the most effective way to reduce stress; as fear-based responses respond

to social and environmental cues of safety. Therefore, planning to utilize the principles of psychological first aid is especially important when in a response.

Functional Supports

Providing environments and structures for staff to feel safe and in control of things is key. The following interventions have been shown to increase functioning for people under extreme stress by supporting their sense of:

- **Safety**- acknowledge what is scary and/or different in staff's lives during the stressor and ask them what support they need to feel safe. Extra emphasis should be placed on staff with the lowest paid, and lowest levels of education, so that you can ensure their voices are heard and their needs met. Then address needs as they are brought up.
- **Self-efficacy**- provide staff with a menu of options of meaningful things to do that will allow them to make decisions that are best for them, their families and their loved ones.
- **Connectedness**- treat staff as equal partners in the response; provide them with mechanisms to be heard and reiterate the peer-support network processes already established. Provide additional outreach to staff members not already involved in those processes.

3

STEP

Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities



FOCUS AREA 6:

Psychosocial Needs Continued...

- **Calm**– support senses of calm by providing staff with simple information and instructions (education in the day-to-day work environment is especially useful here)
- **Hope/Optimism**– Establish realistic expectations and articulate the next objectives/achievements you are working towards. Acknowledge staff’s own accomplishments and highlight their own resilience efforts.
- **Do not diminish the challenges staff face or undermine their needs to feel and experience the above.**

Doing the things above has the added benefit of reducing stigma after an event by allowing staff to experience feelings of safety and control. If the above feels overwhelming, this may be a great opportunity to connect with local behavioral health resources and/or your local or state public health department to build relationships in advance to provide support during a response. Additionally, these resources may have the subject matter expertise to be able to help you anticipate factors that may affect your staff’s behaviors and functioning abilities during a response.

Plan for Fear Reduction by Leveraging Environmental and Social Factors

Fear is greatly influenced by environmental and social factors—many of which are often directly related to health threats that your staff may face, including misunderstanding how disease spread or why specific health actions and behaviors

are effective to keep them safe. Fear can also negatively impact response operations and outcomes by making staff reluctant to take protective actions. Therefore, it is beneficial to create processes and mechanisms to talk with and listen to your staff, especially unofficial respected staff ‘leaders’ and staff who have the least education and are the lowest paid, to understand what fears they have and what values they hold, so that you can create conversation, communication, and community mechanisms that address those fears. In doing so, you may increase staff’s prevention behaviors and compliance, as well as their personal resilience.

Plans to meet the needs of a surge in behavioral health services and sick staff members are also important. Establishing MOUs with behavioral health services in your area ahead of time and making staff aware of these resources ahead of and during a response can be beneficial. Establishing MOUs with healthcare staffing agencies to be able to bring in additional staff to supplement and support your current staff may also be beneficial. Planning with staff on what requests for assistance they might ask for during a response, listening to what they tell you and then addressing what you heard is another way to help staff experience an environment of support during a larger event.

3

STEP

Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities



FOCUS AREA 6:

Psychosocial Needs Continued...

Plan to build in processes that create environments in which staff feel supported privately and publicly during a response can also help to reduce the impact of stigma staff are likely to experience during a biological event. This includes acknowledging the psychological burden that families of healthcare workers face and asking staff how and if they can support their families during these types of events.

Acknowledge Staff Responses

Acknowledge to staff that they may face increased emotional challenges when they return to a normal work routine—and that these challenges are normal AND that the organization has implemented additional support resources (ex. free, on-site behavioral health personnel) to aid in staffs' stress responses. Beginning to plan for this during the response can aid in recovery and help staff feel connected to and supported by their organization during the recovery process.

If a response is expected to be unusually lengthy, actively working to limit the number of hours per day that staff work, the number of days in a row that staff work, and enforcing time off and breaks during shifts can help to reduce staffs' sense of overwhelm and burnout.

The Recovery Process | After a Stressful Situation

An event, whether an unusually stressful shift, or a major biological event, will have a mental and emotional impact on your staff. Depending on the length, severity, and situation of the incident itself, the recovery period may extend far beyond the event.

Staff are likely to have experienced higher than average rates of social isolation, disruptions to family, social and routine life, and stigma (especially so if the event was biological), and therefore enhanced efforts to foster staffs' sense and feeling of (re)connection.

RECAP: Your organization can proactively strive to create an environment in which staff's stress burden is reduced, which increases staffs' ability to function both in their day-to-day work and during times of enhanced stress.

3 Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

STEP

WHY IT MATTERS

Providing all staff with training and education builds confidence and competence.

Focusing training and education on common stressors and unusual events of high concern and consequence that staff may encounter empowers them to take appropriate action(s) when they encounter an event.



FOCUS AREA 7: Training and Education

Identify Stressors

To begin, identify the stressors that staff may encounter in their workplace. Ask about their concerns and the concerns they have for their family. Staff may be concerned about a variety of stressors—both those that may be experienced day-to-day and those that may be rare occurrences, ranging from verbal abuse or threats from patients, emerging infectious diseases, IT outages (including downtime procedures), and natural disasters. By identifying the stressors, you can reduce concern and fear through meaningful education about common stressors and response operations.

Prepare for Stressors

Staff can also be more prepared for fear reactions through training and education on common psychosocial reactions to emergencies and behavioral health principles. When they have a better understanding of stress biology and behavior, staff can better moderate their own fear responses. Once trained these psychosocial concepts and principles can be incorporated in already existing drills and exercises.

When thinking about a large stressor (such as natural disaster or other emergency response), supporting staff with personal emergency preparedness training is also important—by knowing that they are personally prepared, staff are better equipped to be able to focus on their work when an event occurs. Additionally, training and education designed to increase staff knowledge about a particular disease (or types of diseases) has been shown to reduce anxiety, fear, and uncertainty

when staff encounter or are asked to help care for patients with those types of diseases.

TIP: There are a number of educational opportunities that may be incorporated into your organizations' plans.

- Educate staff on how brains react to heightened stress and methods to manage and mitigate those stress responses.
 - Provide [psychological first aid \(PFA\)](#) training to all staff as part of organizational [training](#) processes.
- Ask staff what hazards they are worried about encountering and provide education to all staff on the most likely hazards, what the organization expects from them if this were to occur, and what actions they need to take ahead of time to help them be prepared.
 - Include education on the psychological burden(s) they may experience during a biological event.
 - Reiterate this education.
- Educate staff on new and/or emerging threats that may impact their work environments (ex. how to recognize risk and keep themselves safe from c.diff through proper infection prevention)
- Create muscle memory opportunities for proper PPE donning and doffing, as well as cleaning and disinfecting, so that staff have created good habits and are less likely to make mistakes under heightened stress situations.

3

STEP

Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities



FOCUS AREA 7:

Training and Education Continued...

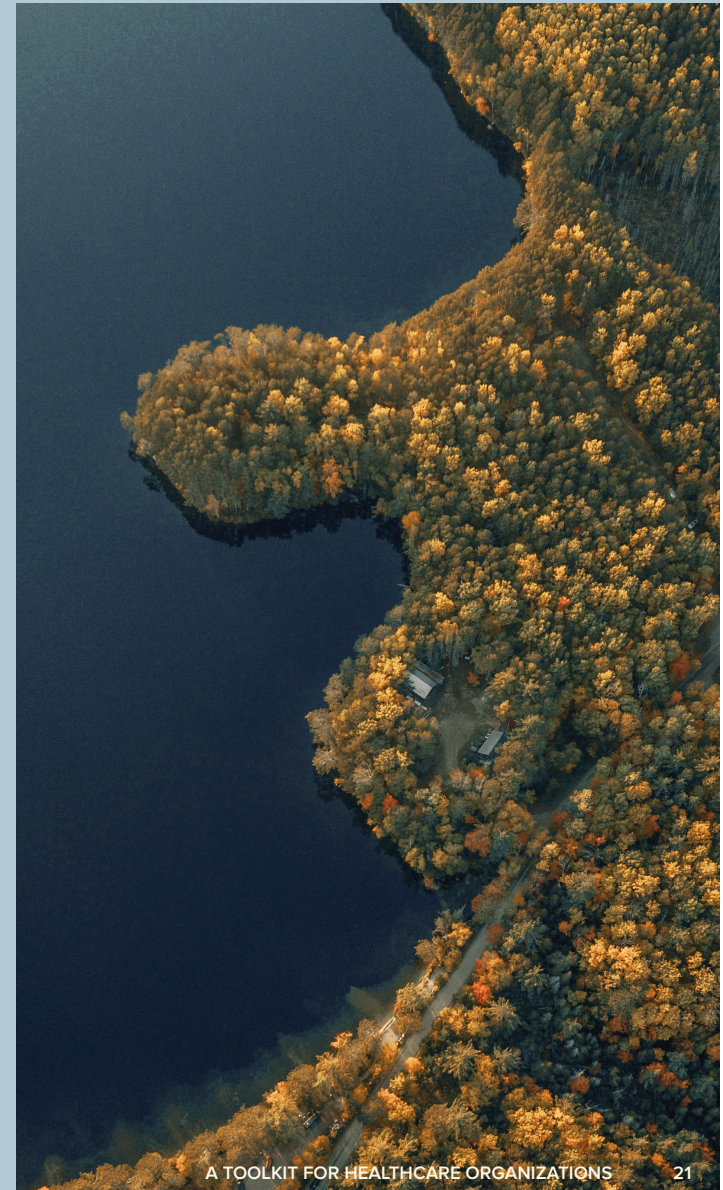
Build Confidence

Confident staff trust that they will ultimately succeed. Confidence comes from repetition, practice, and an environment that nurtures building skills needed to respond. A training and education program that includes information about appropriate preventative actions can help create muscle memory for staff so that they feel empowered to make informed, safe choices when under stress. Staff also benefit from learning about what role(s) they are expected to undertake during an event, and how to properly incorporate into the response structure. Templates and checklists are valuable resources for staff to learn new skills.

Test Competence

Staff need to possess real skill sets to be able to perform their job functions. Those include communication skills and skills to apply personal protective equipment to name a few. Your organization can teach and model effective competencies. Use training time for staff to practice new skills and use the resources they have been provided.

Any training and education program or for resources you develop should have inclusivity in mind. Ensuring training occurs for both night and day staff, clinical and nonclinical staff, English and non-English speaking staff, will strengthen your organization's overall resilience capabilities.



3

STEP

Understand System and Structural Level Resilient Culture Opportunities

Resilience is a learned skill, and thus, people can learn how to become more resilient.

Reaching Out

Empathy

Problem Solving

Impulse Control

Emotion Control

Optimism

Self Efficacy



FOCUS AREA 7:

Training and Education Continued...

Teach Staff Skills that Increase Resilience

Resilient people have developed [key skills](#). These skills are depicted in the graphic below.

TIP: When was the last time you felt “overwhelmed with frustration” versus when was the last time you felt “overwhelmed with contentment?” See what your brain is doing? It is tricking you to focus on the negative...

For example, reminding staff that our brains are hardwired to focus on the negative and brains that go through trauma experience this event more. In order to counteract the way our brain naturally wants to work, we must consciously choose to exercise the brain in a way that reminds it to spend time on positive outcomes, associations and memories, which then helps to increase people’s learned emotional control, optimism, self-efficacy, and impulse control.

Incorporating resilience training into your regular work may help you and your staff learn techniques that help them become more resilient over time. Additionally, research has demonstrated that the more resilient your staff is, the more engaged and productive they are at work.

RECAP: Your organization can proactively strive to create an environment in which staff’s stress burden is reduced, which increases staffs’ ability to function both in their day-to-day work and during times of enhanced stress.

4 Dudášová, Ludmila & Vaculik, Martin & Prochazka, Jakub & Schaufeli, Wilmar. (2018). Why resilient workers perform better: The roles of job satisfaction and work engagement. Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health. 33: 43-62. 10.1080/15555240.2018.1441719

4 Align Your Identified Gaps and Your Knowledge

STEP

Take your needs assessment report and look at it to identify your gaps. Note if certain areas have more opportunities for improvement than others.

MAP OUT ACTION ITEMS TO MAKE SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS.

Use your knowledge learned in Step 3 and the [Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk in Attachment 2](#) to identify action items for your organization to begin to make improvements that support structural resilience improvements. Decide on activities that make sense for your organization. You can add to or take away from the suggestions provided in [Attachment 2](#).

Once you have identified the action items your organization will undertake, note them in [Attachment 3: Action Items Activity Tracker](#). Then assign Champions to help support the planning for and implementation of each activity in [Attachment 3: Action Items Activity Tracker](#). Use this tracker to keep track of the action items your organization has decided to do. Assign a Champion to help with the design, implementation and execution of each activity and identify an timeline for each activity to be completed.

5 Regularly Teach Resilience Skills

STEP

There are number of known trainings and educational supports that promote resilience. These include:

- **Psychological first aid (PFA) training to all staff as part of organizational [training processes](#)**
- **Peer network buddy systems**
- **Risk Recognition, which helps to improve basic Infection Prevention behaviors.**
- **PPE Donning and Doffing trainings specific to the equipment and logistics of your facility, a CDC example is [here](#)**
- **De-escalation [training](#)**
- **Stress response and management [training](#)**

When planning your training and educational pieces, these types of trainings may benefit your staff's holistic resilience capabilities.

Additionally, teaching employees the skills that make them more resilient help them to develop the muscle memory to have resilient behaviors in their day-to-day actions.

These known skills include:

- Connection (reaching out for support, assistance, and/or a listening ear)
- Empathy
- Problem-solving
- Impulse control
- Optimism
- Self-efficacy
- Emotional control & response management

Who can help teach resilience skills?

Managers can play a key role in developing the 'muscles' of practiced resilience so that staff have more capacity to respond resiliently to day-to-day stressors and major disruptions and/or disasters. Building in opportunities to enhance emotion and impulse control, self-efficacy, empathy, optimism, and problem-solving in the daily work environment, and associate those skills with daily work stressors, can help to enhance and reinforce those skills when a larger stressor, emergency and/or trauma is experienced.

TIP: Managers will also need the support of their organization to support the training, maintenance, and enhancement of these skills. The organization should work to support this effort.



5 Regularly Teach Resilience Skills

STEP

Strategies for Success:

Huddles are a tool to quickly communicate with your staff. The goals of a huddle are to increase efficiency and effectiveness and enhance teamwork by anticipating patient and team member needs for the day. Steps for an effective team huddle include:

- **Set expectations**
 - Set an agenda
 - Determine a convenient location
 - Involve all of the right team members
 - Identify a huddle leader
- **Develop relationships & improve team morale**
 - Incentivize team engagement
 - [Use check-in questions](#) to promote well-being
- **Assess & improve**
 - Track any benchmarks that may be impacted by team huddles and share results
 - Celebrate success

Peer support is a protective factor against the harmful impacts of stress. **Emotion coaching** is one way to help provide peer support in the workplace. Make sure to practice scenarios with your team and reflect as a group.

- Self-Disclosure
- Vulnerability
- Validation
 - Reflect
 - Name the Emotion
 - Get Curious
- Increased connectedness

90-second storytelling is a tool frequently and efficiently used within the workplace as a means for connection and healing. Stories do not have to center around a specific outcome; the goal is just to connect.



Steps to a successful session include:

1. Plan
 - Choose a time and place to allow for workplace connection. This can be done formally as a scheduled meeting or informally during team huddles
2. Set expectations
 - Let your team know what to expect
 - Build rapport by beginning with your own story or ask a leader to share a story
3. Prepare
 - After 6-10 storytellers are signed up, send out the prompt chosen for the event
4. Facilitate
 - Assign a facilitator who can introduce the event, keep time, set expectations
5. Wrap-up
 - Thank those who were willing to share
 - Optionally, allow some time for discussion and reflection

6 Provide Resilience Resources

STEP

Toolkit implementers are encouraged to make the information below available to staff.

What is individual resilience?

Stressors can impair resilience due to disrupted social networks and behavior patterns, traumatic exposure, and distressing psychological reactions. For example, feelings of grief and sadness are not uncommon after traumatic events. Individual resilience involves the behaviors, thoughts, and actions that promote personal wellbeing and mental health. This includes a person's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity. People can learn coping skills to adapt to stress and maintain or return to a state of mental health wellbeing.

5 <https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/resilience-factsheet-responders.aspx>

Tools to help individual's access stress and mental health support:

- [“What's Your Stress Index?”](#) created by the Canadian Mental Health Association. By answering yes or no to the 25 questions listed, you can calculate your stress index score. Complete the test online here.
- [“Mental Health Continuum Self-Check,”](#) adapted from the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Mental Health Continuum. The Mental Health Continuum Self-Check chart (on the next page) displays general emotional, physical, and behavioral signs and indicators of mental health on a continuum from healthy to ill. It also identifies actions to take depending on where you are land on the continuum.

Prior to a stressor:

- Educate yourself and your colleagues about the mental health impacts of working during a traumatic event.
- Talk with family & friends about how they can support you.
- Engage in community activities for enjoyment and build social connections.
- Develop and maintain healthy eating habits.

- [Exercise daily](#) and use simple routines you can do even while at work.
- Identify [mindfulness techniques](#) that work for you such as breathing exercises and meditation.

During a stressful situation:

- Take regular breaks and do your best not to work over expected shift lengths.
- Reach out to family, friends, or colleagues to get support.
- Eat healthy and make sure you get adequate sleep.
- Engage in mindfulness techniques.

After a stressful situation:

- Get screened for stress or mental/behavioral health needs.
- Use your employee assistance program or other resources, like the [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#).

7 Re-Assess Your Efforts

STEP

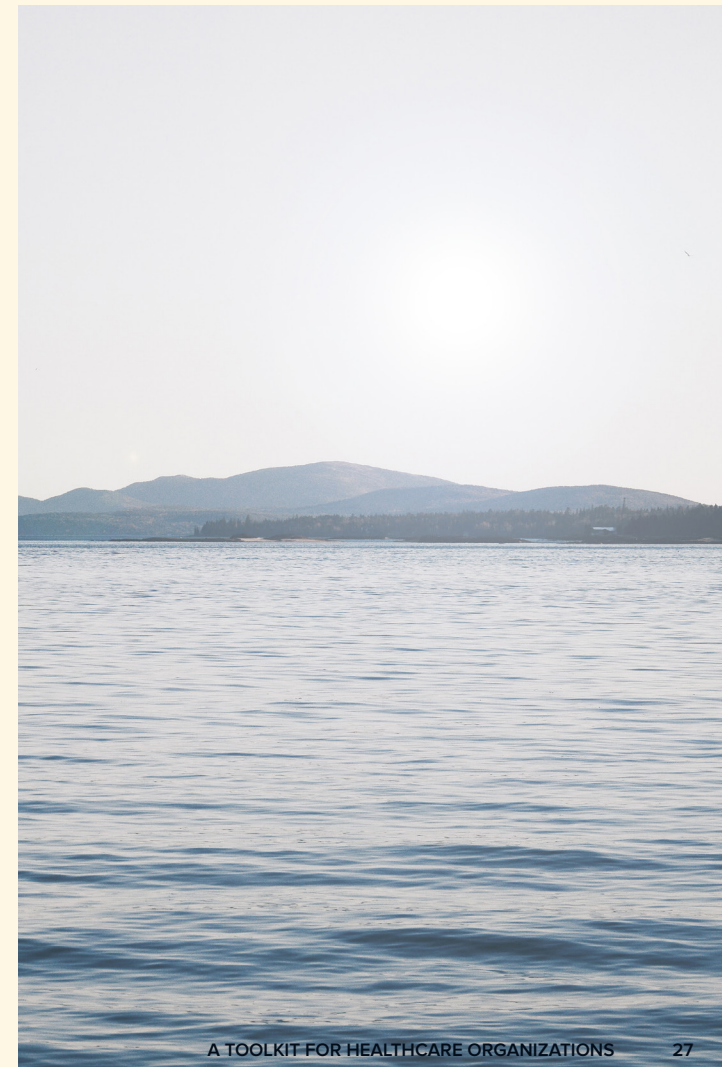
You have started making changes to address the gaps you identified. Great. But, you aren't done yet. It is important to build a process to continually assess your efforts, and their effectiveness, to continue to improve your systems, plans, and processes.



Create a Process for Iterative Improvements

First, use your Champions to decide how often to perform your needs assessment, so that you can track progress and/or changes within your staffs' attitudes, perceptions and beliefs. Then, continue to analyze the results of your needs assessments. Finally, continue to make changes and improvements based on your findings.

The reassessment process should be designed to be an iterative process that continues to build on itself and allows for continued growth and improvement.



Attachment 1: Needs Assessment


SAMPLE DRAFT Needs Assessment

A sample assessment has been provided to the right.

Note: Users are empowered to make changes based on the specifics of their organization. You do not have to use all of the questions provided. This is intended to be a list of example questions, and you may edit or remove as you see fit.

FOCUS AREA	QUESTIONS
General	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How often do you feel stressed at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 2. How often do you feel angry at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 3. How often do you feel anxious at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 4. How often do you feel depressed at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 5. How often do you feel burnt out at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 6. Do you feel that you are able to impact change to make improvements in your work environment? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 7. Do you feel empowered at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 8. Do you feel appreciated at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 9. Do you know what the main stressors you are likely to experience and/or worried about encountering at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 10. Are there any stressors that you know your organization could do a better job of supporting you in? (yes, no) 11. If yes, what are those? 12. I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 13. I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 14. I feel capable of resolving crisis at work. 15. I learn from mistakes at work and improve the way I do my job. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 16. I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 17. I effectively respond to feedback at work, even criticism. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 18. I seek assistance at work when I need specific resources. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never) 19. I approach managers when I need their support. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)

Attachment 1: Needs Assessment

FOCUS AREA	QUESTIONS
General	<p>20. I use change at work as an opportunity for growth. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>21. I have all the freedom I need to decide how to get my work done. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>22. No matter what else is going on around me, I can stay focused on getting my work done. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>23. In the last week, I have felt excited to work every day . (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>24. I always believe that things are going to work out for the best. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>25. I am encouraged to take risks.</p> <p>26. I feel like I have a community that supports me at work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>27. I feel encouraged to learn new skills at work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>28. I am encouraged to share new ideas at work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>29. I am encouraged to ask questions about how things are done at work. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>30. I feel comfortable sharing concerns I have about work with management. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p>
 Leadership	<p>31. Do you feel executive leadership is invested in making decisions that are in your best interest? Yes- always, Sometimes, not often, almost never, absolutely not</p> <p>32. Do you feel trusted at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>33. Do you trust your coworkers? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>34. Do you trust your leadership? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>35. How often do you feel valued by leadership at work? (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>36. I trust my team leader. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>37. Senior leaders are one step ahead of events. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>38. Senior leaders always do what they say they are going to do (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p> <p>39. I completely trust my company's senior leaders. (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never)</p>

Attachment 1: Needs Assessment



FOCUS AREA	QUESTIONS
<p>Communications</p>	<p>40. Do you feel like your organization communicates what policies, procedures and structures are in place to support staff?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes, Sometimes, Rarely, We have policies in place?? b. If yes, sometimes or rarely— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do you feel like this communication occurs frequently enough? <p>40. Do you have a way to communicate your needs back up to leadership? (Yes, no, unsure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you know what that mechanism is? (yes, no) b. Does it work? (yes, no, sometimes, rarely) <p>3. Would you like to see it improved or enhanced? (yes, no)</p>
<p>Human Resources Policy</p>	<p>42. Does your human resources department have pathways for you to make suggestions regarding any of the above? (yes, no, not sure)</p> <p>43. Does your human resources department have mechanisms in place to communicate back down the decisions and actions taken related to those requests they receive? (yes, no, not sure)</p> <p>44. Do HR policies reduce your stress at work? (yes, no, not sure)</p> <p>45. Do HR policies include equity considerations? (yes, no, not sure)</p>
<p>Physical and Safety Systems</p>	<p>46. Do you feel safe at work?</p> <p>47. Are you familiar with the safety network policies of your organization (e.g. personal protection, prophylaxis emergency plans, security emergency plans, etc.)? (yes, no)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If Yes- do you know what your expected role is? (yes, no) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Do you know what you will need in order to do your job? (yes, no) <p>48. Are you encouraged to report unsafe conditions?</p> <p>49. What are some potential hazards/risks/ concerns you've identified in our workplace?</p> <p>50. Do your coworkers show their dedication to safety?</p>

Attachment 1: Needs Assessment



FOCUS AREA

Practical and Personal Needs

QUESTIONS

51. Does your organization have plans to help you with your practical needs (ex. Childcare, eldercare) if you are called in to work during an emergency? (yes, no, don't know)
52. Does your organization have plans or processes to provide support when practical needs appear that become a barrier to coming to work? (yes, no, don't know)



Psychosocial Needs

53. Does your organization provide for your psychosocial needs (ex. Mental and behavioral health support)? (yes, no, don't know)
54. Does your organization create an environment that feels supportive?



Training and Education

55. Have you received training on how to improve your own resilience? (yes, no)
56. Have you received enough training on how to keep yourself safe in your work environment—this can include training on PPE, infection prevention, emergency response expectations, policies and procedures, and others? (yes, no)
57. Are there specific training topics you would like more training in? (yes, no)
58. If yes, what are they: (short answer)
59. Do you think you received proper training to effectively perform your job?
60. Do you feel you've received effective safety training?

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



You have now completed your Needs Assessment and have some results. You have also learned about the System-Level Focus Areas. Now it's time to make some improvements to build and promote a culture of resilience in your staff. Based on the gaps identified in your needs assessment and the information you learned in Section 3, decide on activities that make sense for your organization.

This crosswalk has suggestions for you and your Champions to consider for each Focus Area. **This list is a starting point and not meant to be an all-inclusive list. You can add, edit, or skip the items to the right.**

FOCUS AREA	QUESTIONS
Leadership	<p>If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in Leadership, you can focus on building trust. Building trust can be thought of in three categories:</p> <p>Community: To build trust, implement efforts that will unite staff and build social networks. A sense of community makes staff feel that they're part of a team working toward a common goal and, at the same time, are valued for their individual strengths and skills. To build community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Leaders consistently share organizational status – the good, bad and ugly – with employees and discuss the impact it can have on them. Staff want to know how the organization is doing and how they fit into the larger picture. This transparency can instill purpose in employees' work, and it can provide predictability (in job security, in your organization's operations, and in the future of the organization) to promote resilience. • Celebrate the successes but don't ignore the challenges. • Seek input from staff about potential changes, new initiatives, and strategies. • Collect and encourage staff feedback. There are a variety of methods to provide the opportunity for feedback. Consider focus groups and anonymous "comment cards." • Schedule "days of celebration" to recognize the work of your staff. Consider events like National Hospital Week, Environmental Services Week, Nurse's Week, Pharmacist Day, Administrative Professionals Day, etc. to show gratitude for the work they do. This can build the "we're all in this together" movement. • Hold town halls and focus groups about specific topics that allow leaders to ask direct questions and staff to answer candidly. • Hold listening sessions and feedback sessions to better understand staff's concerns, fears, needs, and questions. • Provide realistic goals and meaning behind the work for every project. It gives employees something to work towards and believe in. <p>Connection: Trust begins with relationships so Leaders should be intentional about consistently engaging with staff at all levels. It's essential to be aware of how teams interact as this can impact your organization's resilience. Cohesive team environments engender trust in leadership and build support networks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively check-in with department leaders and staff in their work areas. Before management by "Walking Around" can be an effective and practical way to keep up with what's happening across the organization. Make the effort to reach out and build relationships with your people where they are. • Maintain regular open-door office hours where staff can engage with you and provide input.

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



FOCUS AREA	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give employees time and space to build relationships at work. Support group lunch breaks and other teambuilding activities. Camaraderie and high morale at work encourage retention. • Sponsor other bonding activities outside of working hours for your employees and their families. Sponsoring a family picnic on a Saturday, an after-work happy hour on a Friday night, or a recreational team will encourage your employees to get to know one another on a personal level and spend time enjoying an activity without the pressures of work. • Remember that your staff work 24/7. Intentionally plan activities for and support those that work outside of normal business hours, so they do not feel left out of the activities. • Reward and incentivize collaboration between individuals, teams, and business units. Hold competitions or games that can foster cross-department collaboration. • Organize and support community service activities that build social connections between staff and the community you serve. <p>Competence: Leaders can foster personal and professional growth among themselves and the staff. Staff that are confident and competent in their positions and know about job growth potential are less likely to leave the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish, encourage, and incentivize coaching and/or mentor programs. • Provide and promote career counseling and advancement opportunities. • Reward and recognize employee excellence and achievement. Celebrate those that receive a new certification or attain a new skill. • Give frontline managers the tools and time to work with employees to set stretch goals and coaching to reach them. • Give employees the tools and public opportunities to recognize each other for accomplishments.
Communications	<p>If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in Communications, consider these suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess staff communication needs and wants. Ask your staff how to improve how and what you communicate. • Learn how teams communicate to build collaboration. Think about how you can deliver key information to people with different communication styles and needs (e.g., ESL or other languages). • Make communications understandable to all staff. • Identify the best communication pathways to reach staff day-to-day (e.g., weekly newsletter, text message thread, morning email, etc.) and what works best for those

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



FOCUS AREA

Communications

- working outside of normal working hours.
- Hold open time or office hours so staff can ask questions policies or initiatives.
- Empower feedback giving them multiple outlets to share feedback. Consider engagement surveys, stay interviews, comment boxes, etc.
- Identify supplemental communication pathways that may be needed during large emergencies.
- Practice and regularly use identified communication pathways.
- Stagger information flow (for day-to-day information and during emergencies) for staff that work different shifts to enhance situational awareness across all staff.



Human Resources Policy

- If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in your Human Resources Policies, consider these suggestions:
- Review and update HR policies to be responsive to employee needs. HR polices should prevent and reduce stress at work. Flexible PTO policies, leave policies, working arrangements, and the like can help employees meet the needs of their everyday lives. When employees find peace in their personal and home lives, they can bring that energy to work.
 - Friction at work can prevent employees from responding well to change. Rigid processes can hold teams back from changing quickly and efficiently. Teams that are overwhelmed find it difficult to prioritize and complete tasks. Teams that are bound by insufficient budgets and resources cannot make change easily.
 - Review all HR policies through an equity lens. Don't have an in-house equity expert? Y our local or state PH agency may be able to provide valuable technical assistance.
 - Having a support system and knowing how to access resources helps people cope when the unexpected happens.
 - Focus on employee health and well-being. Invest in your employees' physical, emotional, financial, and social well-being. When your employees are healthy and happy, they are more capable of managing stress, work, and life successfully.

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



FOCUS AREA

Physical and Safety Systems

If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in your Physical and Safety Systems, consider these suggestions:

- Consider making workplace safety an important part of your organization’s culture. You can begin by understanding staff safety concerns, reviewing workplace injuries/exposures, and regularly surveying the workplace for potential safety hazards.
- Work with HR to assign and incentivize a ‘safety captain’ or ‘safety workgroup’ that can work to address concerns.
- Define the role and expectation of staff during an incident where there is a need for increased security. Ensure staff know how to call for additional security and what they can expect when security arrives.
- Add Safety/Security as a standing agenda item for regular meetings to hear staff concerns and review procedures.
- Connect with your people on the things they care about. Make safety about all of them. Take an active interest in what your people want and show them that they matter to you.
- Use your hazard vulnerability analysis (in conjunction with your emergency preparedness activities) to identify your biggest threats to safety for your staff. Work with your staff to educate them on these hazards and vulnerabilities. Show the actions your organization is taking to keep them safe.
- Informally and/or formally collect baseline data about staffs’ perceived levels of safety in their work environment.
- Implement awareness level processes for staff to recognize infection control risks in the workplace and provide resources and training to build confidence for staff that may encounter



Practical and Personal Needs

If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in supporting Practical and Personal Needs, consider these suggestions:

- Ask staff what practical needs they would like help with to allow for more engagement and presence at work.
- Plan with your staff to create emergency plans for childcare and elder care during an emergency so that staff can come to work. Identify areas within your facility to provide these services. You can also partner with a local partner organization to provide these services (you will know what will work best for your organization).

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



FOCUS AREA

Practical and Personal Needs

- Develop agreement(s) with hospitality agencies so that dependent care needs can occur at a nearby hotel, and temporary lodging can be provided at the same hotel for employees who have logistical challenges with commuting due to the nature of the event.
- Develop agreement(s) with other healthcare organizations nearby to cohort dependent care needs.
- Develop and know resources available for employee support such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other social services employees may qualify for.
- Work with staff to identify possible solutions to housing concerns (hotel, in-house, partner and/or community organization). This also could include plans to provide a hotel if staff are required to isolate and/or quarantine if there are concerns about spreading an illness to any at-risk household or close contacts.
 - Identify possible solutions to transportation challenges (buddy transportation system in an emergency, working with local transport agencies to provide transportation support during an emergency, etc.).
- Identify respite spaces at your facility for staff to use during times of high stress.
- Build peer support systems that are available to staff. Promote and share these resources widely.
- Provide access to nutritious (no, not just donuts) food for staff during an incident. This could include working with a local restaurant or vendor.
- Center equity considerations in your plans and identify staff most likely to need assistance and make sure that extra support is provided and/or planned with them as appropriate.



Psychosocial Needs

- If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in supporting Psychosocial Needs, consider these suggestions:
- Pre-identify and engage with local behavioral health organizations. Remind and reiterate to staff of ongoing organizational support for event-related distress (ex. free behavioral health services, counseling, peer networks, etc.). Identify and then refer staff to available resources that can offer recovery services.
 - Integrate resilience skills and lessons into current trainings, drills, and exercises (see Sections 3 and 4 for more ideas and information).
 - Regularly communicate and teach skills about resilience.
 - Plan to help staff reconnect after stressful events. Actions, plans and mechanisms that support reconnection include, but are not limited to:
 - Create a time for an adjustment period as staff return to normal working environments. Offer additional time off for personal or family time, and self-care. Offer additional time off

Attachment 2: Needs Assessment Action Item Crosswalk



FOCUS AREA

Practical and Personal Needs

- for significant events that were missed due to response actions and requirements.
- Keep staff informed of agency’s plans and actions around quarantine and isolation (when relevant to the disruption).
 - Acknowledge the challenges staff experienced and thank them for their work.
 - Celebrate the accomplishments and efforts of staff (both staff directly involved in the response and all staff supporting the regular work functions) to reinforce a collective sense of community and identify with your staff.



Training and Education

- If the results of your Needs Assessment show areas for improvement in Training and Education, consider these suggestions:
- Provide training Psychological First Aid (PFA) and understanding stress.
 - Don’t have that in house? That’s okay. Here’s a chance to connect with a local behavioral health resource/center to support this training and build relationships prior to a major event.
 - Develop Resilience Training Program for Managers to use to support training staff on resilience tools and skills. (see Step 3 below for more information).
 - Use Behavioral Health experts to support exercise design to incorporate behavioral principles and best practices and make exercises more human response centered.
 - Train staff in resilience skills (refer to Steps 3 and 4) and how to build their own resilience (refer to Step 6 for more information). This can include education on trauma responses and brain function and ways to mitigate stress.
 - Train staff on safety protocols and procedures, including risk recognition in infection prevention and donning and doffing.
 - Train staff on de-escalation techniques, principles and best practices.
 - Train staff on emergency procedures, plans, and processes. Make sure expectations are clear and they know what their roles and expected actions are.
 - Educate staff on communication plans.
 - Educate staff on practical and psychosocial supports planned for by the organization to support individuals.
 - Train staff on the resources provided by the organization to support stress management. This can include respite areas and the buddy system as a stress management technique.

TIP: A safe staff is a trained staff, and a trained staff provides safer patient care. The CDC’s Project Firstline initiative is a free support to your infection control education and training needs with [innovative and accessible resources](#). Project Firstline’s resources help staff [learn to recognize infection risks](#) throughout their workday by explaining where germs live in health care and how they spread. This foundational knowledge can help all staff understand when and how to take action to keep patients safe.

Attachment 3: Action Item Activities Tracker

Use this Activities Tracker to keep track of the actions and activities your organization identified. Assign a Champion to help support the planning and implementation of each activity. Provide a timeline and/or due dates for the activities, to help ensure they happen.

Identified Action/Activity	Identified Champion to Support Planning & Implementation	Identified Due Date/Timeline

Attachment 4:

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Acknowledgement of Funding Source:

This project was funded by the supplemental COVID funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and the Maine CDC Public Health Preparedness.

Disclaimer:

This Toolkit is provided to the Healthcare Coalition of Maine. All Clear Emergency Management Group developed this toolkit. The contents of this toolkit are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of or endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and/or the ASPR.

