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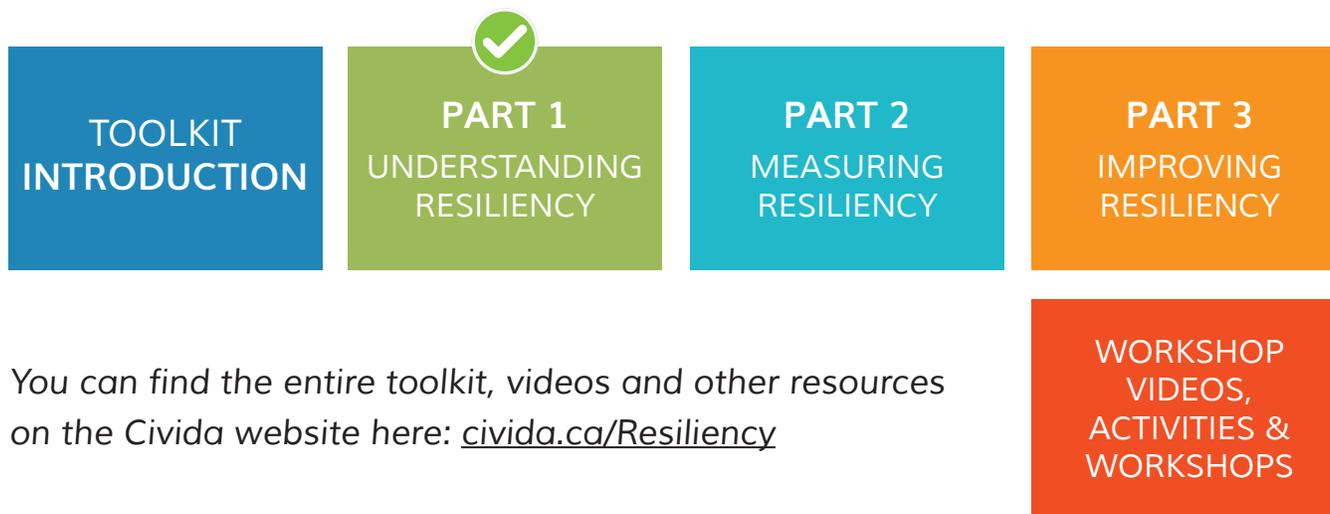## Civida

Resiliency Toolkit

PART 1 / Understanding Resiliency

Resiliency Toolkit PART 1 Understanding Resiliency

TOOLKIT **INTRODUCTION**	✓ PART 1 UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCY	PART 2 MEASURING RESILIENCY	PART 3 IMPROVING RESILIENCY

| | | | WORKSHOP VIDEOS, ACTIVITIES & WORKSHOPS |

You can find the entire toolkit, videos and other resources on the Civida website here: civida.ca/Resiliency

How to use this section of the Toolkit:

The information in this section will help you understand resiliency, how it applies to your organization and/or staff, and why resiliency is an important concept for you to measure and support as your organization engages in business transformation and change.

Why is resiliency important?

The concepts of resiliency, business transformation, organizational culture and change management can be useful in supporting organizations and staff responses to some of the challenges the housing sector is facing.

In plain terms, being resilient means being able to accept and adapt to change easily at both the micro and macro level. Both organizations and individuals can build resiliency, and as a result, they are collectively more likely to maintain productivity during times of change. Resilient organizations and individuals are proactive, anticipatory, and prepared to adjust as change or disruption occurs. Staff and the organization need to have already established resilient practices and qualities to succeed.

The ability of housing providers and staff to succeed through disruption and change is vital so that the sector remains able to meet the demands they face and continue to provide affordable homes to Canadians.

How do organizations increase resiliency?

To increase levels of both organizational and individual resiliency, an organization needs to implement iterative, planned and resourced change. Resiliency is a teachable skill that is applied to different scales, from organizations to individuals. In implementing change and supporting organizational and personal resiliency at the same time, housing providers can more successfully respond to the challenges in the sector and continue to operate into the future.

What is resiliency?
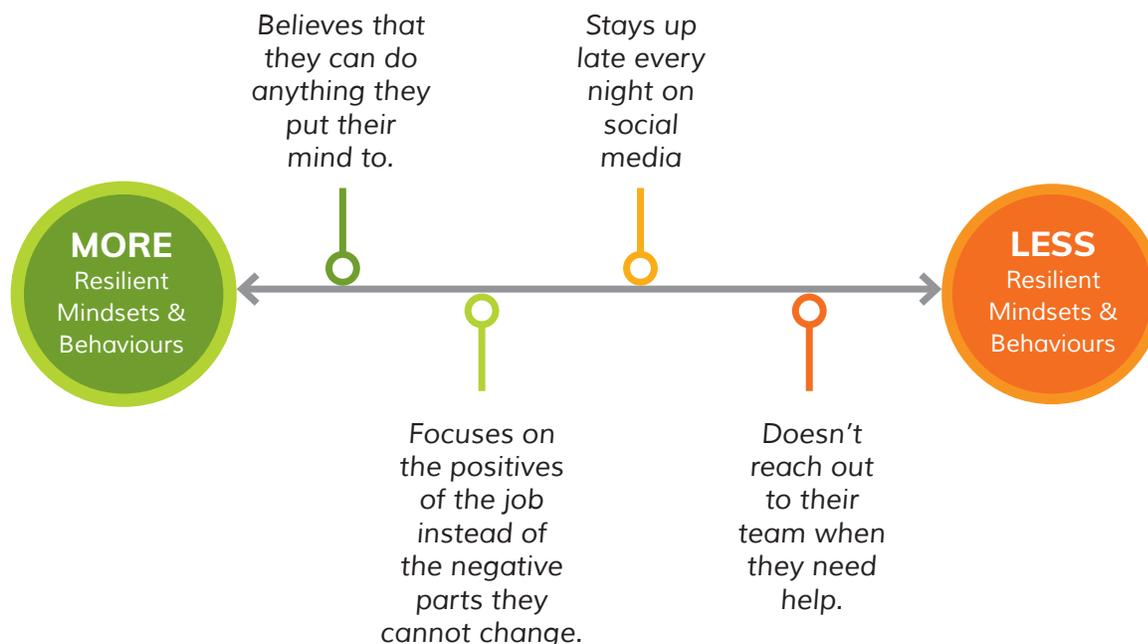
THE CHANGING HOUSING SECTOR

Change Management Practices

Successful Organizational Change

Higher Levels of Organizational & Personal Resiliency

Organizational Culture

Resiliency is an iterative cycle and is not a stand-alone concept

- Resiliency is an iterative cycle in relationship with business transformation and organizational change. Resiliency is needed to be able to withstand organizational change, but at the same time, well executed change can increase personal and organizational resiliency.

- Strong, positive, reinforcing organizational culture and supportive change management practices are key enablers (or barriers) to developing and reinforcing resiliency.

- An organizational culture defined by common vision and values is better placed to be responsive and adaptive to change. This vision or framework must be clearly articulated and resonate with leaders and staff at all levels.

- Intentional change management approaches that recognize an organization's unique culture are key to transforming successfully.

- Change management strategies (like regular communication, recognizing contributions and encouraging feedback) increase resiliency - increased resiliency leads to more engagement and adaptation during change.

Resiliency is not a binary concept nor an inherent trait, and can be developed and supported

- Resiliency is a learned skill which can be improved and built up.

- Resiliency is better thought of as a continuum, ranging from more to less resilient.

For example, a person may have all the following mindsets and behaviours, mapped onto the resiliency continuum:

Believes that they can do anything they put their mind to.

Stays up late every night on social media

MORE
Resilient Mindsets & Behaviours

LESS
Resilient Mindsets & Behaviours

Focuses on the positives of the job instead of the negative parts they cannot change.

Doesn't reach out to their team when they need help.

It is possible for organizations and people to have more and less resilient mindsets and behaviours at one time. More resilient mindsets and behaviours can be supported and maintained, and less resilient mindsets and behaviours can be improved to become more resilient.

Resiliency exists at multiple levels – personal, organizational, and community

Personal resiliency "involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that promote personal wellbeing and mental health. People can develop the ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from stress and adversity – and maintain or return to a state of mental health wellbeing – by using effective coping strategies."[1]

There are many different stressors that can cause disruptions or changes at the individual level. Work related stress, burnout, health, and environmental stressors may cause an individual to rely on their resiliency to cope, manage, and move forward with their daily activities. External events and stressors can also impact personal resiliency, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

When a multitude of stressors impact an individual and are not managed effectively, an individual's personal and performance levels suffer. The reverse is also true: having individual resiliency can positively affect the levels and success of organizational resiliency.

1   U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Individual Resilience."

There are some specific behaviours and mindsets that impact how we respond to stress and change. Some examples are shown in the table below. You can find out more about resilient mindsets and behaviours in Video 2: "Resilient Mindsets and Behaviours" (posted here *civida.ca/Resiliency*).

Mindsets		Behaviours	
More resilient	**Less resilient**	**More resilient**	**Less resilient**
Thinking that resilience is learned.	Thinking that resilience is innate.	Developing and practicing effective coping strategies.	Focusing on unhelpful or unhealthy coping strategies.
Focusing on what you can control.	Focusing on what you can't control.	Relying on yourself and being proactive.	Relying on others and being reactive.
Acknowledging the negatives but focusing on the positives of a situation.	Focusing only on the negatives.	Focusing on problem solving.	Doing nothing to address problems.
Thinking that things will be better after changing.	Thinking that things will be worse after changing.		

Resiliency is not an all or nothing situation. It is possible for an individual to have both more and less resilient ways of thinking and behaving.

Most importantly, it is possible to change less resilient mindsets and behaviours to be more resilient. Individual resiliency should not be considered a fixed trait; it can be developed, re-approached, or strengthened through lived experiences and/or training. Some examples of building resilient practices include:

- Meditation.
- Developing positive perspectives.
- Focusing on what you're able to change.
- Movement.
- Rest.

You can also find more activities and resources for building and supporting more resilient ways of thinking and behaving in Part 3 of the toolkit.

Organizational resiliency is the ability of a workplace to survive significant economic fluctuations, systemic risk, or disruptions by adapting and recovering through reorganization or through the development of different systems that allow an organization to resume its core operations.[2]

Organizations are made up of the people that work in them; organizational resiliency is directly connected to individual resiliency.

2   Lifelong Learning Office at the Boston University School of Public Health, "Other Types of Resilience."

Like personal resiliency, organizational resiliency can be improved and supported and is not an innate ability. There are specific actions and ways of thinking within an organization that can be more or less resilient, as shown in the table below. You can find out more about resilient mindsets and behaviours in Video 2: "Resilient Mindsets and Behaviours" (posted here *civida.ca/Resiliency*).

Mindsets		Behaviours	
More resilient	**Less resilient**	**More resilient**	**Less resilient**
Viewing change in an organization as an opportunity for growth.	Viewing organizational change as an inconvenience.	Being proactive in identifying and responding to change.	Being reactive to change.
Focusing on the organization's mission.	Having an undefined organizational focus.	Communicating effectively, frequently, and transparently within the organization.	Lack of communication within department or organization.
Staff feel excited and engaged at work.	Staff are not engaged at work.	Collaborating between departments.	Not collaborative with colleagues/teams.
Thinking that things will be better after changing.	Thinking that things will be worse after changing.	Demonstrating support for employees, both top down and bottom up.	Lack of support from team, leaders, organization.

Just like personal resiliency, it is possible to have both resilient and less resilient qualities when it comes to specific ways of thinking and behaving in an organization. And just like personal resiliency, these less resilient ways of thinking and behaving can be changed to be more resilient.

Three main factors that support and help develop organizational resiliency:

- **Leadership** is key to navigating disruptions and leading through planned change. Team leaders who draw on emotional, physical, cognitive and social resources have the most success in promoting resiliency. Positivity boosts morale and encourages resiliency in changing environments.

- The **time** it takes for an organization to plan and execute a change is significant, so the timing must be right with other factors that will be ongoing. Proactive behaviour depends on clear communication between leadership and staff which allows for adjustments.

- Organizations should strive to address disruption or change as a positive opportunity to **leverage resources.**

In addition to these three factors, there are other indicators of resiliency that can be measured and supported to improve organizational and personal resiliency. You can find out more about this in Part 2 and Part 3 of the toolkit. (Civida.ca/Resiliency)

Stressors to organizations are wide ranging and can be both intentional changes as well as unplanned disruptions. For example, undergoing significant changes in operations can require resiliency to adapt to new ways of working and organizing. Much like individuals, organizations are impacted by stressors such as economic downturns, environmental disasters, and global pandemics.

Organizational resiliency only works if the organization can withstand stressors (disruptions) on both a systemic and individual level. For example:

- If staff members are sick, is there someone else who would know their role and be able to fulfil their duties?
- Is there a business continuity plan if there is an emergency?
- Are staff engaged in changes and providing constructive feedback?

Organizations need to be willing to invest in their employees at the micro level by encouraging individual resiliency. Some of the ways organizations can create conditions that enable and provide space for individual resiliency include:

- Inducements.
- Benefits that allow for mental health and physical health needs to be met.
- Celebration of staff.
- Having resources established in advance of transformation.
- Activities and opportunities for staff to feel belonging.

Additionally, organizations need to take a proactive approach to change – there must be a willingness to plan for eventual change and commit resources (whether monetary or symbolic) to increase the chances of surviving and thriving through periods of change or disruption.

At every level of the organization, aspects of resilient behaviours increase the likelihood of sustainability and growth for organizations implementing business transformation practices.

Community Resiliency is the shared ability of an area to respond to adversity or disaster, and bounce back as a community. During the time of adversity, community bonds are strengthened, resources are enhanced, and individuals build effective coping skills, thus enabling the community to work towards preparedness for the next disaster or change.[3]

Affordable housing plays a crucial role in facilitating community resiliency – people need homes to live and thrive.[4] Thus, the work of building staff and an organization that is resilient is not only important for business transformation to be successful, but also to facilitate resiliency for the broader community.

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3   Lifelong Learning Office at the Boston University School of Public Health, "Other Types of Resilience."
4   Severson and de Vos, "Social Sustainability in Social and Affordable Housing"; Renn, "The Call for Sustainable and Resilient Policies in the COVID-19 Crisis."