2023 Global Resilience Report

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Report video companion

Introducing the 2023 Global Resilience Report

Welcome to our 2023 Report, exploring the state of global resilience. In our uncertain times, the human capacity to bounce, grow, connect, and flow is tested. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data shows how many elements of physical, emotional, and mentalwell-being are in decline.

Download CDC report here

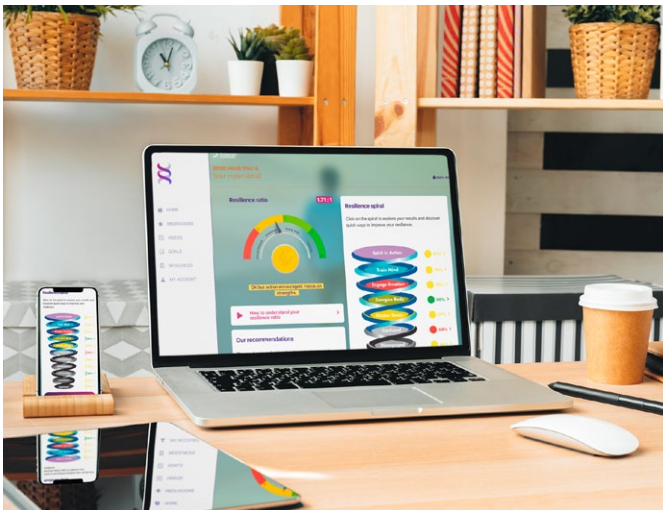
We see this in rising rates of mental illness, preventable disease, and inequality. While some young people thrive, many struggle with depression, anxiety, violence, and isolation.

Understanding the experience of young people is the key theme of this year's report. We all—youth, parents, clinicians, businesses, and governments—want the next generation to succeed. With declining birth rates, the well-being and productivity of young workers are important to organizations and society. This is the key topic of the report. What is going on? Can we identify practical solutions? What might the future look like?

We will review what the most resilient (or antifragile) people are doing, the difference between happiness and purpose, emotional agility, and share some case studies. The key data points for 2022 are in the Appendix.

Our mission is to measure, map and build resilience in partnership with organizations. The foundation of good governance, leadership, and ESG is to know your people's risks and strengths. With this knowledge and benchmarking, organizations can design precise initiatives to build resilience. The goal is to improve physical, emotional, and mental well-being, energize and connect your people, and secure a positive return on investment (ROI).

Our Research in Summary



The Resilience Diagnostic and Development Model measures, maps, and builds 60 human factors—30 strengths and 30 risks. From these factors, we map life experience, resilience, well-being, and mental health in 11 categories. Our Resilience Ratio is the strength score divided by the risk score.

The Resilience Diagnostic measures these factors on a secure and confidential platform. Each individual gets a report on their ratio, categories, and factors with recommendations for action.

We aggregate the data in different ways to map and benchmark resilience by organization, team, region, gender, industry, and age.

The distributions below show the resilience ratios measured during 2022.

Figure 1

Pre-training distribution of resilience ratio in 2022. Average: 1.67:1 (n=8,165)

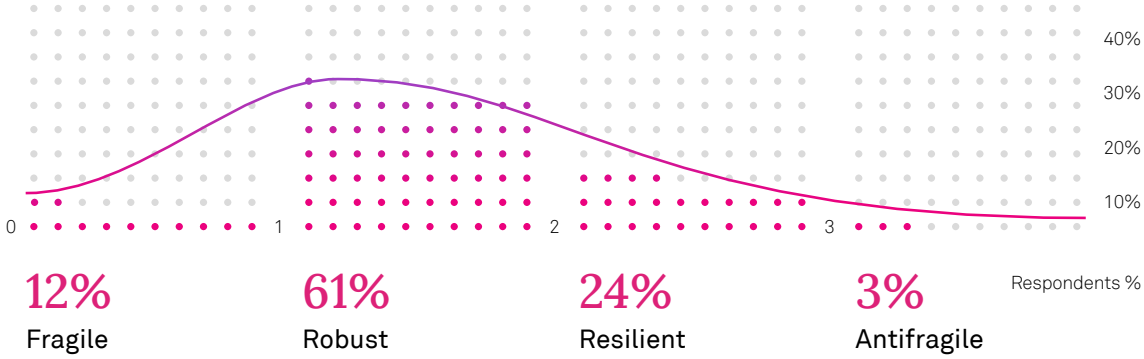
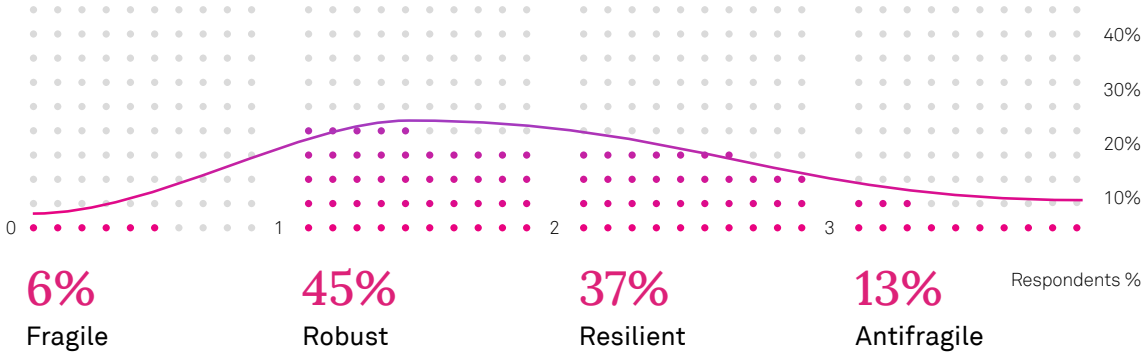


Figure 2

Post-training for 2022. The average resilience ratio increased from 1.67 to 2.06 (n=1,916)



We use Nassim Taleb's explanations. Fragile means likely to break in adversity, Robust means coping but distressed, Resilient means agile and positive, and Antifragile means adversity increases capability. Taleb, Nassim N, Antifragile, 2012. Note a 10% increase in Antifragile. For more See Appendix 1.

1 Resilience in Young People

Ongoing study over the past decades shows that since 2011, the mental well-being of younger people has declined significantly. We see this in well-established research such as the CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) report mentioned above, Jeanne Twenge[1], and Jonathan Haidt[2]. In February, the topic was addressed in the New York Times[3].

The well-being, resilience, and productivity of young employees is concerning for organizations. Despite significant research, investment, and a plethora of treatments, we are not reversing this trend.

Our research has consistently shown that the resilience ratio and profile of people under 30 is lower than other age groups by a significant margin. In 2022 the gap increased. This confirms the reports referenced above. Young women are at the most risk.

Using our 2022 data, these are the key facts to be explained:

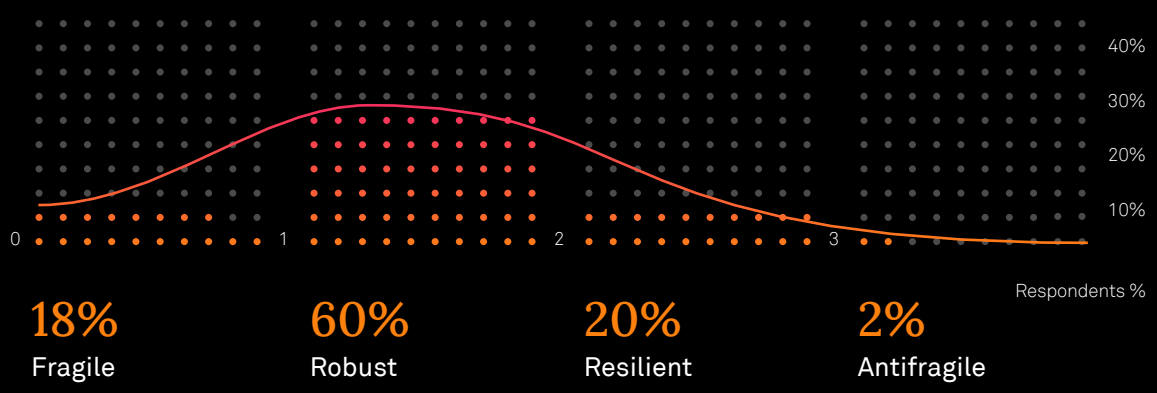
Table 1

Resilience ratio and percentage at risk by age and gender.

Group	N	Resilience Ratio	At risk (<1:1)
All	8,408	1.67	12%
30-69	7,179	1.69	11%
Under 30	1,197	1.54	18%
Male <30	495	1.64	14%
Female <30	701	1.47	21%

Figure 3

Resilience ratio distribution for under 30 participants.



[1] Jean Twenge, iGen, 2017

[2] Jonathan Haidt, Greg Lukianoff, The Coddling of the American Mind, 2018.

[3] New York Times, 18 Feb 2023: https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/opinion/depression-teen-social.html

What The Data Tells Us About Young People Today

Under 30 resilience ratios are lower than any other age group and declining

Female under 30 resilience is significantly lower than males under 30.

Young female participants score much lower on fitness, tactical calm, and bounce than young male participants.

Trust, purpose, focus, influence, decisiveness, impulse control, emotional agility, assertiveness, and sleep quality are lower for younger females than males.

Compassion, emotional insight, and positivity are slightly higher than in young males.

Under 30 participants generally show 15% or more risk in these factors: sleep delay, rumination, boredom, worry, anxiety, indecisiveness, and uncertainty.

Females under 30 have more risk than males under 30 in these factors: chronic distress (34%), anxiety (21%), illness (19%), self-doubt (18%), fatigue (17%), apathy (15%) and sadness (13%). Together these cluster with anxiety and depression.

The critical risks for male participants under 30 as compared to those 30 to 69 are sleep delay (31%), boredom (25%), rumination (17%), disconnected, and impulsivity.

Young people show strength in fulfillment, positivity, empathy, vitality, daily practice, biological insight, and relaxation.

Recommendations for Employers

Our data confirms the growing evidence that young people and particularly young female employees are significantly more at risk for anxiety and depression symptoms than employees over 30. This poses a significant risk to the health and productivity of younger employees. The situation appears to worsen despite the investments made in mental health.

Careful employment and onboarding support is strongly recommended. For younger female employees training in fitness , bounce, and relaxation practice are recommended. For younger male employees, sleep training—particularly regular wake-up time—would be valuable.

All younger employees need help developing their mental skills—specifically, how to master worry, rumination, uncertainty, boredom, anxiety, and indecisiveness. Leaders and managers must take responsibility for understanding this risk and learning how to manage those who may be more vulnerable.

Remember that some young employees are flourishing. However, people leaders must be alert to signs of distress and know how to address these issues. Treating all young people as fragile is insulting and demotivating.

The results of controlled testing before and after resilience training shows a 25% increase for participants under 30.

What you measure, you can improve. This is Performance with Care.

[4] Exercise 1.5x more effective than counselling and medication, British Journal of Sports Medicine, Feb 2023: https://neurosciencenews.com/exercise-mental-health-22566/

2 What Do The Most Resilient People Actually Do?

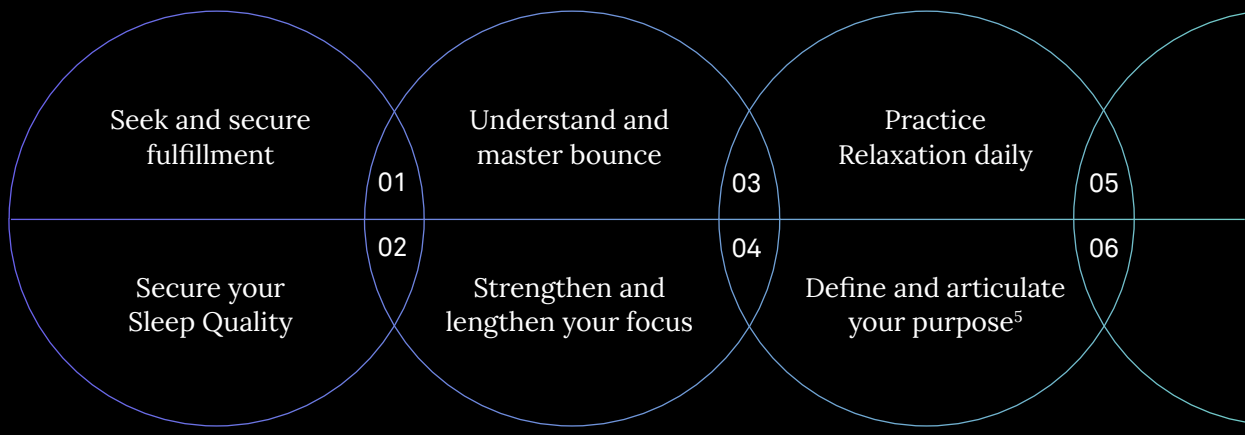
Our research tracks the behaviors of program participants. The tables show the key factors that differentiate how the top decile (10%) answer the questions on strength and risk compared to the bottom decile (10%). This sample from 2022 includes 8,165 people.

Table 2

Strengths: What do those with the top 10% of resilience ratios (RR) do on a consistent basis? The top 10% RR is >2.58, and bottom 10% RR is <0.97.

Strength	Top Decile	Bottom Decile	Difference
Fulfilment	92	16	76
Sleep Quality	83	7	76
Bounce	90	21	69
Focus	94	27	67
Relaxation	80	14	66
Purpose	93	28	65
Vitality	98	36	62
Emotional Agility	94	32	61
Integrity	100	38	61
Presence	95	34	61

Figure 1 shows the strength factors that the top 10% by RR action most consistently compared to the bottom 10%. Despite the subtle shifts over time, the message is clear:



[5] A study in Preventive Medicine from November 2022 shows that purpose is protective against all-cause mortality in diverse populations.

Table 3

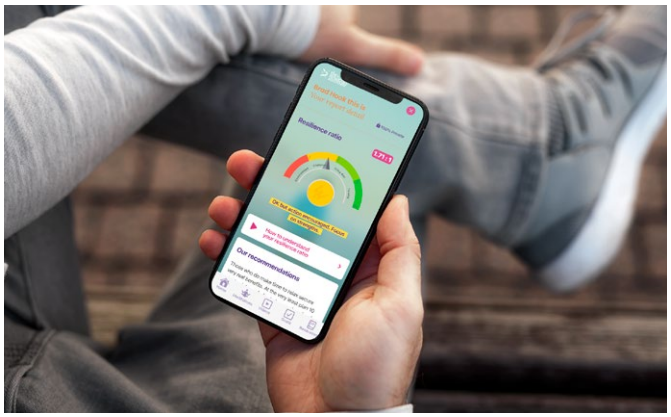
Risks: What those with the top 10% of resilience ratios (RR) protect against consistently.

Figure 2 shows the risk factors that the top 10% of RR consistently protect against.

Risks	Top Decile	Bottom Decile	Difference
Worry	15	93	78
Fatigue	17	94	77
Angst	4	80	76
Apathy	4	80	76
Rumination	6	80	74
Insomnia	6	73	67
Chronic symptoms	5	72	67
Intensity	16	80	65
Self Critical	36	100	64
Anhedonia	0	62	62

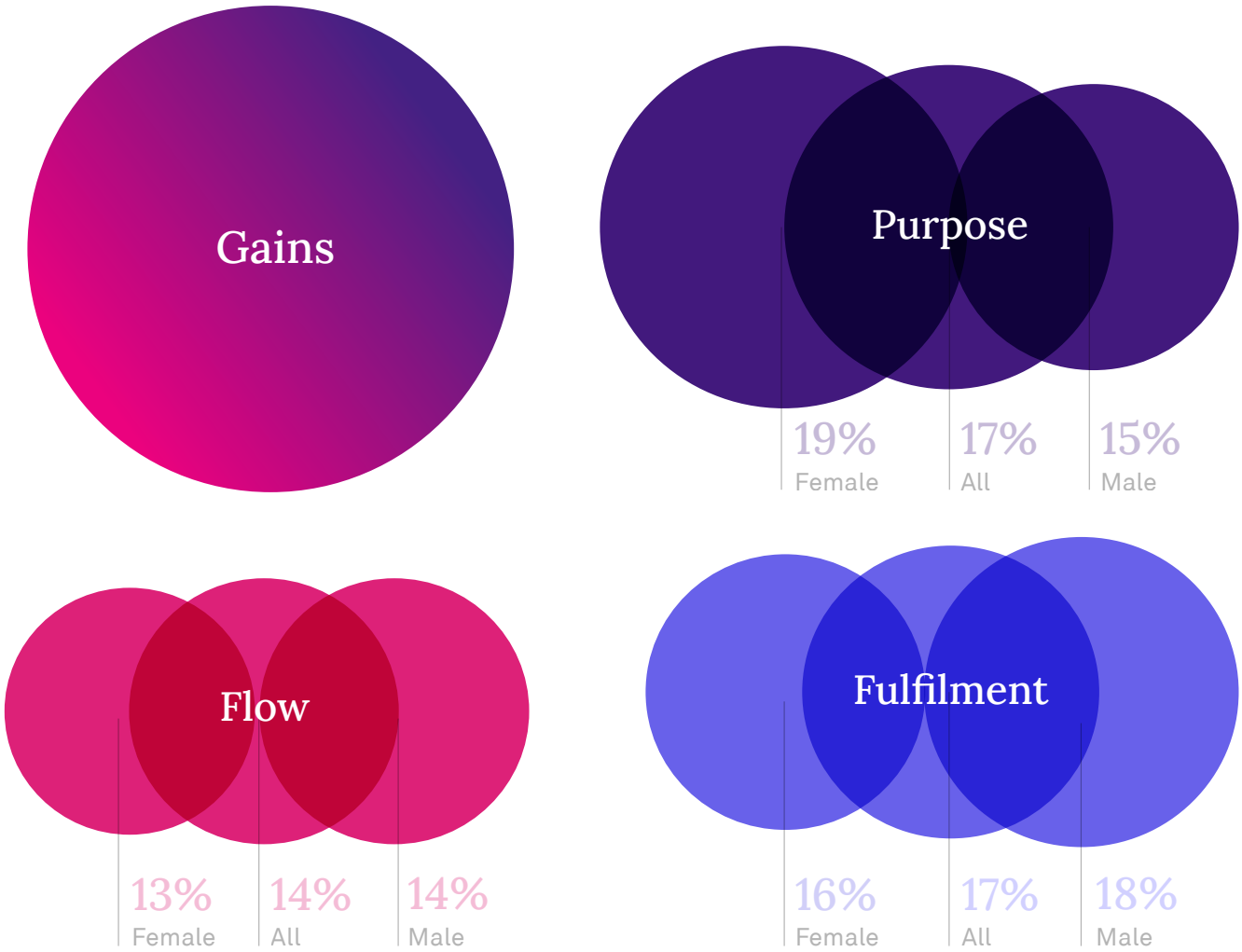
The Message Is Clear

3 To be Happy or Purposeful?



Which do you prefer for your people? Advocates for each tend to polarise. Some sell you programs to increase happiness as the solution. Others advocate for vision, purpose, direction, and mission. In our research, fulfillment and purpose cluster with the factors defining the highest levels of resilience. Fulfilment is usually higher.

Current research leans towards purpose in terms of measurable outcomes such as longevity. This is an excellent conversation for values clarification. We think of purpose as an input. It gives us meaning, direction, and a challenge. If we can master the challenge while in a state of flow, this is perhaps the most reliable way to secure the output of fulfillment. There are naturally other important inputs, such as presence, vitality, positivity, and focus.



Emotional Agility

Emotional agility comes as a surprise to many of our participants. Yet, it is rising in the rankings of what defines the most resilient people. In 2022, Emotional Agility rose to position 8 (see Section 2 above).

Emotions—often a blind spot—are a critical fulcrum for resilience. Emotions move us. When positive, they drive us towards contentment, curiosity, connection, and commitment. When negative, they spiral us down into fear, anger, and sadness.

Emotions are not simply an output. Many assume that emotions follow life. We must learn to live with or medicate them with drugs for anxiety and depression.

Modern understanding shows us that emotions are powerful inputs. We can learn to name, tame and reframe them. Imagine if you could identify a surge of anger, quickly settle the destructive impulse, and shift towards feelings of respect, tolerance, and inclusion. This is good for your health and well-being. It is essential to good leadership, governance, and parenting.

Emotional agility requires work on your emotional fitness. Just like muscles, we can learn to stretch, strengthen and balance the play of emotion in life. Imagine if you could catch your destructive emotions in a moment and transform them into more positive and adaptive emotions. Emotional intelligence, positive psychology, and leadership research clearly show benefits to physical health, happiness, mental and social skill.

Now is the time to open dialogue on emotional agility. Set high standards for the expression of positive and constructive emotions. Make it clear that you do not accept impulsive and destructive emotional outbursts. Support people with honest dialogue on the emotions we feel. Positive and adaptive emotions support trust. That trust further supports emotional agility in a virtuous spiral toward collaboration, flow, productivity, and fulfillment.

A Resilience Institute Exercise for Anger Mastery

Be alert and attentive to feelings of frustration, impatience, anger, and resentment.

Pause and define these feelings as precisely as possible.

Ideally, journal these experiences with the feeling, thoughts, and consequences.

Step back, slow down, or even remove yourself from potential conflict.

Switch attention from your anger target to your breathing.

Slow your breathing and exhale for at least six seconds through your nose.

Respect and call upon the best version of yourself.

Expand your empathy to understand the other person and their perspectives.

Generate and express respect, tolerance, generosity, and even kindness.

Case studies

Icehouse Owner Manager Programme (OMP)

Icehouse is an entrepreneurial venture between the University of Auckland and businesses. In partnership, we have helped to assess and train resilience in approximately 2,000 New Zealand business owner-managers over the past 20 years.

Find out about Icehouse Ventures

View program impact

The Owner Manager Program (OMP) is a six-month journey of approximately 20 owners per cohort. They work through five four-day blocks over this period learning business skills and how to apply them to the growth of their businesses. The impact over this time on the revenue, job, and export growth is remarkable.

In this case study, we evaluate the impact of 10 OMP programs from the start of 2022 when Covid reached NZ. This was a challenging period for NZ businesses with prolonged lockdowns, supply chain issues, a mass shooting, and repeated floods. As a result, many of these programs were interrupted or delayed. The purpose of the resilience assessment and training is to focus on the individual behind the business. We help them to apply the skills of resilience in their business growth journey.

During this period, 157 participants completed a pre and post-Resilience Diagnostic assessment. Despite the challenging context, they achieved a 16% growth in resilience ratio from 1.62 to 1.88, with improvements across every category and factor of resilience.

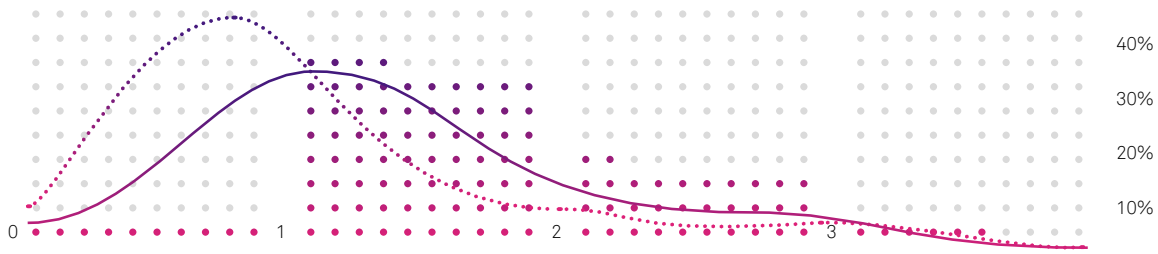
Measure	% Change	Actual
Resilience Ratio	16.1% ↗	1.62-1.88
Participants at risk	53% ↙	15-7
Participants resilient	131% ↗	26-60

Strength Increases	% Change
Contemplation	22% ↗
Fitness	20% ↗
Relaxation	16% ↗
Sleep quality	13% ↗
Health awareness	11% ↗

Risk Reductions	% Change
Hypervigilance	23% ↙
Mental fatigue	19% ↙
Sloth	17% ↙
Rumination	15% ↙
Self-critical	14% ↙

Figure 4

Distribution of Resilience Ratios before and after OMP training (n = 157)



Pre
Post

10 to 4% Fragile

74 to 57% Robust

11 to 32% Resilient

5 to 6% Antifragile

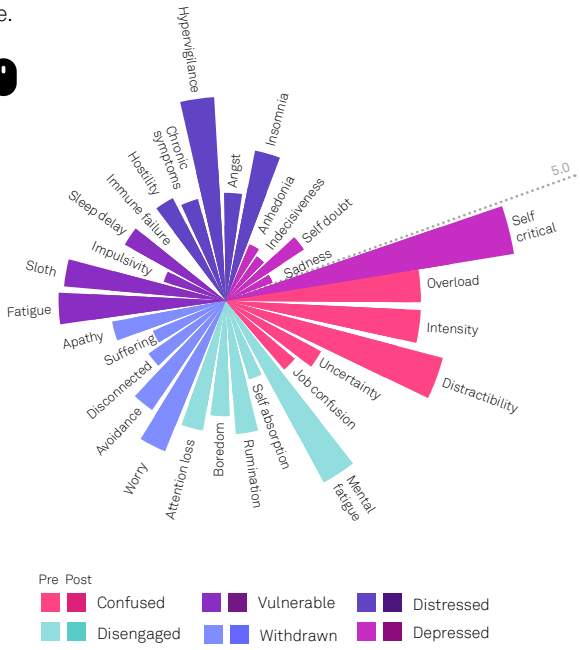
Figure 5

Factor change through the OMP journey. Hover to view the change.

Watch video explanation

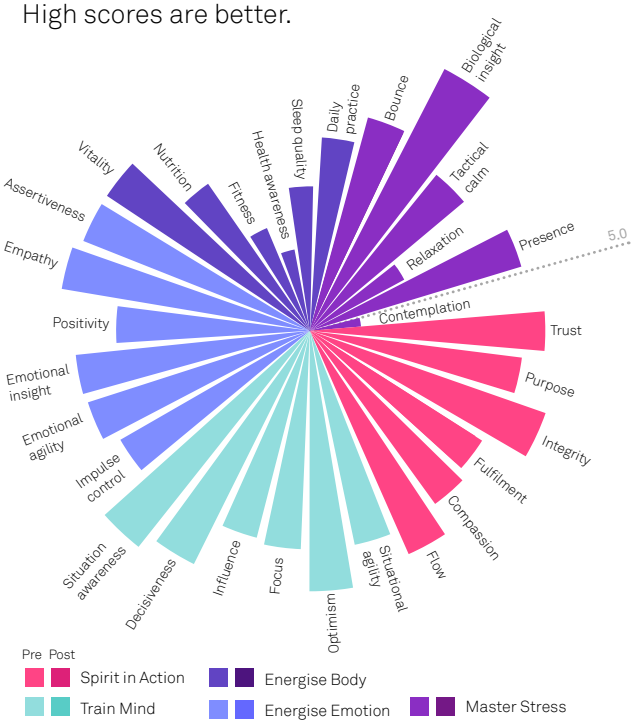
Risk Factors

Risks Competencies and Factors.
Low scores are better.



Strength Factors

Strengths Competencies and Factors.
High scores are better.



The figure 4 shows the change over four months. Above we see positive change in every one of the 60 factors measured. The conclusion is clear over the years: there is a strong correlation between the growth and profitability of these businesses and the growth of their personal resilience.

Group of 120 Managers

An organization engaged its managers in a resilience program in 2022 with the intention of measuring, building, and tracking resilience. The program featured six virtually-delivered training sessions, a digital toolkit for participants, and personal debriefings. The objective was for each training session to present tangible takeaways for participants, supporting them in achieving performance with care.

Measure	% Change	Actual
Resilience Ratio	21% ↗	1.77-2.14
Participants at risk	60% ↙	15-6
Participants resilient	165% ↗	37-61

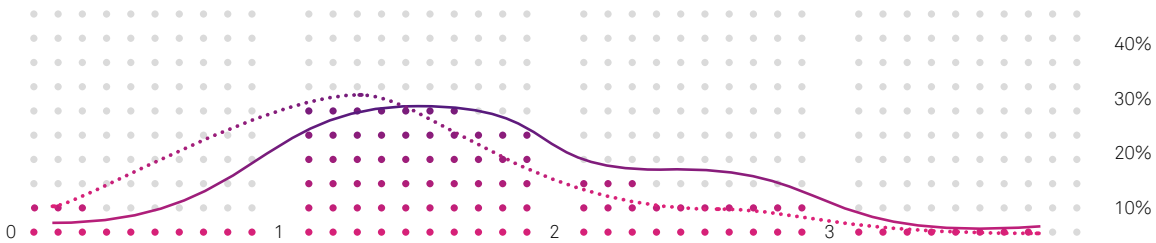
Strength Increases	% Change
Contemplation	25% ↗
Health awareness	17% ↗
Relaxation	16% ↗
Assertiveness	14% ↗
Fulfilment	13% ↗

Risk Reductions	% Change
Angst	24% ↙
Chronic symptoms	23% ↙
Self-Critical	21% ↙
Rumination	21% ↙
Hostility	20% ↙
Rumination	20% ↙
Avoidance	18% ↙

During this period, 120 participants completed both a pre and post-assessment. They achieved a 21% growth in resilience ratio from 1.77 to 2.14, with improvements across every category and factor of resilience.

Figure 4

Distribution of Resilience Ratios before and after the program (n = 120)



Pre
Post

13 to 5% Fragile

57 to 44% Robust

23 to 28% Resilient

8 to 15% Antifragile

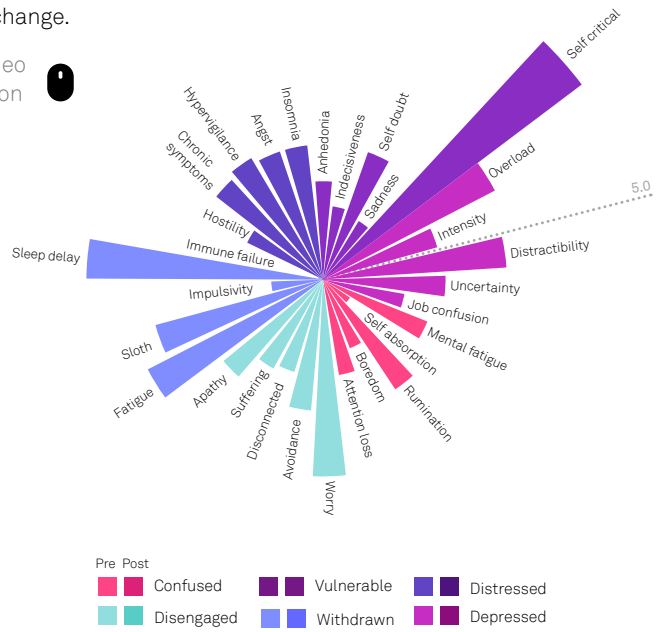
Figure 5

Factor change through the program. Hover to view the change.

Watch video explanation

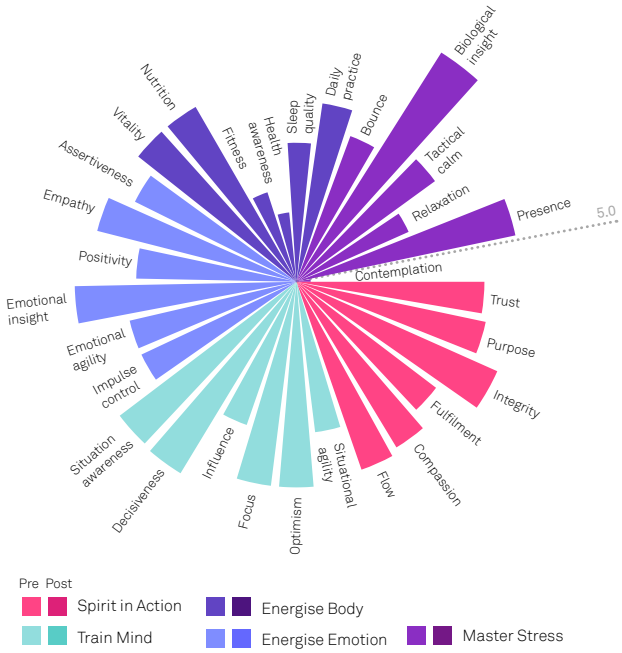
Risk Factors

Risks Competencies and Factors.
Low scores are better.



Strength Factors

Strengths Competencies and Factors.
High scores are better.



The figure 4 shows the change over the course of the engagement. Above we see positive change in every one of the 60 factors measured. Feedback from participants was unambiguous.

They felt much better equipped at the end of the program to honor their leadership responsibilities, take care of themselves and achieve performance with care.

Group of 35 New Employees

Every year, an organization engages talent in a resilience workshop as part of its employee onboarding program. The intention is to equip future leaders with the resilience skills to achieve performance with care. The workshop is run over a half day and complemented by access to our digital toolkit.

Measure	% Change	Actual
Resilience Ratio	12% ↗	1.83-2.05
Participants at risk	50% ↙	4-2
Participants resilient	119% ↗	16-19

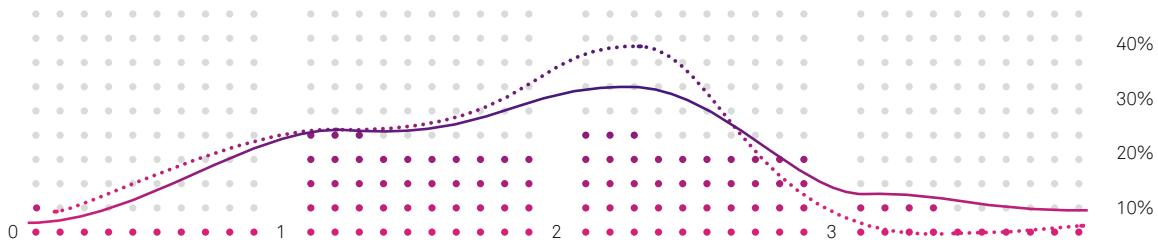
35 participants completed both a pre and post-assessment. They achieved a 12% growth in resilience ratio from 1.83 to 2.05, with an improvement in every category and factor of resilience.

Strength Increases	% Change
Health awareness	26% ↗
Relaxation	19% ↗
Contemplation	18% ↗
Influence	17% ↗
Flow	9% ↗

Risk Reductions	% Change
Angst	40% ↙
Insomnia	20% ↙
Sleep Delay	19% ↙
Self Critica	17% ↙
Attention loss	16% ↙

Figure 4

Distribution of Resilience Ratios before and after the program (n = 35)



Pre
Post

11 to 6%	43 to 40%	43 to 40%	3 to 14%	Respondents %
Fragile	Robust	Resilient	Antifragile	

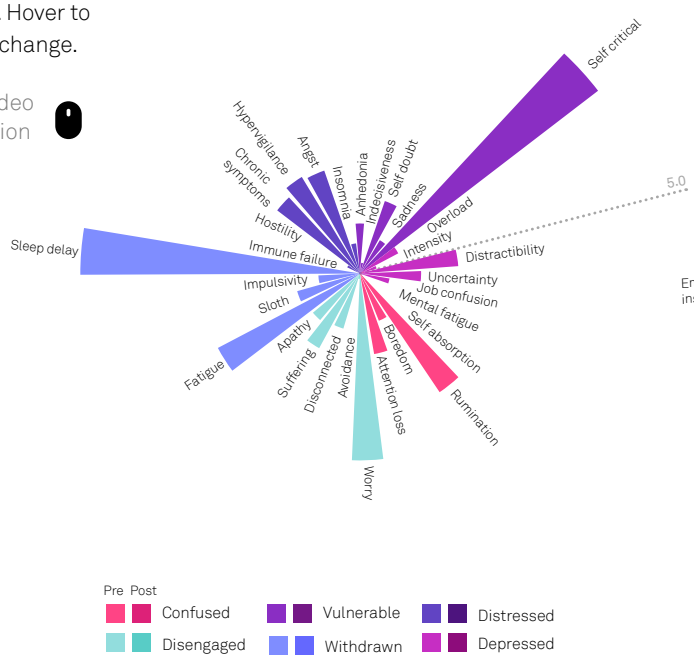
Figure 5

Factor change through the program. Hover to view the change.

Watch video explanation

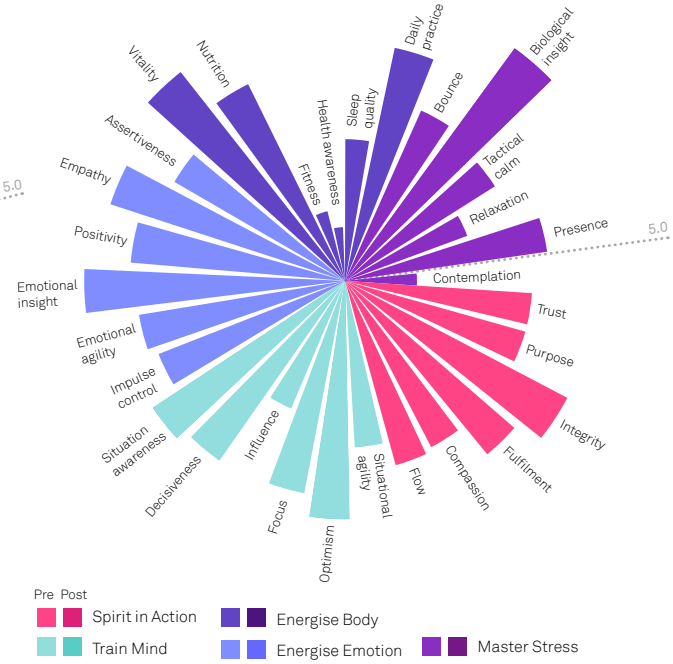
Risk Factors

Risks Competencies and Factors.
Low scores are better.



Strength Factors

Strengths Competencies and Factors.
High scores are better.



The figure 4 shows the change a few months after the workshop. Above we see positive change in most of the 60 factors measured. The decrease in risks is especially noticeable in this group.

Feedback from participants was clear. They felt much better equipped at the end of the program to honor their responsibilities, take care of themselves and achieve performance with care.

Resilient people lead to resilient organizations, which together will create a resilient planet.

Please see the Appendix featuring more data and insights **on our website**.

Access here

Resilience Insights

Discover the latest resilience guides, articles and stories on our new website.

Client Testimonial

Hear Julia Lauriella's perspective in **this video**.

Podcast

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