

Self-Teach Workbook

Resilience

Understanding & Managing Negative Stress & Strain

Resilience: Managing Negative Stress - Watch the Self-Teach

Durham University Leadership Programme

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How To Use This Workbook

This workbook is intended to support the 'Self-Teach' modules and will provide additional activities, explanations and resources you can use in your leadership role.

Work through the self-teach video and, where directed, or as you feel appropriate, pause the video and refer to the workbook. In the video there will be opportunities for you to take a '60 second thought capture,' (indicated by a 🕒 symbol). Feel free to use the space provided in this workbook to jot down your thoughts. Alternatively, you can pause the video at any point to allow more time to consider the questions.

Take away resources (i.e. those that you can use separately as a 'tool' or resource in your leadership role) will also be highlighted by a 📁 symbol. This will prompt you to copy the resource for later use if you wish.

What to expect from the Module (video and workbook)

- Models, Tools & Tips - 🔧
- Reflective Questions - 🕒
- Post-session Resources and Exercises 📁

How to Use the Self-Teach Module

- Block out the time (sufficient time to watch and complete the activities)
- Download the PDF workbook
- Complete the exercises
- Pause/ rewind/ revisit any time
- Complete the post session activities
- Drop into the Q&A sessions planned

Workbook Contents

Understanding Stress & Strain	4
Knowing the Warning Signs	8
The 5 Areas of Resilience	10
Six Areas of Self-Care	21
Dealing with Overload	22
Action Planning	24
References	25
Further Reading/ Viewing	25

Understanding Stress & Strain

Psychological strain is a very human phenomenon. We all experience it. How we respond to it is the key. As a leader it is important to develop your own personal coping toolkit, demonstrate that you value wellbeing as a factor within your team and support your individual team members in protecting and enhancing their own wellbeing.

Thought Capture Exercise



What do you find causes you stress and strain? What do you struggle to cope with? Take some time out to consider the external factors such as workload, demands from others, personal stressors and the internal pressures we can put on ourselves.

Jot down your thoughts here:

Note: Please safeguard your own wellbeing. If, during the course of completing this exercise, you feel overwhelmed or need support, stop and seek support - of a friend, or from the support within the SLA, your College or personal support (family, GP)

Understanding Stress & Strain *(continued)*

Remember, you are a human being, therefore:

'Give yourself permission to be human'

*Tal Ben Sahara (*1)*

Human beings are far more complex than any piece of machinery or electronic device and even they need care. How much more do we need to factor in our own 'care?' (Clue - a lot more).

Watch the Video to view the 'Crackerjack' metaphor with the cabbages and cuddly toys.



Thought Capture Exercise

Jot down your thoughts on the video. How many cabbages are you juggling? What has happened to the 'cuddly toys' (the good stuff in your life) and can you relate to the voice of 'self-cabotage'?

Jot down your thoughts here:

Understanding Stress & Strain (continued)

The Demand-Control-Support Model (*2)

The combination of the following can lead to increasing psychological strain which can become problematic for our coping capacity.

High Demand

(the internal, external, the big, the little, the personal, the work)
coupled with

Low Control

(our sense of 'I can handle this' 'I've got this' or 'we've got this')

Low Social Support

(everything from a chat with a friend, to a more open, intimate conversation with a loved one, to accessing professional independent support - GP, counselling, therapy, SLA support, College Support)

Individual Reflection:



Consider each aspect of the above model from your own personal perspective. What are the demands like? How are you coping?

How much control do you feel you have over the demands? What support do you feel you have?

Understanding Stress & Strain *(continued)*



Team Reflection:

Take some time to consider your team and the individuals within it.

What are the demands you and they face in terms of their team roles? What student and personal demands might the individuals be coping with in addition to their team responsibilities? How much support does the team provide one another? How much support outside the team do you each have?

Jot down your thoughts here:

Knowing the Warning Signs

Being able to recognise when you and members of your team are struggling to cope or feeling overwhelmed is important. Once we recognise the signs, we can then take steps to deal with the issues or support the individual who appears to be struggling.



Team Reflection:

What are the warning signs of someone struggling to cope or feeling overwhelmed? Consider your own warning signs and those you have observed in others. How much support does the team provide one another? How much support outside the team do you each have?

What are the different types of signs?

Physical (body and appearance)

Behaviour & Actions

Feelings and Emotions

Thinking/ Cognitive

Knowing the Warning Signs *(continued)*

Some suggested signs to watch out for:

Physical (body and appearance)

- *Headaches*
- *Appearance*
- *Feeling unwell*
- *Tense*

Behaviour & Actions

- *Avoidant*
- *Slamming doors*
- *Withdrawn*
- *Distracted*

Feelings and Emotions

- *Irritable*
- *Angry*
- *Tears*
- *Coldness*
- *Feeling flat/ low*

Thinking/ Cognitive

- *Unable to focus*
- *Can't switch off*
- *Multi-tasking*
- *Poor decision making*

Thought Capture Exercise



Take a moment now - does anyone you know come to mind - someone who may have been displaying some warning signs? What can you do now to support them?

Jot down your thoughts here:

The Five Areas of Resilience

In order to effectively support our team, it is useful to consider the elements that, if focused upon, you will improve resilience.

The Roffey Park Resilience Capability Index (*3)

Purpose, Values, Strengths

Perspective

Connections

Emotional Intelligence

Physical Energy

Purpose, Values and Strengths

Having a clear sense of purpose in our work, a belief that the work that we do is congruent with our personal values, and plays to our strengths are all key to resilience at work.

Holding a clear sense of our own values and our own moral compass help us to keep centred when all around there is change.

This is worthy of focus from both your own individual perspective, but also for the team as a whole. It could prove fruitful involving the team in the following exercises:

The Five Areas of Resilience *(continued)*



Thought Capture Exercise - Purpose

Reflect on the purpose of your role as a leader and the purpose of the team, club or association you are leading. What is the purpose? How clear are you on this? Do you need to seek clarification and if so, from whom?

Jot down your thoughts here:

What about your team? Are they clear about the purpose of the team and is each member clear on the purpose they fulfil in carrying out their role? How can you firm this up if there is a lack of clarity?

Jot down your thoughts here:

The Five Areas of Resilience *(continued)*



Thought Capture Exercise - Values

*Consider the values that are important to you personally? What are the team values if already stated? How do they compliment the values of Durham University? And conflict? How could you resolve this? **How can you demonstrate these values in your day to day leadership role?*

Jot down your thoughts here:

What about your team? Are the members of your team (including the extended team - volunteers, etc) clear on their own personal values, the team values and how they fit with Durham University Values? Any lack of clarity or conflicts? What could you do to resolve this? How do you as a team behave in order to demonstrate these values?

Jot down your thoughts here:

The Five Areas of Resilience *(continued)*



Thought Capture Exercise - Strengths

What are your personal strengths, skills and what are particularly relevant to your leadership role? (Consider taking the strengths

*questionnaire at <https://www.viacharacter.org/>) (*4) (don't just consider skills*

- consider your attitudes, behaviours and values - what are particularly driving you?)

Jot down your thoughts here:

What about the strengths of and wishing your team? How can you leverage those strengths to increase motivation and results?

Jot down your thoughts here:

The Five Areas of Resilience - Perspective

Perspective

Short Term

Medium Term

Long Term

Short Term (immediate) perspective

Consider what tactics help you to manage or avoid becoming overwhelmed?

Remember the tips in the self-teach video:

- *'Remove From Heat'* - what could you do to create some space between you and the trigger leading you to feel overwhelmed?
- *'Rescue Breath (2-2-4)'* - Slowing down your breathing and focusing your attention on counting can help to both distract you from the stressor and bring your physiological state down from the higher stress states
- *'Cabbage or Sprout'* - Is the thing that caused me to experience overwhelm a big thing (and therefore worthy of a lot of my attention) or a small thing - if the latter - 'don't sweat that sprout'



Thought Capture Exercise

What tends to trigger overwhelm in you? How could you use the above tactics and what additional action could you take to minimise overwhelm? How could you support team members experiencing overwhelm?

Jot down your thoughts here:

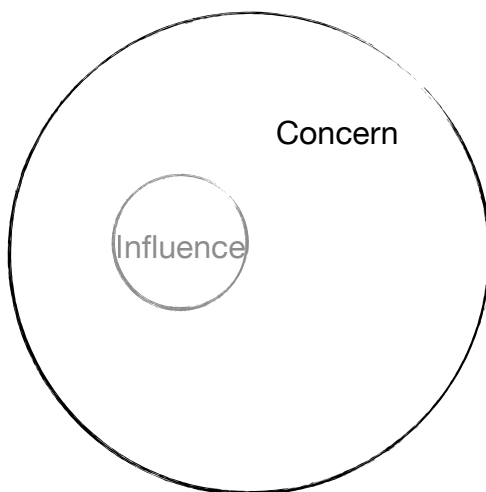
The Five Areas of Resilience - Perspective (continued)

Medium Term

How do we perceive the day to day demands? Does that contribute to our sense of positivity, challenge and accomplishment, or lead us to feel overloaded, ground down and powerless?

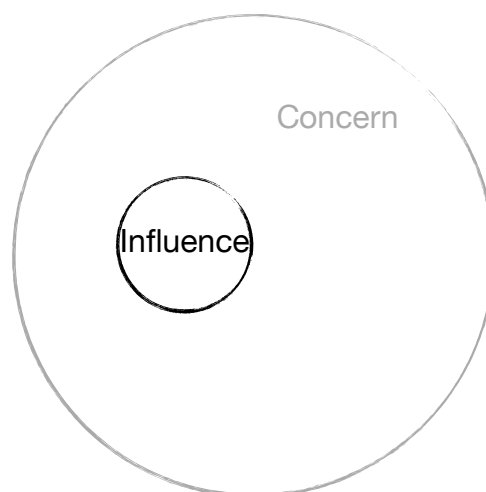
Shifting our focus from what we can't do to what we can do, is something with practice we can do more effectively when feeling the strain

Circles of Influence and Concern (*5)



Where is your focus when feeling the strain?

Adopting an 'optimistic thinking style':



Shifting your focus onto what you can do or what you can influence

The Five Areas of Resilience - Perspective (continued)



Thought Capture Exercise

What do you find yourself worrying about or becoming preoccupied with when feeling the strain? What level of influence or control do you have over those things? Identify what aspects you can influence and what you can't. This practical exercise can help you recognise and let go of the things you have no influence over.

Having identified those things you can influence, identify some specific actions you can take - completing something, making a phone call, sending an email, spending 20 minutes working on.... Your brain can unhook from the negative 'stuff' if given some practical positive action to undertake.

The Five Areas of Resilience - Perspective (continued)

Long-Term Perspective

When under strain and experiencing overwhelm it can be very easy to focus on the here and now and the short to medium term. Thoughts like, 'how do I get through this' or 'this is too much' can contribute to that sense of overwhelm. The previous exercises can all help. However, it can also be very helpful to consider the longer term perspective, particularly when attempting to gain a perspective on the challenges you are experiencing.



Thought Capture Exercise

Think about the advice an older you would give you about life and the things that are causing you stress now. What advice would they give you?

Jot down your thoughts here:

The Five Areas of Resilience - Connections

Our social connectedness is a vital ingredient not only in our success, but in our wellbeing and resilience. How you as a leader and how the team leverage and lean on their connections for support - as well as providing support to each other - is key.

Thought Capture Exercise



Identify who is in your support network. Complete this for yourself and also consider this from the perspective of your team.

1. Close & Intimate connections

2. Close family and friends

3. Wider network of friends and colleagues

4. Independent and Professional support

The Five Areas of Resilience - Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (*6)

Consists of:

Intrapersonal: { Self- Awareness
 { Self- Management

Interpersonal: { Managing Relationships
 { Empathy

Thought Capture Exercise



What aspect of Emotional Intelligence do you feel you could develop? How could you support this within your team?

The Five Areas of Resilience - Emotional Intelligence

You may find the following self-teach modules of use in developing your 'EI'

Self- Awareness: all modules

Self- Management: Resilience: Managing Negative Stress & Strain,
Adaptability to Change

Empathy: Resilience - Having more confident wellbeing conversations,
Listening Skills

Managing Relationships: Mediation - Resolving Disagreement & Conflict,
Having more confident wellbeing conversations, Listening Skills, Conflict
Resolution, Time Management - Delegation and Coaching

Developing your skills in this area can really help you to be an effective, consistent leader and one who is able to connect and maintain excellent relationships with others.

The Five Areas of Resilience - Physical Energy

Looking after your own health and encouraging your team to do the same is an important aspect of resilience. Having the energy to ensure you cope more effectively is a key component in thriving rather than simply surviving the demands of life.

Remember the RADISH mnemonic - the 6 Areas of self-care:

R- Recharge the batteries (your physical, emotional and psychological coping reserves) - Improve your sleep, your ability to relax and take time-out

A - Appreciation practice - identify three things every day you can be thankful for, that have gone well or unexpectedly positive (even the small stuff)

D - Date time - develop the habit of taking time away from the 'to-do-' list and engage in something relaxing

I - Inject some inspiration - sometimes we need a boost and things like music, photos, films and programmes, friends and places can give you that positive reframe

S - Sweat - move more. We have evolved to be on the move and where possible outside more.

H - Have fun. Find opportunities to enjoy, laugh, smile and don't postpone your fun until... Use it as a reward for completing chunky tasks.

You can find more resources at www.stressedguru.com/destresshq

Thought Capture Exercise



How could you encourage the self-care habit within your team?

Managing Overload

When under pressure, your mind will try to avoid dealing with the big stuff - the cabbages. So remember to 'sweat the right sprouts', by identifying your cabbages (those projects and demands) and then slicing and dicing them into sprout sized chunks or actions (for your to-do list).

Remember the top tips:

- Get it out of your head - into a reliable device (a notebook, journal, to do list for calendar)
- If this then that... Confront the things that are worrying you. Identify what it is exactly you are worrying about and consider what three things you will do IF this worry comes to fruition. Keep in mind that you may need some support in doing this if the worries are particularly problematic.
- Create separate zones for your 'work, rest and play' and build in air locks between - so that when you move from one activity to another you allow your mind too shift attention more easily.
- Check out the self-teach on time management - prioritisation
- Procrastinating? Just identify one small thing you will do and do that - that's all. You will find you have made a start and often will do more. Either way celebrate your achievement in overcoming your procrastination tendency.
- Sprout by Sprout - remember if you chunk your cabbages down well it's all sprouts - it's all small tasks, actions and time chunks. Work in sprout sized chunks.

Managing Overload *(continued)*

Thought Capture Exercise



What slicing and dicing tactic can you implement right now? What cabbage (demand) needs your attention the most? What are you avoiding doing the most? Do that!

Action Planning

Now take some time to identify:

1. What tool or strategy could you use for your own resilience?
2. What one of the five areas of resilience (Roffey Park Capability Index) could you focus on first in order to develop your team resilience?
3. How can you support the individuals within your team?

References

1. Shahar TB (2007), *Happier: Can you learn to be Happy?* McGraw-Hill Professional
2. Lundberg U, Cooper CL (2011), *The Science of Occupational Health: Stress, Psychobiology and the New World of Work*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester
3. Roffey Park, *The Resilience Capability Index*, accessed <https://www.roffeypark.ac.uk/knowledge-and-learning-resources-hub/resilience-capability-index/> 23/10/2021
4. Via Institute on Character, *Character Strengths Survey* accessed at <https://www.viacharacter.org/> 23/10/2021
5. Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic* ([Rev. ed.]). Free Press.
6. Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.

Further resources

Consider the following self-teach modules to support your development:

- Adaptability To Change - Safe Uncertainty
- Resilience - Understanding Strain
- Listening Skills
- Time Management - Delegation and Manager as Coach
- Time Management - Focus & Prioritising

Check out Dave Algeo's resources:

www.stressedguru.com/destresshq

Sleep audio course: Visit: https://app.mysoundwise.com/signup/soundcast_user/1620922791011s and sign-up for the 'Operation Snooze Course' and Sleepcasts.

Sprout Sweater podcast - <https://www.stressedguru.com/the-sprout-sweater-podcast>