

Building Leadership Resilience: The CORE Framework

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Executive Summary

Effectively building resilience in today's increasingly uncertain and complex world is crucial, especially for those in leadership positions. The current paper offers the following insights for leaders interested in building resilience:

- A brief overview of what we know about resilience and burnout. This overview is informed by decades of research in leadership development.
- A new, integrated framework for cultivating resilience in leaders: The CORE (Comprehensive Resilience) Framework. This framework is focused on four areas (physical, mental, emotional, and social) and takes a whole-self approach to resilience by developing a diverse set of responses to change and disruption.
- A review of the eight practices designed to help build resilience within the CORE framework: sleep, physical activity, mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, savoring, gratitude, social connection, and social contact. These practices were selected because there is empirical evidence of their effectiveness specifically in leaders and because they are simple, both in nature and in how they can be integrated into daily life. Each practice review also includes tips for how to incorporate these practices into daily life.
- A discussion of the practical and future applications of the CORE framework.



Introduction

Leaders tend to be smart and ambitious. They often acquire their leadership roles through their intelligence, hard work, technical skills, and tenacity, and rise through the ranks through their interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities (e.g., Riggio & Lee, 2007). Yet, at some point, every leader faces a time when these traits and skills are not enough. A personal, organizational, or societal challenge appears that is disruptive, unprecedented, and unpredictable. During these times, leaders often cope by trying to work harder, longer, and faster; they push themselves and sacrifice other important parts of their lives. Although this is an understandable response, it is also unsustainable and inevitably provides diminishing returns. Working harder, longer, and faster will lead to neglecting non-work areas of wellbeing, such as social and physical health, which in turn creates additional stress that compounds the initial work stress. Over time, this vicious cycle will intensify and eventually lead to burnout and other negative outcomes.

In the current paper, we discuss an alternative approach that can help leaders break out of this vicious cycle. Specifically, we highlight how building up a diverse portfolio of personal internal resources and positive coping strategies can help leaders weather challenges and disruption without falling prey to the trap of working themselves until they are burned out. This alternative strategy is, in short, resilience.





Resilience: What Is It and Why Does It Matter?

We define resilience as *responding adaptively to challenges*, where challenges can range from chronic everyday experiences (such as feeling overwhelmed) to major disruptions or adversities (such as an economic crash, the loss of a loved one, or a career failure). Challenges go beyond simply having more work to do; they can take the form of continually needing to change in response to evolving circumstances, resulting in disequilibrium or disrupted plans.

Resilience is a process that involves repeated and intentional engagement with wellbeing-enhancing processes. Research suggests that resilience can directly impact important leadership outcomes. For example, one study of over 500 people found that leaders who were rated by others as more resilient (versus those rated by others as less resilient) were seen as more effective (Folkman, 2017). Resilience has also been found to be positively associated with performance (Luthans et al., 2005), job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Goh, Pfeffer, & Zenios, 2015). Taken together, these studies suggest resilience (and, more broadly, effectively coping with the unknown) is a crucial part of effective leadership.

Despite its clear importance and relevance, we believe that resilience is still relatively underemphasized in leadership. When it is discussed, it is often done so ambiguously and/or in passing, oftentimes after a negative situation(s) has already created deleterious effects. One reason leaders don't take resilience seriously may be that it can feel like there just isn't time to work on resilience when facing extreme leadership

demands. Taking time out of an already-busy day to consider resilience can seem counterproductive or even impossible. There is an interesting paradox, though: Overworking and other similar responses can deplete resources needed to effectively manage your work. Leading well requires *both* hard work *and* the development of resilience.

Workplace engagement and burnout do not happen in linear stages, but rather in cycles that reinforce themselves (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). Like compounding interest over time, having sufficient job resources (such as time and support) not only boosts your engagement, but also increases your chances of getting more resources. On the other hand, having too many demands and not enough resources are likely to lead not only to burnout, but to actually having more demands and fewer resources over time.

Burnout and feelings of being overwhelmed can be distressing and damaging to individual wellbeing, health, and job performance. Without time for revitalization, hard work can have diminishing returns. Without a savings of wellbeing to draw on, it costs more and more to keep going in the midst of stress and disruption. On the other hand, small, steady contributions to wellbeing can also add up over time, resulting in the ability to be less likely to be knocked off course as negative or disruptive events occur. Caring for yourself is one of the most dependable ways to break the cycle of burnout and resupply strength and energy and broaden perspectives. Resilience practices can keep you burning bright rather than burning out.

A New Resilience Framework: CORE

Conceptualizations of resilience vary widely (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Perhaps in part due to this lack of consistency, frameworks and models of resilience also vary greatly, in part by context and population. Additionally, there are not many practical, individual-based models that help people understand *how* to build their personal resources of resilience. At the onset of our work, we proposed that a framework focused on the *individual process of resilience*—specifically, practice-based processes for strengthening resilience—would be a strong addition to the leadership development field.

After a review of the resilience and wellbeing literature, we have created a framework to help leaders better understand how to build and strengthen resilience (see Figure 1). We've titled this framework the **Comprehensive Resilience (CORE)** framework, as it's based on the notion that resilience is a whole-self endeavor, involving leaders' bodies, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It is based on research that spans several decades and domains of psychology, and at the same time is geared toward practical application and integration into one's everyday life. To this end, this framework focuses on four areas of resilience: physical, mental, emotional, and social.

- Physical resilience is the body's capacity to respond to stressors with strength and stamina, as well as recover from injury.
- Mental resilience is the ability to maintain or regain cognitive capacities that risk degradation and to allow creativity to emerge.
- Emotional resilience centers on understanding, appreciating, and regulating emotions, and consciously choosing feelings and responses, rather than simply automatically reacting to the environment.
- Social resilience reflects an individual's capacity to work with others to endure and recover from stressors.

Each of these areas is vital to helping leaders respond to challenging situations and additionally contributes to their flourishing, life satisfaction, and wellbeing. It is important to note that resilience is in the center of CORE—implying that resilience itself (i.e., *responding adaptively to challenges*) does not lie within a specific quadrant, but rather, is strengthened and reinforced by each area. A second key aspect of this framework is an acknowledgement that these four areas are not separate, but rather interwoven, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing—thus the overlapping circles in Figure 1.



FIGURE 1

Eight Everyday Resilience Practices

CORE not only allows leaders to explore a comprehensive and holistic approach to resilience, but also offers a helpful way to consider what types of everyday practices might be useful in boosting resilience. It is worth noting that our overarching framework (which focuses on the physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of resilience) is somewhat separate from the practices; it is more theoretical in nature and can be applied to other resilience practices not listed as part of our set of eight. Thus, when a new resilience practice not currently in the framework is identified, it can be mapped onto a part(s) of the CORE space. In the next section of this paper, we offer eight practices that can be incorporated into a leaders' everyday life (i.e., are actual behaviors one can do) and that help generate and strengthen resilience. The eight practices are: physical activity, sleep, mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, savoring, gratitude, social connection, and social contact (see Figure 2). These practices were selected because there is empirical evidence of their effectiveness specifically in leaders, as well as to demonstrate how different aspects of the resilience framework can be translated from concept to practice. The practices are also simple, both in nature and in how they can be integrated into daily life.

These practices function by generating new resources and creating cycles of gains and growth (i.e., to help stop the vicious cycles that can occur in the absence of resilience). For example, spending a few minutes reflecting on three things for which one is grateful can lead to feeling grateful, which in turn may lead to feeling more energetic and committed to the next task at hand, which in turn boosts job satisfaction. When encouraging leaders to engage with these practices, we recommend that they (a) find the practices most helpful for their specific situation and (b) consider diversifying their practices, such that they do not exclusively rely on one (i.e., diversifying their resilience portfolio). Some practices will seem more palatable and enjoyable than others depending on personal preferences. As with the four resilience areas, we want to highlight that the eight practices also overlap; for example, savoring a social interaction can pull from both savoring and social connection practices.



FIGURE 2

Physical Activity

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure – including activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, traveling, and engaging in recreational pursuits” (WHO, 2018). Physical activity is perhaps the gold standard way to improve your physical resilience.

Of particular interest to leaders, physical activity also relates to cognitive performance. For example, research has shown that people who exercise regularly have improved memory, reasoning, attention, and problem-solving compared to those who don’t (Medina, 2008). In a CCL survey of more than 1,500 senior leaders, 88% said that exercise “clearly impacts” their performance, including improved problem solving, creativity, and focus; better mental health, mood, confidence, and wellbeing; and lower stress levels (McDowell-Larsen, 2012, p. 19).

But despite the clear benefits of physical activity, many individuals still do not adequately engage with this resilience practice. Decreases in physical activity are concerning because researchers have found evidence that sitting too much is deleterious to one’s health (Owen, Sparling, Healy, Dunstan, & Matthews, 2010).

TIPS FOR BOOSTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

If you’re interested in exploring this resilience practice, here are a few ideas to get you started:

- **Take the long way.** Whether you are heading to your next meeting, your car, or the refrigerator, try taking a long path, or a new path, to your destination rather than opting for the shortest and most direct route.
- **Track your activity.** Use a calendar, journal, app, or wearable fitness tracker (e.g., a Fitbit) to see how much movement you have in your day.
- **Schedule moving meetings.** If you do not need to be in a specific place for a meeting (e.g., looking at a screen, whiteboard, or document), try having a moving meeting (e.g., walk, roll, or stretch).



Sleep

When it comes to the intersection between physical health, mental acuity, and leadership effectiveness, sleep is a vital resource. Its importance is highlighted by examining what happens when humans don't get enough sleep: Inadequate sleep impairs functioning of the brain's frontal lobes—the areas responsible for important cognitive processes such as paying attention, making good decisions, and making new memories (e.g., Harrison & Horne, 1999). Sleep loss also has ripple effects into the social area of resilience; more specifically, it can affect the way leaders both perceive and respond to others' emotions (e.g., in a sleep-deprived state, individuals are more likely to respond unpleasantly to negative events). More generally, sleep deprivation also relates to increased stress at work, contributing to the aforementioned vicious negative cycles.

Despite the biological and psychological importance of sleep, it is still a process with which many leaders struggle. At the Center for Creative Leadership, we conducted a study of sleep habits among 384 leaders and professionals (Svetieva, Clerkin, & Ruderman, 2017) and found that sleep deprivation was widespread, with participants reporting getting an average of 6.63 hours of sleep each night and 42% getting fewer than 6 hours—amounts that are quite a bit lower than the 7 to 9 hours of sleep recommended by medical professionals (Sunj, 2020). One potential reason for leaders' struggle with obtaining adequate sleep is that they may feel tethered to their devices (Deal, 2015), constantly checking email and project updates out of a sense of pressure to stay updated and connected. More than ever, it is critical that leaders more intentionally work toward greater sleep quantity and quality, as sleep impacts all four resilience areas.

TIPS FOR BOOSTING SLEEP.

If you would like to explore ways to get more sleep in your life, here are some tips backed by sleep experts:

- **Keep your bedtimes and waketimes consistent.** Try going to bed and getting up at relatively the same time each day. Too much variation in your bedtime schedule can confuse your body, causing it to be more difficult to fall asleep or wake up.
- **Get 20 more minutes.** If you are not getting enough sleep, see if you can fit in just 20 more minutes. This can be going to bed 20 minutes earlier, getting up 20 minutes later, or taking a nap in the middle of the day.
- **Create relaxing routines for priming sleep.** Allow yourself to indulge in routines that are relaxing and set the stage for sleep. These actions tell your body that it is time to rest.



Mindfulness

World-renowned mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn defines mindfulness as “the awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally” (Mindful Staff, 2017). We adopt this definition and consider mindfulness to have three main components: It is (a) intentional, (b) present-focused, and (c) nonjudgmental. While, for the sake of simplicity, we are considering mindfulness to be a practice for cultivating mental resilience, research shows that mindfulness can have a significant impact on all four resilience areas. Studies have documented relationships between mindfulness and cognitive processes such as learning and memory, emotion regulation, perspective taking, self-awareness, attention, and self-control (Fox et al., 2014; Hölzel et al., 2011). Mindfulness is also related to reduced psychological distress (Virgili, 2015), stress (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009), depression and anxiety (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Sedlmeier et al., 2012), and sleep disturbance (Rash et al., 2019).

There are also documented benefits of mindfulness in the workplace: In one study, employees who were instructed to use a meditation practice app reported significant improvements in wellbeing, distress, job strain, and perceptions of workplace social support compared to the control group (Bostock et al., 2019). In a recent meta-analysis, researchers found that increased mindfulness was related to increased job satisfaction and performance and decreased burnout and work withdrawal (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2017). In our own work, we found that leaders’ baseline mindfulness level predicted many desirable leadership attributes including creativity, thriving at work, self-efficacy, and, notably, resilience (Clerkin, Ruderman, & Fernandez, 2021).

TIPS FOR BOOSTING MINDFULNESS.

If you would like to explore ways to engage more with mindfulness in your life, here are some tips:

- **Start small.** Start by taking 30- or 60-second mindfulness breaks throughout the day. Take a moment to stop and take stock of how your body is feeling and ground yourself in the present moment, noticing your thoughts and feelings without judgment.
- **Choose a sense.** Pick a sense and engage with an activity that fully immerses that sense. For example, you can listen to a favorite song or focus on the smell of a particular favorite scent of yours (e.g., a candle).
- **Use your breath as an anchor.** Try a simple breathing exercise. For example, breathe in for a count of 4 and breathe out for a count of 6.



Cognitive Reappraisal

Our thoughts can greatly impact our feelings, behaviors, and physical sensations (and vice versa). Sometimes, our thoughts can reflect interpretations (i.e., appraisals) of the world around us that are not totally correct—for example, if a coworker is short with us during a meeting, we may assume they are upset with us. One empirically supported, effective way to manage thoughts is with an emotion regulation strategy called *cognitive reappraisal*. Cognitive reappraisal, at its core, is the act of reinterpreting an emotionally-evocative situation in a different (ideally, more balanced) way, after considering missing information, assumptions, and new perspectives. An essential part of cognitive reappraisal is the systematic challenging of potentially incorrect perceptions and assumptions in such a way that one is more likely to come to more enabling beliefs about the situation. In our own research, we found that leaders who report higher engagement with cognitive reappraisal also report higher job satisfaction and lower emotional burnout; additionally, we found preliminary evidence that cognitive reappraisal may influence the extent to which thoughts influence your level of burnout at work (Fernandez, Clerkin, & Ruderman, 2021).

TIPS FOR INCORPORATING COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE.

If you would like to explore ways to more frequently and effectively engage with cognitive reappraisal, considering the following tips:

- **Watch your self-talk.** Notice your thoughts when you're reflecting on situations or individuals around you. Whenever you notice yourself feeling distressed at work, take a moment to stop and ask yourself, "What assumptions am I making right now?"
- **Practice using challenging questions.** Select challenging questions to ask yourself about a given situation. For example: *What are some alternate explanations for this situation? What are external factors that might affect the situation? If I surveyed others, how might they interpret the situation?*
- **Take a daily 'thought timeout.'** Set aside a time, perhaps at the end of your work day, to intentionally reflect on the nature and impact of your thought processes that day. See if you notice any distorted thoughts that may have slipped in unquestioned. See if there is anything you want to challenge regarding how you are thinking that day.



Savoring

Savoring is defined as the intentional directing of one's attention to the positive emotions that arise when experiencing or thinking about a specific event (Bryant, Chadwick, & Kluwe, 2011). The goal of savoring is to relish, enhance, and cultivate positive emotions via intentionally immersing oneself in them (Lenger & Gordon, 2019). Savoring can be a helpful resilience practice due to an emotional tendency to hyperfocus on negative emotions (i.e., negativity bias).

Several studies have documented relationships between savoring and greater perceived social support, psychological wellbeing, subjective happiness, and positive emotions, and lower depression and stress (Chen & Zhou, 2017; Hurley & Kwon, 2012; Jose et al., 2012; Kiken et al., 2017; Quoidbach et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2020). Savoring has also been documented in workplace settings. For example, in one study, researchers found that the association between perceptions of performance-oriented HR practices and work engagement are stronger when leaders report using more savoring strategies.

TIPS FOR SAVORING.

Below are some tips and tools for incorporating savoring into your everyday life:

- **Take a mental photograph.** Take a moment to pause and absorb your surroundings; imagine that your eyes are a camera and you're taking a picture so that you can access that moment and memory at any time.
- **Share your good feelings with others.** If you had a particularly productive or inspired day at work, or you finally found a solution to a significant problem, share it with a coworker or a friend. Instead of just telling them that it happened, expand (i.e., savor) on what happened and how it made you feel in detail.
- **Congratulate yourself.** Just as you might take some time to share good news with others, take some time to bask in your own good news. Looking back on the day so far, what is one accomplishment (big or small) that you've had? Reflect on what that accomplishment makes you feel and what it might inspire in you.



Gratitude

Gratitude is “a specific way of thinking about receiving a benefit and giving credit to others beside oneself for that benefit” (Emmons, 2013, Myth 2 section). Research has demonstrated that gratitude can play an important role in the workplace. For example, a recent Glassdoor survey found that 80% of employees said they would be willing to work harder for an appreciative boss (Glassdoor, 2013). In another study, researchers found that employees made 50% more fundraising calls when their director expressed heartfelt thanks to them for their work (Grant & Gino, 2010). Gratitude toward one’s organization has also been linked to higher job satisfaction (Waters, 2012), increased organizational citizenship behavior, and better relationships with supervisors (Ford, Wang, Jin, & Eisenberger, 2018).

Gratitude can also help people cope during times of challenge and stress. Researchers have found the experience of gratitude to be related to higher self-esteem, boosted physical health, better sleep, and greater life satisfaction (Jackowska, Brown, Ronaldson, & Steptoe, 2016; Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2009). In our research on gratitude at the Center for Creative Leadership, we found that even during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders still found things to be grateful for—and, leaders who had more gratitude also had higher levels of job satisfaction and resilience.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH GRATITUDE.

Below are some tips for incorporating gratitude into your daily life:

- **Send a gratitude note.** Writing a letter thanking someone for the positive impact they’ve had in your life is a terrific way to boost your gratitude. If a letter feels too formal, try another way of expressing your gratitude, such as an email, text, postcard, etc.
- **Keep a gratitude journal or list.** Keep a journal to record and reflect on your gratitude. If you’re not the journaling type, don’t worry; making a short list works, too. Just jot down three to five things for which you’re grateful.
- **When things go wrong, count your blessings.** It’s easy to be grateful when things are going well, but gratitude can have an even bigger impact if you’re going through a rough patch. So, next time something goes wrong at work or in your career, see if you can find the silver lining. What did you learn from the experience? What opportunity did it offer you?



Social Connection

Social connection refers to our ability to connect and relate to other human beings. While long-term interpersonal relationships often reflect strong social connections, connections can also be more fleeting (e.g., a really good conversation with a stranger on an airplane, that one person in the audience during your presentation that nods and smiles and seems to ‘get’ everything you have to say). As social animals, social connection is central to our wellbeing. The sparking of positive emotions from social connections can help contribute to a more positive emotional tone at work, especially in individuals facing challenges and stress, in part by helping to create cycles of positive gains (e.g., feeling supported may encourage someone to engage more fully with work, which in turn may contribute to performance, which in turn decreases stress about work, etc.).

The physical and psychological benefits of social connection with others have been widely documented in the literature. For example, greater social support has been found to relate to greater psychological wellbeing (Thoits, 2011; Turner, 1981) and a stronger immune system (Cole et al., 2007). Connections can play a particularly significant role in strengthening resilience. For example, there is evidence that even small amounts of interaction can improve cognitive performance (Ybarra et al., 2008), health via the cardiovascular and neuroendocrine systems (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008), and recovery and adaptation to illness and loss (Lilius, Worline, Maitlis, Kanov, Dutton, & Frost, 2008).

TIPS FOR STRENGTHENING YOUR SOCIAL CONNECTION.

Below are some tips for increasing your social connection with others:

- **Exercise your social muscle.** Just as you might take on a physical exercise routine, try out exercising your social skills. For example, make it a point to greet people around you and ask how they’re doing (e.g., while congregating for a work meeting).
- **Be generous.** Find a way to help a fellow colleague, or at the very least reach out and ask if a fellow colleague might benefit from your assistance.
- **Learn how to understand perspectives other than your own.** A cornerstone of social relationships is to really listen to others and to perceive them accurately and with empathy. Ask others about experiences or opinions that you do not understand in a way that promotes bonding.



Social Contact

The final resilience practice included in our framework is social contact, or the act of positive physical touch among friends, family, and loved ones. Common examples of social contact include holding hands, hugging, patting someone on the back, cuddling, or petting an animal. Though seemingly minor, displays of social contact can actually have powerful effects on socioemotional wellbeing. For example, in one study, participants who physically received touch from friends or partners reported feeling more secure than those who did not receive any physical touch (Jakubiak & Feeney, 2016). Yet another study demonstrated a relationship between social contact and managing interpersonal conflict via decreased negative feelings (Murphy, Janicki-Deverts, & Cohen, 2018). Social contact has also been found to be associated with lower cortisol and a stronger immune system (Cohen, Janicki-Deverts, Turner, & Doyle, 2015).

Documented effects of social contact, such as increased feelings of security and better interpersonal conflict management, can be especially impactful. However, it is worth noting that hugging and other forms of contact must take place in a safe setting. Although it is possible for appropriate displays of social contact to occur in the workplace (e.g., a handshake or a consensual hug), displays of social contact with loved ones at home (e.g., hugging a friend or romantic partner) are likely more effective and beneficial for improving resilience.

TIPS FOR INCREASING SOCIAL CONTACT.

Below are some tips for utilizing social contact to strengthen resilience:

- **Create a contact routine.** Are you getting enough physical contact in your life? If not, try to come up with ways to build more contact into your routine. For example, you could make it a ritual to hug a loved one every day before you start your workday or use time watching TV to cuddle with a child, partner, or family member.
- **If you can't be there in person, use your imagination.** Some research suggests that even imagining social contact can be beneficial. So next time you have to go to a difficult meeting or have a difficult conversation, try first taking five minutes to imagine a loved one giving you a long hug or a reassuring hand squeeze. This is a particularly useful technique during periods when health concerns limit physical contact.
- **Snuggle your pets.** If human companions aren't often within reach, don't worry! Research shows that animal friends offer similar benefits, so snuggle up with a kitten, pet your dog, or cuddle your rabbit to boost your immune system and decrease your stress levels.



Organizational Implications

Though the majority of our framework focuses on personal practices for developing resilience, there are certainly ways in which resilience can be strengthened at the organizational level. More specifically, harnessing the potential impact of organizational influence on leaders to promote resilience practices can be extremely helpful, both at the individual and organizational levels. The Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) examined the benefits of investments in resilience programs in terms of organizational performance and found that high-performance organizations are distinguished from lower-performing organizations on a variety of factors, one being adopting a holistic approach to wellbeing (i4cp, 2020). More specifically, organizations in the high-performance group took a holistic approach at four times the rate of the lower-performing organizations. In another study focused on comparing individuals higher versus lower in resilience, results indicated that individuals higher in resilience (i.e., more likely to positively influence others, demonstrate comfort initiating change, build a positive culture, initiate appropriate action, not let stressful situations take a personal toll, and stay engaged in work during times of high stress) were seen by others as more able to deal with change (Tracom, 2018).

Although many organizations have begun to implement wellness programs (e.g., programs that encourage physical activity), most organizations either have no resilience-based programs or lack diversity in their resilience-strengthening programs/approaches, resulting in minimal help being offered to effectively address the stress and burnout of employees. There are many ways in which organizations support employee engagement with resilience practices, including:

- Implementing educational efforts to better prepare leaders to engage in resilience practices (e.g., incorporate resilience psychoeducation into employee development programs, mindfulness training programs)
- Redesigning of processes, policies and norms (e.g., allow employees more control over their work hours)
- Community building (e.g., creating community groups around physical activities, such as hiking)

Leaders can also serve as role models for others in the organization and advocate for the implementation and support of the resilience practices. For example, beginning each meeting with a moment of gratitude for everyone's contributions or encouraging coworkers to wait until the next work day to respond to emails (versus responding after-hours or during the night). Altogether, there is a huge upside to promoting resilience in organizations, including encouraging a more people-centered climate, which can result in greater engagement, improved safety, better energy levels at work, and reduced absenteeism.

Application of the CORE Framework

There are many potential applications of the CORE framework within the leadership development field that span both practical and theoretical domains. At the practical level, our framework provides a simple, concrete way to teach resilience as part of leadership development programs. Rather than vaguely and haphazardly defining resilience and making general suggestions about how to increase resilience, utilization of our framework can provide clear, specific recommendations for behavioral changes that leaders can make to strengthen their resilience in times of challenge. Given the time and space to do so, leaders can use these practices to create a portfolio of activities for building resilience.

At the theoretical level, our definition of resilience (i.e., responding adaptively to challenges) provides a potentially useful universal definition of resilience that

spans multiple fields of study and multiple situations that may benefit from resilience. When it comes to the operationalization of resilience, future research focused on our framework can thoroughly assess the degree to which individuals engage with each of the eight resilience practices as one measure of resilience, either via the creation of a new resilience assessment or by using existing, psychometrically-valid measures of the eight practices. Rather than focusing on certain characteristics of individuals higher in resilience (e.g., self-acceptance), such an assessment approach could target concrete behaviors that span four areas of resilience. By assessing concrete behaviors, researchers can also more easily tie results to actionable behaviors that can be targeted and modified for more effective engagement with resilience practices.

Conclusion

Resilience is an incredibly powerful part of the human experience of facing challenges. Leaders often find themselves in complex situations that require drawing from multiple competencies to perform well. When challenges and stress are added on top of existing complexity (e.g., a major organizational change, a global pandemic), it becomes ever more important for leaders to find effective ways to manage burnout and associated distressing emotions. Our resilience framework provides a simple and concrete way to conceptualize how resilience can be strengthened in leaders and paves the way for future research and application focused on effectively incorporating resilience training into leadership development programs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

To learn more about resilience, we recommend our new book focused on introducing and expanding on the CORE framework releasing in 2021 by Marian Ruderman, Cathleen Clerkin, and Katya Fernandez. In it, we share more about our research and experience with helping leaders cultivate resilience, and go into greater depth about the eight practices shared here. The book is designed to help people take action and build up their own unique portfolio of resilience practices that they can use to adapt and persist through any challenges they might encounter now or in the future.

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