

## Building Resilience in Your Team by Donna Stevenson

Challenging circumstances and complex issues face every leader today, no matter the organization or environment. These circumstances and issues give rise to ever-increasing demands for leaders who have the capability to foster resilience and optimism, both for themselves and for their teams.



### What skills do resilient leaders demonstrate?

[Catherine McCulloch](#), leadership consultant associated with us at Mohawk College Enterprise (MCE), makes the case for Emotional Intelligence skills, specifically self-awareness.

*“Heightened leadership self-awareness is an indispensable asset in leading organizations during a time of ongoing change and uncertainty. Self-awareness means [understanding] our strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. It includes the action of how we gather and process information, how we handle uncertain and stressful situations, and our interaction with others.”*

Because they have excellent communication skills, resilient leaders generate enthusiasm for opportunities, motivating others to collaborate with them and take the needed risks. They apply emotional intelligence skills to their everyday lives, continually building relationships with team members, colleagues, and supervisors. They remain tuned in to the feelings of those whom they lead.

## What strategies do resilient leaders employ?

Jason Winguard, in a recent [article in Forbes](#), speaks to the 3 C's – clarity, communication, and connection – strategies all leaders should employ when transitioning to remote or virtual team situations. Resilient leaders are great communicators because they expend time and energy to foster relationships with others. They work with their teams to meet workplace demands as well as to address personal challenges that arise (childcare and other family obligations). They encourage boundaries to prevent burnout.

1. Focus on building connections. Openly share information and knowledge about ongoing situations and how it might affect others.
2. Be purposeful. Believe in the power of your team to accept and handle change. Focus on their development, support them as they learn new skills.
3. Encourage wellness. Cultivate an environment where they feel psychologically safe. Demonstrate optimism. Optimism helps us build our resilience, which in turn offers our mental health another layer of protection.
4. Model appropriate work-life balance. Encourage flexible work schedules and arrangements. Implement fun team activities. Our team, virtually, assembled a 'Grinch Christmas Tree' which not only was fun to do, but has become a continual reminder to me how important it is to be joyful.
5. What about you? [A couple of bloggers](#) with Fast Company, advise us to not forget about our own mental health. Their alternative recipe includes a 'Weekly Deliberations' tool – reserving 15 minutes at the end of the week to identify opportunities to improve, or learn about, our wellbeing – self-reflection and action planning geared to maintaining an optimistic outlook.
6. Employ a variety of tools to keep everyone engaged. Continue with weekly one-on-one conversations, focus on sharing personal stories (not related to work), try scavenger hunts and contests. Use social media to connect regularly.

Resilient leaders are passionate about their work and see possibilities in new situations. Their capacity for optimism fosters an environment of wellness and inspires others to remain hopeful.



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