

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE-BUILDING PROGRAMMES AT WORK: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION

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Abstract

The amount of studies investigating the effect of psychological resilience-building programmes in the context of work is increasing rapidly. The aim of this paper is to systematically review how effective such programmes are in enhancing psychological resilience defined as the process by which people adapt to job stressors. Compared to previous reviews, this systematic review is unique for three reasons. First, we use stricter selection criteria than before to warrant that included programmes reflect the basic characteristics that may be expected of resilience-building programmes. Second, we classify programmes in three groups: those planned before, during and after participants encounter(ed) job-related stressors. Third, our review is exclusively focused on the effect of programmes on psychological resilience rather than on mental health or performances outcomes. Our search in PsycINFO and in Google Scholar resulted in 1698 hits. Nineteen studies met our inclusion criteria. We found that up to and including December 2018 resilience-building programmes in the work context have mostly been offered group-based to employees working in occupations ranked high in need for resilience facing multiple job-related stressors. The study and programme design was heterogenous, which is characteristic for an emerging field, but complicates the comparison of studies. Eleven of the nineteen included programmes demonstrated one or more significant immediate positive effect(s) on resilience measures. Even though these results indicate some support for the effectiveness of resilience-building programmes, it is too early to draw definite conclusions because the programmes under review were based on outdated understandings of psychological resilience and/or were characterised by inconsistencies in the way resilience was defined, assessed and developed. To determine the effectiveness of work-related psychological resilience-building programmes in the future, there is a need for programmes that are consistently designed from a process-based understanding of psychological resilience.

Keywords: psychological resilience; programme; systematic review; classification; work