WORKPLACE DISRUPTIONS, REORGANIZATIONS, AND 'CHANGE FATIGUE': Can ADR Support Resilience?

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Resilience

- "ability to positively adapt to change and transform experiences/situation to advantage and emerge stronger"…

- …[learning to] bounce back" (Comfort, 1994, p. 158)

- facilitating a "rapid, flexible, innovative and effective response when a future crisis presents itself"…

- Resilient individuals are those who can "respond quickly and effectively to change while enduring minimal stress."…

Recent Federal Workplace Disruptions

- Sequester
- Furloughs
- Government shut-down
- Agency reorganizations
- Revision of job duties
- Natural disasters (e.g., Hurricane Sandy)
- → environment of seeming continuous change→ ??? Resilience among staff

Potential Outcomes
of Disruptions, Frequent change

- Stress
- Job dissatisfaction
- New relationships with colleagues
- New workplace responsibilities
- Leadership re-alignments
- *'Change Fatigue'*

Change Fatigue

"The environment of continuous change… and persistent change management initiatives …may increase employee stress, negatively impact job satisfaction and lead to …a condition [called] *change fatigue*"

(R. Dool, (Feb 2009), p 24)

Change Fatigue: linking frequency of change (job stressor) + severity of situation

- low frequency + low severity = *business as usual* for the individual
- Low frequency + high severity= *reactive*: individual must respond immediately/ very quickly to the situation
- *High frequency + low severity = *adaptive*: individual frequently adapts to changing environment, change has become an integral part of org. life, stress manageable
- High frequency + high severity= *enervative (debilitate or weaken):* continual and intense change leads to severe job stress and dissatisfaction, not adaptation

R. Dool (2009)

Change Fatigue-graphic

R. Dool (2009)

A graph showing 4 groups categorized by severity and frequency of change.

Challenges:
(How)Can ADR Professionals Help?

1) Supporting (workforce)resilience

2) Leading through uncertainty;

3) Developing strategies and support for the 'new normal' environment

4) Managing the 'human side' of change, crises

Adversity→ thriving

Stages in reaction to adversity*:

- Succumbing
- Survival with impairment
- Resilience (recovery)
- Thriving

* Charles Carver (1998)

1: Moving towards Resilience, or Thriving

Responses to Adversity

(courtesy C. Carver, p 246)

A graph showing the level of functioning over time after the onset of an adverse event.

1 b) What is workforce resilience?

- Ability of employees to continue to fulfill essential functions despite stress

- Closely connected with personal resilience → positive, healthy *adaptation* to change; ability to recover from disruptive change without acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways

What role might ADR professionals Play

In helping people move to Recovery
or   Thriving?

In helping to foster Workforce Resilience?

*****

What experiences might you draw upon?

2. Leading through Uncertainty

Action needed:

Making

"*decisions in unfamiliar contexts*" →

"only by going forward is it possible to learn what the options are for going further forward" (Winter, 2007)

Can ADR professionals help?

2 b) uncertainty & decision-making

• Decisions in unfamiliar contexts→

Consider whether these decisions represent "System 1 or System 2" thinking:
--System 1 =fast, automatic, intuitive
--System 2= slow, deliberative, requires attention, complex considerations

(Daniel Kahneman, <u>Thinking Fast & Slow </u>(2011)

2. c) Uncertainty-impact

- Intra-organizational competitiveness and conflict for scarce resources
- Need for departmental and staff adaptability
- Potential for 'threat rigidity": tendency to become more rigid in response to a threat (.e.g., sequester, furloughs), and use strategies that worked in the past, thus limiting options.

Is there a Role for ADR?

3. Adapting to the 'new normal' environment: using *bricolage*

- making use of resources, tools available to accomplish the task, despite the fact that resources are less than what would be preferred
- the art of creating a new entity from a diverse range of things available
- Something made or put together using whatever materials happen to be available

Bricolage:
hardware store in France

What ADR skills, talents can be applied in supporting *bricolage*? In helping to develop a *bricolage* culture?

3b) new normal

Post-disruption challenge: Recognizing that there's 'life' after the specific event(even if it's brief

Recognize that change may be an ongoing experience

Option 1: reduce the # of initiatives by organization, external bodies, nature (likely?)

Option 2: reframe perspective—develop an adaptive enterprise (Dool, 2009)

4: the Human Side of Change, Major Disruptions

Managing the personal impact

On employees, colleagues

self

On families and more (finances, child/eldercare, pets)

Self-reliance

Develop human resiliency

Developing continuity of operations (coop) for work, home, community

4b) Human side: workforce

Workforce resilience:

"ability of employees…to continue to fulfill essential functions when [affected by stressful situations].

--personal resilience important

--adaptability

Workforce resilience elements:

Leadership in unit, organization

Training and support for new, additional positions..+ rewards

Support for colleagues with increased work-loads

Knowing the organization's plans for action

Contact for questions, concerns –public and confidential

4b) the human side: workforce

Employee returns to?: same office, cube, OR?

Communication via social media; ongoing updates two-way ?

Opportunity for confidential assistance

Issues:

Re-organization assistance; new workload assistance

Relationship with supervisors, colleagues

How can ADR professionals help?

ADR issues:

assisting with workforce resilience; managing 'change fatigue'

Personal adaptation, stamina

Ethical dilemmas re discovery of patterns?

ADR & Resilience

Helping to Move from

Stuck in the mud

To : Survival

To thriving:

Resources, games

http://www.theinvisiblegorilla.com/videos.html

Disaster Resource Guide—
http://disaster-resource.com

HUD presentation (CS) on crises, disruptions
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYbWJILiBxI

*Keys to Organizational Resilience: a crisis **preparedness e-book**. **FEI Crisis Management.** www.feinet.com**

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Thank You

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