

Module 3: Navigating the Path to Success

Purpose

The purpose of this module is to enable you to identify the roadblocks and types of resistance to implementing resiliency strategies through the organizational resiliency model. The module also examines how supervisors and managers can act as change agents to overcome resistance and ensure resiliency strategies are adopted.

Lessons

1. Identifying Roadblocks
2. Becoming a Change Agent

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify organizational roadblocks to implementing strategies.
- Explain how to act as a change agent to overcome resistance in the organization.

Participant Worksheet

- Worksheet 3.1, Implementing Change in My Organization

1. Identifying Roadblocks

You would think that most organizations – especially those that work with victims – would recognize the need for resiliency programs for their staff. But sometimes you run into obstacles. Most often there is too little time or too little money. However, by allowing you to attend this training, your organizations already recognize the value of resiliency, and they are committed to building resiliency in their organization.

Implementing resiliency does represent change. And you are the change agent for your agency. So in this module, we'll provide you with the tools that will make implementing the organizational resiliency model a little easier.

We know that with change there are always challenges – not enough time, insufficient money, the need to create tools, and so on. In the next activity, we look at the strategy you want to implement, what you'll need to carry it out, and what stands in your way of success.

In this activity, you will work in small groups to identify some potential roadblocks to implementing resiliency strategies in your organization.

You may become disheartened when you begin to think about the obstacles you might face when you start implementing strategies for your own organizational resiliency model. There are certainly things that can tear you down. But remember, there are many techniques you can use to build yourself up, too.

2. Becoming a Change Agent

If you want to implement a resiliency strategy within your organization, you will need to act as a change agent, even if there is no resistance to your ideas. Change will be implemented faster and with more enthusiasm if you approach it as a process. There has been a great deal of research on how to bring about change successfully.

There are many definitions of a “change agent,” but essentially a change agent is someone who influences people or organizations to achieve or improve something. A change agent also makes a change “stick” and has a future-oriented outlook. Someone who is successful as a change agent usually has certain characteristics:

- They are passionate about what they are doing, or what they are attempting to change.
- They must be able to motivate themselves and others.
- They must understand people – and know what to do and what to say to each person they encounter along the way.
- They are leaders, regardless of their position in the organization.

Regardless of your characteristics, if you feel strongly enough about something, such as the well-being of your staff, you may find yourself in the role of a change agent. That's why it will be helpful to know a process for implementing change.

There are many theories about how to create change. One of the most popular theories originated with a professor at Harvard Business School, John Kotter. His theory presents eight steps for leading change, and we'll do an activity in connection with Kotter's model

The activity offers the opportunity to work individually and create an approach for obtaining approval for a strategy or maybe just an idea, and with whom you would interact.

Now that you have a strategy you'd like to implement in your organization, let's see how you might go about doing that, applying Kotter's change model, and with you acting as the change agent.

Kotter's Eight Steps

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency

It helps if you can entice people to *want* what you have to offer! Develop a sense of urgency around the need for change. This may help you light the initial spark to get things moving. Spread the word. Convey urgency to your staff and other supervisors, and it could very well snowball.

For change to be successful, according to this model, 75 percent of an organization's management needs to "buy into" the change. Your agency has already recognized the importance of the organizational resiliency model by sending you to this training. But *recognizing* that something is necessary doesn't always mean that the agency feels that it must be done right away. You don't want your ideas to be shelved, then forgotten. That's why creating a sense of urgency is so important.

Step 2: Form a Coalition

Contact people in your organization who are leaders. They don't necessarily need to have a high-level job; they simply need to be influential. However, it does help to have people on your team who have different strengths, such as status, expertise, job title, etc.

If you're successful enough to build a coalition that will be committed to your idea and lend support your resiliency program, you will have a much greater chance of success.

Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

You probably have a clear idea of what you want to do to improve resiliency in your organization, but not everyone else will. It's critical that you link your idea to the vision or mission of your organization. Clearly connect these concepts to an overall vision that people can grasp easily and remember.

A clear vision can help everyone understand why you're asking them to do something. When people see for themselves what you're trying to achieve, then the directives they're given tend to make more sense.

Step 4: Communicate the Vision

You should embed the vision for your resiliency plan within everything that you do. Talk it up every chance you have. Mention it frequently within your own organization as well as to other agencies that might be involved. If people have concerns or issues, address them openly and honestly. Be prepared to describe the benefits.

Step 5: Remove Obstacles

We've already talked a great deal about obstacles and how we can overcome them. You have to check frequently for roadblocks; they can pop up unexpectedly, especially when you are working outside your span of control. Make sure you look at your organizational structure, job descriptions, and performance systems to make sure they are aligned with what you want to do. And identify people who are resisting your idea; help them see what's needed.

Step 6: Create Short-Term Wins

Don't just focus on the large goal. If you can achieve your goals by creating and implementing short-term goals, you may be much more successful. When you develop short-term goals, make sure they are achievable, with little room for failure. Each "win" reflects positively on your idea and generates enthusiasm. Short-term goals might involve some of the activities we've discussed in this training – creating a T-shirt, for example, or posting the mission statement. These are quick "wins" that are easy to accomplish.

Step 7: Build on the Change

Don't celebrate success too early. Quick wins are great and build momentum, but it takes time to achieve long-term change. Each success is an opportunity to build on what went right and identify what you can improve.

Step 8: Anchor the Changes in Organization Culture

Finally, to make any change permanent, it should be integrated into the core of your organization's culture. If you have been successful as a change agent, your resiliency program will eventually embed itself. Recognize key people who helped make the change a success, and make sure the rest of the staff remembers their contributions. It also is important that your organization's leaders continue to support the change.

Obviously, it isn't always easy implementing new strategies within your organization. It will depend on a number of factors – the extent and scale of the idea you're proposing, your current organization culture, the size of your agency, whether it's public or private, and a host of other factors. But by approaching it the right way, you can often see the results of your efforts play out in resiliency strategies or programs that improve the lives of your staff and volunteers.

