

# 3

**What can I do as an employer to develop the resilience of the people who work for me?**

**Greater resilience better care**

**A resource to support the mental health of adult social care workers**

# Overview

This resource offers practical guidance to adult social care employers on how to develop resilience within their workforce.

Resilience, the ability to cope with pressure, underpins safe, high-quality, person-centred care and support. Developing the resilience of the people who work for you is one of the keys to retaining workers with the right values and behaviours. It protects the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the people who work for you. It helps them deliver quality services, consistently.

Resilience matters - it is an essential skill for all who work in adult social care.

Use this resource to understand what you and your workforce can do to develop resilience.

The resource has five parts. Each part addresses a question:

1. What is resilience and why does it matter?
2. Who is responsible for resilience?
3. What can I do as an employer to develop the resilience of the people who work for me?
4. What can individuals do to develop their own resilience?\*
5. Where can I find out more about resilience?

Look out for these icons which point out key information, questions and activities:



**Information to look at**



**A question to ask yourself**



**An exercise or activity**

\*Section 4 is for individuals so they can consider their own mental health resilience.

Note: Resilience is a well-researched area and evidence shows how resilience can be developed. This resource is based on that evidence.

# 3. What can I do as an employer to develop the resilience of the people who work for me?

This part of the resource offers guidance on how to put a resilience-building framework in place.

It considers what you might do to control the risk of work-related stress, help workers develop resilient behaviours and make resilient behaviour the norm in your workplace.

## Key learning points

- Take a three-pronged approach to developing resilience:
  - Use management systems to prevent and reduce stress at work
  - Use learning and development to help managers and the workforce develop resilient behaviours
  - Build positive workplace cultures to foster resilience.

### *Stress management*

- Stress management provides the foundation for resilience in your workplace; it involves:
  - Organising work to minimise stress
  - Raising awareness throughout the employment cycle about stress and how to manage it
  - Ensuring systems identify, investigate and resolve stress-related problems.
- Stress management delivers valuable learning about stress and the shared responsibilities we have to control it; this helps workers develop resilient behaviours
- The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) has developed Management Standards](#) and free tools to help reduce the risk of workplace stress; the HSE approach supports effective people management and organisational success in other areas.

### *Learning and development*

- Use learning and development to help workers develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that underpin resilient behaviours, including strategies to deal with in-the-moment and long-term pressure.

- Behaviour is shaped by other people, so learning for resilience needs to be shared, e.g. team learning; modelling by line managers and reflective team learning are particularly valuable.

### **Positive workplace cultures**

- Positive workplace cultures promote learning and shared responsibility, they reassure and motivate workers, building resilience; negative workplace cultures undermine resilience.
- Positive workplace cultures are based on the good practice people management; the HSE Management Standards will help promote positive workplace cultures.
- Use modelling by line managers and reflective team learning to build positive workplace cultures; the [Social Care Commitment](#) offers a useful framework, you can use its employee tasks to support reflective team learning.

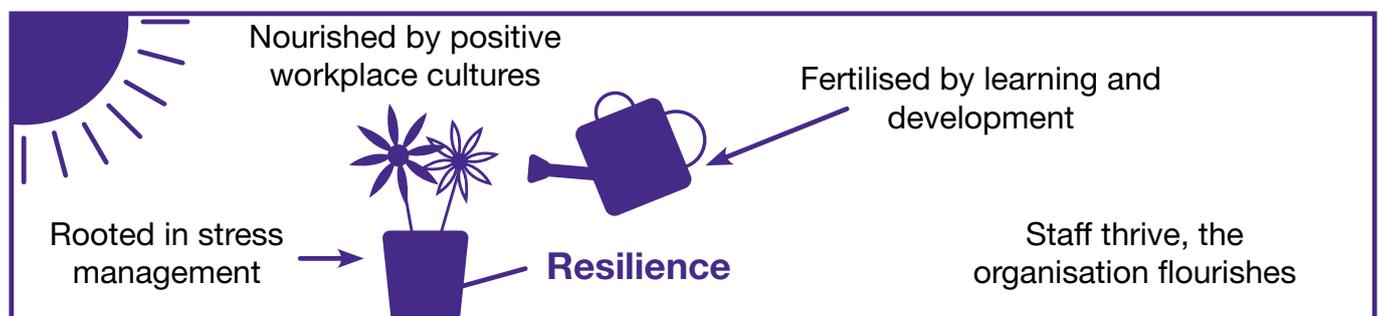
## **Thriving, not just surviving**

As an employer, you have a responsibility<sup>9</sup> to control stress at work. That is important, in and of itself; no responsible, caring employer would want to jeopardise the health of its workforce. It's also an important part of fostering the resilience of workers – but it's only half the story. Let's put stress management in the 'surviving' box.

Resilience is about **thriving**. It helps workers embrace change, to seek out opportunities for development, to stand up for values and quality. Resilience is rooted in stress management, but it delivers broader benefits.

### **Take a three-pronged approach**

- Use **management systems** to prevent and reduce stress at work
- Use **learning and development** to help managers and workers develop resilient behaviours
- Build **positive workplace cultures** to foster resilience.



<sup>9</sup> Relevant legislation includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA); the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2005 (DDA); the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA); the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999); and the Equality Act (2010)

# Management systems

To create the foundation for resilience in your workplace, you need to:

1. organise work in a way that protects the wellbeing of workers
2. raise awareness throughout the employment cycle about stress and how to manage it
3. ensure systems are in place to identify, investigate and resolve problems.

---

## Management systems

“As part of managing the health and safety of your business you must control the risks in your workplace. To do this you need to think about what might cause harm to people and decide whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm. **This is known as risk assessment and it is something you are required by law<sup>10</sup> to carry out.**”

The Health and Safety Executive<sup>11</sup>

This includes

- Assessing the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities
- Taking action to control that risk.



### Are you an individual employer?

Find information on your responsibilities for health and safety in the Skills for Care Employing personal assistants toolkit. See the section called [Before your personal assistant starts](#)

---

## How do you organise work to protect the wellbeing of your workforce?

There are **six primary sources of stress at work**:

1. demands, including workload, work patterns and the work environment
2. control, i.e. having too little say about the way you do your work
3. support, i.e. inadequate support from the organisation, line managers, colleagues
4. relationships, including conflict and malignant behaviours (e.g. bullying, harassment)
5. role, i.e. when you lack clarity about your role, and/or you have conflicting roles
6. change, i.e. when organisational change is poorly managed and/or communicated.

These are the areas that ‘if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence.’(Health and Safety Executive)<sup>12</sup>

10 Relevant legislation includes the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASWA); the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2005 (DDA); the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA); the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999); and the Equality Act (2010)

11 Source: The Health and Safety Executive, *Controlling risks in the workplace*. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

12 Source: Health and Safety Executive, What are the Management Standards. [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) offers detailed guidance on what to do in each area, based on Management Standards.

## HSE Stress Management Standards

*The Management Standards define the characteristics, or culture, of an organisation where the risks from work-related stress are being effectively managed and controlled.<sup>13</sup>*

The standards come with guidance and free tools to help you:

- identify the main risk factors for work related stress
- get to grips with the underlying causes and their prevention
- address workplace stress in health and safety policy
- structure dialogue with workers on practical improvements
- monitor your progress, including typical indicators of stress-related illness, such as absenteeism, workforce turnover, poor performance, conflict between workers
- address workplace stress when planning organisational change.

[See the standards in full here](#)

Free resources to support the HSE Management Standards

- [Stress management guides for employers](#) and [stress management guides for staff](#)
- [Management Standards Indicator Tool](#) - a staff questionnaire to help you assess how effectively you are managing the areas currently.
- [Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool](#) - a self-assessment tool for line managers on the behaviours known to help prevent and reduce stress at work
- [Preventing stress](#) - further resources for managers and also for learning and development practitioners

## A comprehensive approach, designed by experts

In effect, the Management Standards approach offers you the complete package. It's a comprehensive approach, designed by experts. As well as helping you organise work to protect the wellbeing of workers, it will also help you to:

- raise awareness about stress and how to manage it throughout the employment cycle
- systematically identify, investigate and resolve problems.



### **If you take a different approach, at least compare it**

You may have developed an excellent approach to stress management independently, but it is at least worth checking it against the HSE Management Standards. The HSE offers an 'equivalency checklist' based on the standards to help you decide if your current approach is suitable and sufficient, [find it here](#).

<sup>13</sup> Source: Health and Safety Executive, What are the Management Standards. [www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/index.htm)



## Whatever your approach, document it!

Whether you use the Management Standards or an approach of your own, you need to be able to prove that you have carried out an adequate risk assessment, so document what you do.

## What it boils down to...

is good people management. The six primary sources of stress at work (demands, control, support, relationships, role and change) are also the keys to your success as an organisation. Get them right and you create a healthy, high-performing organisation. Get them wrong and you create an unhealthy, under-performing organisation and the key to getting them right is good people management – in other words, team work, leadership, communication, workforce involvement and support. Which is why...

## Effective stress management underpins high performance...

Let's list the ways. Stress management:

1. protects and promotes the wellbeing of your workforce
2. demands work is organised effectively – and educates everyone about what that means in practice
3. builds trust, co-operation and supportive relationships
4. enhances communication
5. clarifies roles and responsibilities
6. helps manage change

...and the list could go on.

## Is stress management really all about line managers?

No, it's about **everyone** - like everything else at work!

Line managers certainly have responsibilities and a leadership role to play, but to make it work everyone needs to be involved.

That is one of the keys to building resilience.

---

### Management systems

“Regular meetings can help to defuse stressful situations and address underlying problems. Managers and workers can learn to identify possible stressors before they emerge rather than waiting for the crisis to happen.”

*The sorts of issues causing stress can be easily added to the agenda of most meetings and can cover issues like communication, health and safety issues, and flexible working patterns. Managers and supervisors should remember to simply talk to employees. In many workplaces the increasing use of emails has resulted in a reduction in the level of face-to-face communication. Homeworkers can feel particularly isolated unless they are in regular contact with their managers ”*

[ACAS \(2014\) Advisory booklet - Stress at work](#)

---

---

## Can you recognise stress in other people...and if you can, do you know what to do about it?

Stress is a physical reaction to too much pressure. What symptoms might it produce

- in an individual?
- in a team?

[You will find answers to these and other questions on the HSE website here](#)

### If you do suspect stress, what should you do?

It is not up to you or your managers to **diagnose stress**, that's the **doctor's job**.

**Your job** is to **notice when behaviours change**, investigate whether something is wrong then, if it is, take prompt action. Take care not to overreact to small changes. It's when the changes persist that you need to investigate.



*The Management Standards Indicator Tool* may provide a useful framework for a conversation to investigate stress with an individual or a team. If you are worried about a member of your workforce, ask the person to see their GP.

---

## Learning and development

Involve everyone in stress management and it will provide valuable learning about stress, its causes and consequences; and about the shared responsibilities we have to control it. That learning is the first essential step on the road to resilience. The next step is to equip workers with the attitudes, skills and knowledge that underpin resilient behaviours.

### How do you help your workforce develop resilient behaviours?

Learning and development for resilience has three core aims:

1. communicate the concept and value of resilience, so that workers are clear about what resilience is and why it matters
2. help workers, individually and collectively, to learn about the attitudes, skills and knowledge that underpin resilient behaviours
3. help workers to apply their learning, i.e. to put the behaviours into practice at work – this is about motivation, support and reward.

### Achievable aims...

These aims are perfectly achievable through your existing learning and development systems: induction, learning and development programmes, supervision (in all its forms), appraisal, team meetings, coaching and mentoring, reflective discussion – not to mention the informal, peer learning that goes on 24/7 alongside those systems.

### ...that support other key outcomes

The behaviours that deliver resilience overlap with the behaviours that deliver leadership, effective communication and team-working, self-management and accountability, learning and

development. In other words, this is not about adding on another agenda, it's about joining the dots. Learning that supports resilience can be easily integrated into the learning and development you already offer your workforce. It will reinforce and enrich that learning and development.

## What does learning for resilience focus on?

Learning for resilience focuses on:

- dealing with pressure, both in-the-moment pressure and long-term pressure; e.g. relaxation, de-stressing and mindfulness techniques, self-care (physical, psychological), boundary-setting and assertiveness, time-management
- building a positive work environment; e.g. big-picture understanding of the purpose and meaning of people's work, effective team-working, interpersonal communication skills, empathy, emotional intelligence and awareness of the impact of emotions on behaviour
- problem-solving and critical thinking skills, including the ability to use information and communicate effectively, to reflect on one's own thinking, to view problems from different perspectives, to ask for help when needed
- self-efficacy skills, including personal positivity (e.g. clarity around long-term goals, understanding the value of one's work), self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, self-awareness and confidence (e.g. to take responsibility, be open to new people and experiences, flexible in the face of change, to assert realistic optimism over fear of failure).

## Keep the focus on behaviour

Personality, past experience and life outside work all impact on a person's resilience – but these are factors we can do little or nothing to affect. Focus instead on behaviour at work. Behaviour can be defined, modelled and learned. Behaviour at work can be supported.

## ...and understand that, because of how behaviour works...

Behaviour is a product of attitudes, skills and knowledge

- Attitude - how you think about something
- Skill - your ability to do something
- Knowledge - your understanding of something

**...but also circumstances.** Whether you're having a good or bad day will affect how you behave (just ask your colleagues). More significantly, though, so will the environment you are operating in, the resources that you have available to you and, most significantly of all, the **people you work with.**

---

### Behaviour rubs off

We've already seen that other people's emotions impact on us (see 'Empathy: another source of stress at work' in Part 2). The same is true of behaviour.

If everyone around you is behaving in resilient ways (managing their emotions, communicating brilliantly, respecting their own and other people's limits, being fantastically supportive etc), it is much easier for you to behave resiliently. And the reverse, of course, sadly.

---

## The learning needs to be collective

In a real sense, behaviour at work is team behaviour, even group behaviour. That's one reason why it makes sense to think **beyond the individual** when you're looking at how to help people develop resilient behaviours. There's also another reason.

Your ultimate aim is to make resilient **practices** the norm in your workplace. That means **everyone** needs to practise and support resilient behaviours, at every level of the organisation. Otherwise the good work you do in one area will be undone in another, with all the negative consequences that implies for future work. (Sounds familiar? Not too familiar, let's hope!)

---

### A word to the wise: Before you talk the talk...

Make sure you can walk the walk. Asking workers to adopt behaviours that organisational practices don't actually support is often just a sure-fire way to lose friends and alienate people. It's always important to keep messages to workers consistent with reality.

---

## What your resilience-building programme might look like

- **Introduce the concept of resilience** (what it is, why it matters) at induction, with regular reminders throughout the employment cycle (supervision, appraisal, team-meetings, coaching and mentoring).
- **Reinforce understanding** by referencing resilience in management systems (policies, procedures, quality initiatives etc) and leadership and management development (so that people in leadership roles at all levels of the organisation can knowingly model resilient behaviours).
- **Use formal, non-formal and informal learning to help teams and individuals** develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge that underpin resilient behaviours, e.g. via workshops and experiential learning, workplace coaching and mentoring, team discussion and critical reflection, peer learning, online modules and other forms of self-study.
- **Support for teams and individuals to establish resilient behaviours** via people management (i.e. supervision, appraisal, team-meetings); quality initiatives (e.g. the Social Care Commitment); and also through further formal, non-formal and informal learning.

See next section for more on helping individuals to develop their resilience.

---

---

## With a little help

A person's ability to cope with adversity, to problem-solve, to get on with others, to set boundaries, to be assertive, to question themselves, to learn and develop – all these things take confidence.

Workers who lack self-confidence may take longer and require more support to develop resilient behaviours. It takes time and commitment to change behaviours, but, if you stick with them, they will become more resilient.

---

## How do you establish resilient behaviours?

Learning about resilient behaviours is one thing, putting them into practice in day-to-day care work, under pressure and collectively, is something else again. Your workforce will certainly need help.

Your aim is to prompt, support and reward the behaviours, both individually and collectively. Doing this need not be rocket science (or even advanced behavioural psychology).

## Prompts and rewards

Simply reminding workers about the behaviours is a good prompt. *'And while we're on this topic, I just want to remind everyone what we learned about resilience because I think it's relevant here...'*

Likewise, positive attention can make a very meaningful reward. *'I notice that you are doing X [a resilient behaviour]. That makes a real difference to the service and our clients. I really appreciate that. Thank you.'*

---

## Offer tangible rewards...

That also promote the behaviours, e.g. a spa day, a fruit basket, a gym membership (all related to health and wellbeing) or money to spend on a course (learning and development).

---

## Support

Regarding support, supervision, team meetings, coaching and mentoring, peer learning, staff resilience champions, e-learning and online guidance can all be effective, as can your policies and procedures as an employer (both as prompt and support).

It's worth saying just a little more about two other forms of support, modelling and reflective team learning.

## Modelling

Whether they recognise it or not, line managers act as role models and standard-setters around behaviour. This makes it vital that line managers are able and willing to model resilient behaviours.

This achieves two things. It brings the behaviours to life for workers; also, it points the way to a better place – a work environment that is calm, supportive, affirming and competent – in a word, positive.

## What is a positive work environment?

Put most simply, a positive work environment is one that enables people to cope with pressure and difficulty by engaging them in the meaning and purpose of what they are doing, affirming and respecting their competence and ability to problem-solve, providing them with the support they need. It nurtures resilient behaviours and is reinforced by them.

---

## The what? The so what? The what now?

It's the classic three-part structure for a reflective discussion.

---

## What is reflective team learning and how does it work?

Reflective team learning is when workers engage in collective discussion about the meaning of their practical, day to day work. It asks them to consider what they are doing and why. The model of learning is quite basic and equally robust:

- Talking gets people to think. Thinking gets them to talk. Thinking + talking = learning (over time).

A number of things are happening at once during this sort of discussion, all of them intrinsically valuable and all of them helpful in building resilience. Apart from opportunity to reflect explicitly on how to develop resilient practices, the discussion helps the team to:

- deepen their shared understanding of work activity, the what, how and whys
- surface uncertainties and concerns
- relate abstract concepts such as dignity to daily practice.

All good, yes? But look at what else is going on, just beneath the surface.

- Being asked to participate in a discussion about the meaning of your work with colleagues affirms you as a member of the team and also as someone with views that are of relevance to the group.
- Being asked to discuss the meaning of your work affirms that your work is meaningful.
- Participating in the discussion strengthens your connection to colleagues.
- Reflecting on the meaning of your day-to-day work deepens your understanding; that in turn makes your work more meaningful.
- Exchanging ideas with colleagues enhances your communicative competence, your critical thinking skills, your interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence and your self-awareness. It helps identify and express emotions
- Collectively and individually the discussion enhances problem-solving skills and confidence.

There's more, but you get the point. This is an activity that offers validation, respect, reassurance, connection, meaning and purpose – as well as creating a platform for discussion of resilience itself.

# Build positive workplace cultures to foster resilience

To fully establish and then sustain resilient behaviours, you need a workplace culture that fosters resilience.

---

## To foster

Promote the growth or development of; encourage; be favourable to; bring up; cherish

---

## What is workplace culture?

Every group has its culture (that's what makes it a group) and workplaces are no exception. *'The way we do things around here'*<sup>14</sup> is probably the most famous definition of workplace culture. Certainly it captures that idea of group norms shaping individual behaviour.

It's people and systems interacting together that create and define workplace cultures. Stress management and learning and development are parts of an intervention designed to build resilience individually and collectively. Stress management takes a systems approach; learning and development focuses on people. Action to build resilience into the culture of your organisation completes the intervention.

## What does a culture that fosters resilience feel like?

*'My work is worthwhile. I'm part of a team that makes the world a better place for people. I feel respected and supported by the people around me, who I respect and support. Yes, there are pressures, but the support is there. Problems too, but we solve them. That is what makes the job interesting and rewarding. It gives me the chance to use my skills and to develop myself. All in all, I'm in a good place with my work and that helps me feel good about life!'*

Does that describe **your** experience at work (all the time, some of the time, just occasionally)? If so, it's an indication that your workplace has the sort of **positive** culture that fosters resilience (all the time, some of the time or just occasionally).

---

## How well do we understand workplace culture?

We know **a lot** about workplace culture.

Ultimately, *'the way we do things around here'* determines whether people succeed or fail in their endeavours. For that reason, workplace cultures are studied extensively.

From whatever angle researchers look – performance and productivity, quality, health and safety, organisational development, human resource management and so on – they draw the same conclusion. Success or failure is determined by the same set of practices.

14 Source: Bower, M. (1966), *The Will to Manage: Corporate Success through Programmed Management*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Get them right, everything falls into place. Get them wrong, nothing works properly.

---

## Participative people management practices shape positive workplace cultures

Positive workplace cultures are shaped by **participative people management practices**. These include open, respectful communication; consultation and involvement in decision-making; co-operation and team-working; goal setting; learning and development – the practices that help ensure work is well designed, well organised and well managed. [The HSE Management Standards](#) detail them with an orientation to healthy work, but they are equally associated with **high performance working, employee engagement** and other quality models.

---

## Management competencies

The [HSE's Line Manager Competency Indicator Tool](#) spells out management competencies in a useful way. See in particular its sections on:

- respectful and responsible: Managing emotions and having integrity
  - managing and communicating existing and future work
  - managing the individual in the team, and
  - reasoning/managing difficult situations.
- 

## Is it all about people management then?

On one level, yes. But that's hardly news. Besides, if it was just about putting systems in place, we'd all be living in paradise – which we're clearly not. Workplace cultures for most of us offer at best a mix of the positive and the negative.

## What are negative workplace cultures?

Negative workplace cultures are typically low trust, low-involvement, unhealthy cultures. Managers use command and control approaches, in between fire-fighting. Workers who stay do so only because they lack better options. Instead of resilience, development and engagement, these workplace cultures promote stress, blame and fear. And they certainly don't meet the HSE Management Standards.

They are instructive, however.

---

## Compliance, blame and fear: The good, the bad and the ugly

Social care exists to support vulnerable people. It's high-stakes work: when things go wrong, there may be very serious consequences. To mitigate that risk, we research what works and what doesn't then produce guidance to support good practice.

### Compliance culture

A world where good practice in care was optional would be strange and dangerous to live in. Fortunately we don't have to. We have regulation and we expect it to be followed: that's called compliance. It's part of the culture of care work and that's a good thing.

### Blame culture

*“ I'm in trouble if I breathe the wrong way. ”*

Care provider

Is compliance culture's evil twin? If so, certainly not a necessary evil. More like a twin with a thought disorder: blame cultures are wrong-headed in every respect. Pointing fingers and shouting at people not only achieves nothing, it makes things much more likely to go wrong again. (For two reasons: (a) it discourages people from taking responsibility; (b) it shreds people's confidence, which undermines the quality of their judgement.) Nor does it exactly encourage resilience.

### Climate of fear

**Inevitably, blame cultures generate climates of fear.**

*“ They're not happy, but they won't say anything. They're afraid that if they complain, management will just say they can't cope and fire them. ”*

Social care worker talking about colleagues

What a cheery climate to work in! Management is highly unlikely to fire those workers (hard enough to recruit them in the first place), but that's not the point, of course. Again, counter-productive from every perspective and clearly not conducive to resilience.

---

## And the opposite of a blame culture is...?

A learning culture.

Instead of that finger-pointing, *You-were-at-fault-because-you-didn't-do-what-you-were-told-to-do!*-shouting approach, learning cultures start from the premise that we are all trying to do the right thing and that, with encouragement and support, people will make the effort to get it right.

Learning cultures are based on a collective **problem-solving** approach. They encourage collaboration, personal accountability and shared responsibility and personal development. They deepen people's understanding and ability. They reinforce people's confidence in themselves and their colleagues. They build a sense of shared purpose and commitment. In all these ways, they foster individual and collective resilience.

---

## Move from blame to learning...

When you are under pressure in a do-what-you're-told culture of compliance and something goes wrong, it's all too easy to slip into blame mode: *'You were at fault! Why didn't you do what you were meant to do?'* Easy, but unhelpful and certainly not good for resilience.

Next time something goes wrong, bite your tongue, breathe, relax and then take a different approach. First reassure the people involved ('OK, what's happened has happened - now, let's deal with it together'). Then involve them in solving the problem. ('Please help me understand what happened and what you think we should do about it.').

## ...And build a climate of respect

Relating adult-to-adult encourages people to take responsibility. That reassures and empowers them. It creates a climate of respect. Respect for self. Respect for others.

Respect goes hand-in-glove with learning, too.

---

## People learn things in blame cultures, too – the wrong things

People are learning all the time, of course – that's just the nature of things. The world gives you feedback and you develop and adapt accordingly – often unconsciously. Learning goes on in blame cultures; they teach workers powerful lessons, just not the lessons we want workers to learn. 'Avoid responsibility!' 'Shift the blame onto someone else!' 'Disappear right now!' 'Head down, clam up!' 'Accept it – you're useless!' 'Working here means being shouted at. It's like being a child with an angry, demanding parent.' It's a depressing list that could go on.

## Learning in a compliance culture

Moving from a blame culture to a learning culture, from a climate of fear to one of respect doesn't stop people doing things wrong. It does make it much easier to put things right. And it teaches workers the right lessons. 'We're a team here – when something goes wrong, we don't blame each, we support each other to put it right.' 'Mistakes are natural. We all make them. We don't recriminate, we learn from them together.' 'You're a respected member of the team and we value your input.' This too is a list that could go on, but an uplifting one.

## How do you create a learning culture?

This time it really is all about line managers! Not quite, of course, but they do play a very key role.

Learning cultures flourish or wither in the countless daily interactions between workers, supervisors and managers as they carry out work. The way managers and supervisors instruct, monitor and feedback to workers sets the tone for everyone. It determines, in effect, whether your workplace has a learning culture or a blame culture.

What's more, people are often very poor judges of the impact they have on others. Enabling managers and supervisors to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge they need to facilitate informal learning will support resilience and a lot else besides.

---

## The 70:20:10 model – how learning really works

Have you come across the 70:20:10 model of conscious learning? It's a neat way to remind oneself that even conscious learning is predominantly informal.

According to 70:20:10, 70% of our learning happens informally, in the course of daily activity; 20% comes from the people around us, also informally; with just 10% coming from formal, structured learning.

The percentages are just rough indicators, of course, but the idea is sound: the great majority of our learning takes place informally. Workplace learning cultures recognise that and harness it.

---

## Simple guide to supporting informal learning

People learn best when they are encouraged to:

- think about what they are doing
- pay attention to what happens
- reflect on what they might do differently next time.

People also need:

- time to think
- support to act
- feedback on results.

Remember at all times that people need confidence to:

- ask questions
- acknowledge mistakes
- act on their learning.

People will learn more if given the opportunity to:

- listen to, observe and work with others who have more expertise
  - use their initiative to solve problems
  - take on more challenging tasks.
-

## The Social Care Commitment – a framework for learning

If you don't already know it, look at the [Social Care Commitment](#) and the employee tasks it offers for workers to evidence their commitment. Those tasks offer a framework for reflective team learning, led by line managers. The tasks offer learning about quality, values, policies and procedures in ways that support the embedding of resilient behaviours and practices.

### Find out more...

#### Creating positive workplace culture

Skills for Care has developed 'Culture for Care', a toolkit for all social care and support employers, regardless of size or services delivered.

The toolkit, which can be accessed online, or ordered in hard copy, explains why a positive workplace culture is so important, details the business benefits for culture and provides activity sheets and scenarios to help providers embed a positive workplace culture.

#### Supporting informal learning

Skills for Care has developed 'Core skills: a practical guide' to help you support informal learning in day-to-day work. See 'how to support core skills'.

---

### Resilience, recruitment and retention

When you build workplace cultures that foster resilience, you also build employee engagement. Resilient, engaged employees stay with you. They also act as good-will ambassadors for you - putting out the word that they work for a good employer. Which doesn't hurt when you do need to recruit.

---

## HSE Management Standards for work-related stress

1. **Demands** - this includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.

#### *The Standard is that:*

- employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

#### *What should be happening/States to be achieved:*

- the organisation provides employees with adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work;
- people's skills and abilities are matched to the job demands;
- jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees; and
- employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed.

**2. Control** - how much say the person has in the way they do their work.

***The Standard is that:***

- employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way they do their work; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

***What should be happening/States to be achieved:***

- where possible, employees have control over their pace of work;
- employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work;
- where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;
- the organisation encourages employees to develop their skills;
- employees have a say over when breaks can be taken; and
- employees are consulted over their work patterns.

**3. Support** - this includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.

***The Standard is that:***

- employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and superiors; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

***What should be happening/States to be achieved:***

- the organisation has policies and procedures to adequately support employees;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to support their workers;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to support their colleagues;
- employees know what support is available and how and when to access it;
- employees know how to access the required resources to do their job; and
- employees receive regular and constructive feedback.

**4. Relationships** - this includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

***The Standard is that:***

- employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours, e.g. bullying at work; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

***What should be happening/States to be achieved:***

- the organisation promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- employees share information relevant to their work;
- the organisation has agreed policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour;
- systems are in place to enable and encourage managers to deal with unacceptable

behaviour; and

- systems are in place to enable and encourage employees to report unacceptable behaviour.

**5. Role** - whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.

***The Standard is that:***

- employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

***What should be happening/States to be achieved:***

- the organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible;
- the organisation provides information to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities;
- the organisation ensures that, as far as possible, the requirements it places upon employees are clear; and
- systems are in place to enable employees to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities.

**6. Change** - how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.

***The Standard is that:***

- employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing an organisational change; and
- systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

***What should be happening/States to be achieved:***

- the organisation provides employees with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
- the organisation ensures adequate employee consultation on changes and provides opportunities for employees to influence proposals;
- employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs;
- employees are aware of timetables for changes; and
- employees have access to relevant support during changes

Source: [Health and Safety Executive](#).



[twitter.com/skillsforcare](https://twitter.com/skillsforcare)



[facebook.com/skillsforcare](https://facebook.com/skillsforcare)



[linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care](https://linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care)

---

Skills for Care  
West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP

T: **0113 245 1716**  
E: **[info@skillsforcare.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforcare.org.uk)**

**[skillsforcare.org.uk/mentalhealth](https://skillsforcare.org.uk/mentalhealth)**

This work was researched and compiled by Alexander Braddell, working to a commission from Skills for Care. Skills for Care gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Michelle Spirit of Spirit Resilience to this work.