

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Challenge of Change Resilience Training Programme: A Controlled Follow-up Case Study

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1. Background

This document reports the findings from a follow-up case study of the effects of the Challenge of Change (CoC) Resilience training programme. The CoC Resilience programme was developed by Dr. Derek Roger, based on a long-term research programme he initiated at the University of York in England in the 1980s and which continues today at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. The case study involved two teams at Meridian Energy Ltd. in Christchurch, and the author is indebted to Meridian Energy for permission to use the data from the research in this report.

For the case study, one of the teams served as the experimental group and received the CoC Resilience programme during the period from the end of 2004 to the beginning of 2005. The training was preceded by a comprehensive assessment of the team using a range of instruments developed by Dr. Roger, and which form the intellectual property of the training consultancy established to provide a vehicle for implementing the programmes (The Work Skills Centre Ltd.). The effectiveness of the programme was assessed by re-administering the instruments during November and December 2005, and the analysis of the data showed that there was an unambiguous and significant positive shift towards greater resilience and enhanced team climate.

The second team served as the controls. The same assessment package was administered to all members of the team in September 2006, and re-administered after the same one-year inter-test interval used for the experimental team but without the training intervention.

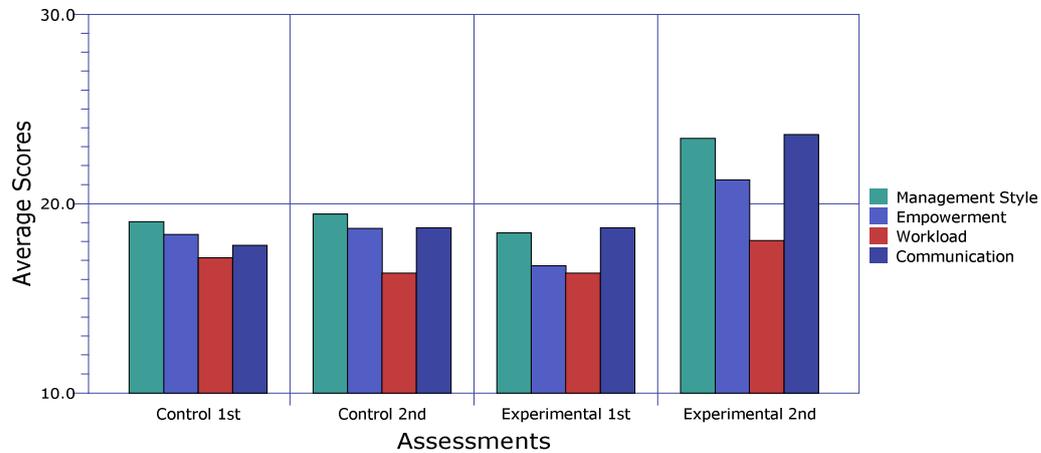
2. Study Instruments and Design

The analyses comparing the two Meridian teams focused on two core elements: the CoC *Climate Survey* comprising four scales labelled management style, empowerment, workload and communication, and a *Resilience Index* comprising measures of emotional rumination and detached coping. All of the psychometric scales developed in the Work Skills Centre have been extensively validated, and the results have been widely published in peer-reviewed academic publications. For the analysis, scores on the two administrations of the assessment package to the two teams were compared using a two-way design.

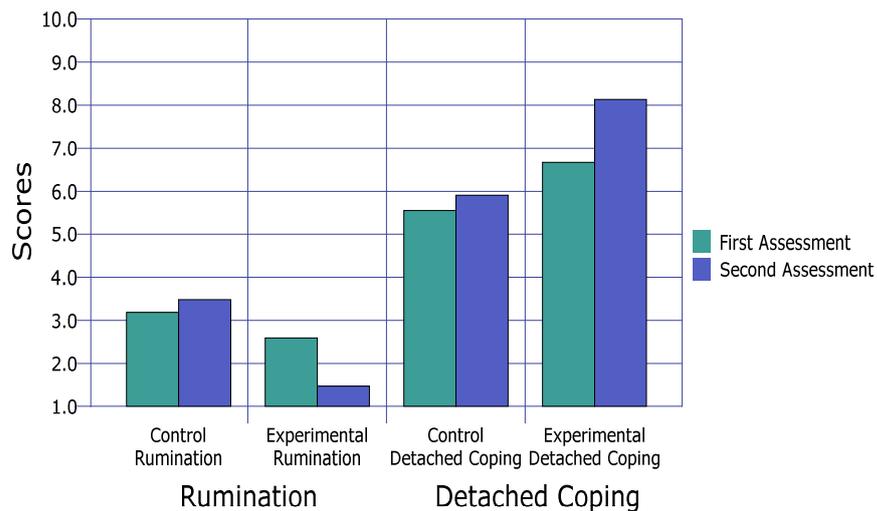
3. Results

For the four Climate Survey scales the scores range from 0 to 30, with higher scores being preferable; the optimal range is 20-30. The two teams had similar scores on all four dimensions on the first administration of the Survey, but for three of them - management style, empowerment and communication – the average scores had increased significantly for the trained team by the second assessment. These results are displayed in the graph below, which shows the average scores for the

first and second administrations of the Climate Survey to the experimental (trained) and control (untrained) teams:



Scores range from 0 – 10 for the two Resilience scales. High scores on rumination indicate less resilience and poorer efficiency and performance, and low scores are preferable. Detached copers are able to maintain perspective and are significantly better decision-makers, and high scores are preferable. The optimal range is 0-2 for rumination and 8-10 for detached coping. For the experimental group rumination scores were slightly lower, and detached coping scores slightly higher, than those for the controls pre-training, but the differences were not significant. By the second assessment, the average scores for the control team had remained stable across administrations, but the decrease in rumination and the increase in detached coping for the experimental team were both highly significant. The scores are shown in the graph below.



5. Conclusions

Overall, the findings are unambiguous in providing evidence for the effectiveness of the Challenge of Change training programme. The training package that the experimental group received did include some other components, including teamwork and individual mentoring where needed. The sub-samples involved were too small for meaningful statistical analysis, but there were no apparent trends, and the Challenge of Change programme was the one core component provided for all experimental team members.

Finally, staff from the control team did have the opportunity to attend the Resilience component of the Challenge of Change as part of a wider deployment of the training across Meridian Energy Ltd. These training sessions are provided as one-day events, and at the time of the follow-up, six of the participants who returned the scales had attended the programme. Their mean scores on the resilience components (rumination and inhibition) had in fact changed on average in the preferred direction, but the sample was again too small to make meaningful statistical comparisons with the remainder of the group. Although the scores had shifted, the effect was also not as marked as that for the experimental team, probably owing to the small number of controls receiving the training in isolation from other key colleagues; as with any training system, the more comprehensive the cover the more effective the implementation will be.