

Resilience in leaders: Conceptualisation and changes brought about by coaching.

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Abstract

Resilience has emerged as a topic of growing interest in the leadership coaching context but little empirical research exists merging the three areas of resilience, leadership and coaching. Two significant gaps were identified. Firstly, numerous resilience measures exist but the leadership experience of resilience remains relatively unexplored, meaning that it is unclear to what degree leadership resilience can be integrated and consolidated with existing resilience approaches. Secondly, the broad scope of definitions and conceptualisations of resilience can mean that coaches seeking to work with resilience lack a coherent model appropriate for coaching. These two gaps give rise to a lack of common understanding about resilience between coaches and their leadership clients. As a result we know little about the degree to which coaching may influence resilience.

This grounded theory study gathers interview data from eight leaders to elucidate how leaders experience resilience and what role they felt previous coaching had on their resilience. Eight executive coaches were subsequently interviewed about their experiences of executive coaching where they felt resilience was relevant. Together these perspectives shed new light on the concept of resilience in the leadership coaching context.

Existing definitions of resilience often emphasise recovery or 'bounce back' yet leaders in this study saw resilience as vital to dealing with the future, as well as the past. This led to a temporal perspective on resilience identifying a common thread that exists across the past, present and future. In addition, a wider conceptualisation of resilience is proposed that includes both capabilities and the capacity for resilience. Capabilities encompass skills that are often the focus of resilience training, while capacity reflects the resources required to apply these resilience capabilities. Together these aspects bring a more coherent approach to resilience.

Coaching was found to already be influencing resilience in leaders in five ways and a new model is proposed to support leadership coaching practice.

Key words: resilience, coaching, leadership, resources

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

We sat in the dimly lit hospital room with my mother refusing to leave just yet. Then round the door appeared the familiar form of a clerical dog collar. „So how is Joe today?“ he inquired with a smile. „Not looking so good“ he added.

I struggled to keep my composure, the words stuck somewhere in my throat. I quickly stepped outside and informed the well meaning Chaplain that my father had passed away about forty five minutes previously.

He apologised extensively and after administering a short prayer my mother agreed to leave. As we got into the car I reflected on the morning's events and had to force back a smile. The humour in the scene was undeniable. I mused on the idea that my reply should have been „Well I'm not surprised he's been dead for an hour!“

This is the moment the concept of resilience first took on real interest and meaning for me. What was it that enabled me, at such a difficult time to see the brighter side? While my father was a good age and had been ill for some time it was nevertheless a stressful time. Yet I was able to see the humour rather than display indignation at the apparent insensitivity of the priest.

As part of my role teaching within a British University Business School the financial events of 2008 brought into sharp focus the concept of resilience. With financial meltdown predicted there was much interest in the ability of employees to bounce back from adversity and in ways of helping leaders in these challenging times.

My role within the Coaching and Mentoring team has a strong focus on personal development and with a degree in Psychology I started to consider how coaching might support leaders to develop this capacity of resilience.

Initial investigations revealed confusion over definitions, limited research with leaders, and little empirical work linking leadership coaching and resilience. Advice was plentiful on how to become more resilient with recommendations from private training and coaching organisations. However there was little evidence base to guide the work of the professional coach. It was this apparent gap in the literature that motivated my research interest in the topic beyond the curiosity generated by personal experience. This introduction will outline the key factors that subsequently influenced the scope and design for this research, culminating in the research objectives and a brief overview of the thesis.

1.1 Leaders under pressure

Working contexts are becoming more volatile and long term business stability (Heifetz et al. 2009) and job security are rare (Ritter 2012, Hamel and Välikangas 2003). Even large corporations have seen spectacular failures in recent years with rapid change a common feature in organisations. Leaders in senior positions frequently experience adversity and challenge as a result of such change. The response could be seen as either reactive stress or a more protective resilience. For many the strain is too much and some suffer burn-out or derailment. The cost in financial and human terms is high with an estimated 11.4 million working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety (Health and Safety Executive 2011). However there is evidence of a significant negative correlation between aspects of resilience with depression and anxiety (Maddi et al. 2009). Therefore resilience may be a way to protect leaders from the effects of change and challenge.

In recent years the focus has frequently been on stress management, an inherently negative focus that supports a disease model. To suffer from stress can be seen as a sign of weakness and illness making individuals reluctant to engage with curative measures such as stress management training. In contrast, resilience is often thought of as a more positive capacity enabling bounce-back from issues. There may be potential therefore to study resilience as a protective capacity that can be strengthened proactively rather than only addressed when it is already in need of repair. This might increase engagement in preventative measures with resulting benefits for both organisations and individuals. Working proactively with resilience could be seen as supporting well-being and it is notable that organisations that experience reducing absence figures are more likely to employ a well-being strategy (CIPD 2011a).

Initial investigations yielded confusion about definitions with the term resilience being applied in numerous disciplines. In the social sciences it was used to describe communities and organisations but was most commonly associated with developmental or clinical psychology. The vast majority of research addresses how children who face adversity and risk in early life can survive and thrive in adult life. Significant research focuses on identifying the resources that support positive outcomes for children at risk (Luthar et al. 2000). Further work in the therapeutic literature investigates individuals who suffer trauma or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Bartone 2006). Much of this work deals with adversity and coping skills so is often found in military or nursing literature. The study of resilience has

therefore traditionally focused on how it is acquired through childhood or the result of its absence in adult life. Resilience in adult working populations has only recently become of wider interest and often builds on the previous work in the therapeutic sector. The topic has emerged within Positive Psychology in the context of individuals, organisations and communities (Hefferon and Boniwell 2011, Hamel and Välikangas 2003). However there has been little empirical primary research on resilience in leadership, especially with leaders who are not under stress or subject to a clinical diagnosis. The most relevant literature is often more broadly focused beyond leaders alone and commonly seeks to develop a tool to identify and define resilient attributes or actions. Very little is understood about how leaders experience the concept of resilience.

1.2 Popular press and practitioners

Interest in individual resilience has been rising through the turbulent economic climate that has followed the worldwide ‘Credit Crunch’ of 2008, evidenced by increasing coverage in the popular press and practitioner community. ‘How high is your Resilience Quotient’ was worthy of a full page in the Evening Standard (Hoggard 2009) drawn from the book *Resilience; bounce back from whatever life throws at you* (Clarke and Nicholson 2010). Resilience has also appeared in professional publications such as Management Today (Black 2003) and Caterer and Hotelkeeper (2009). The Ivey Business Journal focused specifically on ‘The Resilient Leader: Why EQ (Emotional Quotient) Matters’ (Reid 2008), linking it to Emotional Intelligence. In 2011 the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) issued a comprehensive report on ‘Developing Resilience: An evidence-based guide for practitioners’ (CIPD 2011b). With this increasing awareness and visibility comes interest in how to enhance this capacity in organisational settings that has driven demand for interventions to improve resilience.

This desire of organisations to enhance individual resilience has most commonly been met through training programmes that are often based on the traditions of cognitive behaviour therapy. One example is the Penn Resiliency Program (Seligman 2011) teaching people to ‘think like optimists’. Evidence from this program supports the idea that resilience can be ‘taught’ through training. The Promoting Adult Resilience Program reports similar success (Millear et al. 2008) as organisations try to implement training programmes to avert the potential impacts of adversity on employees. Despite this growing interest, little is understood about the

potential role that coaching may play. Yet coaching in organisations has been rising with an estimated 82% of organisations using coaching, which is reported as the most effective talent management strategy (CIPD 2010). The profession has seen significant growth in recent years and is commonly used to support leaders (Coutu and Kauffman 2009). It is therefore likely that coaches are already dealing with issues of resilience, even if not explicitly contracted in these terms. Coaching practitioners may therefore find themselves asked to work with resilience in leaders with little to guide their work.

1.3 Coaching

The rising publicity for resilience may be creating a market for resilience coaches. The CIPD HRD Conference in 2011 listed one seminar titled Using Coaching to Build Resilience'. In November 2011 the EMCC hosted an event called The Resilient Manager' which attracted such a large number of delegates that it had to move to a larger venue! The Association for Coaching took this a step further with a full day conference on 14th July 2011 titled Resilience for Coaches and their clients' that addressed not only the resilience of coaching clients, but also the resilience required of coaches. Professional journals have also responded to both these perspectives with recent articles about resilience (Briggs 2012, Campbell 2012). This demonstrates the growing interest in resilience from the coaching profession.

This interest may be partly fuelled by the demand from organisations. Coaches are often employed to support leadership development and if resilience is seen as a requirement for high performance it will inevitably appear on the coaching agenda. Recent work by the business psychologists from Pearn Kandola highlights resilience as a vital leadership quality and suggests it is a key indicator of leadership potential (Lucks 2009). Coaches are therefore also being driven by market forces to take an interest in leadership resilience.

With this growing interest comes the potential market for tools that coaches can use. A book about psychometrics useful for coaching lists The Mental Toughness Questionnaire' (Passmore 2008) which has clear links to resilience. Other tools are more overtly titled, such as The Resilience Scale offered by Profiling for Success. However there are also a number of free on-line tools available for use with no training required for administration. The i-resilience report by Robertson Cooper covers four areas of Confidence, Purposefulness, Adaptability and Social Support. The Nicholson McBride Resilience Quotient by contrast covers Optimism, Solution Orientation, Individual Accountability and Managing Stress and Anxiety. The fact

that such tools are readily available and the organisational community is asking about resilience means that coaches may already be using such tools with limited knowledge to shape practice.

Specific guidance that may help coaches working with resilience is now emerging with such titles as Developing Resilience: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach' (Neenan 2009). Although not a specific coaching text, it does reflect approaches used by many but not all coaches. Yet many texts and a number of training courses reflect this philosophical orientation. Other titles like The Resilience Factor' (Reivich and Shatté 2002) also demonstrate a strong cognitive behavioural focus that may not meet the needs of coaches who do not share this approach to their coaching. A slightly wider perspective is offered by The Resiliency Advantage' (Siebert 2005) but almost every text seems to offer an alternative perspective on how to enhance resilience through an almost all-encompassing number of attributes. The term is therefore interpreted in different ways and linked to many concepts common in leadership development but nothing has been directly researched in the coaching context.

The academic literature displays similar multiple perspectives of resilience (Reich et al. 2010), but none are contextualised for coaching. A large body of work within positive psychology tries to define and quantify resilience as a list of attributes, skills or traits. In contrast the therapeutic and clinical literature takes a more phenomenological perspective seeking to explore personal and interpersonal gifts and strengths that can be accessed to grow through adversity' (Richardson 2002:307). Yet the list of attributes or gifts' linked to resilience is almost endless. This leads some authors to raise theoretical concerns and to question the construct as ambiguous and being of dubious scientific value' (Luthar et al. 2000). There appears to be no comprehensive and agreed model of resilience that could be used by coaches beyond a checklist of elements to work with that varies by author. Coaches seeking to address resilience are therefore presented with a lack of coherence making it unclear how to work with resilience in the leadership context. The limited data in organisational settings have been identified, resulting in a call for more research linking resilience and leadership (Harland et al. 2005). While there is extensive literature on resilience, on leadership and on coaching, the three fields have generally been researched independently. Little synergy exists between the three fields. The problem is therefore the lack of integration that exists to support the practice of coaches working with leadership resilience as represented in Fig.1.1.



Fig. 1.1 The lack of integration between the three fields.

1.4 Focus for research

Despite increasing interest in coaching for leadership resilience there is little specific research on coaching and resilience to guide practice. Much of our existing knowledge is grounded in therapeutic reparative contexts rather than understanding how to support resilience proactively in a coaching context. Only one study directly evaluates the role of coaching on resilience (Grant et al. 2009) and reports a significant rise in measured resilience following a coaching intervention. Yet it is unclear how this was achieved so the potential role of coaching is uncertain. This study aims to add to this knowledge by enlightening the role that coaching may play in the resilience of leaders. It has three main research objectives:

- To critically evaluate the literature on resilience, leadership and the possible relationship between coaching and the resilience of leaders.
- To explore through empirical research how resilience is experienced by leaders and what contribution coaching may make.
- To contribute to knowledge by building a model that reflects the potential relationship between the development of resilience, and coaching.

The aim is not to focus on leaders who emerge into adulthood with or without resilience from childhood experiences but rather to assess how resilience can be understood once individuals are in positions of leadership. The clinical literature

may have lessons for the leadership context but this research will not specifically select leaders who have suffered significant trauma and may be in need of a therapeutic intervention. The aim is to collect data from a selection of leaders who have had coaching and who are not currently undertaking any clinical intervention, although it cannot be guaranteed that this has not been the case in the past. Coaching is seen here as a developmental approach to growth often delivered in a proactive context not necessarily in response to issues or stressful events. While it is understood that coaching may help leaders work through difficult times, the aim here is to learn lessons that can be used by coaches in general practice to understand if they have a role to play in the resilience of leaders.

Interest in resilience has been growing but much of the work in the adult organisational context has been generated by companies with a vested interest in the selling of services and is often not directly linked to coaching. Academic research is scarce in relation to coaching and resilience specifically so it has been necessary to assess literature from a variety of related fields. Firstly, the psychology literature which often deals with resilience as a quantifiable and measurable attribute: the vast majority of the research available falls into this category and is often developmental in focus. Secondly, the therapeutic literature, that sees resilience as a process of coping or recovery from trauma. This literature is often linked to stress and clinical practice. Thirdly, some literature from the leadership and coaching fields will be reviewed where it may have implications for resilience. At present little exists in terms of coaching for resilience that supports our understanding in the leadership context. This research aims to contribute to that understanding of resilience by gathering independent qualitative data from leaders who have experienced coaching and from a cross section of leadership coaches, thus synergising the three areas. This cross section of coaches will not be selected from any one model or philosophy of coaching, the aim is to provide a variety of perspectives from both males and females working across both private and public sectors.

This research will identify leaders who had coaching some time ago and try to establish from their experiences, if they felt the coaching received played any role in their resilience. Coaches will also contribute their experiences from leadership coaching interventions. The aim is to enhance understanding of resilience in this context and to elucidate what might be happening in the coaching interaction.

By collecting qualitative data from both leaders and coaches the intention is to build a shared understanding of the construct of resilience that can inform practice. The

aim is to create a coherent model which resonates with both leaders and coaches, thus creating a shared knowledge base. This will bring a unique perspective not yet present in the literature; that is the voice of both coaches and leaders on the topic of resilience outside the clinical or therapeutic context.

Due to the limited existing research integrating the three areas a grounded theory approach will be adopted. Quotes will be used to illustrate key themes that emerged from leaders and coaches about their experiences of resilience. These perspectives will be presented in discrete chapters and will be followed by a discussion of the findings where implications for practice are addressed.

1.5 Summary of chapters

1. The Introduction has set out my personal interest in this study and highlighted the growing interest in resilience in the coaching profession. It summarises some of the recent practitioner interest and defines the two gaps this study will address. The rest of the thesis is structured as follows:

2. Literature Review

The Literature Review summarises a number of debates in respect of resilience by drawing attention to the breadth of definitions and conceptualisations that exist. Without one core model of resilience the review focuses on many aspects that have been found to be relevant to resilience and on the evidence that resilience is open to development. It then goes on to summarise how resilience can be seen in the leadership context. Finally it will review the work to date already connecting coaching and resilience.

3. Methodology

The methodology chapter will set out the pragmatic constructivist assumptions that guide this study and explain how the grounded theory methodology was applied. It will review the process for selection and recruitment of the leader and coach participants and detail the data collection methods used. This included semi-structured interviews and an innovative application of the process of conceptual encounter. Conceptual encounter was used to facilitate interviews and resulted in a concept map that pictorially represented the concept of resilience for leaders. The process of data management is explained together with the data analysis, which was achieved with the aid of NVivo software.

4. Leaders' Voice: Understanding Resilience

This chapter uses the leadership voice of participants to describe three main themes that emerged regarding the understanding of resilience in the leadership context. This presents some new perspectives that may inform how coaches approach this topic within leadership coaching. The evolutionary process that resulted in the final concept map will also be explained.

5. Leaders' Voice: Coaching Experience

The leadership voice is heard again to describe participant experiences of coaching in relation to resilience. It will briefly outline how the leadership participants came to coaching and then go on to summarise the five themes that reflect how leaders felt coaching supported their resilience. These five themes are presented as a nested model to represent the interactive and interdependent nature of the aspects raised.

6. Coaches' Voice: Resilience in Coaching

This chapter focuses on how coaches understand the concept of resilience and how they feel their existing practice has supported leadership resilience. Coaches identified a number of ways in which coaching seemed to promote leadership resilience and their viewpoint highlights some disparities between the leadership and coaching perspectives.

7. Researcher's Voice: Discussion

This chapter brings together a number of key themes arising from the juxtaposition of the coaching and leadership data. The discussion seeks to investigate and elaborate on these themes by drawing in additional literature. In consolidating all the alternative perspectives it proposes a conceptual model for resilience based on only two major components. It then addresses the link to coaching and identifies how coaching might support the two-component approach.

8. Conclusions

The Conclusion brings together the key findings and draws out implications for existing theoretical approaches linking to definitions of resilience, leadership and coaching. It then discusses potential applications for coaching practice with a model that could be used to inform leadership coaching for resilience. Limitations are outlined and a number of areas for future research are identified.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This review will critically evaluate the existing literature on resilience from a number of alternative perspectives. The aim is to consider the current knowledge base that might inform how coaches work with resilience in leaders. It will focus on aspects with particular relevance to leadership coaching and does not aim to be a complete review of all resilience literature in a developmental or clinical context.

The initial exploration was based on a systematic search of Business Source Complete, Academic Search Premier, PsycInfo and specialist coaching journals with search terms of *Resilience AND Coaching*. This revealed little direct research in this area. A separate search on both terms independently was too wide as was the term *Leadership*.

Resilience is a term used in various disciplines with a wide body of literature dealing with children and adolescents. Due to this broad scope, a snowballing approach was adopted to identify references applicable to leadership resilience or studies specifically with adults. This generated a number of links to military and nursing publications where this topic appears to have been discussed more widely.

The literature confirms that resilience is a broad concept, and there is no consensual definition of the term' (Blum 2008:173) however two distinct approaches are seen. The first stems primarily from the clinical context where resilience is aligned with resistance or recovery from trauma. This perspective often uses narrative approaches to discern the complex variables that contribute to human resilience' (Akhtar and Wrenn 2008:16). Extensive research is aligned to stress, adversity, coping and Post Traumatic Growth. This study focuses on adult resilience in non-clinical populations but some of this literature is included where relevant.

The second strand of literature is found in both clinical and developmental literature and often seeks to identify the attributes or variables that support resilience through quantitative measurement. It is these approaches that are more prevalent in the adult resilience literature and those that have been recently adopted by coaches. As a consequence much of what follows will focus on these approaches.

2.1 Introduction

Within psychology it appears that the debate on the meaning of resilience operates at a number of levels with some trying to define the concept, while others attempt to list its components. In section 2.2 I will address how resilience is conceptualised in the literature and what implications this might have for coaching.

Section 2.3 addresses the literature on the components of resilience which are relevant to how a coach might work with resilience. The list of personal attributes and external factors that contribute to resilience is lengthy and numerous measures have been developed to quantify the variables through which resilience might be enhanced. Among the personal attributes, I will consider ‘hardiness’ in some detail as it is often used synonymously with resilience and has a large body of research in the organisational context. I will also review research suggesting resilience is open to development since this will be vital to understanding if coaching can play a role. Within the external factors I will specifically address the literature on the role of social support since the coaching relationship is seen as important to coaching outcomes (de Haan 2008) so may contribute a form of social support.

Section 2.5 will appraise the literature on resilience in the context of leadership. Finally, section 2.6 addresses available research on coaching and resilience.

2.2 Conceptualising resilience

Resilience can be thought of as a trait, a dynamic developmental process, an outcome, or all of the above’ (Zautra, Hall and Murray 2010:4). Each of these potential conceptualisations may be relevant to the research question and will be discussed below.

2.2.1 Resilience as a trait

The *trait* theory of resilience termed Ego-Resiliency (Block and Kremen 1996) defines psychological resilience as a personality characteristic, although some refer to this as resiliency as opposed to resilience (Luthar et al. 2000). This trait approach sees resilience as a generalized, characterological quality of an individual and does not simply apply to a highly specific, one-time behavior’ (Block and Kremen 1996:351). Resilience is seen as a relatively stable characteristic that does not presume exposure to adversity. This is in contrast to the view that resilience is the recovery and response to an adverse event.

This view of resilience as a personality characteristic is supported by many studies showing consistent correlations between aspects of the Big Five (neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and measures of resilience (Kent and Davis 2010, Friborg et al. 2005). Ego-resilience, as measured by the Ego-Resilience scale (Block and Kremen 1996), is positively correlated with Extraversion and Openness and negatively correlated with Neuroticism (Fredrickson et al. 2003). This inverse correlation of resilience with neuroticism is suggested as moderating the coping response (Florian et al. 1995).

Other authors expand this discussion and refer to the 'Resilient Personality' (Skodol 2010) as "constellations of traits or attributes" that impact perceptions. This often results in a list of characteristics that would not always be thought of as personality traits such as self-esteem or self-understanding.

Block and Kremen (1996) refer to resilience as a relatively stable 'quality' over time and contexts. However, there is significant evidence that resilience can be enhanced through training (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005, Reivich and Shatté 2002, Waite and Richardson 2004) and that environmental factors can also have an impact (Aldwin et al. 1996). Social support in particular appears to moderate the impact of stressful events so resilience is rarely conceptualised as an aspect of personality alone (Kent and Davis 2010). This may mean that any potential 'resilience trait' is moderated through other factors.

Fredrickson et al. (2003) suggest a possible mechanism for this could be positive emotion. Those high on measures of trait resilience have been identified as more likely to experience a range of positive emotions and more likely to find positive meaning following a crisis, while also exhibiting lower depressive symptoms. Yet when the sample was controlled for positive emotion no correlation between high ego-resilience and lower depressive symptoms was identified. The suggestion is that positive emotion is a mediator, and that resilient individuals learn from their coping experiences to apply these skills to future events. Further research proposes that high trait resilience leads to faster learning, leading to more effective adaptation (Waugh et al. 2008).

The potential for moderating effects and development suggest a trait approach may be incomplete, unless it is equated to 'adaptability' similar to 'openness to experience'. However, the strong role of external factors like social support raises questions about the trait approach being adequate to fully explain resilience.

2.2.2 Resilience as an outcome or process

Some authors suggest that research on resilience sometimes measures the process and sometimes the outcome and it is proposed that the two concepts should be separated with distinct definitions (Zautra et al. 2008). This would avoid the confusion that some measures are designed with items that clearly address outcomes, e.g. I tend to bounce back quickly from hard times' (Smith et al. 2008): Yet others measure the processes that might increase the chances of such an outcome e.g. I feel that I am optimistic and concentrate on the positives in most situations' (Baruth and Carroll 2002).

However, an outcome could denote maintenance of function or a return to normal functioning following a possible loss of capacity (Bonnano 2004). Traditionally resilience has been associated with recovery from an adverse event. A good example is Carver (1998) who identifies the issues of definitions and recommends the term resilience be reserved to denote homeostatic return to a prior condition'. He distinguishes this term from three other potential outcomes: *Thriving* which denotes growth after the event, *Survival* that results in some long-term impairment after the event and *Succumbing* that reflects a potential loss of function. However implicit in this definition is a temporary loss of normal function'. That loss can vary in severity of impact and recovery speed can be fast or slow, but ultimately the adverse event does cause at least a temporary deterioration of function. Only after this, can functioning that returns to a previous level be called resilience. This perspective sees resilience as recovery.

This is the traditional conception of *outcome resilience* from the therapeutic literature, where it is defined as the ability to overcome or adapt to significant stress or adversity' and implies a return to a previous state (Egan 2007:194). This is often conceived as bounce-back' after a significant life traumatic event.

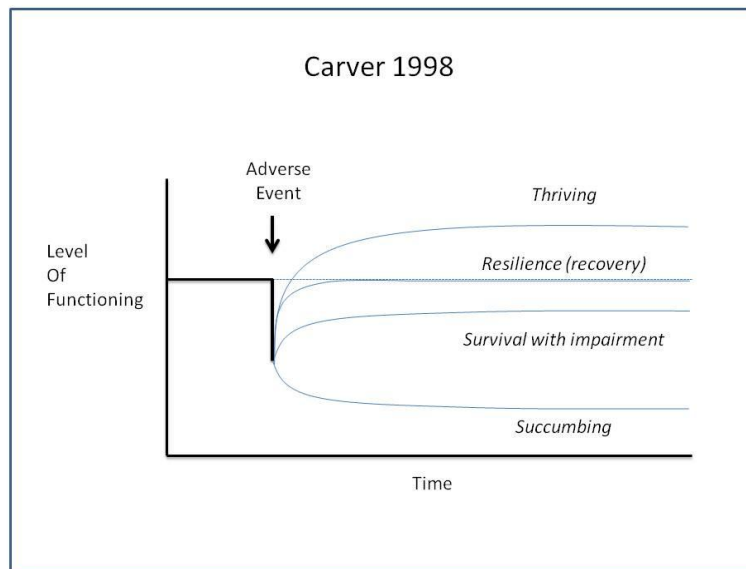


Fig. 2.1 Carver 1998

The therapeutic literature distinguishes such a recovery outcome from *process resilience* which represents the continuous effort to cope that is a normal part of some people's lives' (Egan 2007:195). This type of resilience could be aligned with the concept of daily hassles that have been shown to predict mood and fatigue (Zohar 1999).

This alternative conception of resilience is that it reflects the ability to maintain (emphasis added) relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning' (Bonnano 2004:20). Bonnano (2004) argues that this type of resilience is common and individuals who exhibit such resilience in the face of loss are not in denial, as some theorists suggest (Cramer 2000). This view presents resilience as a sustained pursuit of the positive and is described as an ecosystem as its capacity to absorb perturbations/disturbances before fundamental changes occur in the state of that system' (Zautra et al. 2010:5). The outcome is therefore maintenance of function, this characterises individual resilience as sustainability. A resilient outcome is therefore possible from successful adaptation to adversity revealed by either sustainability, recovery or both' (Zautra et al. 2008:45).

Then again, defining what constitutes a resilient outcome can present challenges. When working with children resilience is normally inferred on the basis of achieving certain external outcomes such as standards of behaviour or academic achievement. Yet in adults indicators are often subjective self report measures such as how the person feels (Luthar et al. 2006). Others highlight that resilience requires good internal adaptation and thus requires psychological well being

(Marsten and Reed 2005). However on occasion, these internal emotional indicators are often seen as predictors of resilience rather than outcomes of it. Trying to define resilience purely in terms of outcomes is therefore still subject to significant debate.

2.2.3 Resilience as a dynamic system

Somerfield and McCrae (2000:621) argue for a more dynamic approach and that existing research approaches simply cannot capture the dynamic nature of adaptational efforts'. Support for such a dynamic approach comes from evidence suggesting resilience involves the integration and interaction of not only internal psychological and biological indicators but also factors external to the individual such as social support (Tusaie and Dyer 2004, Kent and Davis 2010). Work on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in military contexts suggests personal characteristics alone were not entirely predictive of outcomes (Kent and Davis 2010) and it is estimated that life stressors also account for less than 10% of physical and psychological outcomes of exposure to stress' (Somerfield and McCrae 2000:621).

One approach that seeks to explain such dynamic interrelationships is the conservation of resources model' (Hobfoll 2002). In proposing a theory to explain diverse reactions to stress Hobfoll (1989) proposes that individuals act to build and to conserve resources'. Resources are aspects important to the individual and can include such things as mastery, self-esteem or socio-economic status. If the environment threatens the depletion of such resources then it is experienced as stress. This more dynamic model therefore treats resilience as part of the wider process of maintaining well-being. In such a model it is easy to see how individuals normally resilient to events can experience depletion of resources because they have not had time to recover and replenish the normal balance of resources.

Further support for a more dynamic approach comes from the dynamic model of affect' (DMA) (Zautra et al. 2005). The authors suggest that when the context is safe and predictable, individuals are able to process both positive and negative aspects of a situation resulting in a broader more balanced perspective. Under such conditions positive and negative affect do not show a significant inverse correlation. However stressful events result in uncertainty causing attention to narrow and focus on the negative information at the expense of the positive. Zautra et al. (2005) propose that positive and negative affect are a bi-polar scale only under stressful conditions, meaning that the situation exerts an influence on how the emotions

interact creating a dynamic interchange. This could mean that resilience should not be thought of as a single capacity but as a dynamic entity. In an effort to represent this dynamic system Davda (2011) has proposed a Conceptual Resilience Cycle and aims to develop a measure of the 'resilient attitudes' that mediate the effects of stressors to determine resilient outcomes.

However while seeing resilience as a dynamic process helps represent some of the complex interactions there is a danger the models become too complex to be useful to practice. In trying to represent all the interdependencies there is a risk the relationships become obscured.

2.2.4 Resilience as development

A similar dynamic approach is advanced from a developmental perspective. Resilience is 'relative, emerging and changing in transaction with specific circumstances and challenges' (Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003). Resilience is conceived as evolving, and that evolution brings greater adaptability for future adversity. Therefore the entity does not just adapt to new circumstances and add new skills; rather it learns to become more adaptable when it meets new challenges. Effectively the process of adaptation becomes easier and more likely; individuals learn the skills of how to adapt. This is how Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003:97) describe it:

A developmental perspective implies the presence of latent resources that can be activated, combined and re-combined in new situations as challenges arise

This would allow the individual to continually develop that system in response to environmental factors in the light of the relative and unique resources that can be marshalled.

This resonates with resilience as a process of disintegration and re-integration (Flach 1988) where the disruption to normal function, leads to a re-aggregation through learning and growth. The process of re-construction itself becomes easier with experience as the system becomes more malleable. By expecting disintegration to occur any re-integrated system is held 'loosely' to allow for future restructuring. This would support the fact that individuals often report drawing on past experience to deal with current challenges (Aldwin et al 1996). In this study of the development of coping resources in adulthood many respondents even felt that they had 'unconsciously changed their personalities to make themselves more effective in dealing with problems' (Aldwin et al.1996:848).

A similar theme of disruption is evident in the adult developmental approach. Henning (2011:445) refers to such disruption as disequilibrium that marks a transition between adult developmental stages and is characterised by a dilemma and the desire to solve it'. Resilience, she argues, is the ability to weather this developmental disequilibrium. This requires a breaking down of the existing meaning making structures and she suggests four ways to support the development of resilience: Acknowledging the current developmental stage, healing the past, maintaining helpful relationships and learning about oneself and the surrounding world.

The Resiliency Model (Richardson 2002) takes a similar perspective by introducing the choices that counselling clients can make to reintegrate resiliently after a disruption to the existing homeostasis. Richardson (2002) proposes a more systemic and holistic view of resilience as a self-actualising force grounded in Transpersonal Psychology integrating the body, the mind and the spirit. According to this perspective resilience is best characterised as a self-organising system.

Such approaches see development not as an additive affair, human development is transformational' (Henning 2011). Such a view shows synergy with the cognitive-developmental approach to coaching (Bachkirova 2010).

Seeing resilience as a developmental process shows synergy with some coaching approaches (Bachkirova 2011) but not every dilemma can result in a developmental stage change. Individuals are likely to experience resilience issues more often than experiencing a developmental stage transition although there may be some relationships.

It is clear from the wide perspectives adopted that at present there is little shared understanding of how resilience is conceptualised. This is partly caused by the very different contexts and paradigms from which this research emanates but may indicate that resilience research needs to be clearly contextualised. Such contextualisation would minimise misunderstandings and bring some coherence when working with resilience. The existing resilience literature is broad and fragmented which for the coach can be hard to navigate. There is a need to bring a degree of coherence across perspectives in order to support coaching practice.

2.3 Components of resilience

While there remains a debate over conceptualisation, research is prevalent in trying to define the variables or components of resilience that facilitate adaptation in the

face of risk, especially within children. Three groups of variables appear to be relevant: a) individual attributes or characteristics, b) nurturant family environment and c) wider networks of support (Tedeschi and Kilmer 2005). The last two indicate the importance of the wider system, beyond the individual. Despite this, most effort has been devoted to defining the personal attributes that support resilience. Much of this work originates in the clinical field where the aim is to define and measure the personal factors that might protect individuals from psychotic disorders (Wagnild and Young 1993).

2.3.1 Personal attributes of resilience

Benard (1993) found resilient children demonstrated good problem solving skills, social competence, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future. Many of these attributes are addressed in leadership development programmes so might indicate that resilience could be enhanced in adult life through appropriate interventions. With subsequent developmental research, the list of possible factors is still expanding rapidly and now includes constructs such as self-efficacy, humour, easygoing temperament, realistic appraisal, capacity to understand and respond to others' feelings and intellectual capabilities (Kaplan et al. 1996). Such lists generate questions about the scope of the construct and how to make sense of it since such lists often include attitudes, skills, traits, some that might be considered states and even virtues (Richardson 2002).

A similar pattern is seen in adult resilience research. Among the factors highlighted are cognitive flexibility, optimism, positive future orientation, hardiness, self-understanding, interpersonal understanding, internal locus of control, high self-esteem, emotional control, sociability, active coping, spirituality and many more (Skodol 2010, Kent and Davis 2010). For Reivich and Shatté (2002) self-efficacy, emotion regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, realistic optimism, empathy and 'reaching out' are the seven critical factors making up resilience. An alternative approach is offered by Wagnild and Young (1993) with The Resilience Scale, based on Equanimity, Perseverance, Self-reliance, Meaningfulness and Existential aloneness. The Mental Toughness Questionnaire has also been linked to resilience and measures the attitudes of commitment, control, challenge and confidence (Clough et al. 2002).

Many of these approaches are not specific to a leadership or organisational context but Clarke and Nicholson (2010) used the Nicholson McBride Resilience Questionnaire with 26 senior business leaders to identify five overarching themes

important for resilience. These were optimism, freedom from stress and anxiety, individual accountability, openness and flexibility and problem orientation. These five themes emerged from 23 factors [which] are strong predictors of an individual's overall Resilience Quotient'. The 23 factors include statements like 'I am optimistic' and 'I am good at anticipating problems' (p14) so appears to cover both attitudes and skills. A similar breadth of characteristics is included in The Resilience Questionnaire under license to Apollo Assessment that includes self-belief, optimism, purposeful direction, adaptability, ingenuity, challenge orientation, emotional regulation and support seeking.

Wanberg and Banas (2000) studied the degree to which resilience was a predictor of openness to organisational change and measured resilience as a composite of self-esteem, optimism and perceived control. The concept of 'perceived control' raises interesting issues. Csikszentmihalyi (2002:61) distinguishes between 'the sense of *being* in control' and 'the sense of *exercising* control in difficult situations' so this may have implications for how perceived control is interpreted. This exemplifies the difficulties of gaining a clear understanding of what is meant by many of these terms yet this 'list-like' approach is common. Appendix 10 details a range of resilience approaches or measures and the components thought to be relevant. This demonstrates how many different attributes have been named in relation to resilience.

In fact, the list of relevant attributes seems almost endless when different authors and contexts are reviewed. This may suggest there are multiple pathways to resilience or may indicate that the components of resilience are the common characteristics that contribute to any fully functioning person as suggested by Bonnano (2004). It has been proposed that the range of attributes that support resilience are characteristic of a strong and integrated 'self-structure' that facilitate adaptive functioning. As such they are described as the 'reciprocals of personality disorders' (Skodol 2010) so could be interpreted as markers of well-being.

If many factors are relevant then 'resilience' may be a collective term describing a variable 'basket' of qualities or as some suggest, a 'resource reservoir', where capacities are interdependent and cannot exist independently (Hobfoll 2002). Resilience might therefore vary by individual and encompass a variety of components. In everyday life we use the term 'bread' to describe products with varying ingredients, such as naan or soda bread. There are in fact no 'essential ingredients' yet we recognise the term in general usage. This may explain why the construct of resilience is criticised as being 'poorly defined' (Luthar et al. 2000).

Despite the poor definition and the extensive list of personal attributes proposed as making up resilience, authors continue to develop measures to quantify these attributes. Many measures assess alternative conceptions of the construct, for example some report on protective factors while others assess coping behaviours (Ahern et al. 2006). This serves to highlight the continued lack of coherence evident in the construct of resilience.

Trying to define the main elements of resilience through this top-down approach does bring apparent clarity to a complex construct but may oversimplify to a point it becomes useless for practitioners. We have seen that the focus of what is actually measured varies yet all call it 'resilience'. By introducing so many alternative and related aspects the relationships and overlaps become unclear. For example, might working with emotional regulation affect impulse control?

Such linguistic traps may be a function of the structure imposed on this construct in an attempt to make it quantifiable and simple. Yet it may not reflect the experiential nature of how the construct is experienced and perceived by leaders. Organisations often seek measures, seduced by the scientific format and quantifiable data produced. Coaches can then be obliged to adopt similar approaches that may prove inappropriate for their needs. This list-like approach may enable a language for talking about resilience but may not create the shared understanding required in the coaching interaction if it does not reflect the leadership experience of resilience.

2.3.2 The role of social support

Previous work has identified that despite extensive lists, personal attributes alone do not adequately explain successful adaptation and positive relationships have proved significant (Marsten and Reed 2005). Hejazi and Solimani (2011) identified a positive relationship between resilience and friendship quality. The caring relationship provided by mentoring has also been shown to enable the development of resilience in young adults (Beltman and MacCallum 2006). This has been replicated in organisations (Wilson and Ferch 2005) where caring relationships were also identified as key to enhancing resilience. 'Supportive Social Interactions' was also one of two areas addressed in an organisational intervention to enhance resilience (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005) and suggested as one element in enhancing resilience in nurses (Jackson et al. 2007). Motorola also designed interventions to support employee resilience and found a core component was 'one-on-one' conversations (Aitken and Morgan 1999). This longitudinal two year study found

that more resilient individuals reported higher levels of supervisor support and greater social support.

Cohen and Wills (1985) suggest two mechanisms to explain the impact of social support on an individual's ability to deal with issues. The buffering model suggests that social support has a positive impact *only* when stress is encountered and serves to deflect and moderate the increased pressure. The main-effect model by contrast suggests that social support has an *on-going* beneficial impact on well-being irrespective of whether the person is under pressure or not. The data presented supported both models but the process by which the moderation occurs appears different. The main effect model holds for social networks where such integration maintains feelings of stability and well-being irrespective of anxiety levels. However when under increased pressure only the perception of having functional support and access to resources alleviates the impact of stressful events, meaning that even a single person can provide the required buffering and wide social networks confer less benefit. Therefore social support appears valuable to resilience but may operate in a dynamic way.

The fact that other individuals could have an important role in resilience has implications for the role of coaching. Firstly, coaching may provide the 'buffering' in difficult conditions. Secondly, coaching may be an effective way to bring together the developmental and relational components required for the successful development of resilience. However coaching may also be able to provide a very specific type of relationship. The relationship that can support the development of resilience will need to encourage freedom and not compromise that sense of autonomy (Flach 1988). A problem identified by Wilson and Ferch (2005) as the paradox of autonomy-community which they explain as follows:

The deeper our involvement in creative and transformative relationships, the more likely we are to grow and gain a stronger sense of self-empowerment and self-cultivation (p51)

This implies that not all relationships might support the growth required to build resilience, the relationship must support autonomy and build self-esteem rather than rescue and sympathise. This could indicate coaching has a unique role to play in the development of resilience but as yet there is no research that can shed light on this proposition.

2.3.3 The construct of 'hardiness'

One construct often discussed synonymously with resilience but often seen as a subset of it is hardiness'. This is partly due to the publication of Resilience at Work' (Maddi and Khoshaba 2005) which focuses on hardiness and asserts that the key to resilience is hardiness'. The original work (Kosaba 1979) highlighted that despite similar exposure to stressful events only certain individuals succumbed to illness, this led to research to identify the protective factors that were collectively known as hardiness'.

The Illinois Bell Telephone Company was the focus for a twelve year study during which time major restructuring caused significant pressure for employees. While over two thirds experienced significant health issues the other third not only avoided illness but thrived and achieve greater success. Three attributes were identified as characteristic of individuals who avoided illness. These were:

- Commitment
The belief that as times get tough it is better to stay involved with people and events around you rather than pulling out.
- Control
The belief that it is better to try and influence the outcomes in which they are involved rather than give up.
- Challenge
The view that, change is a natural opportunity to grow.

Together these make up the construct of hardiness which has been the subject of extensive research with consistent correlations identifying links between hardiness and numerous positive outcomes (Maddi et al. 2002). Hardy and less hardy individuals seem to experience events in a similar way but those high in hardiness appraise events as less stressful and maintain an expectation that they will be able to cope with them. Hardy individuals are also more likely to engage in active coping strategies that focus on the problem as opposed to regressive (emotional) coping strategies such as denial or withdrawal (Florian et al. 1995).

However some ambiguous results have been obtained with different samples (Funk 1992) and the construct has also attracted a number of broader criticisms. The validity of the construct itself is questioned with concerns about the low inter-correlation between the three subscales and whether it is appropriate to merge them to a single hardiness score (Funk and Houston 1987). This means that when categorising groups as low or high in hardiness the sample group may not be

equally strong in all three dimensions and that one dimension may have more predictive weight than another. The inclusion of the Challenge dimension has attracted particular criticism and research suggests a component related to the search for meaning' in events, may better reflect participant expression of Challenge (Florian et al. 1995). Further concerns are raised about the use of negative measures to infer positive attributes, e.g. high avoidance is seen as low commitment. It has also been suggested that there is overlap with existing constructs such as neuroticism.

Over recent years hardiness measures have been adapted and improved (Maddi et al. 2009) but issues remain about causal pathways (Funk 1992). Directionality is one aspect of this as measures of hardiness and stress are often taken at the same time so it cannot be determined if hardiness alters the perception of stress or if the stress experienced makes subjects appear less hardy. More work has been called for on these causal pathways (Funk 1992) as there is evidence that hardy individuals do engage in more task-focused coping (Delahaij et al. 2010) demonstrating higher confidence and self efficacy (Westman 1990). One suggestion is that since hardy individuals believe in their ability to resolve issues they use less energy in dealing with the internal emotions aroused and can therefore focus personal resources on task-focused strategies and as a result perform better (Westman 1990). This explanation would fit well with the model of conservation of resources advanced by Hobfoll (1989) discussed earlier.

Furthermore, the concept of hardiness is built on the premise that hardy attitudes lead to hardy actions (Maddi 2007). This implies that someone with the right attitude will have the requisite skills required to generate a successful outcome or that only those with both the attitude and the skills can be termed hardy', yet the assessment usually measures only attitudes through self report.

The recently developed Ashridge Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ) (Davda 2011) is based on the hardiness concept together with the mental toughness approach (Clough et al. 2002) from sports settings. The ARQ builds on both these measures to include seven attitudes of Purpose (commitment), Challenge, Emotional Control, Awareness of others (interpersonal confidence), Balance, Self-Awareness (confidence in abilities) and Determination. The inclusion of determination was an attempt to recognise the role of intrinsic or extrinsic motivators in resilience, going beyond the usual measures that include only personal characteristics or coping styles. The author builds on the argument proposed by Smith et al. (2008) that measures often focus only on the components of resilience and ignore the

processes involved. The fact that Davda (2011) uses hardiness as a basis for resilience highlights the degree of potential overlap between the constructs. Resilience is usually described by authors as a far wider concept that often includes elements of the wider system. In contrast, hardiness focuses on the attitudes of the individual and has been described as ‘a pathway to resilience’ (Maddi 2006). However training to enhance hardiness will often include aspects normally associated with resilience such as self-care and how to create ‘socially supportive interactions’ (Maddi et al. 2009:294). This coupled with the high degree of disagreement in defining resilience makes the distinction hard to define.

Hardiness has also been described as an expression of mental health and appears to correlate negatively with scales of maladjustment (Maddi et al. 2002). The study that validated the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor and Davidson 2003) also reported that resilience may be influenced by ‘health status’ since individuals with a diagnosed mental illness show lower levels of resilience than the general population. This may suggest resilience is indicative of healthy functioning individuals.

This raises the question of whether hardiness might link directly to well-being. The table below shows the dimensions of well-being as defined by Ryff (1989) and it is possible to draw direct links to the dimensions of hardiness. While Ryff (1989) represents only one potential approach to well-being the similarities may be interesting to investigate.

Well-being (Ryff 1989)		Explanations of the dimension
Self-Acceptance	Commitment	<u>c</u> ommitment to self’ (Kobasa 1979)
Positive relations with others	Commitment	<u>r</u> emain involved with events and people around you’ (Maddi 2006)
Autonomy	Control	<u>i</u> t is a mistake to let yourself slip into powerlessness’ (Maddi 2006)
Environmental mastery	Control	<u>a</u> ssessed their ability as higher’ (Westman 1990)
Purpose in life	Challenge	<u>t</u> o perceive a stressful situation as a challenge, people should first find a meaning and purpose in that situation’ (Florian et al. 1995)
Personal growth	Challenge	<u>A</u> n opportunity to learn, develop, and grow in wisdom’ (Maddi 2006)

Table 1 Well-being and hardiness

The potential overlap may indicate some relationship and that enhancing one could influence the other. This could imply that hardiness and by implication resilience, are components of the fully functioning individual and support the idea that resilience is “more common than often believed” (Bonnano 2004:20). Such a link would also support the definition of resilience proposed by Zautra et al. as “the amount of stress a person can endure without a fundamental change in capacity to pursue aims that give life meaning. The greater a person’s capacity to stay on a satisfying life course, the greater their resilience” (2008:44). Resilience is also seen as one of four core building blocks of psychological health by Cowen (1991) who adds competence, empowerment and supportive social systems.

The hardiness concept has been the subject of extensive research, much of it in military or corporate settings. Yet the parallels with well-being question if hardiness may simply be a way to quantify mental health. If this is the case one might question whether hardiness is a useful construct beyond well-being. Yet the extensive organisational literature may indicate it has resonance for the leadership population.

2.4 Changing resilience

Much therapeutic research confirms that resilience can be enhanced, with interventions often focused on three dimensions of personal mastery, mindfulness and agency (Kent and Davis 2010). Such approaches are often holistic and systemic in nature.

The need for a change in resilience levels and subsequent improvements are often determined through self report questionnaires. The Resilience in Mid-Life Scale was designed specifically to address a perceived gap with normal populations aged 35-60 (Ryan and Caltabiano 2009). The study supported a five factor structure of resilience comprised of self-efficacy, perseverance, internal locus of control, coping and adaptation skills and family or social support networks. The authors suggest the scale can be used to identify those who would benefit from intervention programs to build resilience, especially when subject to adversity such as illness or loss. The study also administered the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and found that high resilience was associated with high levels of self-esteem which supports previous research suggesting resilient people often have a positive self image (Tedeschi and Kilmer 2005). This raises questions about the direction of causality but also means it may be possible to raise levels of resilience through other mediating variables.

The effort to improve a person's ability to cope with issues was historically grounded in teaching coping skills. Two types of coping are defined in the literature. Problem-focused coping' manifests by taking the initiative to resolve a problem. However when a problem is not controllable, such as a death, the only coping that can be done is to manage the emotional reaction, referred to as emotion focused coping'. Studies have shown benefits from teaching both these strategies but that they are not always employed equally (Lyubomirsky 2010).

Little longitudinal research has been completed on resilience enhancing programmes with normal populations of adults but Maddi and Khoshaba (2005) did establish that hardiness' could be enhanced through a training programme. They were able to enhance the three dimensions (commitment, control and challenge) through training in two skills. The first was to teach individuals how to create Supportive Social Interactions' to enable on-going conflict resolution and communication skills. The second skill was "Transformational Coping" which was based on placing the issues in the broader context in order to help individuals reframe events. This shows alignment with the cognitive behavioural techniques of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (Ellis and Dryden 1997) that are often used in coaching, indicating coaches may already be impacting hardiness.

This cognitive behavioural approach has also proved successful in the Promoting Adult Resilience Program (Milliar et al. 2008) based on 11 weekly sessions. Over six months after completion of the programme participants still reported improvements in coping self-efficacy, reduced stress and depression, with greater work-life balance. In contrast an internet based Resilience-Online programme showed high levels of attrition and no significant impact on participant well-being (Abbot et al. 2009).

The highest profile resilience training programme is the Penn Resilience Programme which has proved effective in preventing depression and anxiety in controlled studies with school aged children (Seligman 2011). Based on the success of this programme some elements have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Programme (Seligman 2011) as the master resilience training' for drill sergeants. The programme is based on positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment – the building blocks of resilience and growth' (Seligman 2011:103).

In spite of extensive use with the US Army (Seligman 2011) some express reservations about the speed of implementation in this new context without a pilot (Stix 2011). Previous figures suggest that 85% of soldiers returning from Iraq or

Afghanistan are already resilient, leading some to question if the programme could reduce resilience, rather than increase it (Stix 2011).

Seligman's focus on positive emotion as a key driver in resilience is supported by numerous other studies and some feel that 'Positivity.....is at the heart of resilience' (Fredrickson 2009:99). The 'broaden-and-build theory' suggests that positive emotion can undo the stressful effects of negative emotion and thus reduce the strain on the body's resources. It is easy to imagine how an ability to generate positive emotion could promote relationship building that attracts the social support reported as so important to resilience. Positive emotion has also been linked to increased creativity that could enhance problem focused coping strategies. Fredrickson therefore argues that by increasing the amount of positivity experienced through targeted activities it is possible to 'build your own resilience levels' (Fredrickson 2009:110)

Building on positive emotion work Folkman (2008) proposed an expansion to her problem and emotion focused coping strategies model. The suggestion is that positive emotion can be enhanced through a third coping mechanism of 'meaning-focused coping'.

Meaning-focused coping is, in its essence, appraisal based coping in which the person draws on his or her beliefs.....values,and existential goals to motivate and sustain coping and well-being during a difficult time. (Folkman 2008:7)

Meaning focussed coping strategies that appear to generate positive emotion in times of distress are supported by five categories of intervention, benefit finding, benefit reminding (Tennen and Affleck 2005), adaptive goal processes, reordering priorities and infusing ordinary events with positive meaning (Folkman 2008). It is suggested that working with these areas can build positive emotion. The broaden-and-build theory would predict a potential impact on resilience mediated by the experience of positive emotions.

The idea that resilience can be changed ultimately relies on the definition of resilience applied. Using measures of resilience to evidence an impact may create a self-fulfilling prophecy where all that is proved is a change in what the measure measures. However causality remains hard to prove. The complexity of the factors involved and the mere presence of an intervention risks unexpected influences such as the Hawthorn Effect (Robson 2002). The importance of social support and the potential synergies with cognitive approaches common in coaching mean that

coaching may already have a role in client resilience, but we understand little about what this might be.

2.5 Resilience in leadership

Scholars have long tried to define and capture the essence of leadership. Text books list approaches based on traits, skills or style and numerous theories have emerged (Northouse 2010). The aim here is not to review every theory, but to discuss the approaches that might have resonance for the concept of resilience.

One of the earliest approaches to leadership was the trait approach' that sought to define the traits that characterise successful leaders. Numerous lists of traits have been proposed (Zaccaro 2007, Bass 1974) and many lists include traits associated with resilience: For example, Persistence, Self-Confidence and Tolerance (Bass 1974). However it is also possible to identify a strong relationship between leadership and four of the Big Five personality factors. Effective leadership has been strongly associated with Extraversion, followed by Conscientiousness, Openness and low Neuroticism (Judge et al. 2002). As shown earlier in this chapter Ego-resilience is defined as a trait and is positively correlated with Extraversion and Openness (Fredrickson et al. 2003) and negatively correlated with Neuroticism. It is therefore possible that effective leaders are also more likely to be resilient by virtue of common traits.

Conversely, much research demonstrates that resilience can be learned which shows greater synergy with skills approaches to leadership. One skills model of leadership defines key competencies required as problem solving skills, social judgement skills and knowledge (Mumford et al. 2000). Problem solving skills were identified by Benard (1993) and problem focused coping is identified as a core resilience skill. A leader with social judgement skills is likely to build supportive relationships and to gain a broader perspective from their ability to recognise and adapt to the needs of others. It is easy to see parallels in the components of resilience and the skills required of leadership.

More interactive theoretical approaches to leadership such as the situational approach (Blanchard 2008) build on the idea of behavioural flexibility and focus on how leaders need to adapt to their changing situation to be effective. Adaptability and flexibility are common words in the resilience lexicon and prevalent in the developmental perspective. The role of adapting to adversity has been advanced as one of the most reliable indicators and predictors of true leadership' (Bennis and

Thomas 2002:39). Based on over forty leadership interviews, Bennis and Thomas suggest that significant transformational and often traumatic experiences influence leadership development in a unique way. Enduring and surviving such ‘crucibles’ are defining moments that come to characterise their leadership approach, described as:

These experiences made them stronger and more confident and changed their sense of purpose in some fundamental way (Bennis and Thomas 2002:40)

This again demonstrates strong potential links between resilience and leadership without the word resilience being specifically used.

Resilience has not been explicit in models of leadership until the PsyCap model (Luthans et al. 2007) which addresses “an individual’s positive psychological state of development” and is characterised by having confidence (self-efficacy), optimism, hope and resilience. These four core capacities are seen as “human capital” which is open to investment and development, enhancing performance. Resilience is defined as “the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure, or even positive events, progress, and increased responsibility” (Luthans 2002:702). It is proposed that this ability to learn and develop through challenge and adversity is a key determinant of success in the modern work place. The PsyCap model suggests that leadership resilience can be enhanced through growth and that such learning will enhance wider organisational resilience.

One way this wider impact might be achieved is by the effect that leadership resilience may have on staff. Bartone (2006) reports that effective leaders can, through modelling and positive meaning making, increase the resilient responses of subordinates to stressful events in the military context. This link between leadership behaviours and subordinate resilience is also supported by Harland et al. (2005) who also reported a link between leadership behaviours and subordinate resilience.

Coutu (2002) proposed that leaders who are resilient possess three qualities. Firstly they maintain a sense of reality and assess situations in a realistic way so are not subject to ‘rossetinted glasses’ and therefore find practical solutions to potential issues. Secondly, they find meaning in events and are able to see the bigger picture building bridges from current issues to an improved future position. Thirdly they maintain a focus on ingenuity, by problem solving and remaining innovative. This shows potential synergy with coaching since coaches often focus on the current reality (Whitmore 2002), seek to work with the future and help with problem solving.

This may imply a potential impact but to-date there has been little empirical research assessing how coaching may help build resilience in leaders.

We know little of what may already be happening in leadership coaching when resilience is relevant, or how interventions could be made more effective. Moreover there is little to inform knowledge of the dynamic interplay that may result from the interactive nature of the coaching relationship. Gathering knowledge about the dynamic involved may shed new light on how leadership resilience can be enhanced through coaching, and may create a new shared reality between coach and client. Resilience as a construct in the organisational context has primarily been investigated through measures attempting to define the characteristics of the resilient person. However, little attention has been given to understanding the potential link to the coaching interaction.

Many of the current ideas applied to leadership resilience have been borrowed, adapted or applied without primary empirical research. Yet it is unclear if leaders experience the construct in the same way or how leadership resilience should be consolidated with wider resilience research. Some already highlight the inconsistencies between approaches to resilience in the developmental and adult arena (Luthar and Brown 2007) and it may be that the adapted ideas are not always appropriate for the leadership population.

One could suggest that leaders already possess skills like problem solving and optimism yet some still appear to suffer from resilience issues. Our understanding of such issues is somewhat limited due partly to the lack of qualitative information about leadership resilience from the leaders' perspective. Luthar and Brown (2007) highlight the need for additional qualitative research into resilience which represents a clear gap in existing literature.

2.6 Coaching for resilience

One of the first studies to demonstrate the potential impact of coaching on resilience was Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009). Forty one executives took part in a development programme consisting of a workshop, 360 degree feedback and four solution-focussed coaching sessions over an 8-10 week period. Measures taken before and after the programme showed a significant rise in resilience using the Cognitive Hardiness Scale (Nowack 1990), a measure derived from the hardiness construct. No subsequent measures were taken to assess the longevity of the effects noted so it is unclear if the changes in resilience endured or if resilience

levels were maintained under times of subsequent pressure. If resilience measures are only taken in 'good times' it is unlikely a real picture is created of how the individual may subsequently react in times of difficulty.

No qualitative data was gathered in this study so it is uncertain how the change was achieved or what role coaching may have played. The reliance on a quantitative measure alone as a reflection of resilience is an example of how little attention is currently paid to the experience of resilience in the organisational context. It may be that organisations look to quantitative measures in order to evaluate impact and that coaches are simply responding to this need. A number of psychometrics tools are now available and marketed to coaches, like the MTQ discussed earlier (Passmore 2008). The Realise 2, often used by coaches (Linley et al. 2010), also has a 'Resilience' scale. However it may also be that coaching has adopted such measures because little else seems to be available when working with resilience in the organisational context.

Grant et al (2009) used a solution-focused approach which is generally associated with cognitive-behavioural coaching. Neenan (2009) proposes using this cognitive focus to enhance resilience by developing a set of core strengths: high frustration tolerance, self-acceptance and the ability to keep things in perspective. The cognitive approach can also be used to help individuals manage stressful responses by working with clients to alter the appraisal of the situation and to promote active problem-focused coping mechanism (Florian et al. 1995). Many coaches employ such cognitive behavioural techniques so resilience may already be a by-product of work being done by coaches today.

However the evidence advocating the role of social support suggests that cognitive approaches alone may not be sufficient to explain any potential effect of coaching on resilience. Existing research implies resilience is more likely when individuals have 'access to human, social and material capital, and when they have experiences that add to their growth, competence/expertise, and efficacy' (Sutcliffe and Vogus 2003:100). Some work does suggest that coaching can help managers cope with stress but also found that coaching could itself be a cause of stress (Gyllensten and Palmer 2006). This highlights the need for further understanding about the mechanisms at work as we cannot fully explain such findings at present.

Storytelling may be one potential explanation for the reported impact of coaching on resilience. The value of relating personal experiences in the therapeutic context is well documented and storytelling has been suggested as an approach that can support the development of resilience (East et al. 2010). East et al. (2010:23) state,

“relating of personal stories to interested listeners in an affirming and accepting environment can provide the foundation for the development of resilience”. This may resonate with the idea of social support since listeners are identified as interested, affirming and accepting’. Hutchinson and Lema (2009) also report how giving good attention’ and a positive focus can enhance resilience. Coaching could therefore be having an effect through this positive focus, from telling of the story or from the perceived social support.

Coaching appears to have a potential role in leadership resilience but the lack of experiential data outside the stress arena means little is understood about how this may work. The professional coach can find themselves having to rely on advice from sources that might be partisan, lack empirical foundation or based in a philosophical position not aligned with their personal coaching approach. While multiple perspectives add richness they can prove disabling for the coaching practitioner seeking a coherent model that makes sense to them and their clients.

One attempt to create a framework for coaches to follow is offered by van Nieuwerburgh (2012) discussing coaching in relation to mental toughness. It is suggested that the Mental Toughness Questionnaire can form the basis for a coaching discussion to increase self-awareness and develop personal responsibility in relation to development areas. The integrated approach presented gives coaches a potential framework to follow while maintaining a non-directive approach. This non-directive approach is important because when coaching around a particular topic it would be easy to slip into a coach focussed discussion rather than maintain the client agenda. The coach is therefore advised to gain a clear understanding of the client perspective and to build a shared understanding with the client of the term coaching’. It could be argued that this shared understanding’ needs to extend beyond the coaching to the topic of discussion, ensuring there is also a shared understanding of what mental toughness means for the client.

Ultimately coaching is a social process that relies on joint meaning making by the parties involved. Understanding these perspectives can help coaches to be congruent with what the client requires and thus contribute to coaching knowledge. Gathering primary data from leaders and coaches who have experience of resilience and coaching could help create this shared understanding.

2.7 Focus for the research

The review so far indicates the limited knowledge base that links resilience, coaching and leadership. This means little is understood about how leadership coaching might interact with resilience. Much of the previous work on resilience is based on populations that experience a deficit yet coaches often work with high performing individuals in proactive rather than reparative ways. This research seeks to gather experiences from those involved in coaching to clarify what mechanisms may be at work.

At present three distinct literatures exist in resilience, in leadership and in coaching. Little is known about the interface between these three areas resulting in at least three potential gaps, as presented in the conceptual framework (Fig.2.2).

Firstly, the literature on resilience is diverse and it is unclear how a coach should approach working with resilience. For the coach who does not favour a cognitive behavioural approach there is little to guide their work. How then can a coach best conceptualise resilience? Is it possible to develop a coherent approach to coaching for resilience and a more generic model?

Secondly, most of the existing knowledge originates in the clinical or developmental fields with little from the leadership context. Little is known about how leaders experience resilience and yet coaches work with experiences and need to understand the leadership perspective. What does resilience mean in leadership? Can the leadership perspective be consolidated with existing literature?

Thirdly, the majority of knowledge currently applied in this area is based on top down measures. Yet the philosophy of coaching is one of partnership and the creation of a shared reality. What is the shared reality appropriate to the coaching interaction?

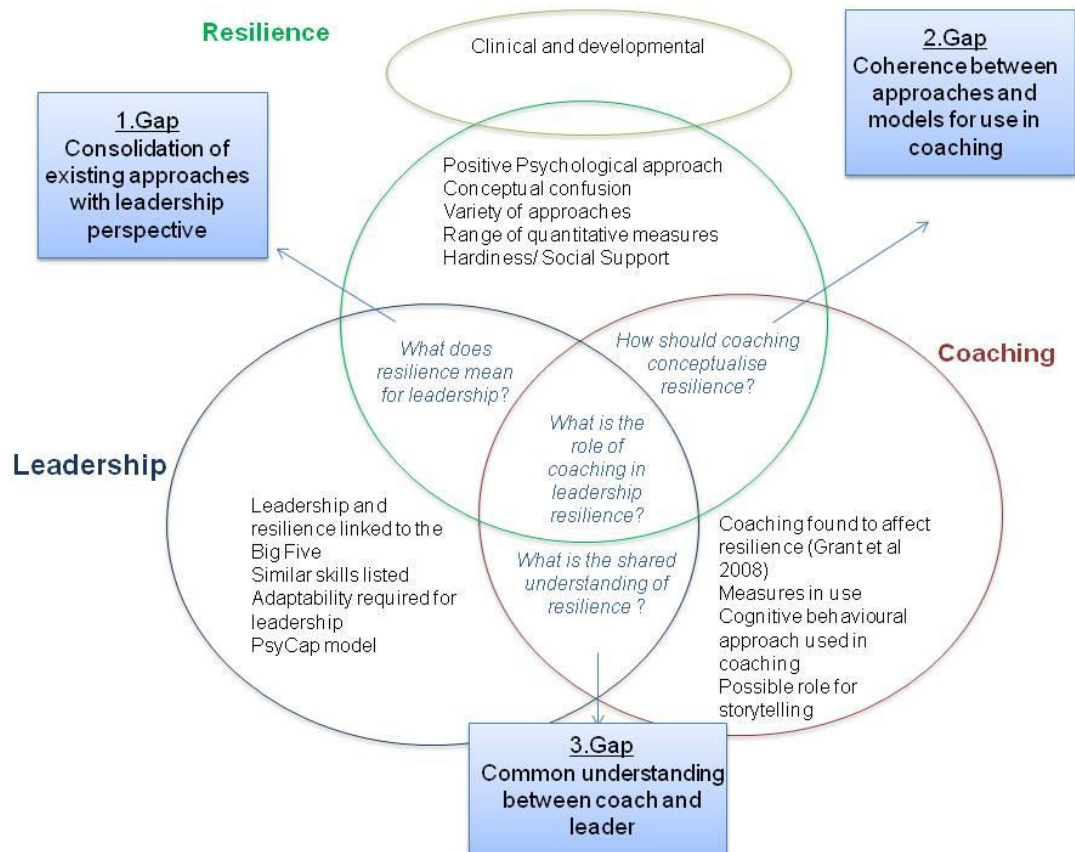


Fig. 2.2 Conceptual Framework

This study aims to address each of these gaps. By gathering experiences from leaders who have been coached, the study will generate some understanding of how resilience is experienced by leaders. This together with the coach's perspective can help create a shared knowledge base of resilience.

It is hoped that as a result of this it will be possible to generate a generic framework to guide the work of coaches working with leaders where resilience might be relevant.

Coaching might already be potentially impacting the resilience of leaders so it is important to establish what and how this is operating. This will help coaches understand the impact of their existing work and avoid unintended consequences. In addition it may reveal new avenues that can be investigated to make coaches more effective if increased leadership resilience is the contracted aim. However at present we know little about the role that coaching plays in the resilience of leaders.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the philosophical foundations on which this study is based and describe the journey that determined the ultimate methodology. It will then spell out how the study was conducted, including information about sample selection and data collection methods. I will discuss some of the tensions and dilemmas that arose and draw links to the role of ethics and reflexivity in the context of this study.

There will be a detailed explanation of how data were collected and the analysis process used, including a discussion of validity and reliability and methodological limitations.

3.2 Philosophical foundations

Every researcher comes to research with a paradigm of beliefs that determine their choice of question and their subsequent inquiries. These paradigms contain the ontological and epistemological assumptions that guide the research journey. The questions to be answered are what can we know?' and how can we know it?' (Willig 2008). Yet arguments over well established terms are common in the literature and Crotty (1998) effectively summarises my analysis that one frequently finds the same term used in a number of different, sometimes even contradictory, ways' (p1). This has created a whole lexicon of research positions, each seeking to set out the beliefs under which it operates and which are not always mutually exclusive (Jones et al. 2006). Identifying firm philosophical foundations for the research is therefore vital to ensure subsequent choices on which the research is built are not undermined by the foundations on which it relies.

This research aims to clarify the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders. The selection of this topic is the product of my own background and is coloured by my philosophical paradigm. The paradigms we hold define our reality, how knowledge is gathered and analysed and cannot be separated from the people who use it' (Fishman 1999:77). To understand this research it is therefore important to appreciate the researcher paradigm.

Researching knowledge that might aid practice was foremost and I was open to data from multiple sources. My background in marketing research had taught me that all data provided valuable information if used appropriately with an

understanding of its limitations. My research journey led me to position this research within the theoretical perspective of pragmatism. I shall now expand on why I feel this position is most appropriate and explain some of the issues it raises.

The concept of utility is central to pragmatism which has its roots in the work of James (1997) and Dewey (1910), with more recent advocates in Fishman (1999). James (p21) states that the only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us' and as such he refers to pragmatism as a mediator and reconciler': An approach that can hold all the alternative conceptions of truth' as useful, without needing to remain wedded to one particular perspective. Accepting one truth does not negate the value of an alternative truth because Pragmatism is not committed to any one system or philosophy and reality' (Cresswell 2003:12). Fishman (1999) likens it to using different pairs of glasses, and glasses are chosen according to which pair is most useful in meeting our particular, practical goals in that situation' (p83). Fishman (1999) highlights the Diagnostic Statistical Manual as an example where although the categories have a value to policy and practice they are not for the pragmatist seen as clear distinctive biological categories. The aim of this research is to provide knowledge and understanding to inform the practice of coaching in relation to resilience. As such it chimes well with the advice that the primary goal of research based in the pragmatic paradigm is to provide solutions to context specific and practical psychological problems.' (Fishman 1999).

The pragmatic position therefore avoids the classical distinction between ontology and epistemology as summarised by Cherryholmes (1992:16):

Pragmatists also believe that we would be better off if we stopped asking questions about laws of nature and what is really "real" and devoted more attention to the ways of life we are choosing and living when we ask the questions we ask.

Truth is what works at the time. James (1997:14) writes pragmatists talk about truths in the plural, about their utility and satisfactoriness, about the success with which they work'. Embedded within this view is an implicit constructionist perspective. My constructivist views of reality and the pragmatic perspective within which it sits led me to Crotty's (1998) four-element framework (Fig.3.1). This best reflects my views as at an epistemological level I hold a constructivist position and within that a pragmatic theoretical perspective.

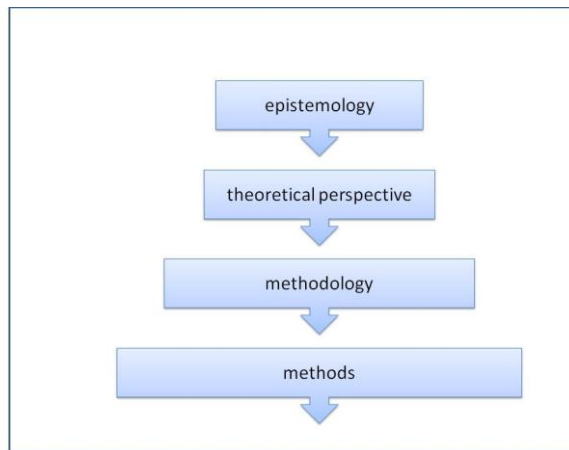


Fig. 3.1 Crotty (1998)

One concern for the pragmatist is research that either fails to deliver a useful outcome or that has no immediate application. The history books are littered with discoveries that appeared to have no useful purpose at the time, penicillin being one notable example. This does not in itself mean the pragmatic paradigm is not applied. Rather pragmatism is a perspective, a tendency to evaluate knowledge by how it can be applied. Knowledge without an obvious application will cause the pragmatist to seek potential applications. I cannot predict the value of this research and how it will be used but I need to be mindful of not directing my research output to create a purpose that is unjustified.

The concept of purpose is also central to the selection of methodology and methods for the pragmatic researcher. Pragmatic researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures that best meet their needs and purpose' (Cresswell 2003:12). Pragmatism is often seen as a paradigm that can be adopted by those who seek to complete a mixed method study. Yet it should not be seen as an option to avoid the need to justify the research methods employed nor an approach for those who cannot make up their minds! However we should not assume that pragmatism *requires* a mixed methods approach because ultimately the decision is driven by the problem and not by the need to keep a foot in both camps. In this research only qualitative data is collected as this best fits the purpose of the study, although much quantitative data has informed the research.

Morgan (2007) focusing on the importance of methodology in pragmatism advocates that we should start with the end in mind and seek to gather and evaluate knowledge on the basis of what difference it makes'. This suggests that

the pragmatic researcher is driven only by the problem but some would question if they can ever truly adopt such multiple and diverse perspectives. This presents a challenge effectively summarised by Morgan (2007:69):

But research questions are not inherently ~~important~~,” and methods are not automatically ~~appropriate~~.” Instead, it is we ourselves who make the choices about what is important and what is appropriate, and those choices inevitably involve aspects of our personal history, social background, and cultural assumptions

This highlights the need for the reflexive outlook so vital to qualitative research. Yet this may prove even more vital to the pragmatist who may fall victim to a belief that they are able to divorce themselves from their values and world views by focusing on the problem as a central driving force. Any research decision ultimately carries an assumption about the nature of the problem and about the nature of the data that may arise. The pragmatist is no less subject to such limitations. It is not possible to un-know that which we know and believe.

The impact of the researcher’s values is summarised as the axiology and will influence not only the question posed but how the researcher chooses to investigate the problem (Lincoln and Guba 1985). I will be drawn to questions that attract a pragmatic answer, and seek usefulness in my data. This will demonstrate congruence in my approach but brings a potential tension with internal collusion. I can only approach this process with an awareness of this and make explicit my thinking for the reader to evaluate.

3.3 The journey to methodology

I have explained the philosophical position within which this research is conducted and will now summarise the methodological choices made and what influenced the decisions. As Robson (2002:80) says:

The general principle is that the research strategy or strategies, and the methods or techniques employed, must be appropriate for the questions you want to answer. In this respect the methodology should be inevitable.

Grant et al. (2009) reported a potential impact of coaching on leadership resilience with no information on how this might have been achieved. This led to an initial question formulation of how coaching can support the growth of resilience in leaders’: A question requiring an inductive approach and qualitative data. Best

practice advice is to define a methodology to answer the defined question which is consistent with the epistemological framework.

In reality the formulation of the question and the methodology go hand in hand down each methodological path, much like the yellow brick road in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Baum 1900), to find the elusive answer. The researcher walks each pair down many paths that turn out to be cul-de-sacs. The epistemological framework may narrow the field but much like the tin woodman on the path to find a heart, the journey is fraught with questioning of beliefs and the realities the researcher thought of as taken-for-granted.

Willig (2008) asserts We cannot ask questions without making assumptions (p38) and these assumptions are laid bare through the constant interplay between question, methodology and underpinning epistemology. Those assumptions are evaluated in the context of what they tell the researcher about their own real epistemology, rather than the one they claim to support. As a result the formulation of the research question changes and evolves. Not unlike a micro version of an action research project, the refinement of the question takes considerable iterations.

The question as initially stated found a natural partner with action research (AR), a common approach to dealing with practical problems. I set off down the yellow-brick-road with AR and the How question. Such a study would seek to establish and refine approaches and interventions that could be used with leaders, and the common themes of AR (Saunders et al. 2007) showed significant congruence with my paradigm and the research aims. Firstly, AR is characterised by a clear emphasis on purpose and practical outcomes, supporting my pragmatic position. Next, the approach is of a participatory nature allowing for the co-construction of ideas with the researcher often being the practitioner involved. As a practitioner this synergy appealed. Lastly, AR should make a wider contribution beyond the case being researched, an aim that fitted well with my topic since it was neither organisationally bound nor linked to any specific context. AR would provide practical information from an experiential perspective that could be applied to coaching practice. Such an AR study would require interventions to be devised, delivered and evaluated. This raised a number of drawbacks. Firstly the cyclic delivery and evaluation could make the research impossible to complete due to participant availability and deadlines. In addition, data collection would need to happen soon after the interventions which might mean participant resilience had never been tested, providing limited data. However the overriding limitation was the

lack of a clear understanding of what resilience means to leaders, a gap already identified. In order to design suitable AR interventions there would need to be a guiding theoretical foundation based on an existing approach to resilience. Without an existing model appropriate for the coaching context it seemed premature to be testing a concept that was still subject to so much debate in the literature. It appeared I would need to investigate the understanding of resilience in the leadership arena *first* in order to understand how this phenomenon was experienced. This led to a reformulation of the question in the language of experiences of participants which found a partner in phenomenology as I set off down another methodological path.

Phenomenological research aims to clarify situations lived through by persons in everyday life' (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003). By gathering the experience of participants rich descriptions' elucidate what the concept of resilience actually means to leaders. However this raised a concern that the study might become focused on the leadership experience of resilience rather than the role of coaching in resilience. Gathering phenomenological data was likely to generate in-depth individual narratives rather than a broader sense of coherence and shared understanding, which was the aim of the study. There was also a danger that the data produced by this methodology might create tensions with the pragmatic philosophy underpinning it. Individual narratives may prove less useful for the coaching practitioner than broader common themes. A path with nice scenery, but not the most appropriate route to the required destination.

Without an appropriate model and the need to focus on the role of coaching in resilience, the question became much broader, What is going on here?' which led to grounded theory (GT). GT allowed for a clearly inductive approach and felt like a shoe that fitted, so might comfortably take me down the path to an answer. It appeared that this research might provide value to the profession by building a model useful within coaching. I was drawn to GT by Charmaz's (2006) description that a finished grounded theory explains the studied process in new theoretical terms' (p7). While there was significant work on resilience there was no coherent theory that could be used by coaches from a variety of conceptual standpoints. GT would also allow the study to move beyond the pure description provided by phenomenology and produce some explanatory theoretical frameworks, thereby providing abstract, conceptual understanding of the studied phenomena' (Charmaz 2006:6). This might help create a shared understanding between coaches and leaders.

Suddaby (2006) has described GT as a 'pragmatic approach' and most suited to efforts to understand the process by which actors construct meaning out of intersubjective experience' (p634). 'Usefulness' is also highlighted as a key element for a GT study (Strauss and Corbin 1998). This alignment with usefulness and the construction of meaning showed a clear synergy with my pragmatic constructivist position supporting the decision to adopt a GT approach.

The identification of GT as an approach did not however entirely resolve the question of methodology due to the ongoing debate in the literature about the true nature of GT (Bryant 2009). Mills et al. (2006) distinguish between *traditional* and *evolved* GT identifying a number of key differences between the two. It is proposed that traditional GT as conceived by Glaser has an embedded assumption of discovering a 'real' reality that emerges from the data. Mills et al. (2006) report that evolved GT as conceived by Strauss and Corbin (1998) takes a clearly constructivist position and reflects the pragmatic philosophical tradition, a position supported by other authors (Bryant 2009). Such a constructivist approach to GT is most clearly seen in the work of Charmaz (2006) whose approach will be adopted for this study since it most clearly matches my personal philosophy.

3.3.1 Research plan

The aim of the research is to answer the question 'What is the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders?' In adopting the constructivist GT position there is an assumption that 'society, reality and self are constructed' (Charmaz 2006:7) by the *actors*. The *actors* in this process are leaders who have had coaching and coaches who work with leaders. The cyclic and iterative nature of GT suggested a design in two stages gathering data from both leaders and coaches.

Stage one sought to gain the leadership perspective of the role of coaching in resilience. This discussion would require an understanding of resilience but to impose a definition seemed contradictory to the philosophy of coaching. Coaching aims to work with the client perceptions, the coach seeks to understand and build a mutual understanding of the client reality. To avoid directing responses, interviews would need to start with a discussion of their experiences and meaning making of resilience. This was likely to generate experiences that proved challenging, and perhaps occasions when they were not feeling resilient. This led to a decision to use one to one interviews to allow rich descriptions in a confidential context since it was expected that some of the experiences reported might prove sensitive.

In stage 2 data were gathered from coaches on their experiences of working with resilience using the responses from leaders to inform the interview schedule. This was in line with the principle of theoretical sampling where 'decisions about which data should be collected next are determined by the theory that is being constructed' (Suddaby 2006).

3.3.2 Issues with GT and how to avoid them

In line with the emergent nature of GT, researchers are often advised to avoid engagement with the literature until after the data have been collected. This creates a paradox for the researcher; how can we know there is an area to research without first evaluating and searching existing literature? Suddaby (2006) explains this as a myth due to a misreading of the original texts. Dey (1999) highlights that there 'is a difference between an open mind and an empty head' (p251) so I have engaged with some literature and will explain my perspective on this point.

Firstly my reading has been about the concept of *resilience* to inform the study but not about *coaching and resilience* which is the focus of the study. The GT researcher still needs to establish that a gap in the literature exists, and had there been significant theoretical research on coaching for resilience this study would not be a GT study. Secondly, I would concur with Strauss and Corbin (1998) explaining that 'familiarity with relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data' (p49), help the researcher generate questions for respondents and identify useful areas to pursue. Wiener (2007) expresses a similar view, commenting when researching a fast moving area, staying up-to-date presents a greater challenge and new developments can significantly broaden horizons and 'enrich our interviews' (p299).

However, even if literature is only reviewed after data collection most researchers still come to a problem with prior knowledge or interest so will hold some initial position. Even without an initial position there remains a danger that the first interview will colour all those that follow, so the challenge for the researcher is more generic; how to avoid formulating and testing any potential hypothesis wherever it originated, even if unconsciously. Here the need for reflexivity and awareness is key. I have engaged in constant reflexivity through memos but also employed the principle of constant comparison, being sensitive to multiple meanings (McLeod 2001) in an effort to ensure quality.

The need to avoid preconceptions and forcing of categories is not the only challenge faced by the GT researcher and as Suddaby (2006) highlights GT is not easy or perfect. Many of the primary techniques appear simple yet are undoubtedly developmental improving with researcher experience. My own reflections and research memos catalogue clear progress of technique. However this serves to illustrate the interactive nature of the GT process and that dealing with individuals brings many unforeseen issues. For example while allowing one participant to describe their experiences it became clear that at times an alternative personal agenda was on display: One where the participant was playing a role. A recognition of such events improved my subsequent interviewing but GT is by its nature at the mercy of the interactive process that requires the researcher to develop a tacit knowledge but to remain flexible. This may open GT up to the charge of being at best inconsistent and at worst an excuse for an absence of methodology where anything goes (Suddaby 2006). Charmaz (2006) answers this point by describing GT as a set of principles and practices, not as prescription or packages' (p9). It is therefore vital that the reader understands why decisions were made and how GT principles have been applied in this study.

3.4 Sample and recruitment

This section will explain how the study was conducted and describe some of the issues encountered.

The study was based on data from two sources, leaders and coaches. In stage 1 eight leaders who had been coached were interviewed individually about their experiences of resilience. This was followed by individual interviews with eight executive coaches in stage 2. Since the topic of resilience is somewhat abstract it was decided to use a pictorial representation (concept map) to facilitate discussion that will be detailed below.

Bryman advises to sample in terms of what is relevant to and meaningful for your theory' (2008:416). This meant it was important that participants had experience of the phenomena under consideration (Morse 2007) so they could discuss their own experiences and thus contribute to a theory truly grounded in reality. A non-probability sampling approach was adopted using a snowballing approach (Bryman 2008). Such a sample aims to identify a small number of individuals with the requisite experience to contribute to theory building so can be considered a purposive sample (Robson 2002).

Coaches were approached through personal links, network meetings and external seminars or conferences and asked to recommend leaders who might take part. They were asked to consider past clients or acquaintances who were, or had been, in leadership positions and who;

- Completed coaching prior to Feb 2010 (even if subsequent coaching had taken place)
- Might have had experiences that required resilience
- Had the degree of self-awareness for discussing such a topic
- Had the time and interest to take part, and if possible were within one hour of Oxford

Being able to conduct interviews face-to-face was important to facilitate the use of the pictorial stimulus and to provide a more intimate setting given the potential sensitivity of the discussion topic. However this may have limited those who were prepared to take part by enforcing a perceived longer commitment.

All interested coaches received information about the study and a web-link for further details which could be forwarded to potential leader participants. It was made clear that matched pairs of leaders with their coaches were not required. Following this communication early in 2011 expressions of interest from both coaches and leaders were followed up.

Following the initial expression of interest all participants were thanked and sent the appropriate Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Appendices 8 and 9). They were then asked to confirm their involvement after reading the detail of what was required ensuring fully informed consent. Following this confirmation an interview date, time and place was agreed usually by e-mail.

One or two days before the agreed date, a final reminder was sent to participants confirming the meeting. This final mail was amended after the first interview to include some preparation questions after participant feedback expressing a desire for some thinking time ahead of the interview. This presented a potential tension in wishing to ensure participants did not feel confused by the questions on the day, but avoiding them presenting fully formed answers that had been discussed with others. The decision was to include some questions for them to think about but to deliver these very close to the meeting date to avoid over analysis.

A total of eight leaders were recruited through seven different coaches, three of the leaders had been coached by the coach who recommended them. The remaining

five had completed some form of coaching but not with the person who directed them to the study. This minimised confidentiality issues. None of the leaders were known to me prior to the research avoiding potential influences on the data.

In selecting the final leadership sample for interview the aim was to achieve a diverse group of individuals who were in senior leadership positions managing a team/department or organisation. This would give a range of views about resilience and minimise any industry specific challenges arising within the data. The aim was to learn lessons useful across leadership rather than be subject to issues unique to perhaps the banking or IT sector. The final leadership sample included two females and six males. Two came from higher education, one worked for a national charity and the remaining five worked in the private sector. This gave a broad range of perspectives in line with the exploratory nature of this study. In practice, both accessibility and availability also played a role in the final selection since leaders in such positions are often difficult to engage in such studies. This must be considered when evaluating the data as the leaders who took part may share an interest in resilience and coaching that is not common to their peers.

In selecting coaches for interview I was concerned that if coaches had been trained in only one particular philosophy (e.g. solution-focused) the data may be coloured by the language and approach of this specific type of coaching. To minimise this effect and potentially partisan language, only coaches who had attended the PG Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice at Oxford Brookes University were recruited. This ensured that all the coaches had been exposed to a broad range of philosophical positions, minimising but not eliminating the problem. However this meant that I was acquainted with all the coaches although none were still studying at the time of the research. This may have made them more responsive but brings a potential limitation of collusion. I tried to minimise this by selecting coaches less well known to me who often practice outside my local area reducing the chances of familiarity. I was also conscious of maintaining the researcher role in interviews, adhering to the interview schedule and not referring to our common background.

Of the eight coaches interviewed one had been involved in coaching participants. Ideally there would have been no direct links between participants however to maximise diversity I accepted an offer to take part from one male coach who had been coach to two leader participants: Thus increasing the male coaches to two. A summary of the participants is included in Appendix 1.

The sampling strategy was successful in identifying leaders with appropriate experience who proved to be insightful. This may be because coaches were

effectively pre-selecting individuals who they felt had the requisite awareness and interest to contribute to the research. However this pre-selection brings drawbacks. It is likely coaches only recommended individuals who gained from coaching and perhaps those who had a positive connection to them or coaching. This might mean that the leaders interviewed reported more effective or successful coaching than a more diverse sample. Since I had requested individuals with experiences of resilience, the group interviewed may not be representative of the majority of leaders. They might be more fragile psychologically, more willing to seek support or be experiencing a particular life transition which could influence the subsequent themes that emerged. Finally, since coaching took place some time before the study, recommendations would have been limited to those that coaches were still in touch with. This may reflect a special connection of some kind that I might not be aware of with a potential impact on data.

Such a recruitment process will have limitations by restricting the sample group as those agreeing to take part may share certain characteristics, such as exhibiting a more positive approach to research and being geographically based in the south of England. However a positive commitment might also be a valuable feature in obtaining good quality data by filtering out those who may not mentally devote much effort to the interview. Nevertheless such issues need to be acknowledged and will be addressed within the limitations of the study.

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Interview process

Interviews were carried out at a location of participant choice and in line with best practice advice (Robson 2002). The interview has been criticised for its overuse in qualitative research (Silverman 2007) but is a common method for gathering data in grounded theory. Interviews were an appropriate way to elicit participant meaning making in this case because the interactive nature of the interview would allow for clarification questions which may arise with such an undefined concept.

A pilot interview was conducted and raised a number of procedural improvements that were subsequently made. For example, the discussion continued after the tape had been switched off and I was conscious of the hand on the door' phenomenon (Robson 2002). Future interviews minimised this effect by switching off the equipment on leaving the room.

In listening to the first recording I realised that my nerves were causing me to ramble, this resulted in over-talking which made transcription difficult. I concluded that my attempts to make participants feel at ease and my feelings of debt to them for taking part were creating a submissive rambling dialogue. Subsequent interviews demonstrated a more relaxed approach together with a more effective interview schedule that resulted in more coherent data. The interview schedule provided a framework for each interview but continued to evolve and change after each interview in line with the GT approach. Two interview schedules are shown in Appendix 2 showing examples of changes made.

A significant consideration in the interview introduction was how to build trust with the interviewee in such a short space of time. Trust and confidentiality are vital to obtaining quality data when discussing sensitive issues (Goulding 2002). To support this I gave some background about myself and reiterated the confidentiality of the interview. However the fact that each participant had been asked to participate or recommended by a coach enabled that trust to develop quickly. I was effectively able to 'ride on the back' of the trust embodied in the previous relationship. This is an interesting potential consideration when gathering sensitive data. In such cases a snowball sampling strategy may confer additional benefits beyond purely identifying people with the right experience.

3.5.2 Stage 1 – Leader interviews

The aim of the interviews with leaders was to gain their perspective on resilience and to establish what they felt the role of coaching had been in their resilience. The interview followed a semi-structured format in three parts, shown below. Open questions were used to support data richness; what Charmaz (2006) refers to as an 'intensive interview' that 'permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic or experience' (p25).

- a) Understanding resilience – meaning of resilience, description of experiences
- b) Concept map – experiences that support or question map construction
- c) Coaching and resilience – experiences from coaching

The interview started by asking leaders to explain what the term 'resilience' meant for them. Since this concept might be hard to articulate two techniques were used to facilitate this discussion. Firstly, participants were asked to describe concrete experiences where they felt they were or were not resilient and they were encouraged to reflect on actual events. Secondly, and only after this initial

discussion, participants were shown a conceptual map (CM) of resilience. This acted as a further catalyst for discussion before moving on to the third phase to discuss the role of coaching in their resilience. The full interview schedule is shown in Appendix 2:

The idea of the concept map is drawn from the Conceptual Encounter (CE) methodology proposed by de Rivera (1981, 2006). As a methodology CE is a process by which a researcher can elucidate complex phenomena. In this study CE was used as a method to facilitate discussion and to clarify what resilience means for leadership. It involved creating a pictorial representation of the concept based on literature and personal experience. The aim is then to ask participants to discuss concrete examples of 'resilience' so the experience described can be incorporated within the pictorial representation. In this case the CM was used to represent resilience and *not* a theory of coaching and resilience and was amended after each leader interview. The CM therefore evolved with each interview and is consistent with the iterative nature of GT. The initial concept map is shown below in Fig.3.2 and subsequent iterations of the CM are in Chapter 4.

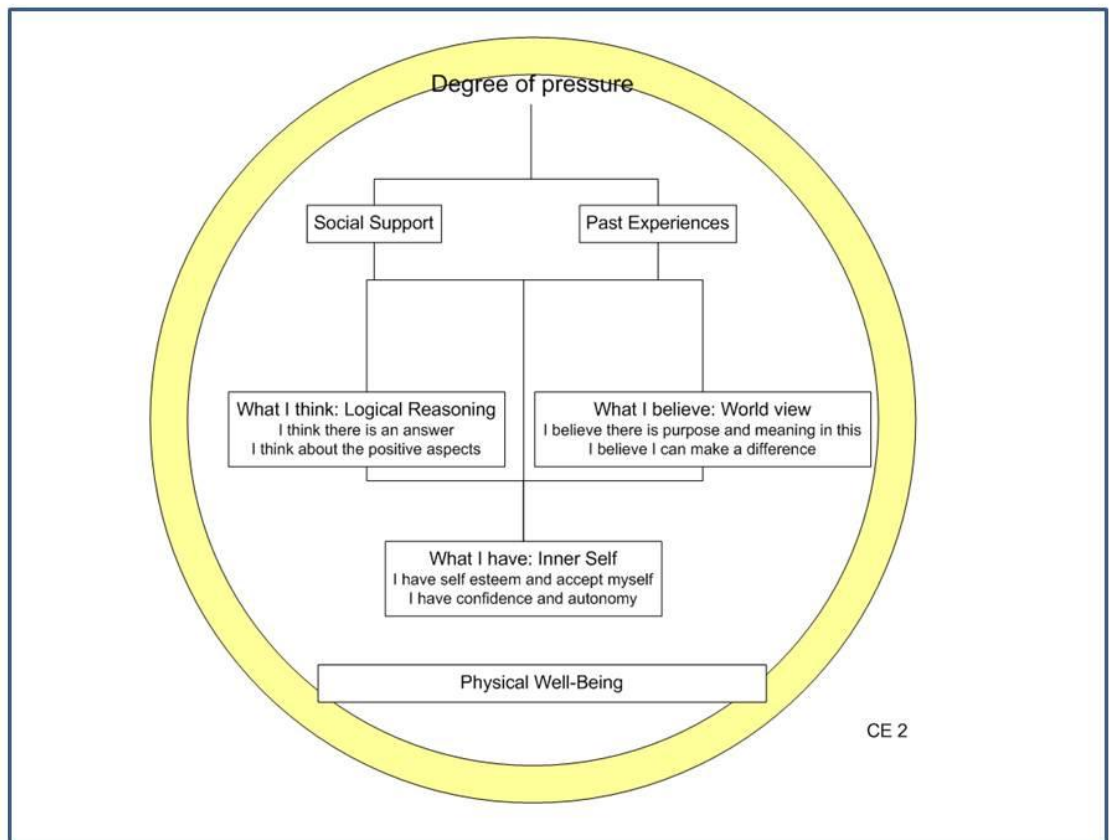


Fig. 3.2 Initial Concept Map

To generate the starting map the researcher draws from their own experiences and existing knowledge which creates a potential tension with the GT method. As already highlighted in this chapter any researcher will bring preconceptions to the research process but by making them explicit for the participants there is a danger of manufacturing data in line with existing ideas. However one could also argue that by committing them to paper for deconstruction and analysis by participants those preconceptions are more open to challenge than if they remain implicit. The CM proved a valuable interview stimulus which evolved significantly so I feel I was transparent and ethical in its use and do not feel it compromised the GT approach. From the learning on this project I feel it could be a complimentary data collection tool in GT when the topic under discussion proves somewhat abstract or the participants might benefit from a stimulus to generate further thinking. The main danger is in ensuring the construction and labelling is not leading participants.

Each leadership interview generated an updated concept map of resilience and text data for transcription. The Stage 1 process is shown in Fig.3.3.

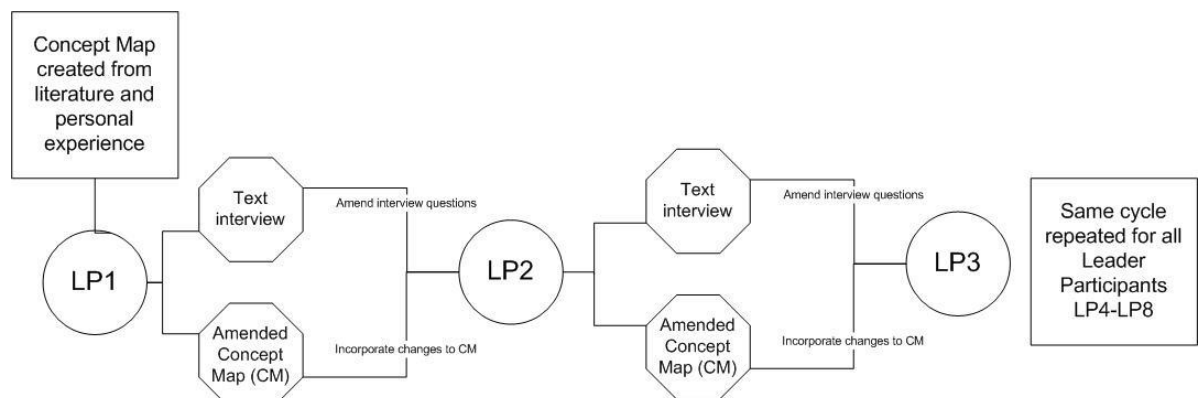


Fig. 3.3 Stage 1 process outline (LP = Leader Participant)

Interviews took place between March and October 2011 to allow initial coding between interviews which would generate additional theoretical sensitivity in subsequent data collection.

3.5.3 Stage 2 – Coach interviews

In stage 2 coaches were interviewed about their experiences of working with resilience. Again interviews followed three phases, shown below, but the concept map was presented only in the last phase to ensure examples from coaching practice were captured *before* any model was presented. This would minimise the chances of coaches discussing only experiences in line with the concept map.

- a) Understanding resilience – meaning of resilience
- b) Coaching and resilience – experiences from coaching
- c) Concept map – experiences that support or question map construction

The process was otherwise similar to that employed with leaders where the interview schedule (Appendix 3) was adapted as the data collection progressed, demonstrating theoretical sampling (Goulding 2002). However the concept map was used only as a discussion document, the CM did not change with input from the coaches as it was designed to elucidate only the leadership perspective of resilience. The Stage 2 process is shown in Fig.3.4.

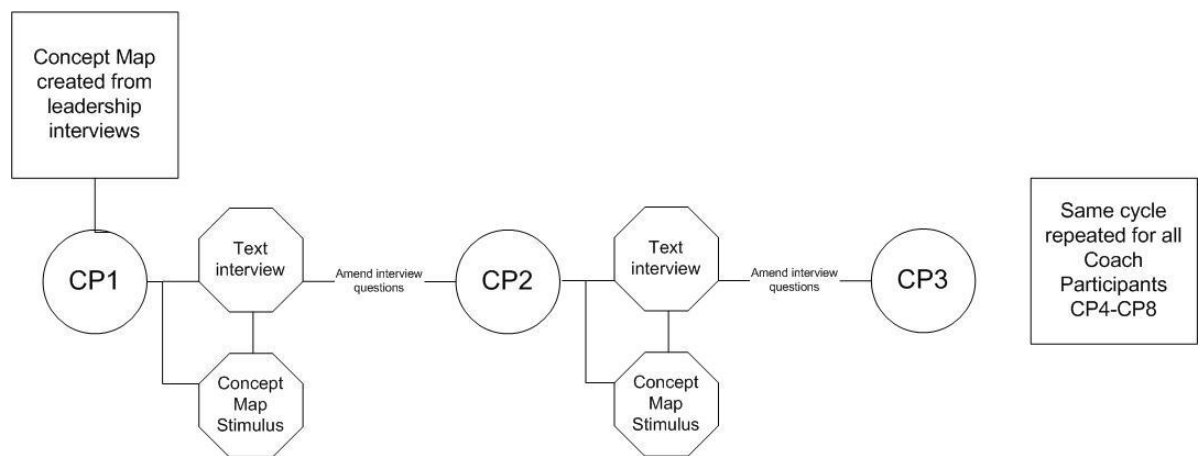


Fig. 3.4 Stage 2 process outline (CP = Coach Participant)

GT is based on collecting data until saturation is reached. In practice this means that no new information seems to emerge during coding' (Strauss and Corbin 1998:136). Dey (1999:116) draws attention to the fact that it is the capacity of the data to generate new ideas that is exhausted here, and not the accumulation of evidence to support those ideas.' McLeod (2001) advises a number of between eight and twenty participants is common for GT. By completing initial coding while data is gathered it is possible to establish when saturation is achieved as no new nodes emerge. However in practice true saturation might be hard to claim for a constructivist. This is well explained by Strauss and Corbin (1998) who describe a continuum rather than a finish line: In reality if one looked long and hard enough, one would always find additional properties or dimensions.' (p136). There is also the possibility of new and unexpected information arising (Dey 1999). The issue of saturation must therefore be a researcher decision driven by the research process

and the philosophical position. For the pragmatist, saturation can be claimed when the data reaches a point of being useful to enlighten the research question. It cannot be judged that the data collected fully represent the phenomena from an infinite number of perspectives, but the data can reach a point of providing valuable knowledge that can be useful to practice. Saturation has therefore been interpreted as the point at which there is something substantive to say about the phenomenon' (Locke 2000).

3.5.4 Interview issues

The interview process adopted followed the intensive interview checklist suggested by Charmaz (2006) requiring that the interviewer's questions ask the participant to describe and reflect upon his or her experiences in ways that seldom occur in everyday life' (Charmaz 2006:26).

Such an approach raises two potential issues. The first is a potential blurring of the researcher and coaching role due to the overlap of skills used. The coach uses these skills in service of the client and follows the client agenda. In contrast the researcher must remain focused on the research question, and may need to draw the topic back to the research focus without directing the content. This highlights the second potential issue that in directing the interview I was effectively manufacturing data rather than finding it as described by Silverman (2007). However, within this context I would argue that I neither manufacture nor find data. Rather the co-constructed understanding emerges from the conversation. This iterative building process is a core element of constructivist grounded theory (Mills et al. 2006). This position is well summarised by Strübing (2007):

Grounded theory treats data as the representational material of reality that is under construction. In the case of empirical research this construction involves not only the actors in the field under scrutiny but also the researchers themselves. (p584)

It follows that the findings reflect a joint meaning making by both researcher and participant, where the researcher is author not witness to the data collected (Willig 2008). Yet not all grounded theorists agree with this perspective. Glaser (2002) is clear on the issue:

When I say that some data is interpreted, I mean the participant not only tells what is going on, but tells the researcher how to view it correctly—his/her way. I do not mean that they are mutually built up interpretations. Adding his or her interpretations would be an unwarranted intrusion of the researcher.

Referring to this interpretation as an intrusion does not appear to reflect the experience of the participants which seem to clearly indicate a joint process at work. One leader participant drew specific attention to the co-constructed meaning that was taking place during the interview.

„...that's interesting because it's just made me see something..... that I tend to have coaching for myself [...] but remembering that there's the resilience of the role as well almost, I hadn't sort of fully thought that out, but that's just occurred to me that that's a theme. {Rachel}

It is clear that the meaning making is occurring as part of the interview process as she comes to new realisations from our discussion. A number of other interviews demonstrated similar patterns. While questions were open and not leading it is possible that my interventions created this realisation. However a pure listening approach in coaching (Kline 1999) is still effective in precipitating new realisations that would not have emerged without the interaction. The emerging picture is a feature of the co-constructed situation and the situational dynamic.

This co-construction was further helped by sharing the CM stimulus which created a mutual focus for discussion. This did represent a departure from standard GT methodology but as Charmaz (2006) highlights Choose methods that help you answer your questions with ingenuity and incisiveness (p15). As such the Conceptual Encounter methodology was congruent with the iterative nature of GT and proved a valuable interview catalyst.

Prior to the first interview, an initial concept map was created from reading and thinking about resilience. This approach can be considered a way to sensitise the research rather than in conflict with the inductive nature of GT (Goulding 2002). On presentation of the CM I was careful to explain that I wanted to discuss their personal experiences in the context of the CM. This was followed by a specific request to think of experiences that did not fit the map, to enable a check through the concept of negative incidence (Goulding 2002). The CM was amended after each leader interview and presented in its new form at the next interview, mirroring the iterative nature of GT. This process embodies the idea that concepts evolve through the research process and that data collection and analysis go hand in hand. This process supports a constructivist approach and makes the participants true co-researchers.

Using interview as the main form of data collection brings an assumption that language is a valuable way to gather knowledge about participant experience.

However language can be fraught with confounding factors. The individual may fail to express the true nature of the experience due to limited vocabulary or the inadequacy of words to convey feelings. Participants might edit expressions to maintain a self-image. In transmission, intonation or delivery can convey a different meaning to the listener. Finally the listener may attach very different meaning to words used by the speaker. It is acknowledged that language is understood to be a medium that can create only a particular view of reality' (Locke 2000:5). However, since this study seeks to understand the constructed reality of the experience I feel the use of participant language alone provides valid data.

It would be misguided to claim within the intensive interview method that the participants can independently create an inductive theory. Both parties bring a perspective as Strübing (2007) notes jects are constituted solely through our activity.....this activity inevitably involves choices based on (known or unknown) preconceptions' (p584). It is not possible to divorce the researcher from the experience or the paradigm they bring to the research. Yet it is that very experience that can add a unique perspective to the data and reveal new aspects. Here we see a parallel with coaching. Through the process of vocalization and social interchange a meaning and understanding emerges that was not previously visible to either party. This method is therefore valuable for uncovering new knowledge that might not be accessible through other means such as observation. This is akin to mining for rock. We can observe a rock face by exposing it to view but in order to make the rock useful we need to extract it with a method that makes the output of a size and shape to be applied in practice. We therefore use dynamite for extraction. It does change the nature of the output, but in a way that facilitates its use and application. I therefore feel that the use of the interview method is congruent with the research paradigm outlined. However in creating a new co-construction there is a likelihood that the participant emerges changed from the research process. As a researcher I therefore needed to be mindful of ethical guidelines ensuring no harm to participants as a result of my intervention.

3.5.5 Ethics

The one-to-one interview presents some ethical issues that need to be acknowledged. Questions can become intrusive and lead to sensitive topics of discussion, especially given the focus of this study. The participant can feel under duress to answer all the questions put or disclose more than they feel appropriate and this might be aggravated by the referral process from a trusted coach. The formal ethics process addressed many of the anticipated issues and it was

necessary to instigate some of the planned procedures. During interview five the participant became very distressed recounting a health scare following a hospital appointment. The interview and the recording was stopped. Following a short break I asked if she wanted to continue and we were able to resume following a short interlude. I later reflected on this decision since the event may have yielded valuable data on the topic of resilience. However since the interview was based on leadership resilience and this event was causing significant distress it was inappropriate to force its inclusion in the data. I was also mindful that 'participant comfort level has higher priority than obtaining juicy data' (Charmaz 2006:30).

This is a pertinent example of how ethical procedures were implemented in this study. However the ethical commitment goes well beyond the interview process and should infuse all aspects of research, from integrity in selection of participants to a transparent and accurate account of data collected. Throughout the process participants and stakeholders must be protected and all ethical requirements and data protection practices were in line with University guidelines. At least one leader asked explicitly to have the organisational name removed but it is vital to be aware of such sensitivities even if not specifically stated by participants. Pseudonyms have been used for all quotes printed. Throughout the research process I have tried to operate with honesty and integrity and have been mindful of the aspects relevant at each stage as highlighted by Saunders et al. (2007). This has been achieved by constant self questioning of my own choices and decisions and by considering how I might unwittingly influence the process engaging in ongoing reflexivity.

3.6 Reflexivity

Qualitative researchers are not 'passive receptacles into which data are poured' (Charmaz 2006:15) but are often referred to as the instrument of measurement (Patton 2002, Goulding 2002). For the grounded theory researcher this is especially pertinent as Charmaz (2006) notes;

..we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices (p10)

Our ability to leave behind our existing beliefs and knowledge base has been researched as the 'insider/outsider' concept (Le Gallais 2008). This often refers to employees researching their own organisation when as a member of the 'in-group' the researcher's knowledge of past and present histories can affect the research

(Le Gallais 2008). It could be argued that investigating any psychological phenomena brings an indisputable insider perspective that cannot be avoided. Researcher experience has created the interest, the motivation, the perspective and the research questions so may demonstrate partiality. Yet it is exactly that experience that may enlighten others. The researcher's unique contribution is their own meaning making of the phenomena and to attempt to lose that in search of pure objectivity as an outsider might obscure areas of knowledge. As Wolcott (1994) notes 'nothing becomes data without the intervention of the researcher' (p3). However there is a danger that individual meaning making becomes researcher bias. No individual comes to research as a blank canvas so we need a way to mediate the potential impact, enabling others to assess the validity of the research with full knowledge of the likely researcher perspectives and influence. As Denscombe (2003) highlights:

There is a growing acceptance among those involved in qualitative data analysis that some biographical details about the researcher warrant inclusion as part of the analysis, thus allowing the writer to explore the ways in which he or she feels personal experiences and values might influence matters.....The analysis of qualitative research data calls for a reflexive account by the researcher concerning the researcher's self and its impact on the research. (p212)

Reflexivity for me is therefore about raising awareness but not discounting the insight that it brings. To be reflexive we need to be aware of our personal responses and to be able to make choices about how to use them' (Etherington 2004:19). There is still significant discussion about what reflexivity involves and its relationship to reflection (Etherington 2004). I describe the difference like being by a swimming pool. I can reflect on the pool, its colour, size and consider what it felt like when I was swimming in it yesterday. This process of reflection enables me to review and reflect. However if I get into the pool I can be reflexive. I can feel the temperature of the water, I am aware of the current when others enter the water. While in the water, the water has an impact on me, but similarly I affect the water. I contribute heat to it; I displace some volume within it. These are different considerations to those I had while on the edge looking in. This is the challenge for me as a reflexive researcher. To understand the pool I am in, appreciate the impact I have on it, and the relationship it has with me and be able to explain this to the reader.

But even such self-insight can be prone to distortion (Dunning 2006) and researchers can be subject to self-reporting errors. It is therefore important for the researcher to demonstrate reflexivity and for the reader to assess the information

presented. As a researcher I may only be capable of stating my perspectives and questioning my own awareness of the research process. I am aware that my research choices are framed by my pragmatic perspective and choosing leaders' is my attempt to make the problem of interest to the business community, a logical step for a business school employee. These underpinning desires and objectives for the future will affect how I take the study forward and need to be explained so the reader can question and fully evaluate the findings from an informed position.

I am aware that I create a strong impact on my data. Through my questions, my interactions and my manner I am likely to influence the data collected. Fishman (1999) reports a study where 26% of the variation in therapeutic outcomes was determined by the therapist/patient relationship. The researcher/participant relationship is likely to be no less influential. My past experiences and the story with which I started give me a unique perspective that is likely to influence what I ask and how I attend to answers. That may well drive' the participant down a particular route. So while transcript analysis can demonstrate best practice, it cannot compensate for the interaction achieved in the moment. Transference and counter-transference are examples of interactive factors that can affect the interchange significantly yet could remain hidden within a transcript. While steps can be taken to limit such process impacts it will be impossible to become not me' and if I were to try, I might remove the very value of my perspective. The opportunity for empathy trails the danger of collusion in its wake.

Consider the grounded theory researcher like a painter rather than a scientist. The style of painting is the artist's defined epistemology, both Picasso and Monet thought their painting a reflection of reality yet neither may represent what others see. However, even two traditional painters can be given the same palette of colours and produce a very different output. With the same palette of browns Turner is likely to produce a landscape while Rembrandt a portrait. The qualitative researcher cannot leave behind their past, their preferences or their predispositions.

However, this does not mean that data will inevitably be subjective, intuitive and value laden' as Goulding (2002) reports that some think. I concur with her assertion that such views are a rather condescending view of the researcher'. Any research process relies to some degree on the discipline of the researcher to follow best practice and the rigour of the academic process. I cannot un-know' that which I know or the way I know it. So I need to be explicit about the taken-for-granted assumptions that frame my view of the world. This means including autobiographical information (Patton 2002) throughout to help the reader evaluate

the value of this study in their context. Ultimately through the process I need to build credibility and trust to support the quality and faith the reader can have in the study.

3.7 Data management

I will now explain how data was managed and analysed post interviews.

3.7.1 Post interview data collection

Following each interview I completed a reflective memo in three sections. Firstly, detailing improvements to the process, for example the decision to send out questions prior to the interview. Secondly on interview content, how effectively questions met the needs of the research which informed subsequent interview schedules. For example, after LP2 values emerged as important and were followed up with future participants. Finally I reflected on the interaction and my role as a researcher. One example was becoming aware that I needed to ensure I asked about experience not thoughts'. My initial interviews were in danger of gathering data about thinking rather than personal experience and this may generate stereotypes rather than individual meaning, revealing little.

3.7.2 Data coding

Researcher transcription proved to take longer than the time available between interviews. To avoid delaying the process or deterring potential participants a transcription service was used. It could be argued that this decision limited my engagement with the data. However my experience was quite the contrary. In transcribing interviews with very poor typing skills I became frustrated, and bored with the raw data. There was a danger that once transcribed I assumed I knew what was said and failed to gain a broader perspective on the tone and meaning. Using the transcription service made me far more excited and interested to engage with the data. This also made me more vigilant as it was necessary to check each transcription against the digital audio as a number of errors and omissions were identified. Each transcription was then loaded into NVivo for preliminary analysis.

The analysis process was based on the stages advocated by Charmaz (2006) of 'initial coding', 'focused coding' and 'axial coding' to reveal themes:culminating in 'theoretical coding' to generate the ultimate theoretical framework. However the initial three stages were not discrete activities, rather they fused into an evolving synthesis of data, with all stages evident throughout the analysis. This process is

well described by Locke (2000), Researchers would be setting themselves up for disappointment if they expected analysis to advance according to a linear pattern' (p46).

Initial coding

Initial coding involved a broad sweep of the data reading each interview in sequence and deciding what to code and where to code it. Larger segments of data more effectively retained meaning so proved preferable to line-by-line coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Generally only participant comments were coded unless the interviewer question was needed. On occasion participants explained in great depth an event that was paraphrased which drew the response yes, that's right'. This process served as a member check' (Robson 2002) and in such cases both the question and the answer were coded.

This initial coding process highlighted areas that needed further investigation with future participants. For example, on a number of occasions the experience described was actually the trigger to take up coaching. This was highlighted by initial coding, so a question was added to investigate what brought the participant to coaching, demonstrating theoretical sensitivity. I was aware of the language used (Charmaz 2006) and the need to gain explanations of often well-known' terms such as sounding board'. This ensured I minimised the chances of my own preconceptions influencing data analysis by gaining explicit explanations from participants.

In defining where' to code, the workspace in NVivo started empty to ensure I did not force or predefine my data. This made initial coding slow. Each statement was evaluated to assess what is this about?' I allowed my interpretations to dictate the initial coding frames. In NVivo these are called *nodes* so this term will be used to refer to a group of statements with a common thread, and verbatim node titles used below are shown in italics. In creating the node names I tried to follow the advice of using gerunds (Charmaz 2006) to preserve the action orientation and the participant perspective. I was conscious of the danger of turning the nodes into topics that would lose their experiential nature. However this was not always possible as certain holistic topics emerged that required more in depth analysis later e.g. values. An extensive list of free nodes was generated as recommended by Bazeley (2007) to capture ideas (and text) without forcing structure too early' (p85).

As each subsequent interview was coded the requirement to stay close to the data and to remain as open as possible' (Holton 2007) created a large number of nodes and navigation was facilitated by using a tree structure and a *Miscellaneous* section. As new topics emerged they were extracted from the *Miscellaneous* heading to create an independent category. Coding to multiple nodes was common, and consistent coding into similar nodes highlighted the need to review if the relevant nodes should be merged. However in initial coding, breadth was vital to allow maximum choice for future coding.

The use of NVivo for initial coding provided a useful self-check as each time the interview is analysed the existing coding can be hidden from view. This means that as a single researcher it is possible to check previous coding each time the transcript is read. I could effectively ask the same question each time I entered the data set which increased validity.

Focused coding

When every transcript had been coded once, each transcript was reviewed in a random order against the completed node structure. This is important because the nodes grew as transcripts are analysed so topics not coded from the first interview, because they were missed or minor, may still have been raised by the participant. For example the node managing resources' emerged only as a major topic after LP5 yet in reviewing LP3 I found words such as depleted' and topup' and I've got limited resources' and in LP2 a reference to resilience as fuel'. So while this topic did not emerge from LP2 or LP3 it clearly had some resonance for these participants. This stage was therefore characterised as coding with a focus in mind. Each interview was effectively re-coded and existing coding within categories was also reviewed.

Focused coding also allowed for a review of any node with a single reference to assess if a separate node was appropriate. This constant comparison is vital to support validity and the conceptual collapsing of data to create themes. This must be balanced with the potential finding that resilience may have strong individual variability. For example, Expressing concerns honestly' was a node within *„How coaching helped“* which had only one reference. This was merged into *„Disclosing or listening to feelings“*. Yet *„Feeling safe environment“* remained as a discrete node, with only one reference. It was at this point it became necessary to create a Coding Log to keep track of evolving data and the audit trail required for writing up.

In reviewing established guidance on GT there was little advice on maintaining the audit trail. While there were extensive suggestions on memo writing (Lempert 2007) and the coding process, there seemed little to guide the novice researcher through the process of constant comparison required by GT. Through constant comparison categories evolve, move, merge and may change significantly. A coding log can date and list all the changes, recording researcher development of thinking but it is easy to become engrossed and forget to log the changes made.

Researcher positionality (Lempert 2007) is integral to theory development so to assist the reader in understanding and following a transparent process I would argue code lists should be provided for each stage of analysis. With the advent of qualitative analysis software it is relatively easy to export and freeze a view of the coding structure without the need to maintain multiple file copies. I would therefore recommend that the process of freezing would be a valuable addition to the coding process of GT. These can then serve as milestones alongside memos.

Axial coding

This coding stage involved structuring the emergent categories, looking for the main axes around which data rotated and was often done manually. Links and common themes start to emerge that create coherent form. For example in coding How the coach helped five clear overarching themes emerged from the 31 nodes, shown by the manual annotations in Appendix 5. Common characteristics started to emerge between nodes that resulted in the five ultimate groupings.

For example many of the nodes reflected internal feelings such as „*Feeling validated*“ or „*Realizing it’s not my fault*“. This was in contrast to „*Getting honest feedback*“ or „*Providing a sounding board*“ that were a contribution from the outside and linked to the relationship. Five major groupings could account for all the nodes which were the eventual themes for How coaching helped. The emergence of these themes built my trust in the process and I became confident that I was allowing the data to emerge and not forcing categories. This was also highlighted by the emergence of a number of topics that were both unexpected and beyond the literature reviewed.

The overall analysis process is summarised in Fig.3.5. The initial coding of each participant’s data informed the subsequent interview. Each participant contributed their own perspective as shown by the coloured squares. During focused coding

these naturally occurring groupings are reviewed to create patterns. It was then possible to return to the individual data looking for further instances, example or contradictions.

Once the focused codes are felt to truly represent the data it is possible to look for a higher level of abstraction and any links that exist between the focused codes. These links enable themes to form, the axes around which the data pivots. These overarching themes formed the basis of the emerging grounded theory by way of theoretical coding.

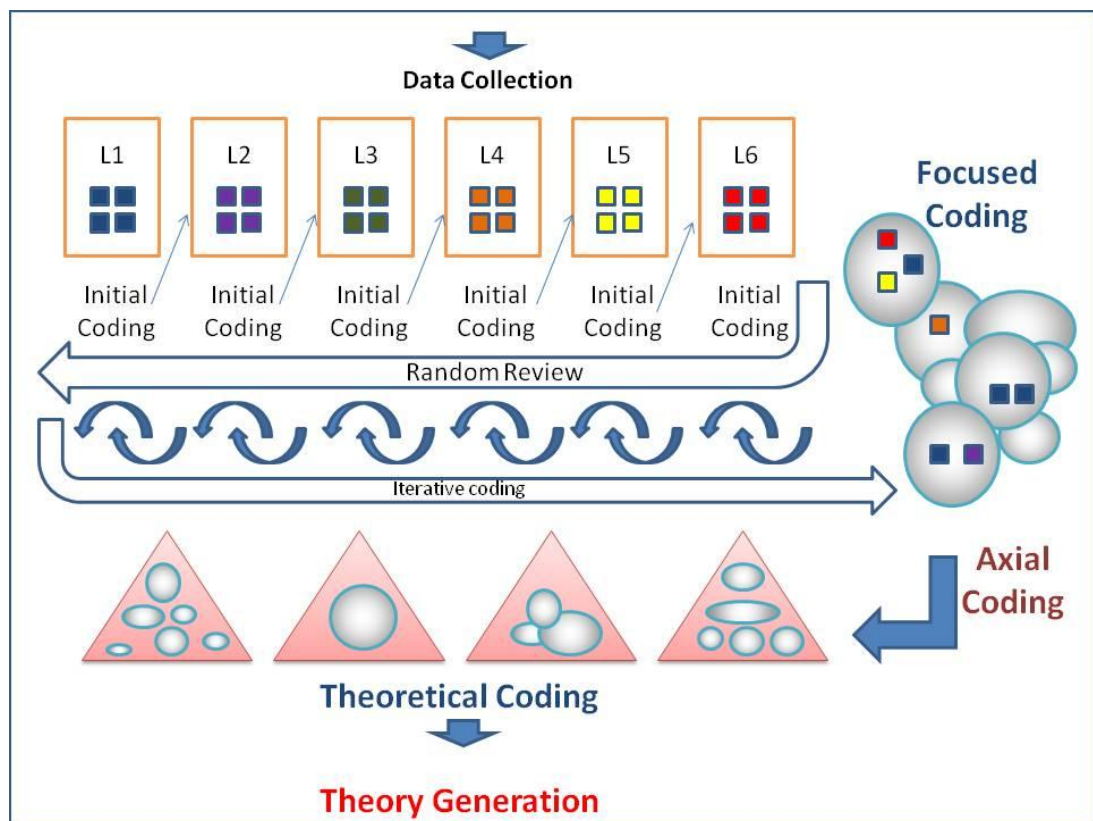


Fig. 3.5 Analysis process

This theory consists of plausible relationships among concepts and sets of concepts' (Strauss and Corbin 1998) but should not be seen as permanent reflections of reality. Since the pragmatist sees reality as nowhere else but in active experience' (Strübing 2007:583) it follows that theories will be by nature evolving and transient.

3.7.3 Memos

Throughout the coding process memos provided questions to follow or lines of investigation to pursue. The role of memos in GT is vital (Goulding 2002) to capture emerging ideas. The reflective memos following interviews informed the ongoing data collection process. During data analysis memos captured thoughts and ideas to investigate, enhancing theoretical sensitivity. This included noting additional literature for investigation as well as recording thoughts about emerging data. Memos are an integral part of the GT methodology and help to generate relationships, abstract integrative frameworks and more general problems' (Goulding 2002:65).

3.8 Qualitative validity and reliability

In order to demonstrate quality, validity and reliability I will first summarise some of the approaches available to the qualitative researcher. I will then go on to explain how this study reflects best practice.

Ensuring the quality of qualitative data has proved challenging and is still the focus of considerable debate with a number of approaches proposed (Bryman 2008). One suggestion is to adopt the terms of the positivistic paradigm but to translate criteria into the language and philosophical assumptions of qualitative research in order to be convincing' (Mason 1996:145). An alternative approach is proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who establish parallel concepts that can be used to evaluate qualitative investigations. The criteria summarised in Table 2 are taken collectively to ensure **trustworthiness** of the research process.

Traditional Criteria	Lincoln and Guba 1985
Reliability	Dependability
External validity	Transferability
Objectivity	Confirmability
Internal validity	Credibility

Table 2 – Qualitative quality criteria - based on Lincoln and Guba 1985

Another alternative for assessing quality of qualitative data is to use comprehensive checklists. Examples can be found in McLeod (2001) and Bryman (2008). These are useful to guide research but no single checklist has yet been extensively adopted throughout the research community. This may be because they are seen as overly prescriptive and inconsistent with the philosophy of qualitative research (Bryman 2008).

Yet another approach is advocated by Jones et al. (2006) who proposed the concept of goodness of qualitative research (Fig.3.6). They explain the importance of a coherent rationale linking epistemology and the choice of methodology and methods. They assert that criteria become more specific according to epistemological views and methodological approaches' (Jones et al. 2006:120).

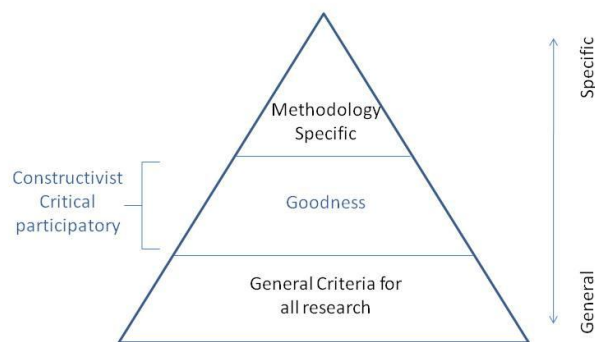


Fig. 3.6 Data Goodness - Jones, Torres and Arminio (2006:120)

This theme has been more extensively explained by Madill et al. (2000) who argue that qualitative research can only be evaluated in accordance with the logic and epistemological position of its authors. Charmaz (2006) for example, proposes that GT studies be evaluated against the criteria of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness.

However, McLeod (2001) points out that while such an argument may be discussed in academic circles it provides little reassurance to the practitioner community in such areas as psychotherapy. Such practitioners look to research to guide practice and may apply their own quite different criteria when evaluating research. This

demonstrates that ultimately any research is assessed by the reader who brings their own agenda, aims and values.

This brief discussion highlights that no single framework is consistently applied to qualitative data so it may ultimately come down to whether the researcher is plausible and trustworthy' (McLeod 2001). As a researcher then how do I persuade the reader of my integrity and honesty to gain the trust of the reader? As a researcher this requires *transparency*: transparency of thinking; transparency of process; and transparency of guiding principles. This will endorse the concept of goodness' but also support the criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985). My role as a researcher is therefore to give a comprehensive account of the project providing enough relevant and useful information for the reader to reach a conclusion on quality. Goodness can then be assessed by the reader if they see rationale and best practice demonstrated throughout the research.

In clearly detailing the process I hope to meet the criterion of *dependability* by following best practice and being explicit about when and where digressions occurred. To support the criterion of *transferability* I provide comprehensive thick descriptions of context and events that could affect how the reader makes sense of the information provided. I have engaged in reflexivity throughout the process with a research journal and memos to support *confirmability*. Each of these three criteria require a complete explication of the process, demonstrating best practice and explicit reflexivity. My challenge is therefore to give a transparent description of the research and to ensure my own taken-for-granted' assumptions are not left hidden in the shadows of my own beliefs.

The final criterion of *credibility* presents more difficulty where Lincoln and Guba (1985) advise respondent triangulation'. The interviews (of about an hour), were transcribed and then subject to a detailed analysis. The question then becomes at what point would best practice suggest participant validation is obtained?'

To send transcripts for checking presents the participants with a lengthy task to complete which may be seen as having little benefit and potentially deter respondents. To present final analytic categories may prove to be meaningless and far removed from what the first participant said, or remembers. At any point in between the data is unlikely to make sense to anyone! I would therefore question the value of this criterion in a grounded theory study. It seems more appropriate to use the general criteria proposed by Jones et al. (2006), evaluating the study against grounded theory best practice as has been done throughout this chapter.

This chapter has outlined the methodology used for the study and the next four chapters will discuss the findings. Chapter 4 uses the leader's voices to describe their understanding of resilience, and will also explain the evolution of the concept map. In Chapter 5 the leaders describe their experiences of coaching and what role they felt it played in their resilience.

In Chapter 6 coaches describe their experiences of working with leaders where they felt resilience might be relevant. They convey how they think of resilience in the leadership context and give examples of how they feel they coaching contributed to leadership resilience.

Chapter 7 will then discuss the overall findings by focusing on The Researcher's Voice.

Chapter 4 – The Leader’s Voice: Understanding Resilience

This chapter is divided into two sections:

4.1 Perception of Resilience

4.2 Evolution of the Concept Map

Section 4.1 conveys in the words of the eight leaders interviewed their experiential perception of resilience. Section 4.2 goes on to summarise the evolution of the concept map and how leaders amended and made sense of the map from their experiences.

The researcher role

The extensive data gathered generated many topics worthy of attention so the research aims and the epistemological paradigm have been used to guide the focus. While the aim is to present the true voice of participants, the pragmatic paradigm is likely to create a focus on aspects that might be of direct use to a coach working in this arena. The researcher decides *which* story to tell and this will shape a set of choices we will make regarding what to speak in detail about and what to ignore’ (Locke 2000:53).

I was therefore active in choosing the main characters’ for the story presented. This is not to say that other aspects were ignored, rather that as the researcher I inevitably made some choices. These choices have not been driven by volume of quotes or by number of nodes, but by relevance and usefulness in coaching. The full list of final leadership nodes is shown in Appendix 6 for transparency but the themes have emerged holistically and are often more than the sum of the parts, weaving their way through many codes and categories through theoretical coding.

4.1 Perception of resilience

The leadership experiences described yielded three key themes that may be of particular relevance to coaching.

4.1.1 Resilience as fuel

4.1.2 Resilience across time

4.1.3 Values matter

4.1.1 Resilience as fuel

The idea of resilience as a fuel source came through descriptions clearly and first appeared as a memo in initial coding reproduced below.

Memo 5/9/2011

Resilience reservoir

Consistent metaphor of resource & energy. Many speak of reservoir & draining it, or topping it up. R seems to be a depletable resource but links to values & motivation. Coach can work with this concept. What fills YOUR resilience tank, what depletes it?.....raising awareness

Look for energy, resource quotes.

Consistent resource terms were used to describe resilience such as energy, reserves, fuel and battery that eventually formed this theme. References were often made in the form of a metaphor, such as Mark, who likened resilience to a high performance car that needs regular maintenance and rest periods to perform at its best.

.... even Formula One cars don't run for days, they do a two hour race and that's it and then they're serviced and maintained and they go out again. And I think sometimes in an organisation like XXXX people think it's a marathon but it's made up of 100 metre sprints and you've got to keep doing it. I think everybody just needs to take the foot off the accelerator [...]......you can't run at 100% all the time because then if you're a car and you need to step out and overtake someone there's nothing left to do it. {Mark}

Interestingly, Rachel, who is in a completely different industry, used exactly the same words to describe leadership resilience. The feeling of sprinting conveys a sense of pressure that drains energy very quickly. Both identify that sprinting can only take place in short bursts, but Rachel introduced the idea of the marathon which requires endurance.

It's about dealing with the world as a marathon and not a series of sprints and saying that accepting that there will be periods when you do need to sprint. {Rachel}

This metaphor appeared in many transcripts and was described as a resource that needed to be topped up. Mark took this metaphor further by referring to his personal tank with a strong awareness of what drains and replenishes this tank.

The thing that most quickly replenishes my tank is when I can truly switch off, and it's not from just work because I don't call it work/life balance I call it passion balance because work... I love my job, absolutely love my job ...I'd do it for free, but I love a bunch of other things I do. {Mark}

Mark mentioned switching off as a way to regain energy, but others listed alternative ways to top up this resource. Some mention holiday or just support from others. James explained that success can also be restorative.

.....each time you're successful that tops up that resilience because it's topping up that self-esteem. {James}

Neil raised the idea of using others which links to the literature identifying social support as important in resilience. He still applied the energy metaphor but uses the support of others to sustain him.

It's like every time you get a bit down in the dumps you need an energy boost. [...] ... you've got a bit low you take an energy drink. Just going around to the lawyers and saying: are we really doing the right thing? And they say: yes, of course you are; [...]. That gives you that boost that you need. It's having reference points to make sure that you are thinking straight [...] those are the things that sustain you. {Neil}

Leaders therefore do not just list a set of actions they take to support their resilience, rather they see it as a system they need to manage. This was evident when coding revealed „*managing the resource*“ as part of the category of „*exercising conscious control*“. Jack explains very clearly that he has limited resources that need to be managed through conscious strategies.

I've got limited resources, I'm facing multiple problems, how do I try and adjust my mental attitude, are there other resources I can draw on, I might have to talk to someone to bounce ideas off, that sort of thing..... I suppose where I think there are things that people have been totally negative or you just can't get through things, I think that depletes my resilience. {Jack}

These descriptions appear to support the resource approach to resilience (Hobfoll 1989). The experiences show leaders are skilled at dealing with issues and are generally able to solve problems until there are too many issues to deal with. It is not the skills they lack but rather that the resources available to them to implement known strategies seem to run out.

Experiencing too much change, often in a short space of time or in multiple contexts was commonly highlighted as creating resilience issues. Leaders are well versed in

dealing with issues, being busy and facing challenge, it comes with the territory'. However when too many issues accumulate, frequently across multiple contexts, their normal resilience starts to fail, perhaps where demand starts to exceed supply.

Particularly difficult times are characterised by a perceived overload of events often stretching beyond the working context with no recovery time. Leaders end up with too many foci of attention with often taken-for-granted constants being at risk, such as family health. George reflected on a difficult time where his grandmother was very ill when things were difficult at work. This removed, for him, one of these taken-for-granted constants.

And in life I suppose there are those building blocks that you rely on to just be there, just the constants in your life, and then they change and it can knock you off kilter and I think that's what happened to me. {George}

Experiences where resilience was lacking therefore often resulted from a high degree of change over both work and personal situations that commonly persisted for some time. This is frequently described as becoming worn down as James did, continuing the fuel metaphor.

I lived in London, there was a set of buildings that were built right around the house, that really had an impact on me and I was extremely resilient to that. I was running around lots and lots of different houses, trying to get people's views on things, and my resilience was very slowly worn down over a period of time. {James}

This wearing down is associated with reduced motivation towards the current situation and often leads to a disconnection from the job role as explained by Jack who shifted his focus into getting an alternative job.

I suppose disaffected really you know, „cos you're lacking in motivation sort of thing, which I suppose that's why I moved. {Jack}

Here he decided to apply his resilience skills to a new challenge, one that he was motivated to address. What is unclear is the causal mechanisms involved. It could be that reduced motivation and engagement in a work role reduces the desire to apply any resilience capacity to the task. It could be that the wearing down of the resilience resource drains the system of motivational energy, or that both draw on a common energy pool. Alternatively motivation and resilience may both be affected by a third mediator, such as reduced perceived control. Whatever the cause, demotivation is the result and can lead to a disengagement from the situation.

However sometimes these events seem to lead to a state where leaders became disconnected from both people and their own experience.

Leaders reported disconnecting from people and from what is known and perceived. There is almost a denial of reality that impedes the resilience capabilities being engaged. Rachel describes shutting off the emotion and becoming distant from others, yet it is only when she reconnects and talks about the issues that she can work through it.

... when I'm not resilient I tend to be tearful, pessimistic, or if I then manage to put a brave face on it, snappy, distant. Distant actually is the common one. What I tend to do, in that sort of spiral of worry. I do shut it off and I particularly shut it off at home and I try not to talk about it, try and work through it and my husband says I'm distant, and then when it reaches the point of sort of crisis then I become tearful, then I'll talk about it, deal with the crisis and go up again. {Rachel}

Resilience is therefore experienced as an exhaustible energy system that needs replenishment and management. Leaders describe how high levels of change over sustained periods lead to a level of drain that exceeds supply. Under these circumstances individuals often withdraw and experience disengagement from the job, from others and from their emotions. This could perhaps reflect a survival mechanism to protect the individual and to create the recovery time required.

Further support for a resource model of resilience was also provided by a number of examples where despite knowing the skills of problem solving and emotion-focused coping, leaders found it hard to apply these in certain situations. For example, Amanda recounted a situation where she lost her son in a supermarket and expressed her complete inability to deal with this problem in the systematic way she might approach a work issue.

I mean by this stage I think I was a bit of a wreck actually. And I was, getting a little bit emotional and thinking... actually he's not a silly little boy, he wouldn't just go off with someone, so my kind of natural head's coming on. But it was not being suppressed by my unnatural head that was basically panicking. {Amanda}

This supports the idea that different issues result in a differential drain on the available resource depending on the value placed on the situation. This disabling experience might totally drain the resilience tank, making the use of even well practiced strategies impossible. This usually resilient leader was well versed in the skills of being positive and problem solving, yet she was unable to marshal them to

help her in this context. This example demonstrates that it is not simply a set of skills to be learnt and applied in difficult situations, rather far more complex factors are at work.

From a coaching perspective seeing resilience as a personal resource system or fuel tank could support resilience work with clients and may be a valuable metaphorical concept to use. This will be explored in subsequent chapters.

4.1.2 Resilience across time

The initial interview questions asked what resilience meant to the participant. Responses reflected many of the words frequently associated with resilience and often linked it with persistence. Neil gave a common example of a definition:

It's somebody who keeps on getting up when they're knocked down. Somebody that is persistent at achieving their goals in the face of adversity. That is really what resilience means to me. Somebody who doesn't take knock backs; but constantly reassesses, gets up and has another go. {Neil}

Neil mentions the concept of getting up' when knocked down in common with many definitions of resilience that talk of bounce-back' and the ability to manage perceptions or emotions in response to past events. These topics were prevalent in the data under such categories as „*managing my perceptions*“, „*managing emotions*“ or „*being adaptable and open minded*“. Leaders describe the importance of responding positively' to challenging or unexpected events. They often refer to it as a learning process' and talk of being flexible'. This demonstrates considerable synergy with previous research. Such language might suggest resilience is backward looking and that reframing or meaning making enables recovery from difficult events. But Neil's comment also adds a future imperative. Resilience is not just perceived as recovery from past events, but also about taking control and moving forward.

Many leaders expressed this duality with a sense of acceptance about being wrong in the past and linked this reframing of the past with clear outcomes and objectives for the future. Brian explains this acceptance but links it to the desire to move on and to set a new direction for the future.

....part of being resilient is you've got to be able to understand that you're wrong and say, "Okay I'm wrong. Right, now, what are we going to do about it, what are we going to do to correct the mess I've got us all into?", and then go off in the correct direction,.....{Brian}

This link to the future was often framed as learning from the past to inform and improve the future. For example, Amanda experienced a long period of major issues but maintained a future orientation throughout that seemed to sustain her.

....what I thought was, I need to conquer this. Once we've got through it I need to go back to say, right, if we do anything like this again how can we do it differently, how could we test things to make sure that it doesn't happen as bad, because it was one thing after another. You got through one thing and then something else came out of the woodwork. {Amanda}

It is clear that despite past issues or failure, leaders maintain this focus on the future and have a belief that past events can inform the future. This resilient past perspective is apparent in categories such as „Accepting being wrong“ and „Seeing it as a learning process“. In looking at past events leaders seek to recognise and accept issues that have happened and not be paralysed by rumination upon the consequences. This resilience could be described as Amanda did, as **'conquering past events'**.

However Rachel also highlighted the need to focus on the present and made links to both the past and the future. She talks about not being anxious about what has happened in the past, or about the future and about dealing with the present in the here and now.

.... there's something about learning to deal with what's going on in the moment and not being anxious about what has happened or what might happen and that's where coaching comes into it for me. {Rachel}

She notes the importance of taking action to deal with the current situation, thus exercising a degree of control. Brian expressed this as becoming engaged and trying to exert influence, rather than becoming a victim.

...being resilient is partly a mental attitude in terms of actively trying to solve problems rather than succumbing to them. {Brian}

So having accepted and managed the emotion resulting from past events leaders explain how they „recognise the issue“, „take responsibility“ and start to „exercise conscious control“. The categories that emerged describe leaders who are reacting and responding to often unexpected events with action. They are setting boundaries, making choices and marshalling the resources required. These resources included logic and problem solving strategies, and the use of other people to help.

In the present, resilience was characterised by exercising conscious control over the current situation and taking responsibility for resolving problems. Leaders reported using a „*Toolbox*“ of strategies to break down problems and find solutions. The toolbox also included emotion-focused strategies to manage and control emotional reactions in a positive way. It could be said that resilience in the present is based on ‘**exercising control**’ by engaging in action.

This action was motivated by a continued future focus for leaders. They maintain a belief that problems can be solved and that by applying the skills and strategies in the present they can gain control over the situation and move forward. This future focus was apparent in the category of „*Planning for the Future*“. A future focus also appeared in other categories as individual nodes such as „*Openness to risk*“.

In moving towards these future goals a significant amount of contingency planning was in operation to ensure the goal had the maximum chance of being realised. George likened it to designing a system that could withstand potential risks. For him, resilience was about setting the future goal and anticipating and mediating all potential risks. Resilience was therefore based on expecting issues and planning ahead of time how these might be dealt with. In effect, leaders are trying to make the future more predictable perhaps to minimise risk.

..... have an end goal in sight...[...], and the resilience to be able to deal with perceivable issues the „what if“ scenarios, the kind of scenario planning that you might do with a system to make sure it would be resilient to anything that you could throw at it.{George}

This implies a form of risk assessment and management that is made explicit by Neil. For him taking risks is what generates the need to be resilient. „*If you don’t take any risks there’s not really much need to be resilient.*“ While he was only one of two leaders who specifically named risk in relation to resilience, for many others it was implied in the future assessment as George did.

The leaders interviewed therefore do not see resilience as just a way of reframing disappointment and overcoming failure. Rather they see it as having the courage to face unknown risks: to look forward into the future, and assess these risks or possibilities. Not with a sense of blind optimism, but with clear contingency plans and a sense of purpose. Facing risks and working towards the future goal is motivated by a belief that the aim is worthwhile and that they can make a real difference. James described his persistence as driven by his determination and belief in the future goal, despite the apparent indifference of others.

.....it was a very different example of resilience where I just had to really keep going and it was my determination that I knew I was right and that I knew that other people deep down would feel the same way even though half of them just couldn't really be bothered to do anything about it. {James}

This strong sense of purpose and self belief is common, although the specific motivation varied. For Neil there was a motivation to protect the jobs of his staff.

In my case, from a business perspective, it's making sure that our 250, 260 people stay in work. We'd have failed if we don't retain their jobs, if we don't win new business, if we don't develop new products and keep the business rolling forward. {Neil}

This is not to say that all leaders think only of organisational outcomes. Some have faced great personal challenges, and James was very motivated to maintain a professional image while being managed out of the business. But this still reflected a strong future orientation with a reference to next steps'.

So there were two aspects. One was the..... resilience of what do I do next? What are my next steps? I now have to find the solution, which effectively was another job, building relationships externally to fly into that, but also controlling that aura of James is still a leader irrespective of what's happening and I was very keen to demonstrate that I was still a leader as I was leaving. {James}

Whether the future goal was of a personal or business nature there was a continued forward focus. In looking to the future leaders describe a need to assess and face risk and to take responsibility for action to move forward. Resilience for the future might be described as '**courage for the future**'.

Much of the previous research on resilience defines resilience as bounce-back' or the ability to recover from trauma to normal functioning. The definitions often imply an ability to deal with the past is vital to resilience. The findings here replicate many of these ideas with leaders describing the use of reframing and emotional regulation supporting recovery from difficult events. Yet such activities encourage a focus on the past and many definitions are retrospective including terms like overcome obstacles', self-righting', regaining equilibrium' or bouncing back'. However the data imply that resilience operates across the time perspective, including the future.

This future orientation is highlighted by some authors who identify optimism as a core component of resilience (Clarke and Nicholson 2010) and describe optimists as those who;

tend to believe that they can make a real difference, that they can take positive action to influence events and circumstances. They tend to have what psychologists call, an internal locus of control (p56).

This optimistic belief of feeling able to make a difference' was present in many of the leader descriptions. Optimism is identified by the PsyCap model as important for leadership, together with hope and resilience (Luthans et al. 2007). Hope is defined as having a sense of agency' together with the ability to identify multiple pathways' around potential blocks (Snyder et al. 2005). This has resonance with the contingency planning described by leaders and the idea of taking control and problem solving. The current data therefore seems to link optimism and hope as aspects of resilience rather than identify them as three separate constructs. The leadership experience appears to describe future resilience as being partly an outcome of being hopeful and optimistic. If resilience is experienced as having a future dimension this then questions if the three constructs can be treated as separate or are linked in some way. Luthans et al. (2006) assert that resilience differs from hope and optimism due to the necessity of a trigger event' that defines resilience. If resilience in this context is not subject to such a trigger, the constructs become less distinct.

Historically resilience is often defined in terms of recovery from the past yet these findings suggest a broader approach to resilience that brings a time perspective, including a larger future orientation. It is proposed that resilience in this leadership context might be summarised as:

Conquering the PAST, exerting control in the PRESENT, and having courage for the FUTURE.

4.1.3 Values matter

In trying to understand resilience it was important to ask leaders to describe times when they were *„NOT resilient“* to gather experiences that might contradict the concept map elements. This would act as a data check to specifically generate negative case' incidences (Robson 2002). What characterised times of low resilience was often a conflict of values.

The emergence of a category referring to values was an unexpected theme within „Miscellaneous“ that gradually gained significance through initial coding. It was first logged as a memo after interview three but linked to an issue raised in interview one, recorded in a memo shown below.

Memo 5/6/2011

Values

Role of values – where to put them? Clear issues when values compromised. Seems R needed when values compromised.

L3 Line 706 – Working in line with values energises you and makes you want to engage R. L1 mentioned issue of honesty.

The clearest description of the importance of values in early data collection was from Jack. He explains how congruent personal and organisational values support and enhance resilience. Jack felt energised by values alignment despite having problems or issues to deal with.

... although there were difficulties and challenges it was a much more positive, constructive, helping people to grow, which is I suppose one of the things I'm interested in. So, I think if one's values are alive in what one's doing one's resilience is automatically enhanced, [.....]. whereas I found where there are tensions between how I see things and perhaps organisational systems or approaches, you feel to a certain extent your resilience has been worn down, because you're not being energised by the environment you're in. Whereas being in a work environment more alive with one's values which you see as more positive, is almost like enhancing your resilience. {Jack}

What comes through became a common theme, that leaders are capable of dealing with problems or issues and to some degree expect them. But when asked about times when resilience failed, many chose to discuss situations where values were compromised. George referred to a situation with another family member who appeared to be stealing money from a joint business venture. There was a clear conflict between family loyalty and an expectation of honesty. A further example was given by Mark:

... I went into this unit and I just expect that everyone in XXXX works to a certain standard of professionalism [...] and realised that this wasn't the case [...] and that's before I even understood

quite how corrupt it was [...] so my struggle came when there was a question of values, I'd never come across it before, I had no one to turn to and even here all the strategies that had served me so successfully didn't seem to work in this environment. {Mark}

Mark identifies that existing strategies did not seem to help. So while very skilled in problem solving with a strong ability to manage emotions, such situations seem to present a new type of challenge. These different issues were explained by Rachel who distinguished between resilience for practical work issues, and resilience involving a personal values conflict. In this example she explains the conflict she feels when having to withhold information about upcoming redundancies:

... I am a person for whom honesty and openness I value very, very highly so having not to be honest and open and having to deal with people on a day to day basis when I know what's coming, I find really, really hard. In this situation being resilient means finding a way to compromise my own values and live with that, whereas in the situation I described with the cash-flow crisis, being resilient meant finding a way to learn something practical very quickly and stay positive. {Rachel}

The picture that emerges is of capable individuals who are taking responsibility for resolving issues by applying problem-focused strategies. These strategies include logic, applying their own strengths and using other people. They are also able to apply emotion-focused strategies to manage their own perceptions and emotional reactions. Yet when faced with a clash of values both these strategies seem inadequate.

Folkman (2008) identifies a third potential coping strategy of meaning-focused coping that can be used to generate positive emotion as a last resort following an unfavourable outcome of an event. This is defined as;

appraisal-based coping in which the person draws on his or her beliefs, values, and existential goals to motivate and sustain coping and well-being during a difficult time (p7).

Yet if the very thing being questioned is this value or belief, it is easy to understand why this strategy may also be rendered redundant. Bachkirova (2005) identified a potential relationship between personal values and stress in teachers and the current study may indicate this relationship warrants further investigation in the leadership context. Values are not often included in models of resilience except in how they inform attitudes. The most recent attempt to create a measure of resilience for the organisational context (Davda 2011) identifies values from past

experience as informing attitudes that are then measured as the ultimate determinants of resilience.

The evidence from this study brings a slightly different perspective to the concept of leadership resilience. Leaders appear to demonstrate many of the attitudes and skills required for resilience when faced with challenges, unexpected events and pressures of work. However when faced with issues that cause a fundamental re-evaluation of their beliefs and values, they experience pressure that they are unable to resolve by applying the techniques and approaches commonly associated with resilience. Under these circumstances they experience significant sustained pressure that can cause resilience to fail.

The role of values became more prominent as interviews progressed and was discussed more fully with later participants. This was an example where theoretical sensitivity was demonstrated by a continued narrowing of focus on values supported with additional interview questions. Values became so prominent in discussions that they were eventually added to the concept map which I will now go on to explain.

4.2 The evolution of the concept map

The motivation to use *Conceptual Encounter* (CE) as a data collection method was to facilitate access to the potentially abstract concept of resilience. The map was to promote discussion about the factors that support personal resilience so did not define the concept and used simple titles to minimise the chances of leading participants.

The initial map (Fig.4.1) emerged from the literature where, despite substantial debate, six broad categories appeared regularly when talking about the activation of resilience. *Past experience* and *social support* were commonly identified. There was also considerable focus on the cognitive domain which was labelled *logical reasoning* where conscious thought is applied to problems or emotions. A number of authors talk about confidence and inner strength that seemed to be a resource within the person, these were termed *inner self*. There also appeared to be a large impact based on beliefs about the world. Much research refers to the mindset and attitudes of resilient people that became *world-view*. Finally, the need for self care through *physical well-being* was often highlighted as relevant. These six elements were presented within a ring of *Degree of Pressure*. Resilience is often defined as

only being needed in times of adversity so this represented visually the potential adversity against which the six elements needed to be used.

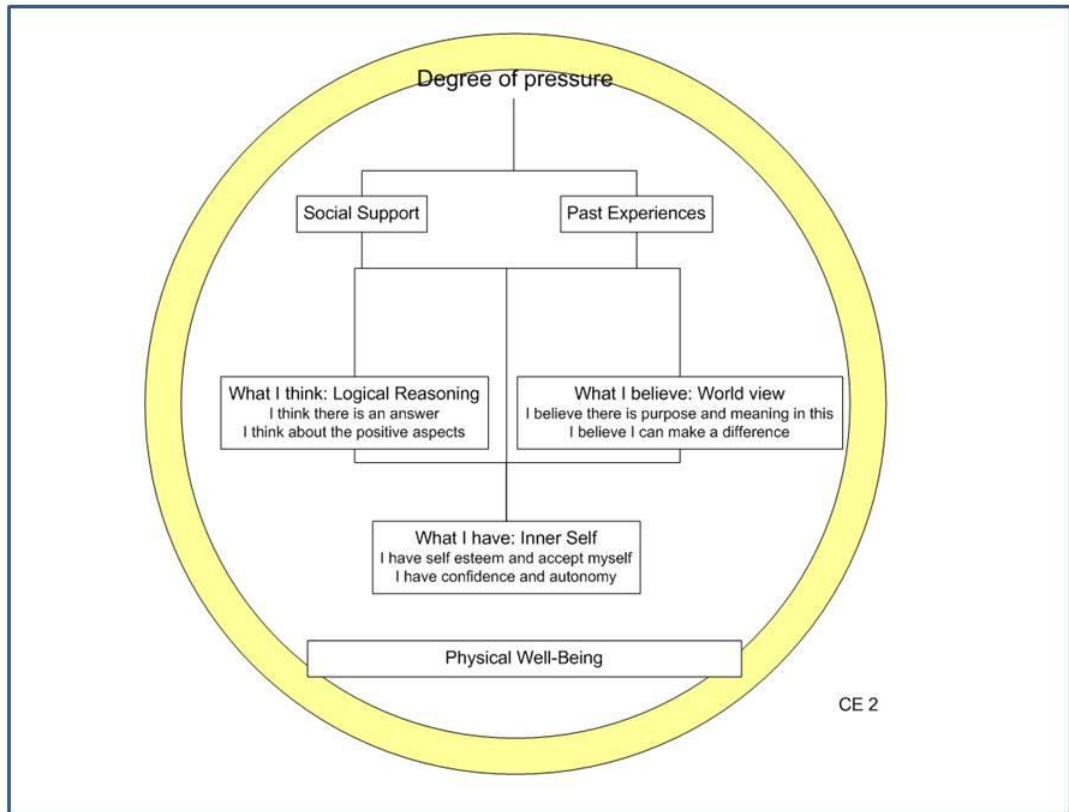


Fig. 4.1 Conceptual Encounter - Map 2

The map was introduced to leaders following an initial discussion about the meaning and personal manifestations of resilience, usually at least 20 minutes into the interview. It was commonly introduced with reference to an aspect the participant had already highlighted to make the discussion seamless. The comments generated by the map are included within the full data analysis, so here I will discuss only aspects relevant to the maps evolution. Map CE2 (Fig.4.1) was used for the first interview with George. It stimulated significant discussion and George highlighted that while past experience could be defined as ‘learning’, he felt there was a place for formal learning, such as education. George also started to talk about confidence after seeing the map which raised a concern that the wording was leading. The subsequent version was more abstract (Fig.4.2) but meant terms had to be explained. The word ‘Heart’ was especially problematic as it was interpreted as synonymous with emotional reactions. However confidence still emerged so it seemed that confidence had not been mentioned by George only as a consequence of its appearance on the map.

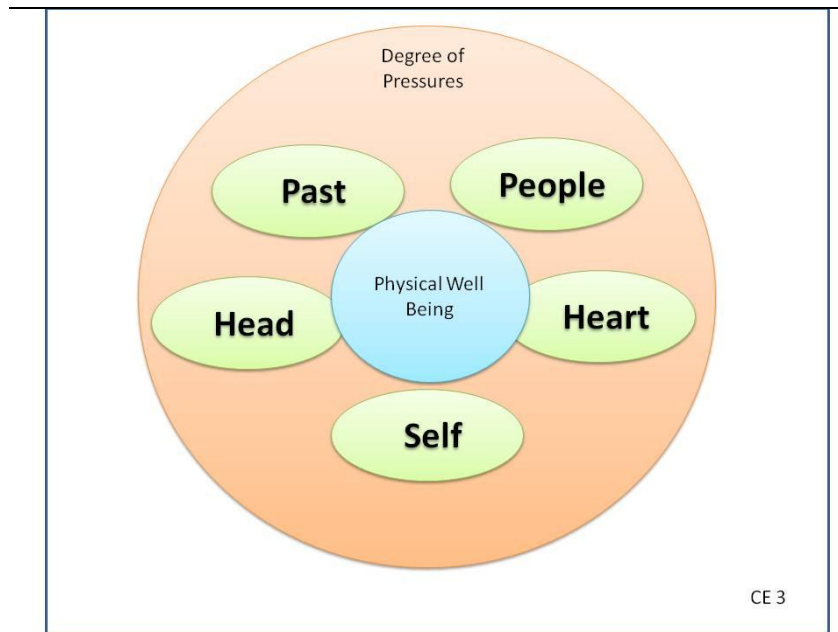


Fig. 4.2 Conceptual Encounter - Map 3

For interview three CE4 (Fig.4.3) removed the word Heart and returned to the title of World View’.

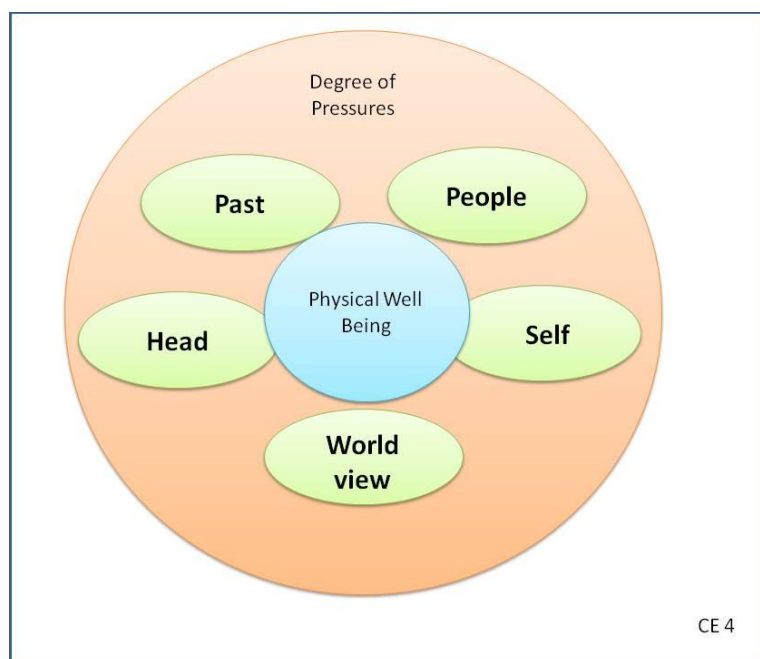


Fig. 4.3 Conceptual Encounter - Map 4

However interview notes highlighted that the world view altered through experience and influenced perception of other elements. The world view was almost a filter, a window on the world. For example, world views and beliefs influenced the choices that were made. If the participant believed it was the role of the leader to be strong for others it influenced not only their choice, but also their display of behaviour. It

also influenced who they chose to approach for social support and could colour what past experiences they focussed on.

To reflect the adaptability of these world-views CE5 (Fig.4.4) represented them as a shaded area influencing all the core elements but ultimately fluid as represented by the wavy line. This felt much closer to what participants were describing and was used for interview four with minor changes for interview five. The ring of pressure was removed since this was not entering the discussion. This may be because the whole interview was about times of pressure or may reflect the subsequent finding that resilience is also needed without exposure to adversity, when dealing with future events that are as yet unknown.

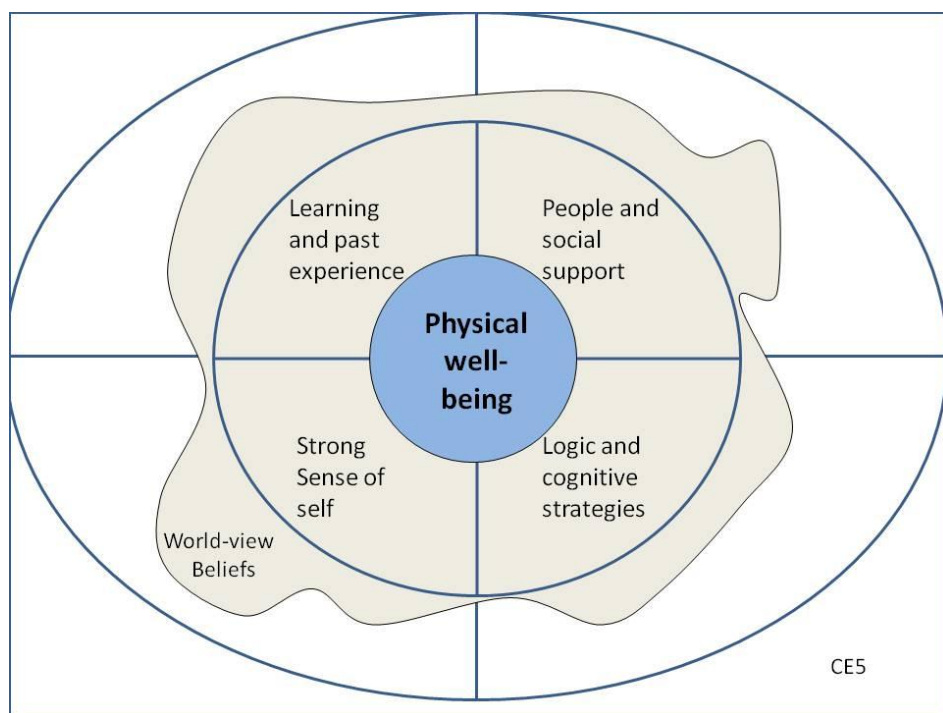


Fig. 4.4 Conceptual Encounter - Map 5

Each subsequent interview contributed to the maps' evolution but values started to emerge as a significant topic and were not shown. Values could be considered part of the world-view however making this malleable made it more difficult to incorporate values which were often described as fixed. The solution was presented in CE6 (Fig.4.5) in interview six. This version received endorsement from Mark who felt it clearly explained all the facets he had found valuable. While this may simply represent an individual who shared my particular perspective, it did indicate a conceptual framework that had resonance for him. The final map will be described below after some reflections on the use of conceptual encounter as a method of data collection.

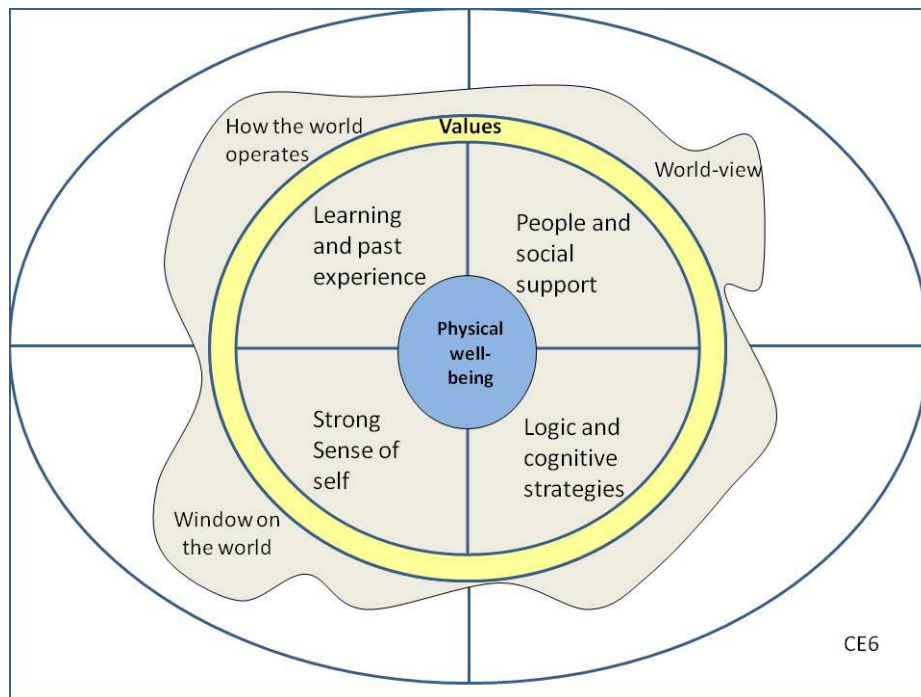


Fig. 4.5 Conceptual Encounter - Map 6

The experience of using conceptual encounter proved a valuable research approach. It added richness by prompting new lines of discussion and reminding participants of experiences. Following presentation of the map, leaders would often immediately recount a story without reference to the map at all. It also presented a useful focus of attention for critique which is an activity far more familiar to leaders than purely discussing personal experiences. However with this benefit comes the potential drawback that leaders engaged too much of their cognitive analytical ability at the expense of experiential data. To minimise this I was conscious of asking for specific experiences and trying to avoid abstract theorising on their part. This meant drawing the focus back to actual experiences when sentences began with ‘I think that...’, which was often followed by an analysis not an experience.

The map did succeed in acting as a catalyst raising new topics for discussion. Physical well-being for example, might not have been discussed by most leaders without the map as a stimulus, yet all felt this was a critical component once they saw it on the map. This was most forcefully demonstrated by Neil who immediately described in detail his mantra of ‘healthy body, healthy mind’.

*Can I talk right away about this physical well-being in the centre?
[...] So, I would definitely say that for me making sure that I am on top of my game physically enables me to be more resilient – most definitely. {Neil}*

A similar view was expressed by most of the participants but George also drew attention to the potential synergy that may exist. He explained that while resilience may be enhanced by physical health, poor health through illness may also decrease resilience.

...if you're not very well you tend to be a lot less resilient, because your ability to concentrate, your ability to suffer fools gladly and things like that tend to reduce when you're not feeling very well, and if that's chronic then you can go down quite a long way. So I do think there's a kind of chicken and egg going on there.
 {George}

In describing as ‘chicken or egg’ he is implying that illness reduces resilience, but also that reduced resilience may make you more prone to illness, a position that would fit with a resources perspective.

The final map, (Fig.4.6) includes physical well-being to highlight that some physical component might be relevant, despite not being the focus of this study. The four key domains identified as supporting resilience were learning and past experience, people and social support, logic and cognitive strategies and a strong sense of self. In the outer oval are aspects that leaders specifically mentioned as contributing to that specific domain. This section was blank during interviews to ensure leaders used their own experiences and language. A brief summary of the four areas will help clarify the scope of discussions.

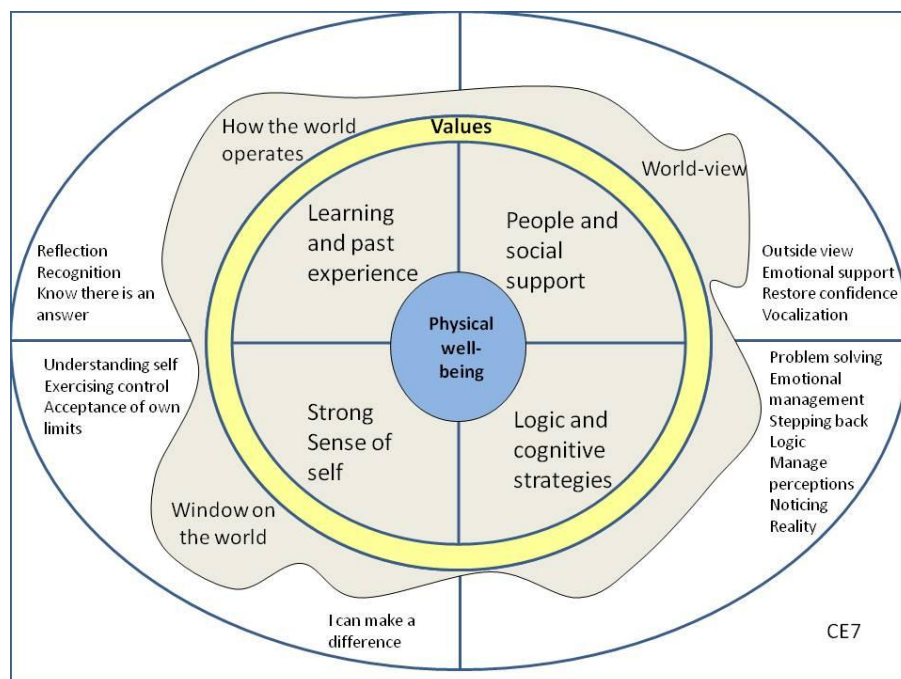


Fig. 4.6 Conceptual Encounter - Map 7

Leaders describe drawing on past experiences and their formal learning to inform situations. This also included a reference to age and experience helping leaders recognise similarities with past situations. Through reflection they evaluate experiences and draw lessons for the future. In particular they draw strength from previously having found solutions to problems. This creates a belief that a resolution will emerge and that they will come through the process even if the ultimate resolution is not an ideal outcome.

There was strong backing for the role of social support in resilience. This meant either using the skills and knowledge of others, or relying on them for emotional support. They describe how discussing situations with others can bring clarity and emotional release. Such contact also brings an outside view, and can restore confidence. Leaders describe the self-doubt that can result from a difficult situation. For example when going through redundancy, having another person affirm your capabilities can combat feelings of negative self-worth.

Logic and cognitive strategies were often highlighted and included using logic and problem solving skills to analyse problems. Emotional management was also the result of applying thought to potentially difficult situations. Leaders describe managing outward emotion to protect staff or to maintain an image. They commonly try to step back and take a wider view, for example, taking an organisational perspective or choosing to look at the successes achieved.

Finally, leaders talk of confidence and self-belief. They try to understand themselves, and accept their own limitations. They believe they can make a difference and that they need to exercise control over situations, feeling the responsibility of their position.

These four domains were shown as discrete elements for simplicity but there is significant fusion at the boundaries. For example talking to others increased confidence and thus contributed to a strong sense of self. While setting clear boundaries and accepting their own limits helps define the sense of self but could be termed a cognitive decision.

These four areas are influenced by a personal window on the world that filters how each domain is seen. This window changes with experience, so is represented as a fluid area that may alter. Yet some world views were less adaptable and often represented a line beyond which leaders would not go, often termed values. Values and world views colour all incoming experiences and influence perception of events. However, values also formed a restrictive barrier that informed and

bounded how leaders used and applied their resilience strategies. For example, one leader explained how commitment to a member of staff influenced his decision process and who he chose to share information with. Values were therefore shown as a rigid ring that gave structure and form to the leadership approach and influenced all other domains.

The final concept map CE7 (Fig.4.6) was shown to coaches, who were asked if anything was missing and to comment on its potential value in coaching. They were not asked to amend or add to it as the aim was to represent the leadership perspective. Only one coach identified what they felt was an omission, which was a failure to represent the strong future orientation that leaders often display. This will be discussed in Chapter 6. As with leaders, the concept map proved a valuable discussion stimulus. In particular it led to specific examples being triggered and further significant information on the potential link with values.

One significant learning from using the concept map was the practical implication of using a visual stimulus in an audio-recorded interview. It was important to annotate and record comments on the map at the time of the discussion as on the recording participants often refer to this or that while obviously pointing at something. Without a contemporary record researchers are in danger of relying on the audio which is then inexplicable to anyone not present at the time and prone to memory failure. The only alternative would be to vocalize all the visual clues or name each component. However this would make the conversation unnatural and highlight that recording was taking place. In an effort to keep the conversation flowing and natural I opted to annotate the maps within each interview and make extensive post interview notes.

This chapter highlights the leadership understanding of resilience. Resilience is understood as far more than a list of attitudes and competencies commonly described in the literature. Rather, it is described as an integrated fuel system that needs management and replenishment. Resilience is also perceived to operate across the past, present and the future. It is therefore contextualised and experienced as a broader concept than just bouncing back from failure and disappointment.

Leaders are experienced and capable when dealing with issues and problems but find resilience failing when values are compromised. Congruence of values therefore seems to be influential in a leader's ability to marshal their resilience to

best effect. In contrast, a clash of values, presents a significant resilience challenge. Existing approaches to resilience say little about the role of values so we may need to expand our understanding of resilience in this context to include such aspects.

Chapter 5 – Leader’s Voice: Coaching Experience

In this chapter leaders discuss their coaching experiences and the links they see to resilience. Section 5.2 outlines how leaders made meaning of their coaching in relation to resilience. However section 5.1 will firstly convey their route to coaching as this has some implications for coaching.

It should be noted that leaders had very diverse experiences of coaching and some referred to their coach as a mentor, while others had received a service closer to counselling from a coach. It is outside the scope of this study to discuss in depth the alternative terms used to describe coaching as in some contexts the term mentor is more acceptable. In this study Brian and George both used the term mentor. They were both in the IT field and had been coached by the same coach. Yet these individuals often used the term coaching for the activity they were engaged in, as in this example.

I very much saw it as something, that’s like for me, it was definitely like a sounding board the coaching that I had {George}

This supports the idea that their personal construction is of having received coaching. This is further supported by the fact that they responded to an invitation to participate that specifically asked for individuals who had received coaching as shown in Appendix 4.

However, there is continued debate about the degree to which mentoring and coaching can be mutually and exclusively defined (Garvey 2010) so for the purposes of this study I am adopting the perspective that a mentor brings a degree of directivity and knowledge to the relationship. This is in line with the perspective of mentoring taken by Whitmore (2002) where an older or more experienced individual passes down their knowledge to a less experienced individual on how a particular task should be approached. While many of the same skills are applied, discussions are often more leading than might be the case in coaching.

While both these individuals used the term mentor, their coach had never done the job they were currently doing and in one case there was only a minimal age difference. It was also clear that the passing of knowledge was not critical to the relationship as highlighted by Brian.

I’ve certainly found that with [coach] I’ve been talking things through with him and I’ve realised things without him having to say anything {Brian}

In both these cases the service was provided by an independent person to support leadership development. The type of coaching provided therefore is best described as ‘developmental coaching’ where the coach is an external professional coach, who focuses on the broader, longer-term consolidation of leadership competence’ (Bachkirova 2010:4).

5.1 Coming to coaching

The aim of this study was to investigate the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders. Since coaching for resilience is a relatively new term, participants were not selected on the basis of having received coaching for resilience. However, after the second leader interview it became clear that challenge and a need for resilience had encouraged Brian to seek coaching. As a result, subsequent interviews included a question about what brought participants to coaching. Every leader subsequently interviewed, except Neil, reported a challenge or transitional pressure as the key catalyst to take up coaching. The quote from Brian is typical in identifying particular pressure that was the motivation to take up coaching.

At that particular point I had a boss who was extremely unsupportive so the internal organisational support wasn't really there, and I was getting to the point where I was starting not to cope with it, and that's when I started the mentoring relationship. {Brian}

In asking coaches to suggest leaders to be interviewed they were asked to recommend leaders whose resilience might have been tested, so it is not surprising that this sample shows this trend. However it is interesting that despite coaching being promoted as supporting high achievement it is often taken up by those feeling under pressure. This throws into the question the view often repeated that;

‘coaching clients seek this form of help when they are doing well but wish to do better’ unlike counselling clients who seek help in response to a problem (Griffiths and Campell 2008).

Much has been written about the boundary between coaching and counselling (Bachkirova and Cox 2005, Maxwell 2009, Buckley and Buckley 2006, Spinelli 2008) and it is outside the scope of this study to debate this concept in detail. However, the findings do provide some evidence that leaders who present for

coaching may often be under pressure rather than just seeking to excel and might benefit from an understanding of resilience.

Almost all leader participants were motivated to take up coaching when they faced a particular challenge or transition and this has potential implications for coaches. It is likely that coaches are dealing with issues of resilience far more often than they expect or are contracted for. Many of the experiences cited by leaders were live issues while they were being coached, yet coaches were not contracted specifically for resilience in relation to that issue. It was common for leaders to say that despite feeling under pressure they try not to show it. This might mean coaches are well into a coaching contract before the real issues emerge. Jack described the surface image that he maintains while underneath experiencing significant turmoil.

...you're giving this illusion of serenely gliding along. But human nature being as it is you're actually trying to get to grips with a new situation, and work out what the parameters are, get the pieces of the jigsaw in place. So it's probably a bit chaotic and your own perceived resilience is probably lower. {Jack}

This desire to mask potential issues was compounded by a reluctance to ask for help that many leaders highlighted. Asking for help is seen as a sign of weakness in leadership so coaches may not be asked to discuss resilience overtly in their practice. It is therefore important for coaches to be increasingly aware of situations where resilience may be relevant and to start to build the skills and the knowledge for dealing with such clients. However coaches also need to be aware that in some contexts the expectations of coaches may go beyond what many expect.

Mark in particular had clearly experienced significant issues but requested and received the support of a coach'. It is clear that in his industry coaching is an acceptable term to which he could willingly commit. It is not apparent if he would have been as motivated to attend counselling sessions'. In this case his labelling of the support as coaching helped him accept and take part in the relationship. He also responded to the research invitation as someone who had been coached, so his construction is of having had coaching. This raises some potential considerations for the profession that go beyond the boundary issues often discussed. This is not a coach needing to decide if they have the skills to deal with a potential issue and make a decision about referral. In this case the support has been sold' as coaching but is clearly working on the boundary of where coaching might be expected to work. This has significant implications for coaches who need to fully understand what they have been contracted to provide. But even beyond this particular example the leaders interviewed did not contract a coach for

resilience issues, yet they were able to shed light on how the coaching they received helped their own resilience and this is the theme of the next section.

5.2 How coaching helps

In describing their coaching experiences leaders identified five overarching themes that related directly to the research question, defining the role that coaching played in their resilience.

1. Reclaim my self-belief
2. Learning
3. Seeing wider perspective
4. Supportive relationship
5. Thinking space

In analysing these emergent five themes there was significant interaction and overlap between them. As a result I would suggest they are best represented as overlapping elements, as shown in Fig.5.1.

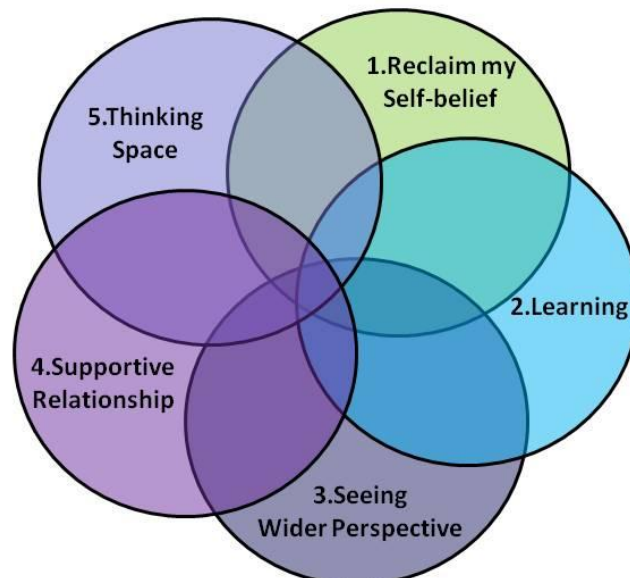


Fig. 5.1 - How Coaching Helped – Five elements

1 - Reclaim my self-belief

This theme reflected feelings the leaders had about themselves and seemed to imply having lost something they once had, that manifests as self-doubt. This self-doubt made leaders question their own judgement and there was a clear implication that coaching helped them feel validated. Jack explains how he no longer trusted his own judgement and that vocalizing with a coach helped gain clarity.

I think part of how the coaching helped, you're sort of bouncing ideas off and thinking, well actually these don't seem like total nonsense, they are quite coherent, quite consistent, there's a logical strand to them.I suppose you do get a sense of validation or clarity really, because you realise yourself, oh yes, that probably is a good idea or no, it's not the right time for that, or it's not a priority. {Jack}

This example suggests validation for ideas. There were also examples of validation of perceptions or courses of action. Validation of feelings was also key for some leaders, and was supported by the coach effectively giving permission for their feelings, as expressed by Rachel.

I think it's important to have someone say, "It's okay to feel like you do. It's understandable that you feel like you do." {Rachel}

Once leaders gained a sense that their thinking was still sound and it was both acceptable and logical to feel as they did, they were open to a realisation that the situation was not always their fault. It may be because leaders are so used to exercising control and taking responsibility that they adopt responsibility for the difficulties they are facing. Yet the coach is able to help them step outside that position, and separate themselves from the situation. The descriptions give the impression that the leaders almost become consumed by the organisation and lose their individual identity. They become part of the system and no longer have worth outside that system. They often describe it as having lost confidence or self-belief.

And strangely enough you have to have certain amounts of self-confidence to go and look for another job for a start, and self-belief, and I had almost got to the point of thinking, 'well if I can't cope with this job why should I look for another one', which is a slightly daft approach, but never mind. So [...] you need to be able to step back and look at yourself and look at the situation [...] and I think a good mentor helps you do that, and that's quite a powerful part of it. {Brian}

Working with a coach therefore starts to replace this confidence that had somehow been lost. However the clearest indication that this confidence was, reclaimed under certain conditions came from James who explained how the coach was able to bring back that inner self:

So if you're faced with a dilemma, if you're faced with a question, if you're faced with a direction of where you're going to go, you often have that inner self who talks to you, don't you? You say, "Should I really be doing this?" and then that inner self says, "Yeah of course you should, you should go for it, it'll be great." I think if you don't have any resilience that inner voice suddenly disappears you don't hear it and I think that's almost what I got from [coach] was to bring back that inner self who would question me and say, "You don't need to be so worried. Get out there, stand, be proud, this happens to everybody." {James}

So the coaching did not build new confidence through new learning, but enabled leaders to regain a self-belief that they had temporarily lost that contributed to their resilience in dealing with difficult situations. This resonates with previous research that identifies how important a supportive relationship can be in building aspects of the self (Wilson and Ferch 2005).

2 - Learning

Throughout the interviews leaders explained how much coaching had contributed to their learning long term. As explained by George.

I think for each and every session that I had with [coach] there was stuff that I would take away and it has now become part of [...] the way that you dealt with things. {George}

Leaders refer to learning about specific topics or situations but also learnt a great deal about themselves. This self-learning helped support self-acceptance, or instigated the motivation to change. For example, one leader began to appreciate that others do not expect 100% accuracy, so he became more accepting of his own failings and started to work on changing his approach to tasks. This shows a clear overlap in how learning can support the reclaiming of self-belief. His self-belief was predicated on perfectionism that was not sustainable. Learning this about himself helped him see what needed to change.

For Mark this self awareness went hand in hand with the adoption and application of resilience strategies. He started to appreciate how to recognise the triggers that signalled a need to use a particular tool or technique.

I thought I was resilient before, I feel now that that was a fairly brittle resilience, that was fine if I could just keep powering through, I think I've now got many more tools in the toolkit to enable me to do that and also to recognise when I need to get some of them out. {Mark}

The coaching therefore contributed to the development of resilience through specific tools, self insight and awareness that came together to create a far more holistic change in the individual that often went far beyond the component parts, as explained by Rachel.

So there have been moments where I've had coaching with [coach] where I've had a real sort of duh, and those are things I can hold on to, they're not just about that, they're about something much bigger.....but noticing more is the biggest one, because that is kind of a way of being. {Rachel}

The perception of enhanced resilience is therefore not just based on specific learning but rather a more integrated development that enables leaders to be in the world in a different way.

Learning therefore happens in a number of ways. Leaders learn about others, about situations, and about tools and techniques. In addition they learn about themselves that contributes to their self-belief, so they ultimately develop in a more holistic way.

3 - Seeing wider perspective

The ability of the coach to help see the wider picture was a vital coaching contribution that helped avoid the tunnel vision' described by Jack.

[coach] helped me to question and identify priorities, reprioritise things in my own mind and look at things from a slightly different angle than I wouldn't naturally on my own. [...] so talking to the coach, I suppose kept me aware of the need to not get tunnel vision. {Jack}

Leaders talked of coaching as broadening their horizons and helping them consider implications. This may be an indication that the future focus discussed earlier starts to recede under difficult conditions. Leaders report being able to step out of the situation and through these wider perspectives, stimulate new ideas. Generating alternative actions helped George reclaim the forward focus that resonates with Hope theory (Snyder et al. 2005) discussed earlier.

....the ability to see it from other people's perspectives, and the role of coaching as far as I remember, would be to throw up those

kind of questionssometimes, some of the suggestions that I came up with, even if I didn't act on them, made me feel like I knew I had that course of action open to me, broadened my horizons in terms of thinking about the problem. {George}

By contributing wider perspectives the coaching is still supporting learning as the individual learns how to adopt another point of view. This other point of view extends to the view they have of themselves, thus supporting the re-building of self-belief. By seeing their own performance from another perspective they can start to appreciate they are not as incompetent as they may feel.

One of the most perceptive explanations of how this alternative perspective manifests came from Rachel. She likened pressure to getting trapped on the dance-floor in a night club, unable to get back onto the balcony. This again links to the idea that leaders start to lose their individuality and are unable to disengage from the situation. So the role of the coach was to enable her to gain distance, and see the bigger picture.

..... it's feeling unable to get back onto the balcony. It's when you've got trapped on the dance floor in a fast salsa or something. There is a sense that you know something more is required of you and you can't find quite what it is. {Rachel}

This may lend support to the view that pressure results in a narrowing of focus as in the model of dynamic affect (Zautra et al. 2005) described in the literature review. In a leadership context this results in an effective paralysis and a failure to see a way forward which may be due to the inability to gain distance on the issue. A similar effect would be predicted by the broaden and build theory where a lack of positive emotion created by pressure would reduce creative possibilities (Fredrickson 2009). Yet, coaching seems to help the individual regain perspective on the issue and may cause a reverse effect. Whereas positive emotion is said to enhance creativity and generate a wider perspective, perhaps creating a wider perspective through coaching, generates positive emotion. Alternatively, positive emotion may simply result from the relationship with the coach as predicted by the buffering effect model (Cohen and Willis 1985) and in itself generates the wider perspective. Such potential mechanisms might be fruitful areas for future investigation.

The coach therefore brings a wider perspective and in so doing contributes to learning how to adopt another point of view that may reveal new ideas. This can also bring a new perspective to individual strengths and weaknesses that support self-belief.

4 - Supportive relationship

When elaborating on the coaching contribution to resilience, participants often talked of providing a sounding board and the value of having an outsider to talk to. This perceived neutrality and impartiality was vital in creating a safe environment, as explained by Jack.

Because sometimes when things are very complex, it's helpful to have that external sounding board, to help clarify your ideas....., getting good mentoring, takes you out of the data that you are in, puts you into a context which is neutral, non-threatening, and not directly connected to work, and allows you to then think through what's going on in the other context, in a fairly safe environment. And I think that's the key. {Jack}

This concept of a safe environment meant leaders could obtain honest feedback that they found valuable, because the coach could highlight potential issues without creating tension. Brian expresses how valuable it is to be challenged.

The role of mentor isn't to lead you to a solution, it's to enable you to think your way through, equally, to tell you when you've being a complete idiot - which we all do occasionally - and that is helpful. {Brian}

The supportive relationship created a trusting and safe space that allowed honest or challenging feedback to be discussed which was vital to being able to see the wider perspective. This helped leaders become aware of their own errors or shortcomings when seen from a different perspective. It enabled true feelings to be disclosed and acknowledged, that created candid reflection on the situation.

This safe environment also made it acceptable to disclose feelings which could not be shared with others. James explained how honest disclosure was difficult with family or friends, „*But with somebody like [coach] who is divorced from the whole thing, it's much easier to communicate what you're really feeling.*“ {James}

James went on to describe a common view that the coach contributed emotional support but in a unique trusted relationship that could not be provided by family or individuals within the organisation. But apart from perceived neutrality, what is expressed is the perceived external credibility of the coach. Because the coach has no relationship or vested interest, their opinion is given more weight than a family member who is seen as partisan and just trying to make you feel better.

You might have a family member who would say that to you as well, but I think hearing it from somebody who gets paid to coach lots and lots of different people, and to improve and expand their

comfort zones carried a different weight, if that makes any sense?..... He was just inquisitive „what are you going to do.....what’s your next move J?“ and that really was deep down coaching for resilience, but it didn’t feel like it. It just felt like someone I could talk to, who was just divorced from everything and somebody that I trusted. {James}

But leaders also drew attention to this being a unique relationship because of the ability to focus on yourself’ which leaders rarely get the chance to do.

A mentoring relationship is about you, and there aren’t very many relationships that you have, that are focused around yourself. Certainly not that I have anyway. And so, that’s quite unique as well, because most of the time when you’re discussing – it’s focused about something else. {Brian}

In times of difficulty the power of narrative has been shown to confer unique benefits that may account for the processes at work here (Niederhoffer and Pennebaker 2005). Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005) highlight that not talking about emotional upheaval was ultimately unhealthy’ (p575) because suppression of these thoughts or emotions, required physiological work, reflected in central nervous system activity. This physiological work could be interpreted as a drain on the resilience fuel tank’ discussed earlier. However, expressing this emotion in verbal form seems to confer benefits above and beyond other expressive mediums such as dance or art. The processes proposed to account for the increased benefit of verbal expression rely on two factors. Firstly, in order to construct a coherent narrative that can be conveyed to another person the individual needs to order events that give a sense of control. Secondly, once formed, this narrative can be summarised, stored and ultimately forgotten’ (p576). This interpretation could be seen as having links to the time dimension discussed earlier. In ordering events the individual takes control of the present but once completed and stored it allows the aspects to be consigned to the past and conquered.

These cognitive processes give a sense of meaning and closure to potentially difficult events. In order to tell the story to a coach the leader is therefore engaged in cognitive meaning making that is, in itself, a valuable process to reduce the emotional impact, but telling the story then reduced the physiological strain caused by inhibition. Once the story is created and told it is suggested that this brings a secondary benefit in creating social connection. Without the ability to communicate and tell the story to others the individual is likely to become isolated as explained by Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005).

Suppressing thoughts on a daily basis is a large cognitive load, making it difficult to organise thoughts about the event and to make sense of what happened. Thus, the keeper of the secret is more guarded, and the surrounding people who will be unaware of the individual's thoughts and feelings cannot offer sympathy or help. As a result, the individual becomes more isolated. (p577).

It is therefore not surprising that the leaders in this study describe disconnection as a key characteristic of not being resilient. The implication is that this lack of social connection is further draining the resources available. Therefore the coaching relationship may provide a unique way to reduce the resource load created by inhibition, lack of cognitive coherence and isolation. The coaching relationship can in one place remove the inhibition by allowing emotion to be expressed, facilitate the building of a coherent story by being available to listen and provide a form of social support reducing the sense of isolation. This further reduces the cognitive load because here is a relationship where the secret does not need to be kept. In doing all of this, the energy required to suppress the turmoil is reduced which may then allow the available resource to be diverted to more productive use. Such a process would be compatible with a resource model of resilience.

The supportive relationship therefore allows for honest feedback that contributes to learning and to seeing the wider perspective.

5 - Thinking space

The last theme that emerged was 'thinking space' that expressed the value of dedicated reflection.

Jack reflected a common view that coaching enabled reflection and thinking. Having this dedicated time was seen as important to the process of making sense of the situation.

I think that came out of talking it through, and reflecting, and refining things in my own mind.....[.] I suppose you set aside time to problem solve to a certain extent, whereas you might just be thinking, that it might be flowing in and out of your mind, whereas if you set discrete time aside to focus on things, it helps to move your thinking forward. {Jack}

This lack of reflective time is compounded for leaders who often feel they cannot take time for themselves, so coaching allows them protected time as expressed by Amanda. Having this dedicated thinking time for herself seemed to support meta-reflection that helped her analyse and observe her own thinking.

And I think it just made me think about why was I thinking like that, [...] So it made me look at myself and think, well actually you wouldn't get to where you were if other people thought that you couldn't do the job, so why is it now that you're thinking you can't do the job? So I think it made me think more actually, and take time for me. {Amanda}

This quote clearly shows a widening of perspective that contributes to her learning and is starting to help her reclaim her sense of self-belief, demonstrating the interaction between themes.

This thinking space is consistently explained as valuable, yet it is clear that leaders rarely engage in this alone, and for some, like Rachel, this would not be an effective strategy as she highlights the benefits of using a coach to aid reflection.

One knows that the right thing to do is to reflect regularly but knowing it and doing it are entirely different things, and reflecting properly on your own is really, really hard I think, especially when you're extroverted. I need someone else bouncing back in order to help me reflect properly. {Rachel}

The value of vocalization to bounce back' ideas may indicate the conversion of ruminations into a verbal narrative supporting the work of Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005) discussed above. Brian also highlighted the value of turning it into conscious thought' through vocalization that could be an indication of the cognitive processes suggested.

....because it just gets it out there in the open and allows you to think it through... Because you might not be verbalising it, otherwise you might not actually be turning it into something which is conscious thought. And for me, that's quite useful because I don't think I'm particularly good at listening to my feelings. {Brian}

The thinking space provided by the coach is a special place where leaders can retreat and think through actions and events, gaining personal insight and reaching decisions. This supports all the other activities. The process of vocalization helps them organise their thoughts and they can focus on their own needs, instead of the needs of others and the organisation that usually take priority. Yet without the justification of a coaching interaction leaders do not, or cannot justify thinking time. Even if they could, there are questions about how effective this might prove for some.

5.3 Consolidation

The five themes emerging from the interview gave a sense of how leaders gained from coaching. If the emergent categories were to demonstrate validity and credibility, they should exhibit some synergy with data emerging from the concept map as effective triangulation. This was found to be the case and is shown in Table 3 with an explanation below.

<p style="text-align: center;">Interview Analysis ‘How coaching helped’</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Concept Map Domains</p>
<p>1) Reclaim my self-belief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of self
<p>2) Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and past experience
<p>3) Seeing wider perspective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logic and cognitive strategies
<p>4) Supportive relationship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and social support
<p>5) Thinking space</p>	

Table 3 - Consolidation of Concept Map and How Coaching Helped

The role of the coach was reported to help leaders *reclaim their self-belief* after a period of self-doubt. This is a clear reflection of a strong sense of self on the concept map, and issues such as confidence were often discussed as part of this quadrant.

Leaders explained how they experienced *learning* from the coaching interaction. They learned new approaches, tools and techniques and also from their own experiences. In discussion with the coach they were able to reflect on past and present experiences that led to greater self awareness and acceptance. This showed synergy with the learning and past experience domain.

The coach enabled leaders to *see a wider perspective* that helped them stand back from the issue which opened new options and gave a more balanced evaluation. This re-engaged the logical analysis and highlighted the reality of the situation. This has clear links to the domain of cognitive and logical approaches which included things like *‘stepping back’* and *‘noticing reality’*.

The important role of people and social support was explained by leaders who use others in a number of ways to support resilience. Some reported seeking out others

with relevant skills and experience to assist in times of challenge. While others explained how a supportive family or a specific individual was able to help them through difficult times. This shows a direct parallel to *supportive relationship* with the coach. The coach is able to fulfil both functions by giving emotional support as well as sometimes providing specific skills or knowledge.

This evaluation therefore showed significant overlap with the concept map and identified clear mechanisms for the role of coaching in leadership resilience.

The one disparity was the *thinking space* which had emerged as a major theme but was not present on the concept map. However the concept map was created to reflect resilience without reference to coaching. It may therefore be that the *thinking space* is the environment provided by the coach that facilitates the other four things to happen and is the unique coaching contribution. It may be this very thinking space that helps refresh the fuel tank described earlier through reflection and thinking time. Rachel drew a direct link from coaching to the fuel resource:

I feel that coaching is like topping up a battery. And it's a battery and the power is self-awareness I think, but I don't mean general self-awareness, I mean noticing more than self awareness.....So the coaching is the thing that both on the short term, and to a lesser extent on the long-term basis, encourages that malleability. {Rachel}

It therefore seemed there were synergies with existing concepts and that coaching does play a role in leadership resilience in a number of ways. What is not clear is how these themes interact and relate to each other. For example, can some exist without the others or do they exhibit co-dependency? Future research may be able to address some of these questions and clarify the potential interface between the themes.

Chapters 4 and 5 have given an insight into how leaders experience and conceptualise resilience helping to clarify what resilience means for leadership. While some synergies with existing resilience approaches exist, contextualisation may require a broader perspective than just resilience as recovery from past disappointments or failure. This knowledge can help coaches start to build a shared understanding with their clients. The next chapter will present the voice of coaches to establish how coaches might contribute to building this shared understanding.

Chapter 6 – The Coaches' Voice: Resilience in Coaching

Having gained the leadership view on resilience, eight coaches were asked about their perspective and presented with the completed concept map for discussion. They described how they work with resilience and expressed their own meaning making of the concept. This chapter is presented in two sections:

6.1 Understanding leadership resilience in coaching

6.2 The role of coaching in the resilience of leaders

The full list of NVivo codes generated from the coach data is in Appendix 7 for reference.

6.1 Understanding leadership resilience in coaching

The early part of the coach interviews focused on how coaches define resilience and yielded two main themes:

1. Not calling it resilience
2. Adaptability and change

6.1.1 Not calling it resilience

Coaches all agreed that the term 'resilience' is not yet in common use for them or their clients. Many did not use the word 'resilience' and explained that clients would not specifically contract for resilience or use this term, as explained by Giles.

I mean resilience isn't a word that sort of crops up in conversation, and it is a difficult word to define. I think, for the sort of clients I'm thinking of, they wouldn't talk about resilience. They might talk about survival or, making progress, or doing it, or whatever, but I don't think they think in terms of resilience. {Giles}

This suggests that despite popular and practitioner press coverage this term is not yet commonplace with coaches or clients. This does not mean that coaches see resilience as irrelevant as they often describe a clear link between performance or feelings and a lack of resilience. So while resilience is not a stated aim, working with resilience is felt to have a potential impact on aspects like performance, as described by Alex.

I think the resilience outcome is almost always unexpected because the explicit aims of the coaching tend to be, often around performance issues, but in reality it's a resilience issue, because the person feels lousy. So as soon as you've dealt with that, performance just deals with itself. {Alex}

Alex describes the indicators of a resilience issue as the person feeling lousy but possible symptoms varied among coaches. In discussing how they recognise a resilience issue some refer to negative client language, others to physical signs of stress, such as reported trouble sleeping. While others talked of low self-esteem, or going round in a vicious circle. However one common view was the demonstration of inappropriate or unusual behaviour for that individual. This meant that it often did not surface in the early stages of a coaching relationship. It was more likely to be identified after working with a client for some time, possibly because coaches feel they know the client better as described by Teresa.

You may be having a conversation with someone and you won't necessarily think: right, I've got a resilience issue – because it will come out in the discussion. And that's what I found with the two that I've been coaching most recently...[...] if you've worked with a client for quite some time you might pick up a resilience issue earlier than if it's quite a new client; once you know the client a little bit better. {Teresa}

Knowing the client a little better meant that Teresa was more able to judge when the client's natural reactions were beyond what might be expected for this particular client. It was described as a „disproportionate response“ or as seeing them „act out of character“ by Cathy.

It's something about acting out of character maybe. Maybe, I'm working with somebody and the patterns tell me, „but normally they would have no trouble coping with this“. {Cathy}

This quote is interesting because it also mentions that they would „normally...cope with this“. This means that leaders who are well known to the coach can suddenly change and no longer display coping skills that the coach felt they possessed. This lends some weight to the idea that resilience is a dynamic capability and not a specific skill or trait that can always be applied.

Coaches are also aware of the difficulty in trying to isolate and identify a pure resilience issue. More commonly they feel they are working with a whole range of aspects linked with resilience, such as confidence or assertiveness. Coaches are therefore generally not working with resilience explicitly although they do recognise links in what they are doing. This link is made mentally by coaches, but with the

client they tend to use more accessible and familiar language as described by Wendy.

I probably wouldn't use the word resilience, I would use whatever word they did... „I'm not assertive enough" or in these situations „I come away being frustrated", or however they described it.
{Wendy}

Part of the reason that the term resilience is not used may be because coaches still find it very hard to define. They consistently refer to resilience being affected by individual differences and context. Nancy drew attention to how different personalities are energised by different situations. While for some a busy schedule is energising, for others it drains them very quickly.

It's, I think, an interaction between the situation and the personality, because there are people who love being frantic and love being important and love being creative and all of those pressures and find it very, very difficult because, you don't sleep a lot, but still actually that's when they're being really vibrant. And there are others who would just collapse under that but they might be quite happy in much more of a „minding the shop" role.
{Nancy}

Her interpretation is that resilience is needed when there is a poor fit between personal strengths and job role, rather than in response to any particular issue. For those who thrive on fire fighting resilience was not needed to cope with constant change because such challenge energises them. This reflected the view of a number of coaches that a generic definition of resilience with no reference to situational factors is inappropriate. This view was well summarised by Cathy.

Well I'm wondering if, that's why I haven't named it to date, because it feels to me like, a heading. It feels like, it's probably very different in different situations, for different people. {Cathy}

This may raise questions about the value of measuring and labelling the construct of resilience. Most measures are based on self-report, meaning two individuals may both report having a positive mental attitude yet mean very different things because of the context within which the judgement is made. This would make the comparative scores quite meaningless. While this is a common critique of self-report psychometrics generally, to be labelled as not resilient could in itself create an emotional reaction that creates despondency and a decrease in resilience. Cathy questioned the value of such labels and was keen to stress the importance of the feeling.

Does it help an individual to know that they have a certain level of resilience? Actually the important thing is, how they feel rather than what somebody else tells them and labels it as. It's how resilient they feel, I think. {Cathy}

The fact that many coaches describe resilience as a feeling with an emotional component, may suggest it is likely to change in different domains of life, such as at work versus home life. The emotional reaction in response to personal issues, such as children may be quite different to that experienced in a working context. This might explain Amanda's reaction detailed in Chapter 4 when she lost her son in the supermarket. This would make a single general resilience score of limited use unless expressed contextually at a point in time.

The validity of resilience measures is already questioned as they are often composites of a number of scales, as noted in the literature review. This means that one single, overall, resilience score may not adequately reflect all the component scales. In addition, if resilience is experienced as a fuel system as described by leaders, this is also likely to make the measure unstable and potentially transient. As a result, any resilience measure may prove ineffective as a way of predicting resilience performance or as a basis for training or coaching. Some coaches did express reservations about the use and value of resilience measures. Wendy had experience of the Mental Toughness Questionnaire and felt it was not an accurate reflection of her personal level of resilience. She was also concerned that such measures might be used by organisations inappropriately.

6.1.2 Adaptability and change

Despite not agreeing on a definition, there was a common view among coaches that resilience was about dealing with change or adversity. It often arose as an issue when expectations were not met, or when uncertain and unexpected situations emerged. Leadership resilience is therefore characterised by coaches as the ability to deal with the unknown, or a mismatch of expectations against reality. This is not to say leaders would always know how to deal with the unfamiliar situation, but they would continue to perform and be able to work through the situation to a conclusion, without being disabled by the ambiguity, as explained by Teresa:

I think it's the ability of an individual who's in a leading situation to be able to deal with ambiguous situations; situations that are constantly changing; situations that are not clear; and to be able to

have the head space to cope with, not necessarily knowing the answers, and being able to ride out the uncertainty. {Teresa}

This resonates with the ideas expressed by leaders that a certain degree of courage is needed to face new situations and an unknown future. Barbara explains how assessing your own personal capability is more difficult in new situations, so it would be harder to accurately predict the potential outcome. This is the result of a lack of accurate data against which to evaluate potential performance so leads to anxiety, requiring resilience to deal with it.

So if you're in your home environment and you're used to what's happening, and it could be really high pressure but you know what you're doing, you feel competent, capable, you've got experience, all these trials and tribulations, water off a duck's back. In a different scenario where you perhaps aren't sure of your limitations, you're not sure that you have got the capability, then, I think it would be perfectly normal for your resilience to be less. If, you're in new and uncertain territory maybe you can't make the assessment that you could do if you're in a familiar context. {Barbara}

Leadership resilience is therefore characterised as looking forward into the future and maintaining the belief and motivation to move forward even into unknown situations. The descriptions from coaches often mention confidence or self efficacy despite the „trials and tribulations“ that are seen as normal and acceptable. This is not implying that success is guaranteed, but that resilience confers a security that what is to be faced will not present unmanageable risk. This chimes with the view from leaders that resilience is needed for the future even when no adversity has been experienced or currently exists.

What seems to sustain this forward movement is a true belief in the outcome as meaningful and worthwhile. Most coaches explained how they support the future focus through forward planning but that true belief in the goal is vital. This presents an interesting tension in the data. It is clear that leaders need to be flexible and adaptable to be resilient. Yet at the same time they must be single-minded with a true belief both in the outcome they are striving for, and in their own capability. Mary threw some light on this by separating belief in the goal which remains consistent, from the process to achieve it that must be flexible.

They're only going to get there if they really, really want it and will do anything to get that and to have that flexibility. And if that doesn't work well, I'll do something else and if that doesn't work, I'll do something else and constantly...but you've got to really want

and believe in what you're working towards. So it's making it very compelling. {Mary}

Coaches therefore believe leaders need a clear destination but must be willing to change or consider alternative paths to reach it. This might mean changing their approach to the job because the demands of the situation are different; or to change their perspective and attitude to a situation. Resilient leaders are seen as having to sustain their belief in the outcome, without dogma in the process to get there. This presents an interesting dilemma for the coach working with a leader. To help them remain resolute but not stubborn, to remain flexible but not compliant.

6.2 The role of coaching in the resilience of leaders

All the coaches who contributed to this study work with leaders. This section will address the four main themes that emerged from their collective experiences of how they felt their coaching supported resilience in their own clients.

In describing their role coaches identified many of the common functions associated with coaching emerged as nodes, such as „*challenging assumptions*“, „*allowing vocalization*“ and „*offering tools*“. There were also examples of synergies with How coaching helped with the mention of „*holding a safe space*“ and „*giving a wider perspective*“. It was clear that the coaching relationship did provide leaders with a unique context that created thinking time. These aspects related to what the coach actually did in the sessions that appeared as the coaches' role in the data shown in Appendix 7.

However four themes were more reflective of what coaches felt happened for the client as a result of coaching in respect of resilience. These were:

1. Stimulating action
2. Connecting to the reality
3. Working with the whole person
4. Building time bridges across risk

6.2.1 Stimulating action

Some coaches equated a resilience problem with a failure to take action or make progress, often described as becoming stuck.

The more acute the resilience problem is, the less able they are to move forwards, and the more likely they are to be stuck in the past or the very close present. {Barbara}

However, a useful distinction was highlighted by Nancy that the potential block might be due to a lack of skills or a lack of will to take the required action. She describes a lack of knowledge or information, which could be resolved through coaching. These might equate to problem solving strategies that the coach can help define and think through. However there is also a judgement piece that is more emotion based. Does the leader have the motivation and commitment to carry out the required action?

There's always a level of it which is skills [...] how do I, what do I need to know. [...]. But there also seemed to be a bit about deciding what to do. This is the right thing to do and this is the way through, and then deciding to do it, to commit to that strategy, and the two things are different. And that's partly an emotional bit, am I up for doing this? {Nancy}

Coaches described working with both dimensions, helping with tools and techniques but also with the emotional intangible aspects that drive motivation. The perception of coaches is that a leader can possess all the skills and fail to apply them. This raises concerns about the value of large-scale resilience training programmes. Even if it is assumed that many of the tools and techniques will be valuable there is still no guarantee that the individual feels moved to apply and use the skills learnt. This may go some way to explaining why normally resilient leaders suddenly lose this ability at certain times. While they have the skills and this capability has not changed, the capacity to apply these skills has been reduced or eliminated. This may indicate that the resources required to motivate and apply the skills were compromised. The fuel system described in Chapter 4 is therefore affecting their capacity for resilience but not the capability which remains constant. Coaches are therefore working with both aspects to stimulate action. Creating action will almost inevitably promote re-engagement that may combat the withdrawal that is often indicative of failing resilience.

Cathy gave a description of just such a case, where the coaching helped support action that started to reclaim some agency in the situation.

I think he was feeling quite powerless – and those are my words not his – and now he's at the point where he's talked to a lawyer and is actually going to take some action as a result of all of this. So I'm not necessarily saying the coaching directly led him to do

that, but maybe part of that sort of raised awareness was actually, I can do something about this. {Cathy}

In this case the coaching role was working with the motivation and capacity rather than with additional skills.

Coaches therefore equate resilience with the ability to perform and take action. They identify two aspects to their role. Firstly they are able to support the development of emotion-focused coping skills and to moderate these feelings through stimulating action. However there is also a far more pragmatic role in helping create plans and to formulate achievable actions that support the first step towards regaining agency in a situation, the equivalent of problem-focused coping, as expressed by Nancy:

....being really quite simply pragmatic about options for some things. I suppose it's a bit like when you go into a new organisation you're looking for the quick wins. If you've got this complete mess, well is there something you could do, is there something that would make a difference out of it? So the little bits, because if people then get to see that, that can do an awful lot in terms of perception and confidence and begin to move on. {Nancy}

This highlights how coaches see these two factors as reciprocal and integrated. That working with one can support the other. This mirrors the nested interdependencies explained by leaders in the model of How coaching helps. However it is interesting that the leaders did not mention coaching as a spur to action although they feel focusing on actions and outcomes is important to resilience. Leaders expressed how coaching raised their awareness that something could be done. This encouraged them to re-engage in some way with the situation and take control of either activities or emotions. This raising of awareness was vital to moving forward and was also highlighted by coaches as a major theme that will be discussed next.

6.2.2 Connecting to current reality

The view that leaders often lack awareness was a common experience reported by all the coaches. The fact that leaders are so busy was cited as a reason why they sometimes failed to connect with the reality going on around them. It was highlighted that leaders usually do have the problem solving skills to work through issues but that what is lacking is often the awareness of what the issue really is. This was clearly expressed by Alex.

These people didn't get to the positions they're in without being able to decide a plan and execute it, but being able to recognise the difficulty of the situation they're in and the need to do something about it is different. {Alex}

What is identified as missing is the ability to assess the reality of the situation. This reality sometimes related to awareness of the organisational system. Giles describes someone moving from the private into the public sector and not seeing the culture of the organisation accurately. Feeling resilient relied on him being able to make meaning of the situation in a different way that required awareness of an alternative perspective.

A lot of it was about trying to support his understanding of the new world that he was living in, [...]... so he'd operated a little bit as an island. The resilience in that case was perhaps showing him there was a bigger picture and there were other things that had to be taken into account in doing what he'd done. {Giles}

In other cases coaches describe a lack of *self*-awareness causing issues. This could be a lack of awareness of personal weaknesses, or a lack of accurate evaluation about themselves in context. Barbara described how resilience relies on accurate information processing, especially in relation to the task and the skills available.

The people I've seen who don't have resilience, they don't have the internal measure of your own competence versus the task in front of you. So someone with resilience has this internal capability, internal measure, and they can look at a set of circumstances honestly and say well okay I can pretty much do 75% of this, I can get the help where I need it, and although I haven't navigated it before it's similar enough so I can bring in skills and resources. So they're confident but they're not over-confident, there is an element of doubt which helps them stay flexible and think. {Barbara}

Coaches therefore help raise awareness of the context, the task and of personal strengths and weaknesses. Coaches also described a vital part of their role as helping leaders become aware of their feelings. The private coaching relationship encourages emotions to be discussed honestly allowing leaders to connect with their own emotions through the process of vocalization and reflection. Barbara explained how the coaching space allows for the reflection that leaders are often not able to do alone.

Because a lot of my people are good at thinking, and good at analysing, but not good at reflecting, and not good at feelings.
{Barbara}

This echoes what was said by leaders and highlights the coaching contribution in stimulating reflection and accessing feelings. If a leader lacks confidence, this may be a relatively new experience and the problem to be resolved is how to regain that confidence. To achieve this there must be awareness and acknowledgement of the real problem in order to deal with it. Such a process may rely in large part on the trusting and honest interaction provided by the coach.

The image created by coaches is that leaders are capable people who usually have the skills to solve problems and to manage their own emotions. Successful application of these skills results in resilience. However, in order to apply these skills appropriately leaders need to identify the real problem they face and to realistically evaluate the skills needed to resolve it. Without a realistic grasp of situations, leaders are likely to solve the wrong problem and continue to experience issues. Through increased awareness the coach appears to help set in place mechanisms that help solve the right problem, separating subjective interpretations from observed reality. This separation may be supported by the vocalization process itself. Nancy explains how vocalization starts to structure information into a form that can be observed and objectified and may support the previous work discussed in Chapter 5 by Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005).

I think talking about things begins to take you outside anyway, because it begins to structure stuff in a way that makes sense to other people and makes sense to yourself [...] getting a different light on the landscape, standing in a different position, in connection with it. {Nancy}

Coaches feel that by connecting to a wider reality and their own emotions, leaders are better able to employ their natural resilience to manage the emotional impact they feel. But even the emotional impact itself is up for debate in the coaching situation. Through effective challenge the coach can question if the emotional impact is justified given the importance of the issue. Alex explained how gaining a realistic connection to reality can already minimise the emotional force.

Resilience is about changing your inner state, feeling better. I think first of all just acknowledging why they might feel lousy and understanding that, is a good start and then...[.], it's about getting a realistic view of the situation. It's about challenging whether the things they feel lousy about are really that important [...]..and

sometimes they might be, and it's about having a way, a plan to deal with the situation and change it. {Alex}

Alex highlights that apart from challenging the perception of reality, he also challenges what is really important to them, and how they want to take it forward. Moving forward may need a change of perspective that requires a reformulation of their world view. Once the reality of the situation is appreciated and the internal beliefs are made explicit the leader faces the potential mismatch. To reinstate equilibrium the belief structure may need to change. This has resonance with the role of values raised by leaders. If the issue is truly important and equilibrium with core values cannot be achieved, the leader may decide to exercise ultimate agency and step out of the situation. This brings into sharp focus how coaches work with leaders. While they might be contracted to work in the organisational context coaches are usually engaged with the whole person.

6.2.3 Working with the whole person

Coaches have a very holistic view of working with resilience. None of the coaches identified resilience as a specific aspect they would name and work with, unlike perhaps confidence or self-esteem that are more established terms. Barbara explained it as just part of the mix.

I don't feel that singling out resilience as a particular issue for leaders is very helpful, because it's like singling out emotional intelligence or something else. I think it, has to be a part of something you work with. {Barbara}

Coaches were also clear that any resilience work involves the whole person. Failing resilience was often associated with additional personal pressures beyond work alone. As a result the coaching focus may include both work and personal issues.

My focus is business and the executive, but obviously when you coach somebody in a business, they are affected by the whole, what's happening in their life, so that resilience translates to business issues as well. {Wendy}

The work is therefore more holistic and goes well beyond just context, Teresa described it as ‘about their being’.

Something about the individual's core, about their being, and about who they are. Something about helping them recognising that – because I think sometimes they've lost track of that. And then, helping them find ways to re-engage with it. {Teresa}

The reference to „*who they are*“ was also highlighted by Alex explaining another example that came almost by accident when he asked a client “Who she was, as a leader”. The answer came in the form of values and once articulated seemed to act as an anchor point.

And I said, “Well okay who- who is...?” and said her name. It was incredibly powerful because she spent a lot of time talking about values and where they were in danger of being compromised and she was defining herself in terms of values and it was an incredibly powerful session. I think what we achieved wasn’t really a plan to do anything differently, it was more about her awareness of herself and interestingly since then [...] she’s being very resilient and that’s very interesting. I hadn’t thought of it that way at all. {Alex}

What Alex is implying is that the process of coaching helped articulate and set out her values, thus providing a clear foundation on which to move forward. In building the concept map with leaders defining the boundary between values and assumptions or beliefs was problematic. That is, to understand which aspects represented a ‘window on the world’ that is open to debate and change, in contrast to strongly embedded values that form a rigid foundation for the individual. This distinction was discussed with coaches and values were felt to be more fixed and less open to change. Therefore by definition, a belief that is not open to change is deemed to be a value. This creates a somewhat circular argument that is not entirely satisfactory. However the process of coaching does increase awareness and surface these assumptions for discussion and scrutiny. Therefore it may be the very process of coaching that helps define where this boundary is for each individual, as explained by Alex. This would mean that leaders, through coaching, establish a much clearer understanding of which principles they are not prepared to compromise that creates a clear ‘line in the sand’ that they can use to inform decisions. The example given above may have created the bedrock on which the client could build her leadership resilience. It has been proposed that resilience is tested when there is uncertainty or the future is unknown. Yet once values are defined this could create a degree of certainty. It sets out some ‘constants’ that start to define a framework that reduces this uncertainty and may make decision making much easier.

Some support for this position came from Barbara explaining how she equates resilience with a strong set of principles that guide decision making.

At the start of the coaching, people who come into this resilient block, I ask them what’s important to them, and they know. They don’t call them their values but they know. They don’t know they

take them into account when they make decisions, that's below their awareness, but they absolutely can say it's integrity, it's success, it's family, ... they don't always live them wholeheartedly, but they know what their guiding principles are..... and that's how they navigate the world. {Barbara}

The constants may therefore be at a more abstract level, in the form of values, to replace the unknown tangibles presented by the situation. The leadership data hinted that a values conflict might play a role in resilience issues. The experience of coaches seems to support the position that values matter.

If coaches are working with resilience holistically it suggests skills transfer alone is inadequate to explain the role of coaching in resilience. Yet there is a danger that the availability of resilience training creates a belief that it can be enhanced through simple tools and exercises. This is already evident with the plethora of tools and checklists available to guide the work of the coach. However, coaches are clear that the process of increasing resilience is far more holistic, involving multiple attributes, some potentially difficult self-reflection and evaluation. Resilience training and measures may be a fashionable concept in the current climate but may provide only an element of the solution. Coaches who rely too heavily on simplistic techniques and measures are unlikely to see real change in the resilience of their leadership clients.

6.2.4 Building time bridges across risk

The concept map shown to coaches did not contain any reference to the 'future focus' that emerged from the initial coding of leadership data but Nancy highlighted this as an omission on the map when she reviewed it.

The thing that I would think could be missing is that it's a picture of the present and the past, and what leaders are often driven by, is a vision of the future, how they want things to be, which is the moderating influences around beliefs and values. {Nancy}

This strong impact of the future was raised by all the coaches interviewed and seemed to support the idea that the future perspective is key in leadership resilience. Many coaches spoke of leaders having a strong future vision that motivated them to get past challenges. However a future perspective alone was not felt to be sufficient to support resilience. Leaders needed to be able to make links across the time perspectives, by learning from the past and the present to inform the future. Giles explained this as follows:

The day-to-day events will impinge on that and it's about learning from them to enable that longer-term transition to take place. And I think what most of my clients find difficult is linking those two. They actually tend to be quite good at either responding to the immediate, or at thinking in the long-term, but actually linking the two is quite difficult. {Giles}

Many coaches saw their role not just as defining how to be resilient in each time zone, but rather in helping to draw links between them. This was best summarised by Wendy, who explained that resilience operates in different ways in each of the three time domains but explained how past informs the future.

I do believe you can build your resilience, because again it's how you interpret past experience, and how that informs your current feeling and your future action. {Wendy}

Most coaches therefore feel that leaders benefit when they can focus across this time perspective and see their role as helping to build bridges between time perspectives. This included reflecting on experience and learning from past events, to take lessons into the future. This can take the form expressed by Wendy where by reflecting on previous challenges the person gains confidence that they are capable of surmounting issues in the future. They are learning about the process of challenge and their personal ability to survive it.

If people are able to reflect back and see that they dealt with this really difficult thing, and they came through it, that gives them more resilience for the next time it happens, because they have experience that they will come through it. {Wendy}

But not all coaches agreed on this point. Nancy felt that leaders were capable of making this link for themselves and that coaching should focus more on the present and the future.

Clients sometimes talk about previous experiences but it doesn't help hugely in discussion, partly because of the present and future nature of coaching work, and if people are going to draw off that, they're probably going to do that anyway without me saying, "Has this ever happened to anyone?" {Nancy}

Most coaches therefore went well beyond describing resilience just as the capacity to 'bounce back' from issues. Alex explained how an emotional reaction might be present because of a past event, but again highlights that resilience is required for the future.

I think actually the feelings may be there because of something that's happened in the past, but the resilience part of it is about looking to the future. {Alex}

This idea that resilience is not only about reframing or dealing with the past came through very strongly and was often explained as having the courage or confidence to move forward. Mary gave the analogy of venturing beyond the safe comfort zone to take a chance in order to achieve the ultimate goal.

They're kind of taking the easy option to stay where they are rather than fighting for what they're saying they want. It's just harder...I've just got this picture of, this little pool and this little bit of river and it's nice and sheltered and I'll just stay here, yes I'd rather be up there, but actually it's okay where I am in this nice sheltered pool, but if I want to get there I've got to go out into this. {Mary}

The image created is of resilient leaders having a clear future goal, together with the courage to face the potential risks that getting there might entail. This idea of risk was often explained in the context of approaching a new task or area of responsibility, as for Teresa.

For her it was quite a risky move to start making quite big decisions [...] in an area that she's not really had much responsibility in before. {Teresa}

In order to deal with this perceived risk coaches talk of building courage, confidence and self-trust. In many cases the descriptions bear a strong relationship to the concept of self-efficacy. Barbara explains that leaders build courage through a belief that they have the capabilities to reach that future vision but need to base this on the assessment of reality, covered earlier.

I think courage goes with it. To be able to look at the world as it is and say this is how it is now, rather than wishing it was something else, and accept that this is how it is now, and knowing that you have the skills, the capabilities, whatever, the toughness, to move from that to a better place, a slightly better place. {Barbara}

What is unclear is the nature of the perceived risks that lie ahead. Some may be emotional risks such as fear of failure, but tangible risks are also identified. Coaches explain much of their role as helping to create this future focus and to support the planning process that needs to go with it. As explained by Giles.

Researcher: What is it you're intending to work with when you work with resilience?

Well I think it's trying to get the client to take that forward view which is the, the total picture of their organisation, and planning as much as possible for the future. {Giles}

However the safe coaching space means that a coach can also discuss the intangible emotional risks. Through discussion, the perceived risks can be evaluated and strategies discussed to deal with them.

One aspect that might be interesting to research further is the role of modelling risk in the coaching interaction. Alex discussed the importance of risk taking in the coaching relationship that may indicate some form of parallel process. Alex explained how the coach takes risks, through a very strong form of challenge. It would be interesting to understand if this helps clients become less risk averse in their own roles.

It's often taking what feels like a risk because I think it's very easy as a coach to pussy foot around, ask lots of lovely open questions and all that stuff, but actually inside say, "Come on, you know, this person needs to deal with this. Just ask that killer question, go on" and, it's not being afraid to take that risk. In some ways I think that's the most important thing. {Alex}

The picture painted is of leaders needing a strong future vision that is informed by past experience and an honest evaluation of the current organisational system. The coach helps clarify this future vision and brings lessons from the past to inform future action. However these tangible steps need to be supplemented with the emotional resolve required: the ability to face uncertainty and risk.

6.3 Creating a common understanding

The coach's perspective concurs with that of leaders in identifying values and the future focus as important. However coaches are not generally addressing social support or any physical aspects. Coaches may see the physical or systems domains as outside their remit but the leadership data suggests these may be fruitful areas to include when coaching for resilience.

The metaphor of resilience as 'resource' was very strong in the leadership data but was far less prominent from coaches. One coach referred to the 'resilience pot' and two made reference to energy or fuel such as Cathy.

I think the conversations I was having with him were probably, enabling him to, find some energy and some resource if you like, to deal with the situation in a different way. {Cathy}

These expressions lend some support to the metaphors that were so strong in the leadership data. However, references were far less pronounced and it is unlikely these would have been noted without the theoretical sensitivity conferred by analysing the leadership data first. This could present an opportunity for coaches. Making leaders aware of their ability to manage this resource system may present an accessible way to work with resilience.

The current support coaches use for resilience is focused on two approaches. Firstly, helping to develop tangible skills, approaches and techniques, such as risk assessment or planning. Secondly they help deal with emotional or intangible aspects, such as self awareness, building confidence or the courage to face risks. Both these strategies are described by coaches as aiming to 'simulate action'. Yet leaders do not tend to describe coaching as a spur to action. Rather their perception is of raised awareness and regaining a sense of agency that action could be taken. So for leaders the role of the coach is to recreate the connection to reality and the future, the action seems to be more a consequence of this realisation. For coaches, an increase in 'awareness' is hard to see so it may be that coaches describe the 'action' as the overt signal of their role simply because it is more visible.

These findings suggest significant differences in how resilience might be conceptualised by coaches and leaders. It is important that coaches appreciate the potential differences in conceptualisation of resilience to ensure they develop a mutual understanding with leadership clients. If leaders see resilience within a future frame of reference they may have a very different conceptualisation than that presented in the literature to date. This might suggest that resilience coaching with leaders needs a dedicated research base that goes beyond resilience as 'bounce back'.

Chapter 7 – The Researcher's Voice: Discussion

This chapter will share my holistic meaning making of the data from previous chapters avoiding specific quotes in favour of the researcher voice. My views are based on the fusion of data from both leaders and coaches and will try to expand and interpret findings in the light of existing literature. Additional literature that has become pertinent following data analysis is used to inform the discussion; a process in line with grounded theory.

I will start by expanding on the idea of resilience across time (7.1) identified in Chapter 4 and reiterated in Chapter 6. Following this I will propose a new conceptualisation of resilience that may be of help to coaches (7.2) and go on to discuss this in more detail in 7.3 and 7.4.

7.1 Seeing resilience across time

Resilience is often defined as the ability to bounce back' after a negative event and to continue to perform or thrive despite adversity. Data from both leaders and coaches suggest that in the context of leadership, a strong future orientation is also required. Leaders agreed that resilience involved maintaining a future focus and a degree of persistence in working towards the ultimate aim. Coaches reinforced this commitment to the future and associated stuckness' in the present with a lack of resilience. Coaches felt their role was to stimulate action, often by making the future goal the topic of discussion. This allowed greater clarity of vision to be built, and to assess the possible risks so leaders could plan around the potential practical and emotional pitfalls. Very little was said by participants about recovery from past events which may suggest resilience in the leadership context is best thought of as sustainability rather than recovery (Zautra 2009).

This perspective does however raise potential overlaps with alternative constructs. The future focus was often aligned with persistence' that presents a possible overlap with the 'grit' concept which may merit further investigation (Duckworth and Quinn 2009). Grit is defined as trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals' and individuals high on the grit scale will possess zeal' and persistence' (Duckworth and Quinn 2009). Duckworth and Quinn distinguish GRIT from resilience, which they describe as a process. However, high grit scores are indicative of those who can maintain motivation over long periods, despite failure or adversity. If resilience is experienced as having a strong future focus, and leaders equate it with persistence, it raises questions about the relationship between these

two constructs. Further potential overlaps between hope, optimism and resilience are also raised by the findings. Both hope and optimism were often experienced as elements of resilience rather than as separate constructs and may suggest further investigation is required.

The fact that both participant groups described resilience as future focused and relevant to all three temporal perspectives does show synergy with previous work. Coutu (2002) characterised leadership resilience as based on an acceptance of reality, the ability to make meaning, and ingenuity to problem. The ability to make meaning could be interpreted as the capacity to find significance in past events. The acceptance of reality has clear synergy with the ability to connect to the present. While the ingenuity to problem solve could be seen as the aptitude to maintain a future focus and deal with new challenges. It appears that the skill of resilience needs to be applied in all three time domains successfully to enable leadership resilience. However coaches also reported it was important to draw links between each of these time perspectives as some leaders found this aspect difficult to achieve alone. Rather than a distinct set of skills required in each time zone, it is important that leaders make links between the three temporal dimensions. Therefore resilience is associated with a focus on the future, but not to the exclusion of the past and the present. The leaders interviewed do not appear to be focused only on the future when at their most resilient. Rather they draw on the past, accept the realities of the present and then look to the future, demonstrating balance.

This interpretation shows links to the concept of time perspective (Zimbardo 2008, Boniwell and Zimbardo 2004). Zimbardo asserts that individuals use time perspectives in encoding, storing, and recalling.... experiences; in sensing, feeling, and being; in shaping expectations, goals, contingencies; and in imagining scenarios' (p18). It is suggested that individuals demonstrate a personal time profile that often favours one time perspective over another with a disproportionate focus on the past, the present or the future. When individuals adopt an excessive orientation that excludes or minimises the others, they may become dysfunctional' (Boniwell and Zimbardo 2004:169). An individual may therefore have a strong past orientation and enjoy reminiscing while someone with a strong present profile may exhibit hedonistic tendencies and fail to appreciate future consequences. Six time profiles have been identified and leaders often demonstrate a future time bias. It is suggested that a balanced time perspective allows the greatest flexibility to adapt to the prevailing situation, and may be linked to greater well-being. Experiences from

this study seem to support the optimal time perspective proposed by Zimbardo (2008) and may suggest one way for coaches to work with resilience.

Coaching may be able to help leaders compensate for time biases, whether they are short term as in stuckness or long term as might be the case for a measured unbalanced time perspective. It may be possible for a coach to use questions that focus on the lower preference perspectives to support balance through increased awareness. Achieving this balanced time profile may then contribute to resilience by maintaining the future focus but ensuring lessons from the past are not lost, while connecting to current reality to make informed decisions.

The ideas presented here are based only on the qualitative data and none of the time bias measures available were administered. This could represent an area for future longitudinal research. If when resilience fails it manifests as stuckness there may be a potential effect on the time profile. This may indicate that coaching could work through a time perspective to influence resilience. Such an idea might merit future investigation.

A time perspective may also start to build some coherence into the concept of resilience beyond the checklist approach of many frameworks. The literature review established the extensive list of attributes associated with resilience and identified a lack of integration between resilience and the leadership context. While some existing approaches are helpful, leadership resilience may need a different perspective but this risks further fragmentation. If it were possible to identify a common component in how resilience manifests in each time domain we might reach a more integrated conceptual understanding to guide future work. The findings of this study suggest that what seems common to all situations requiring resilience could be described as the world is not as I would like it to be.

In looking back at the past, resilience is often about recovery, for example in dealing with regret, loss or failure. In such situations past events have not gone as the leader wanted them to. Resilience is therefore about dealing with the disparity between expected state and perceived state to reach an acceptable equilibrium. In the present, resilience is associated with a connection with reality which would minimise the potential discrepancy experienced. In the future, the desired state could be one of knowledge in order to minimise uncertainty and risk, in contrast to the perceived state of ignorance and uncertainty. This again involves the rebalancing of the desired state with the perceived state. This approach would bring an aspect of consistency to our understanding of resilience.

Therefore resilience may be expressed as different actions in the past, present and future but could be attempting to achieve the same aim. Resilience is what is needed to deal with the difference between the world as I would like it to be and the world as I perceive it to be - a position that would support resilience as a state of equilibrium.

7.2 A model of Capability and Capacity

Many of the existing approaches to resilience are what could be called, capability models. They focus on what capabilities are required to exhibit resilience. These models generally propose a checklist of attributes, skills and strategies that define the resilient person. These strategies once learned, are fairly enduring. This study indicates that coaching contributes to these long term resilience strategies, primarily through learning new approaches and techniques. Leaders reported still using strategies they learned from coaching to help them well after their coaching finished. This can be referred to as the *capability* required for resilience.

However, capabilities alone do not appear to adequately explain the concept of resilience in this group. It was clear from the descriptions that leaders already employ many of the attributes, skills and strategies to be resilient. It is often these very characteristics that have helped them rise into leadership positions. Yet they report their resilience deserting them at times when there is simply too much to do, or values are compromised. This indicates that just having the requisite capabilities will not guarantee those capabilities are available or applied at any specific point in time. In addition to the capability, they must also have the desire, motivation and mental energy to apply these attributes in any particular context.

The prevalence of the fuel metaphor identified in Chapter 4 indicates there may be another factor at play that is more transient and short term. This will be referred to as the *capacity* to be resilient. While capabilities, once learnt, endure, the capacity gradually runs out so needs constant maintenance. The capacity can be described as the energy to be resilient, and coaching seems to contribute here too. This could be by restoring fuel by creating the thinking space, or it could be by releasing energy engaged in suppression. Alternatively, energy may simply be gained through understanding how to manage this personal energy system.

This energy system has strong support in previous literature (Hobfoll 1989) and is considered exhaustible. The energy system requires constant maintenance so individuals need to understand and manage this system in order to remain resilient.

This shows parallels with the sports arena where intermittent recovery is required, to balance periods of high energy expenditure, known as 'oscillation' (Loehr and Schwartz 2001). Even the most successful and efficient leaders who were used to high pressure environments experienced a failure of resilience when faced with too much change or a significant emotional conflict. This might be attributable to a lack of adequate recovery time or simply to demand outstripping resource supply.

Such effects might suggest that resilience is best thought of as a system containing two components of *capability* and *capacity*. It would be possible to build capability but for a leader then to lack the energy or interest to apply those capabilities. This might happen if the organisational cause or aim is not seen as congruent with their own values or they simply have too much to do. So despite having problem-solving skills and a strong sense of optimism they might fail to apply those capabilities to the current situation because they lack the resources required to do so.

In contrast, a leader may have the energy to be resilient by being very committed to the organisational cause, yet lack the tools and techniques to support the process. In such situations the leader might not have the strategies that would help support aspects like emotional regulation. These two components will also interact. A lack of capabilities is likely to cause a larger drain on the available energy resource than well developed capabilities. A lack of resource energy may also hinder the acquisition and use of existing capabilities.

A useful way to explain this dynamic might be as a water system (Fig.7.1). The size of the storage tank is based on the capabilities. The more capabilities acquired, the larger the tank. The tank is filled from a variety of sources that might include success, support of others etc. This tank supplies a tap that must support both personal and organisational aims. As long as demand does not outstrip supply the resources are adequate to meet demand. When there is simply too much to do the fuel tank empties and resilience fails. The conduit to the tap is based on values. While there is integrity in the pipe, the flow will be based on the water available. However if values are compromised there is an effective leak that diverts resources. This means that not enough resource reaches the initial aims but will also cause the tank to empty faster meaning depletion is more likely. So coaches need to pay attention not only to the capabilities but also to the whole system and the integrity of the values.

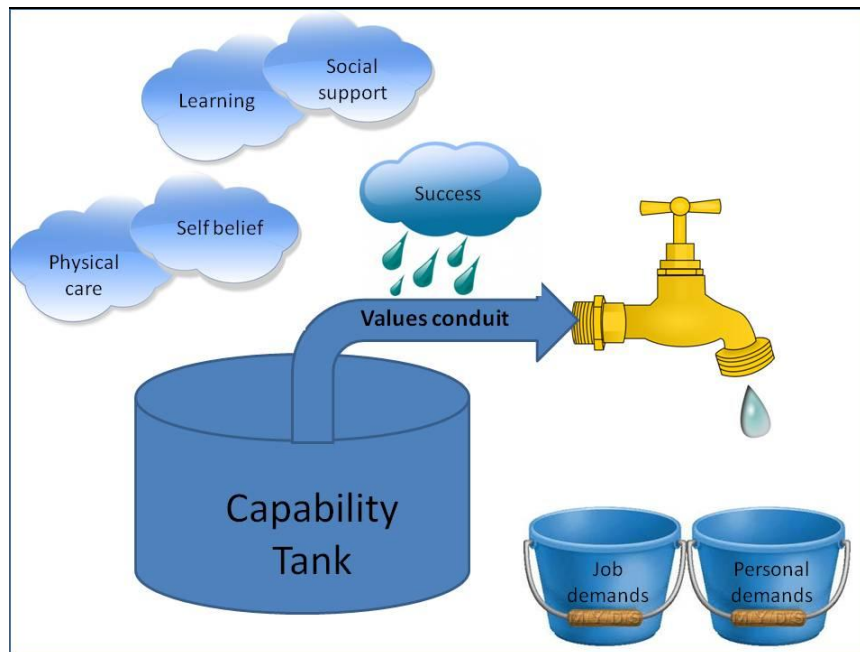


Fig. 7.1 Resilience resource system

Coaches and leaders identify that coaching contributes to the capability system. Both describe many ways in which coaching offered tools, techniques and strategies to help at times where resilience was required. However, coaching also seems to contribute to the capacity system although leaders were more cognisant of this aspect than coaches. Leaders sometimes used the fuel metaphor specifically in relation to coaching. Coaching was described as topping up the battery of self-awareness. Therefore the experience of leaders is that coaching already supports their resilience fuel system. Yet coaches made little reference to the energy system that leaders experience and this may represent an area coaches can capitalise on. It seems that coaches currently see their role as mainly contributing to capabilities and may lack awareness of their opportunity to influence the energy system. Some coaches did mention that identifying previous success can give leaders energy but could work with this more explicitly.

The outcome of coaching work with this capacity energy system appears more short-term and less likely to endure after coaching has ended. The energy may therefore be released by the process of vocalization reducing the energy used in inhibition, or be the result of the social support provided by the coach. Other potential mechanisms are that coaching enhances agency and pathways to generate hope which contributes to energy levels through positive emotion. Coaching therefore does seem to have a role in enhancing the capacity system but this would benefit from further investigation.

Thinking of resilience as made up of capabilities and capacities can bring together many of the approaches and ideas found in the literature to create a more integrated perspective. This may provide a starting point to build a shared understanding of resilience between leader and coach.

7.3 Working with Capability

Much of the previous research on resilience takes a capability approach and lists factors that can be addressed to enhance resilience. It was this previous work that was used to generate the initial concept map. The list of attributes is extensive and it was not the aim of this study to add to this list, although many existing criteria were supported. However the final concept map (Fig.7.2) does provide a more generic framework for dealing with the capabilities, at a higher level of abstraction that may be helpful to coaches who prefer not to be tied to one particular theoretical orientation or metric.

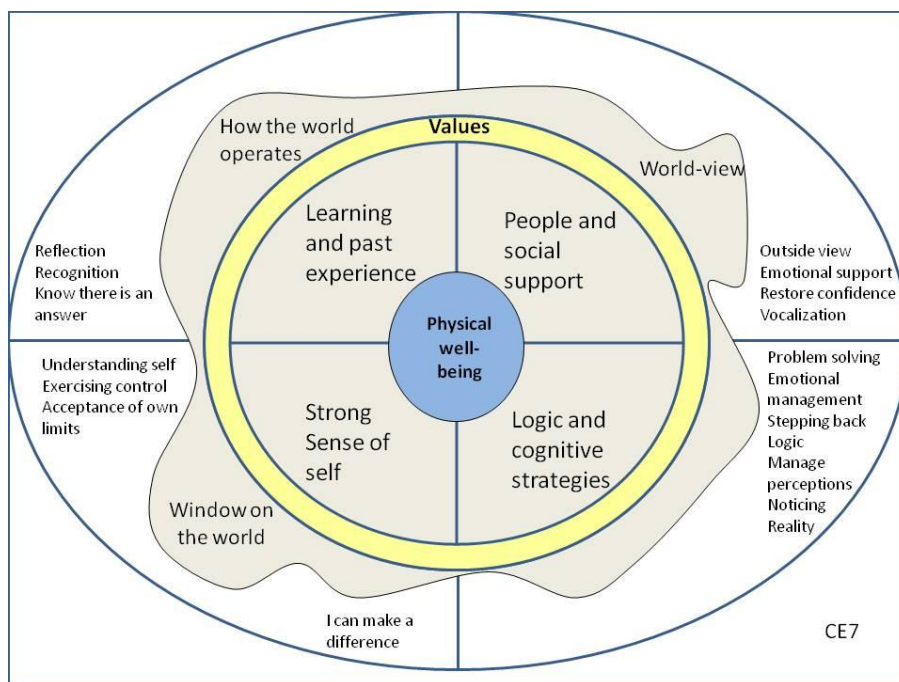


Fig. 7.2 Final Concept Map

The four main domains could be areas for discussion and investigation by coach and client but will not act as discrete facets, but rather interact and overlap. For example, vocalization with other people may increase self-understanding and contribute to changes in the world view.

In addition to the four core capability domains, coaches should also be cognisant of the potential impact of physical well-being and of values, which will be covered in the next section. Encouraging basic self-care for clients may be an area overlooked when considering what clients perceive to be pure mental challenges. Yet without physical health the system is likely to suffer (Cowen 1991) and biological considerations may be important to maintaining well-being (Ryff and Singer 1998). This supports Loehr and Schwartz (2001) in their assertion that physical capacity is the essential first level of the 'high-performance pyramid' for the 'corporate athlete' and enables emotional, mental and spiritual functionality.

Participants did express varied views of what physical health meant for them personally. Some related it to being unwell, for example with flu, while others were adamant that some physical exercise was necessary. Yet others equated physical care with taking a break or a holiday. It may not be for the coach to define what personal physical well-being consists of but to encourage a discussion on this point. Individuals may differ in what creates that sense of physical health. For one client they may feel most physically healthy after a five mile run, for another it may consist of sitting in the sun with a book. Physical care in this context reflects what the body needs to build and conserve energy reserves to support resilience. The coach may be in a position to discuss with the client when they feel most energised to define what physical care is appropriate. This is an area where the capability and capacity systems meet. In order to maximise the capacity there may be a need to engage certain capabilities of self-care.

7.4 Working with Capacity

7.4.1 Managing the energy system

The descriptions provided by this study strongly suggest that for leaders, capabilities alone are insufficient to support resilience. Leaders explain in consistent metaphors the energy pool they feel supports their resilience. This pool is a limited resource needing regular replenishment. This would explain why resilience has been described as a common resource prevalent in most people (Bonnano 2004). If the system is well managed it forms part of normal human functioning and would be associated with well-being. However this would also account for why some normally resilient individuals can still suffer issues despite possessing all the requisite skills and capabilities. When the system is poorly managed or suffers an over-demand that is not regulated, resilience will break down. This has some resonance with

other resource models such as the Job demands-resources model (Bakker and Demerouti 2007).

The idea that individuals possess a central pool of energy is not a new concept. Freud referred to psychic energy and Gestalt therapy highlights the benefits of closure to release energy into more fruitful activities. Baumeister and Tierney (2011) expand on a similar idea with the ego-depletion model; calling it willpower, and proposing that (p35):

1. You have a finite amount of willpower that becomes depleted as you use it
2. You use the same stock of willpower for all manner of tasks

This willpower can be devoted to four broad areas; control of thoughts, control of emotions; impulse control; performance control. Too many simultaneous demands can cause potential failures in other parts of the system. So for example, a taxing set of decisions may make it less likely that you can resist a cream cake in the afternoon!

Baumeister and Tierney (2011) explain that decision making depletes your willpower, and once your willpower is depleted, you are less able to make decisions (p98). This might explain why having too much to do can result in the stuckness that coaches describe.

Coaching may help restore energy to this system through the five levels highlighted by leaders. Each could either release energy or help add energy to the pool. The thinking space can allow recovery time without the constant pressure of decision making. This might replenish and release energy through the cognitive structuring proposed by Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2005). The supportive relationship allows vocalization that can release energy trapped by suppression of emotions and also contributes energy through the process of capitalisation where describing past success generates positive emotion (Gable et al. 2004). Seeing the wider perspective has been associated with the creation of positive emotion (Fredrickson 2009), and acceptance of reality may reduce the energy used in holding negative emotions like frustration in check. Learning may release available energy that was previously used to block self-awareness but also increase energy by creating new pathways to hope that generate positive emotion.

Lastly, in restoring self-belief it may be that energy was being used in trying to resolve the cognitive dissonance created by the mismatch between the leader they thought they were and the sense of powerlessness felt. Again, reflecting a

mismatch between the desired and perceived state, creating tension; as summarised by Henning (2011):

People resist experiencing cognitive dissonance that occurs when a person's own behaviour becomes incongruous with his emerging values and self-image. When there is a growing distance between the self one is becoming, people's sense of themselves becomes vulnerable' (p446).

Both leaders and coaches describe how clarifying core values helped resilience. This may relate to the work of Westman (1990) who proposed that individuals with strong internal beliefs use less internal energy in dealing with emotions and can therefore focus this resource on task-focused strategies. When values were at risk or compromised both leaders and coaches noted a decrease in resilience. It is easy to see how trying to resolve such internal emotional turmoil could engage significant resources. The individual is faced with suppressing emotions while trying to resolve an emotional conflict created by a clash of values. Values therefore appear to be significant in the capacity system.

7.4.2 The role of values

I have suggested that resilience is not one singular construct, but rather a system that requires both capabilities and capacity. Leaders need the capabilities necessary to address issues that might require learning and could include skills commonly taught in resilience training. In addition, they express a need for the capacity or energy to apply their skills that is often generated by values congruence. If the ultimate organisational aim and the leaders own values are congruent, the leader feels motivated to apply their skills in aid of the organisational cause. Jack, in this study, described his ability to deal with almost any issue when he felt the cause was worthwhile. Only when the organisational values changed did he no longer feel energised to apply his significant resilience. When resilience was no longer fuelled by this values congruence, he withdrew to pursue a more congruent personal cause of a new job. Resilience can be marshalled in aid of either an organisational or personal outcome but values tension can precipitate a diversion of resources.

Another example was described by James during a downsizing programme. He wanted to demonstrate loyalty to his company but loyalty was not being displayed to him or his staff. By remaining loyal and implementing the organisational downsizing programme he did not feel he was being loyal to staff. This created significant emotional turmoil that could be described as a values dilemma'.

However once he resolved this dilemma and decided to leave the organisation he was able to marshal his abilities to problem solve in order to set up new networks and contacts. He engaged his emotion-focused strategies by treating it as a challenge and choosing to see the potential opportunity for a new career. He created meaning by expressing that he had been true to his values by stepping out of the organisation but remaining professional. This meant that despite leaving, he remained resilient. Resolving this values dilemma was an issue of priorities and caused disruption to the system where realignment was required to ensure coherence and congruence which was eventually achieved. Such situations can be resolved through one or a number of coping strategies, as long as there is enough fuel in the system and the executive is not overwhelmed by too much to do.

However the values dilemma can cause an ongoing drain on the energy system if it cannot easily be resolved by problem-, emotion- or meaning-focused strategies. George was faced with dishonesty from a family member involved in a business venture with his wife. Taking an objective problem solving approach would mean removing his wife from the business she had built. He was struggling with the clash of values between honesty among family as paramount, and loyalty to support his wife in her career. This emotional turmoil was not resolvable so he may look to make meaning from the situation. Yet to make meaning he needs to draw on the very values that are in conflict. Does he protect his loyalty and compromise his honesty, or vice versa? This becomes a far more energy-consuming tension that starts to deplete the resource system and could be regarded as a values paradox.

The core values that enable the implementation of meaning-focused coping are themselves under threat and may need to be reconfigured in some way. This has some resonance with the concept of defining moments (Badaracco 1998) where it is suggested the question to be answered is: which of the responsibilities and values that are in conflict are most deeply rooted in my life and in the communities I care about?

One possible solution is that a values paradox is only resolvable through a deconstruction and reintegration of the type suggested by Flach (1988):

We have the capacity to restructure ourselves after disruption and achieve fresh, different, more meaningful levels of order and coherence, if we know how to activate it (p20)

George would need to reconfigure his self-image as an honest man in order to deal with the disruption. But making this change may affect many other dependent values so a full reorganisation might be required. Flach (1988) advocates that

falling apart', is therefore commonplace and valuable in developmental terms. However this does present a more significant drain on the energy resource available. Rather than just a problem to solve, the individual is faced with a far more complex conundrum that is to answer Who am I now? It is notable that this is the question that participant coaches Alex and Barbara identified as helping support resilience in their clients. If this is the case, it would not be surprising if it absorbed the vast majority of available energy resource and caused an introspective period of disconnection from the outside world. The values paradox might in fact trigger a form of existential questioning of who do I want to be when I reconfigure' and this is likely to create a high resource demand.

Such an interpretation is evocative of the adult development literature which might describe the situation as grappling with continual contradictions' (Henning 2011). While not every resilience issue might be indicative of a step change in meaning making to higher order thinking; it might well reflect the developmental process of continual building of world views and behaviours that are later dismantled and destroyed.....resilience is an attribute gained through lifelong developmental processes' (Henning 2011:452).

The experiences of leaders indicate that values played a significant role in resilience. Values congruence was seen to contribute to the energy resource and became a core component of the concept map. What proved interesting was how often the coaching conversations involved establishing those values and how critical that proved to be for resilience. Leaders in turmoil have frequently lost sight of their values; the coaching conversation surfaces and makes explicit those values. Both leaders and coaches noted how often values are discussed and how the formulation and discussion of values help decision making and ultimately resilience. Evidence that may help make sense of this comes from Carver and Scheier (1981) who carried out numerous experiments assessing the impact of self-awareness on self-regulation. They found the presence of a mirror often caused significant differences in behaviour, such as working harder and resisting instructions to deliver shocks to another person. Notably subjects were also more likely to follow their own inner values instead of following someone else's orders' (Baumeister and Tierney 2011:113). Given that coaching is often described as holding a mirror up for the client' we could suggest that coaching in respect of values is working in a similar way. When values are opened to scrutiny and reflected back to the client they become more salient in decision making. This external view drives increased self-awareness which more clearly defines the core principles they wish to operate by, supporting self-regulation. It is the expression of

those core principles that re-establishes the constants that are needed in times of difficulty. These constants provide the navigation map that enables leaders to plot a course they can commit to. This would suggest that values congruence that is made explicit refuels the energy source and can sustain individuals through great strain. This may explain how those imprisoned for their beliefs or political ideologies frequently remain remarkably resilient in the face of hardship.

Values form a significant component of the 'acceptance and commitment' model of therapy (Hayes et al. 2006). This is made up of six processes that form an interactive network (Fig.7.3).

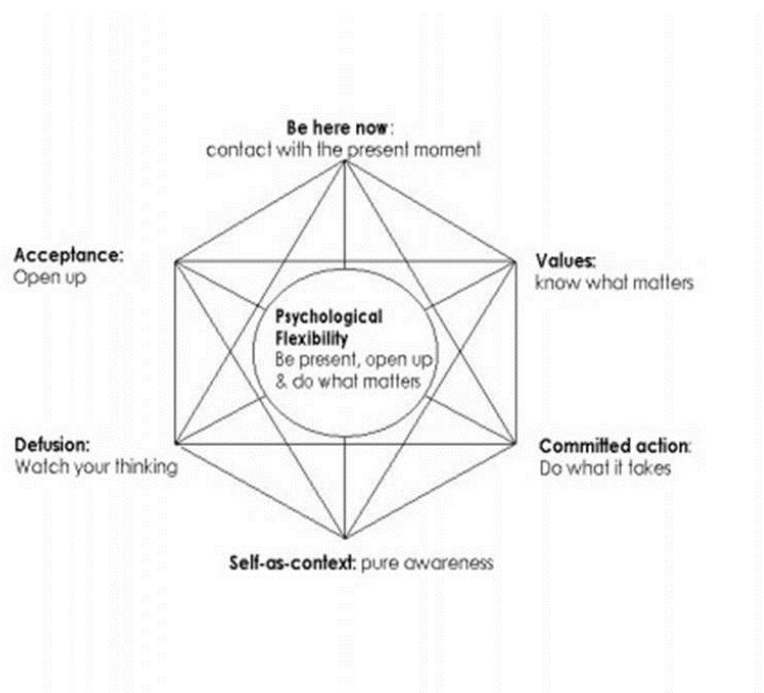


Fig. 7.3 Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) Model

The ACT model as it is referred to, explicitly refers to values as a contributor to psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility has strong links to resilience since it is associated with the ability to adapt and change. Data from this study show additional synergy with this model beyond the identification of values as important. The theme of connecting to reality from the coach data is an indicator of *'be here and now'* and *'committed action'* reflects what coaches said about stimulating action. While the ACT model does not reflect the resources aspect within the data it has been applied to leadership (Moran 2011). It may therefore prove a useful source for leadership resilience coaching, so further research in this area would be valuable.

Further research on values in the coaching context would also be helpful as they remain difficult to define. Rokeach (1973) distinguishes between instrumental values, which describe beliefs about desirable behaviours, whereas terminal values relate to goals worth achieving. What constitutes a value is also open to debate with one list containing quite varied concepts such as 'clarity, persistence and obedience' alongside 'justice and respect' (Hasson and Hadfield 2009). Liu and Lei (2012) also highlight four potential conceptions of values in the working context. They can be thought of as beliefs in action, as attitudes to what is conducive to welfare, as cognitive representations of human requirements or as a conceptual synthesis of ideas such as what is beautiful or ugly. Defining values is therefore open to significant debate.

Many coaches find themselves working with beliefs and are likely to touch on values. Values undoubtedly rely on certain personal constructs and may be rooted in cultural or religious foundations. For example, a value of 'fairness' may manifest as very different beliefs in people from different cultures. This raises questions of how far a coach can go in working with personal values and how they might recognise a core value.

Values emerged as an unexpected component, exerting a disproportionate drain on the resource system when not clearly established or followed. Coaches often discuss values with their clients and some were clear that leaders with well grounded values were more resilient as a result. However few coaches were overtly working with values and the capacity system as a path to resilience which may represent an area for exploration.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This chapter summarises the contribution this study makes to both theoretical knowledge (8.2) and to coaching practice (8.3). It will also discuss study limitations (8.4) and potential areas for future research (8.5). However it will start with my reflections as a researcher.

8.1 Reflections of a researcher

This thesis represents not only the data collected and analysed but also my contribution and journey as a researcher. In collecting and analysing data the researcher's contribution is ever present in the data. Despite an in-depth thematic categorisation I would frequently leave the data confused. By next morning there was often a transformation that gave structure and form to the previously abstract concepts. Therefore the researcher's meaning making is far more than what appears in the node lists. As a constructivist I appreciate my personal meaning making may not reflect another's reality, but the pragmatist in me hopes the outcomes will be of use to both practitioners and theorists.

The research journey has been a valuable education and it is clear that the pragmatic researcher using grounded theory faces a number of challenges that have provided useful lessons. Firstly there is a danger that the pragmatist looks only for what is useful, not for what is there. Yet, the grounded theory researcher must be happy to effectively freewheel through the stages in a state of openness: Accepting confusion, and conceding control to the process, and trusting in that process. I have tried to avoid premature closure and to live with the discomfort that brings. My natural problem-solving bias was hard to curb, especially through data analysis where multiple reading of transcripts can appear futile. But the passage of time helps bring a freshness and novelty to data that have not been seen for some time. The implication for new researchers is to ensure that time is available to avoid multiple reading of data in a condensed time scale that could lead to boredom and a subsequent lack of insight.

Secondly, I learned to annotate the journey fully. It is easy for the pragmatist to see field notes and memos as a distraction yet these are vital to writing up. I would extend this learning to the need for version control and a full audit process. Without this it becomes difficult to document and prove the audit trail. While the ultimate outcome must be useful for the pragmatist, without a documented path few will be persuaded by the miraculous outcome that might be presented.

For the would-be grounded theory researcher I would liken the process to entering a darkened room with no lights or windows. It is not clear what might be in the room or if anything of interest exists in the room at all. There may be a period of taking small steps and bumping into things but gradually it gets easier. With time your eyes become accustomed to the gloom and shapes start to emerge in the shadows. By feeling your way you can gradually build a mental picture of the room as it may appear in daylight. But in reality this is just a mental image that may not reflect reality, only your restricted experience of it. The room may be far larger than it appears and have aspects that you never touch or reach. However by the time you leave the room you will have constructed a representation of at least some part of the room that may be of value to those who follow you into the room. For those who follow, this is the contribution I make.

8.2 Contribution to knowledge

The aims of this research were to shed light from the perspective of leaders and coaches on the concept of resilience in the leadership arena and to explore what role coaching may play in leadership resilience. The literature review identified three specific gaps resulting from the lack of integration between the three areas. The first was the absence of a leadership perspective of resilience. The second was the resultant lack of common understanding existing between leader and coach. The third was a general confusion about how resilience is defined and conceptualised especially in adults and particularly in the leadership coaching context. This meant that coaching had no coherent model to apply in practice.

8.2.1 Consolidating the leadership perspective

Implications for definitions and conceptualisations

In trying to understand how leadership resilience was experienced in this context the most prominent feature was the future orientation. It seems that for the leadership population resilience is as much about the unknown future as recovery from the past. So a leader may need to be resilient to future challenges rather than just recovering from past or current issues. This removes the presumption of having faced adversity which is an element of resilience definitions in the developmental context.

This study therefore suggests resilience for the leadership population is not only about sustaining performance in the light of negative past experience or current

challenges but also to set in place the parameters required to move forward. This may mean that the definitions of resilience need to be reviewed for this context. In particular it has implications when defining resilience as an outcome. If resilience relates to how future unknowns are dealt with, when is the point at which the outcome can be evaluated? Since the future is in continual flux and the emotions are likely to be equally turbulent, what is the outcome being considered? It is hard to evaluate or measure the resultant impact of events yet to happen. It may only be possible to align to a quality such as persistence. Defining resilience as an outcome may therefore present some issues.

Existing literature is divided on how resilience should be conceptualised. Data from this study lend some support to the dynamic resources approach proposed by Hobfoll (2002). Leaders commonly described resilience as fuel and spoke of limited resources under certain conditions. This is referred to as the *capacity* to be resilient that is by nature a transient quality. However in order to function effectively resilience also requires a number of skills and attributes that were identified as *capabilities* of resilience that once learnt are more enduring. These capabilities are what are often listed by authors as components of resilience. Such an approach would create a more inclusive understanding of resilience that can bring together these diverse perspectives.

The suggestion that resilience has two core components of capabilities and capacity has certain implications for existing theoretical approaches. Firstly, if capacity is by nature transient it questions the use and validity of resilience measures which are often taken at one point in time. Measures also often focus on capabilities which may be an incomplete picture of leadership resilience. Leaders reported contextual factors affecting their resilience and current measures do not reflect this contextualisation. Secondly it has implications for how coaches might work with resilience. The data suggest that working with capabilities alone might be of limited use. Coaches who wish to work with resilience may need to pay attention to the energy system as a whole and perhaps explicitly work with the understanding and management of that system for the individual leader.

So while the findings show some overlap with existing resilience approaches it appears that contextualisation for leadership would be beneficial.

Implications for leadership

Resilience has been identified as a key leadership quality (Luthans et al. 2007) and this study proposes leaders need both capabilities and capacity for resilience.

Central to the capacity element was an understanding and alignment of values. Leaders who were clear about their values and felt they were aligned with their organisational values emerged as more resilient. This implies that coaches working with leadership resilience need to address values and potentially consider a systems perspective. Findings suggest that pure skills training on the capability element is unlikely to prove sufficient. These ideas may also present wider implications for leadership theory.

The finding may suggest that a purely skills or competency based leadership model will not result in increased resilience of leaders. If resilience is determined to be a vital leadership attribute it will be necessary to build on models that incorporate an aspect of values, such as 'authentic' or 'transformational' leadership. The Psy Cap model (Luthans et al. 2007) has proved a useful starting point although some questions about the degree of interdependence between the core constructs remains. In addition organisations that seek to address leadership resilience will need to consider how to ensure values are aligned since training or coaching alone may prove ineffective. Ultimately, leadership resilience may be as reliant on systemic and cultural issues as on personal attributes.

Leaders often displayed many of the attributes and characteristics required of resilient individuals which may have been instrumental in them achieving leadership status. When leaders are perceived to lack resilience, organisations may seek coaching to address the issue yet coaching may prove an inappropriate solution. Resilience appears to be most at risk when leaders can no longer reconcile both organisational and personal values or lack the internal resources to supply all the demands made upon them. In such circumstances the coach may only serve to highlight the irreconcilable differences and confirm their decision to leave the organisation. This seems a waste of both human and coaching resources. Organisations might consider how they ensure they provide the appropriate internal mechanisms that can identify values misalignment or work overload and provide an internal social support structure that may be able to meet many of the individuals needs.

8.2.2 Creating a common understanding

Experiences of both coaches and leaders suggest that coaching is already influencing leadership resilience even if not explicit in contracting. Leaders are often reluctant to raise issues so do not appear persuaded that it is a more positive concept than stress management but frequently take up coaching in an effort to

resolve particular difficulties. As a result coaches may only appreciate that resilience is lacking some time into the relationship when they are able to recognise potential emotional signals and leaders have built the trust to convey true reactions. This means that shorter or one off engagements are unlikely to deal effectively with resilience issues.

Leaders explained that coaching had contributed to their resilience in five ways. The practical framework of coaching for resilience (Fig.8.1) suggests some ways through which coaching may support both capability and capacity. It includes the findings of this study and draws links to previous research.

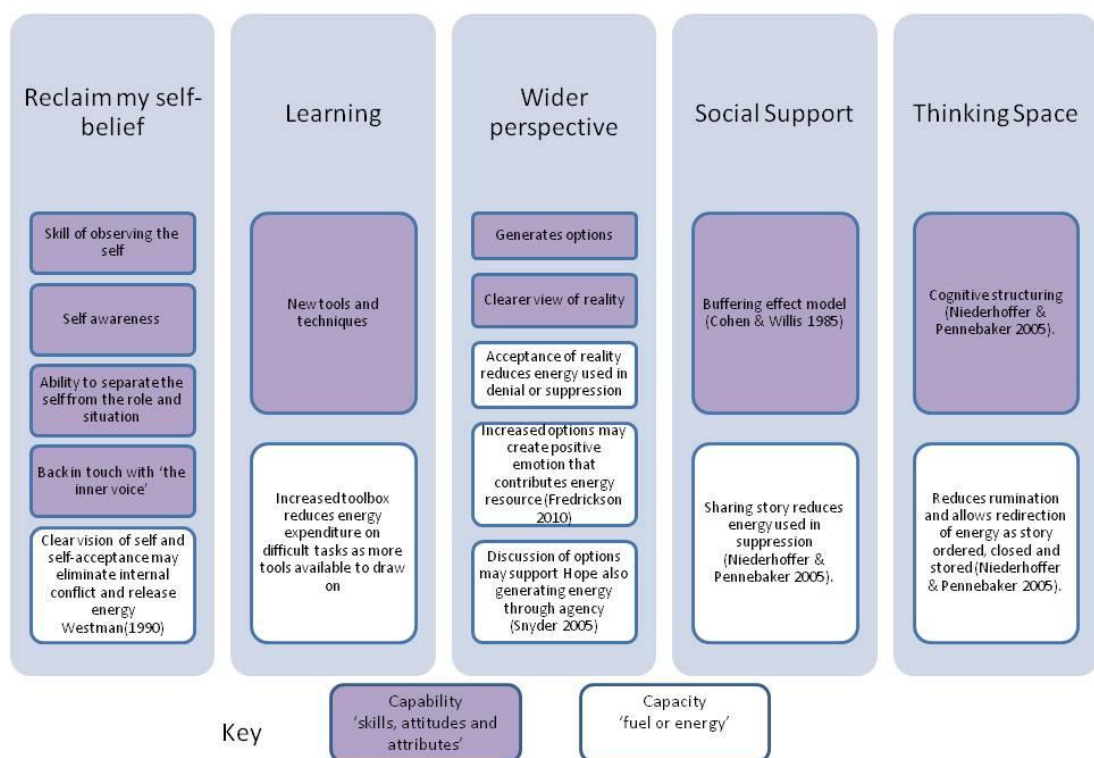


Fig. 8.1 Capacity and Capability Framework

The framework identifies what skills and attributes leaders may gain through coaching (darker squares) and suggests some speculative mechanisms for how the fuel system might be affected (clear squares) drawing from existing research. This is a tentative attempt to relate two dimensions that emerged from the research that may suggest avenues for future research to investigate the proposed links. It is clear that leaders interviewed did feel that coaching played a role in their resilience so further research may elucidate how this was achieved. In particular it would be valuable to understand if these themes operate independently or co-dependently which may be useful avenues for future research.

8.3 Contribution to practice

Beyond the theoretical contribution, the research also indicates ways that coaching practice might potentially work with resilience in leaders that will be discussed below. In addition this section will present a generic model to support practice.

8.3.1 Creating coherence

This research began by identifying the various resilience approaches and highlighting the lack of a coherent model applicable to coaching that did not rely on a cognitive behavioural foundation. The findings have been presented so that coaches from any philosophical orientation could use the findings. By focusing on *capabilities* and *capacities* coaches can effectively build a personal framework that meets the needs of their clients and their personal practice. Nevertheless it does appear that coaching could work more explicitly with the capacity system, building on the fuel' metaphor and with values or time.

Working with the fuel source

The consistent metaphor of resilience as a source of energy or fuel could confer significant benefits to coaching practice. Firstly such an idea is easy to explain and is likely to have resonance with leaders given the language and examples quoted. Secondly it allows clients to define and discuss their own unique fuel tank' in their own language. They could even be asked to draw their own personal representation. This allows for a flexible approach to resilience using the client language that coaches raised as an important aspect. A coach could facilitate a discussion around the individual's resilience tank' that could include very personal resources such as a strong faith, within a very broad framework of capabilities and capacity. The individual can discuss not only their personal capabilities but also what aspects of the system might need to be addressed. A coach might discuss what aspects drain or fill the tank to raise awareness, and what strategies prove most effective for this individual in their specific cultural context.

Table 4 shows some sample questions of how a coach might work with the fuel metaphor with a client.

<p>Logic and cognitive strategies</p> <hr/> <p>How often do you refuel? Where do you get fuel from? What gives you energy to move forward? When is it a marathon and when is it a sprint? What do you do to manage the energy levels? What can you use as your personal ‘energy drink’? What strategies help replenish the tank for you?</p>	<p>Strong sense of self</p> <hr/> <p>How can you protect the minimum level? When do you feel most energised? How do you need to manage this resource? What do you need to know to manage your personal fuel levels? How do your perceptions influence your fuel levels? How do you know when you are ‘running on empty’?</p>
<p>Learning and past experience</p> <hr/> <p>What has experience taught you about your own personal fuel tank? What fills your resilience tank? What drains your tank the fastest? Where do you usually refuel?</p>	<p>People and Social Support</p> <hr/> <p>How do others contribute to the fuel level? Who helps fill the tank? Who most drains the tank? How does helping others affect the tank?</p>
<p>Values</p> <hr/> <p>What happens to your fuel levels when your values are compromised? What values need to be present in your life to maximise your energy levels? How does commitment to your values affect the energy supply?</p>	<p>Physical Well-Being</p> <hr/> <p>What is the relationship between your physical health and the fuel level? What physical care helps replenish the tank? What action needs to be taken when the ‘refuel light’ comes on?</p>

Table 4 Working with the fuel metaphor

This approach raises awareness of resilience as a system that can be managed so helping individuals gain a sense of control over the respective elements. Understanding these differential effects can be valuable knowledge for the leader to help manage and sustain performance. Sustainability has become an important concept in the current business environment and increasing resilience may be a way of contributing to the sustainability of the human resource.

Working with time

Many models of resilience are based on a checklist of attributes or attitudes that a coach might be encouraged to work with to enhance resilience. By introducing a time perspective a coach could work in a number of alternative ways at a more conceptual and individual level.

Firstly the coach can use the three time perspectives to structure a conversation which would allow the future frame to be used more explicitly. This might help leaders maintain the vision that often drives their sense of purpose and stimulates action. Such a focus would also demonstrate congruence for coaches who seek to work mainly with the future.

Secondly, coaching might enable the individual to build their own personal strategies to conquer the past, to control the present and to give courage for the future. It would be possible for a coachee to discuss courage in their own words and might include gathering information, talking to others or simply defining contingencies. Each of these strategies is a valid way to enhance courage, depending on the individual perspective. Such an approach could be a valuable addition to the coaching toolbox and avoids a checklist of activities that relies on a particular philosophical framework.

Some resilience approaches rely on a cognitive behavioural philosophy which not all coaches subscribe to and which is not always successful (Gilbert 2009). Introducing an adaptable framework might give coaches scope to define personalised approaches that could be more meaningful and effective. There is already evidence that leadership resilience may be better addressed in a more individual way. Davda (2011) tested alternative versions of a new measure to evaluate the impact of presenting defined scenarios to assess resilience. He concluded that resilience differences are best measured by allowing individuals to think of their own potentially stressful situation and self-appraise their ability to manage this situation' (p14). The predefined scenarios did not allow resilience to be measured as effectively as personalised scenarios. So we might conclude that a standard set of resilience skills might be equally ineffective at dealing with such personal situations.

8.3.2 Using a metaphor for the system

In the section above it has been suggested that when working with clients the fuel metaphor could be effectively used to raise awareness and build personal resilience strategies. However the professional coach might benefit from a more comprehensive model that represents all the aspects raised by this research to give them more options with clients. This section details a more extensive metaphorical model that some coaches may find helpful.

It is proposed that resilience is made up of two systems, capabilities and capacities that integrate to support resilience. Both are necessary for the successful application of resilience and can be represented by a metaphorical tyre on a bicycle, the Resilience Wheel (Fig.8.2). The tyre is made up of central spokes that are the capabilities required to maintain the shape of the tyre and includes the temporal perspectives highlighted above and other aspects from the concept map. The more spokes there are, the stronger the tyre becomes. The more capabilities learnt the stronger the framework we have to rely on, supporting resilience.

However the spokes are useless without the rubber exterior. This rubber exterior represents our values. It is the tyre which is in contact with the road and represents the values that are constantly tested by the outside environment. Tyres come in various types, none are essentially good or bad, they are evaluated by their fitness for purpose. What matters is the match to the terrain we wish to tackle. To go up mountains we need mountain bike tyres for the speed of the racetrack we need a different tyre. Without the right tyre we get no traction on the road of life. If our values match our environment the tyre gains traction and we can access the resilience we need to deal with challenges. When values are not congruent with our environment resilience never engages and life becomes difficult.

Apart from the tyre being a suitable match for the environment it must also have integrity. The stronger and more coherent the values the thicker the tyre and the more able it is to protect us from the bumps in the road'. The thicker the rubber, the better protected we are but ultimately it must remain flexible and not rigid. Values that are well established, defined and coherent give greater protection from the bumpy road. Poorly defined values make the rubber walls thin and prone to puncture, fixed values become brittle and susceptible to catastrophic blow-out.

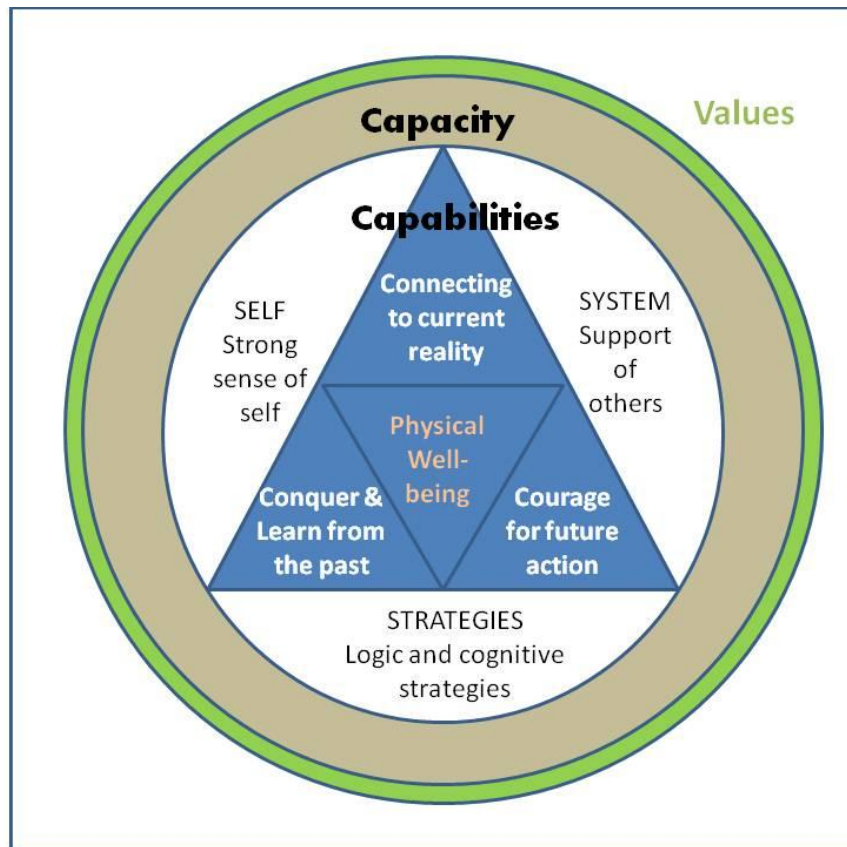


Fig. 8.2 The Resilience Wheel

Finally, even the best tyre in the world needs air! The air that the tyre holds is the capacity that needs to be maintained. Capacity is not permanent, it needs regular top up. On long journeys it may need to be topped up more frequently. A puncture to the tyre will also deplete the air very quickly.

This model provides an accessible way to explain and discuss the different components that make up the entire system and could be used by coaches to guide discussions about resilience. In particular it highlights resilience as a personal system where the coach may need to address external factors such as social support, as well as internal attributes. It also highlights the need to work with both values and physical well-being.

8.4 Study limitations

This exploratory and inductive study is subject to a number of limitations that will be outlined below.

This was an initial study with relatively few participants where the data were collected and analysed by a single researcher that may limit confirmability. I am especially conscious that I have a future time bias so my personal preference for the future frame may have affected what I have been able to see in the transcripts and the story I have chosen to tell.

The selection of a relatively small number of participants by snowballing inevitably creates potential bias. The leaders recommended are likely to have had positive coaching experiences so may be more likely to report a significant role in their resilience than someone who found coaching ineffective. A more fundamental issue might be that by recruiting interviewees to discuss resilience and coaching there is an imperative to assume an effect must be found to answer the question. How likely is it that the interview started with the participants saying they had nothing to contribute? By agreeing to take part, participants were almost predisposed to suggest a role for coaching. The data may therefore overstate the role of coaching and is less likely to understate it. Coaches were also asked to identify those who might have had cause to test their resilience so this may introduce another confounding limitation.

While none of the leaders were known to me I was acquainted with all the coaches who were alumni of a course on which I teach. While there was no ongoing contact it is possible that this group have been influenced by the course to hold particular views which could limit transferability.

The interview method is open to question on many dimensions. Those taking part feel they have time to spare and are prepared to discuss the issue which means this self-selection may have implications for the sample group. They could be less busy as leaders so have less need to be resilient or might be looking to promote their own profile by taking part. The interview itself presents potential issues based on the researcher's interviewing skills. I may unknowingly react more positively to certain responses and reinforce the conversation moving in a particular direction. Conversely a lack of responsiveness may mean fruitful areas are not elaborated on by participants. My choice to return to one topic and not another may reveal certain

aspects while leaving others in the shadows. Ultimately the interviewer choices will influence what is revealed.

Another critique of the interview method is the retrospective nature of the account meaning that memory, selective attention, subsequent events and post rationalisation may all impact the quality of the data obtained even if the account is taken to be a truthful one. As a pragmatist I ask does this matter? If we are aware of these potential limitations and do not seek to present an objective reality then we can accept such effects. It could be argued therefore that our emergent knowledge and theories need to allow for this phenomenon. In this particular research the leader participants were selected specifically on the basis that they had received coaching over a year ago. The rationale was that a perspective on resilience can only be acquired once resilience has been tested. A longer time frame made this more likely. We are seeking a perspective not visible with anything other than hindsight. Therefore in this study I feel the use of retrospective interviewing can be justified.

Any study such as this relies on the language skills of participants to clearly convey their meaning through words. This may result in omissions because meanings are implicit but not apparent to the researcher. This could mean that contradictory views have not been raised or additional support for aspects has been missed.

The data analysis is fraught with potential bias if we were to adopt a post-positivist ontology, but even within the GT methodology I may fail in my endeavours to remain true to the data. I may be overtaken by my pragmatic philosophy and be drawn only to categories with an obvious application or ignore contradictory or inconvenient data. Even the well meaning researcher must remain constantly vigilant for such effects.

Looking back at the project overall I feel the research might have benefited from an even tighter focus. While it was felt necessary to define the concept of resilience initially it did limit the discussion about the coaching experience in the time available. This has generated numerous models and perspectives that are useful starting points but that need further exploration. In particular the strength of the data on values and fuel were unexpected so could not be ignored despite having far wider application than to coaching. A follow up study might investigate specifically if and how coaching might relate to these aspects in a more targeted way.

8.5 Further research

This study represents an initial attempt to understand the role of coaching in leadership resilience and a number of aspects have emerged that require further investigation.

Values emerged as potentially important to leadership resilience and need significantly more focus. In particular to understand what happens when values that are used to engage meaning-focused coping are in question or conflict. Coaches also reported that leaders who knew their own values or were helped to define them were more resilient as a result. This proposition needs to be investigated and could be linked to research on the Acceptance and Commitment Model adapted for a coaching context since values are already a component of this model.

It has been suggested that resilience may also show potential correlations to a balanced time perspective and further research on this might help understand if time profiling can assist coaches working with leaders. It would be especially valuable to conduct longitudinal research to track potential changes. This approach may prove particularly helpful as it may present a less overt way to assess resilience and to access some of the potential mechanisms.

One theme that appeared throughout this study was the concept of courage for the future characterised as the ability to face uncertainty or risk. While coaches feel their role is to help clients plan for eventualities there was an indication that how the coach handles risk in the client relationship may have repercussions for the client. One fruitful area for future investigation might be the degree to which modelling of facing risk supports a reduction in the client's risk aversion.

Finally it is still not clear how coaching supports the capacity system. It has been suggested that there may be links to previous research as shown in Fig.8.1. However a more focused study on this with leaders who are undergoing coaching may give more tangible insights to the way coaches might approach this.

This has been an exploratory study into the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders so does not seek generalisability. It has raised a number of potentially new avenues for investigation that may prove the basis for future research. Many of the ideas presented are tentative suggestions of potential mechanisms that require significant further work and the next step may be to test some of the models presented. I am reminded of the quote by James (1997:6) “Theories thus become

instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest'. The theories within this thesis are a small first step to help coaches on what I hope may become a well travelled road to leadership resilience.

So to end this thesis where it started: What was it that enabled me, at such a difficult time to see the brighter side of the priest's faux pas?

I clearly had the cognitive, personal and physical capabilities to deal with the situation supported by a strong family system. In addition, I had the capacity to deal with events. This capacity was the product of my strong value system that knew I had done all I could for my father and required me to be strong for my mother. These values created the bedrock on which to base the decisions that needed to be faced. I could remain true to my values in the knowledge that I had done all my father had asked of me when he joked one day about grave flowers: look after me while I'm alive, not in the cemetery when I'm dead!

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Appendix List

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Appendix 1 – Participant Biographies and Pseudonyms

Leaders				
	Sex	Age Range	Role	Pseudonym
Pilot	Female		MD of large UK housing association	
L1	Male	35-49	IT Manager for A university department	George
L2	Male	50-65	Head of Information Systems with large UK charity	Brian
L3	Male	50-65	Ex Head of a university Careers Service, now in consultancy	Jack
L4	Female	35-49	Contracts Director in private healthcare company	Amanda
L5	Female	35-49	MD of a publishing house	Rachel
L6	Male	50-65	Senior Executive of management consultancy and outsourcing business	Mark
L7	Male	35-49	Management executive and ex-finance director in technology	James
L8	Male	35-49	MD of private equity business	Neil
Coaches				
	Sex	Age Range	Role	Pseudonym
C1	Female	50-65	Executive Coach & Supervisor	Wendy
C2	Female	35-49	Executive Coach	Mary
C3	Female	50-65	Executive Coach	Nancy
C4	Female	35-49	Executive Coach	Teresa
C5	Female	35-49	Executive Coach	Barbara
C6	Male	50-65	Executive Coach and Mentor	Giles
C7	Male	35-49	Executive Coach & Supervisor	Alex
C8	Female	35-49	Executive Coach	Cathy

Appendix 2 – Interview Schedule - Leaders

Interview Schedule L1

Introduction

Aim of project is to enlighten the concept of resilience and the role that coaching may play in the resilience of leaders.

Read PIS?

Sign Consent Form

Happy to continue?

1-2 hours, open discussion, no right/wrong answers

Recording, can stop at any time

If any issues prefer to not discuss, this is OK just say so.

Can stop interview and your involvement at any time

Start Recording

General

Can you tell me a little about your role as a leader?

What coaching have you had and when did it end?

Stage 1

Looking to hear from you about your experiences of Resilience.

Can you describe your experience of Resilience?

What does resilience mean for you?

Can you describe a time when you were/were not resilient?

Stage 2

Present Concept map.

How does this play out with your experiences?

What experiences might agree or disagree with this?

Any metaphors come to mind?

Stage 3

What form did your coaching experience take?

What can you tell me about the coaching you had and your resilience?

What role did the coaching you have play in your resilience?

How did the coaching affect your resilience?

In terms of your resilience, what aspects came from your own resources & what if anything did the coach add?

Take:

PIS

Consent Form

Recording Equipment

Concept Map

Pen & Paper

Interview Schedule L7

Introduction

Aim of project is to enlighten the concept of resilience and the role that coaching may play in the resilience of leaders.

Read PIS?

Sign Consent Form

Age range 20-34, 35-49, 50-65

Happy to continue?

1-2 hours, open discussion, no right/wrong answers

Recording, can stop at any time. If any issues prefer to not discuss, this is OK just say so.

Can stop interview and your involvement at any time

3 Stages

Start Recording

General

Can you tell me a little about your role as a leader?

What coaching have you had and when did it end?

Stage 1 – Understanding resilience

Looking to hear from you about your experiences of Resilience.

Can you describe your experience of Resilience?

What does resilience mean for you?

What motivates you to engage this capacity?

Can you describe a time when you were/were not resilient?

What are you like when this capacity is in action?

What are you like when this capacity is missing?

What supports your capacity to be resilient?

Stage 2 – concept map

Present Concept map.

How does this play out with your experiences?

What experiences might agree or disagree with this?

Stage 3 – coaching & resilience

What brought you to coaching?

What form did your coaching experience take?

What can you tell me about the coaching you had and your resilience?

What role did the coaching you have play in your resilience?

What specifically did it contribute for you?

How did the coaching affect your resilience, short term, long term?

In terms of your resilience, what aspects came from your own resources & what if anything did the coach add?

Take: Concept Map Pen & Paper	PIS/ Consent Form Recording Equipment
-------------------------------------	--

Thanks/ Results/ Presentation

Appendix 3 – Interview Schedule - Coaches

Introduction

Aim of project is to enlighten the concept of resilience and the role that coaching may play in the resilience of leaders.

Read PIS? - Sign Consent Form

Years of experience as coach

Happy to continue?

1-2 hours, open discussion, no right/wrong answers

Recording, can stop at any time. If any issues prefer to not discuss, this is OK just say so.

Can stop interview and your involvement at any time

3 Stages

Start Recording

General

Can you tell me a little about type of coaching you are involved with?

Would you associate yourself with any specific tradition of coaching?

Stage 1 – understanding resilience

What does leadership resilience mean for you?

Can you describe a coaching interaction where Resilience was relevant?

What do you feel you are working with when or if you work intend to influence resilience?

Stage 2 – coaching and resilience

What do you feel is the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders?

How do you know your coaching influenced the resilience of your coachees?

* How would you recognise a potential resilience issue?

What do you feel is the coaching contribution to leadership resilience?

In what ways do you feel your coaching influences the resilience of leaders?

What approach would you use if you felt R was an issue?

How would you work with resilience in leadership coaching?

What has worked from you experience and why in your view did it work?

What unexpected outcomes have you found?

Stage 3 – concept map

Present Concept map.

How does this play out with your experiences?

What experiences might agree or disagree with this?

What does model do for you?

How might the model limit you?

<u>Take:</u> Concept Map Pen & Paper	PIS/ Consent Form Recording Equipment
--	--

Thanks/ Results/ Presentation

Appendix 4 – Invitation to Participate - Leaders

Invitation to Participate

Leaders Invitation

Dear Leader

This document is aimed at leaders working in the public or private sector who had coaching which finished prior to February 2010. I am planning a study with Oxford Brookes University as part of a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice that will look at the role of coaching in the development of the resilience of leaders. I am looking to interview both coaches, and leaders who have been coached. I will interview leaders and coaches as individuals so there is no requirement for matched pairs. A leader may take part without any contact with their previous coach. I am therefore looking for leaders to volunteer to be interviewed about their experiences of resilience.

If you are a leader who feels you have experience of the topic and an interest in contributing to this research please read the information below to get further details of what will be required.

If you know anyone else who may be interested in taking part this information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/Resilience-Research> and click the link called *Invitation to Participate – Leaders Invitation*.

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Appendix 5 – How Coaching Helped

31/8/11

Appendix 5 – How Coaching Helped – Emergence of themes

Nodes

Name	Sou	Ref	Creat	Create	Modified O	Modified By
<input type="radio"/> Confidence	5	17	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
- <input type="radio"/> How coaching helped	5	152	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Enabling my reflection and	5	11	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
3 <input type="radio"/> Giving new perspective	5	13	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
3 <input type="radio"/> Broadened my horizons	5	6	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
1 <input type="radio"/> Feeling validated	4	6	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5 <input type="radio"/> Helping learning	4	7	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> What coach adds	4	12	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Building my confidence	4	9	25/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
3 <input type="radio"/> Considering implications	3	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5/2 <input type="radio"/> Increased self-understandi	3	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
3 <input type="radio"/> Stepping out of situation	3	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5 <input type="radio"/> Long term impact	3	9	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Outsider to talk to	3	11	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
3 <input type="radio"/> Changing my focus	2	4	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5 <input type="radio"/> Dealing with change	2	2	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Disclosing or listening to fe	2	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Feeling emotionally suppor	2	4	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
1 <input type="radio"/> Focusing on myself	2	2	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Getting honest feedback	2	3	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Realized through vocalisati	2	4	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Provided a sounding board	2	8	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Thinking it through	2	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5 <input type="radio"/> Increased my understandin	2	3	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Enabled me to reach a deci	2	3	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Setting time aside	2	2	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Refining self evaluation	2	2	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Expressing concerns hone	1	1	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
2 <input type="radio"/> Identifying responsibility	1	1	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
4 <input type="radio"/> Feeling safe environment	1	1	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
1 <input type="radio"/> Realizing it's not my fault	1	1	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
1 <input type="radio"/> Giving me a sanity check	1	1	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
5 <input type="radio"/> Holistic growth	1	1	30/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> How resilience manifests	5	166	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> Meaning of resilience	5	62	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> Not resilient	5	41	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> When I need to be resilient	5	27	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
<input type="radio"/> Coming to coaching	4	11	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> Participants	4	5	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> Where does R come from	4	8	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
+ <input type="radio"/> Misc	3	17	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
<input type="radio"/> Physical issues	3	4	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS
<input type="radio"/> Role of values	3	11	24/08	CLS	30/08/201	CLS

Reclaim my self belief

































Thinking Space



































Seeing system









Relationship

Learning

Appendix 6 – Final Node List - Leaders

Appendix 6 Leaders Final Node List				
	Coming to coaching	6	14	
	How coaching helped			
	Long term impact		6	19
	What coach adds		7	25
	RE-CLAIM MY SELF-BELIEF		8	33
		Feeling validated	6	9
		Building my confidence	6	15
		Realizing it's not my fault	2	4
		Gave me permission	2	5
	LEARNING		8	70
		Dealing with and facilitating change	5	10
		Increased self-understanding and acceptance	6	12
		Helping learning	6	19
		Increased my understanding	3	10
		Gave me a toolbox	4	12
		Holistic growth for future	3	7
	SEEING WIDER PICTURE		7	54
		Changing my focus	5	9
		Considering implications	4	8
		Giving new perspective	7	20
		Broadened my horizons	6	8
		Stepping out of situation	5	9
	RELATIONSHIP		6	54
		Disclosing or listening to feelings	3	6
		Feeling emotionally supported	3	5
		Getting honest feedback	3	9
		Feeling safe environment	2	2
		Provided a sounding board	2	8
		Outsider to talk to	5	17
		Unique relationship	3	7
	THINKING SPACE		7	44
		Enabling my reflection and thinking	7	18
		Focusing on myself	3	3
		Identifying responsibility	2	2
		Realized through vocalisation	2	4
		Thinking it through	4	7
		Enabled me to reach a decision	3	4
		Setting time aside	3	3
		Refining self evaluation	3	3

	Understanding Resilience	8	408		
	Being adaptable and open minded		6	43	
		Accepting being wrong		4	8
		Holding beliefs lightly		4	7
		Accepting own limits		6	11
		Being flexible		4	5
		Openness to risk		2	5
	Managing emotions		8	45	
		Feeling different with family		3	7
		Evaluating own achievements		5	8
		Covering real feelings		5	10
		Difficult emotions		2	6
	Planning for the future		7	51	
		Believing in a solution		4	9
		Focussing on action & outcomes		7	16
		Believing I can make a difference		5	8
		Generating options		3	3
		Having a goal		1	6
	Taking responsibility		8	62	
		Making choices		7	14
		Setting boundaries		8	18
		Supporting others		5	8
		Delivering on commitments		3	3
		Setting own agenda		5	9
		Its part of the job		3	5
	Dealing with unexpected		8	46	
		Bouncing back		3	4
		Coping with range of adverse situations		7	11
		Keeping going		5	9
		Not giving up		5	10
		Not of my making		1	1
	Exercising conscious control		7	56	
		Managing the resource		7	28
		Finding a way to exercise control		1	4
		Taking Action or control		4	5
	Using a toolbox		8	57	
		Applying logic		5	12
		Using others		8	38
		Using my natural strengths		2	4
	Recognising the issues		6	27	
		Relating past experiences		6	21
	Managing my perceptions		8	21	
		Seeing it as a learning process		5	8
		Responding positively		5	7
		Having a mindset		3	3

	Notresilient	8	84		
	DISCONNECTED		5	21	
	POWERLESS		6	20	
	EMOTIONAL CONFLICT		7	24	
	TOO MUCH CHANGE		5	19	
	Misc	8	96		
	Confidence		7	18	
	Considering stage of life		4	9	
	Knowing yourself		4	7	
	Physical issues		6	10	
	Role of values		7	39	
	Holding wider perspective		3	10	
	Role of my coach		1	3	
	Participants	8			
	L1		1	1	
	L2		1	1	
	L3		1	1	
	L4		1	1	
	L5		1	1	
	L6		1	1	
	L7		1	1	
	L8		1	1	
	When I need to be resilient	3	4		
	Seeing a systemic impact		3	4	
	Where does R come from	6	18		
	Feels like part of me		2	3	
	Different for everybody		5	13	
	From my Faith		1	1	
	Experiences		1	1	
	Concept map	5	11		
	Defining resilience Q	8	8		
	Time	8	35		

Appendix 7 – Final Node List - Coaches

Appendix 7 Coach Data Final Node List 10 April 2012				
COACHES ROLE	8	74		
Allowing vocalization		5	9	
Challenging assumptions		5	10	
Creating thinking time		6	11	
Giving a wider perspective		7	8	
Highlighting other point of view		4	10	
Holding safe space		5	9	
Offering tools		4	6	
Providing unique relationship		4	5	
Using listening		4	6	
MISC	8	49		
Linking to other people		7	13	
Linking to physical		6	16	
Managing the resource system		4	11	
ROLE OF COACHING	0	0		
CONNECTING TO CURRENT REALITY		8	66	
Increasing self-awareness			8	16
Linking to emotions			6	17
Recognising situations			4	9
Reconnecting to self and reality			4	9
Reflecting on patterns			4	7
Understanding organisational system			3	5
Understanding scope of control			3	3
CREATING ACTION		8	59	
Dealing with stuckness			3	8
Engaging coping skills			4	11
Engaging problem solving			3	5
Exercising some agency in situation			6	8
Moving to action and delivery			6	17
Taking action outside comfort zone			3	10
WORKING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL		8	92	
VALUES			8	50
Identifying congruent aims or values				4
Understanding what is important				7
Working with values				8
Working with internal and external				6
Working with view of the world				7
Working with whole person				6
TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVE	8	108		
A FACING RISK		7	36	
Building confidence			7	18
Building courage			7	13
Building self trust			2	5
Building belief in future vision		5	10	
Creating future vision		2	4	
Focus on future		6	17	
Identifying temporal link		3	4	
Interpreting the past		4	5	
Learning from experience		6	13	
Past informing future		5	7	
Positive and optimistic focus		5	12	
UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE	8	116		
ADAPTING AND CHANGING		7	53	
Changing approach to the job			5	11
Choosing the attitude or perspective			6	12
Dealing with change or adversity			3	7
Dealing with uncertainty flexibly			4	8
Mismatch of expectations			4	5
Motivation to change			5	10
Being too resilient		2	4	
Failing resilience		5	9	
Identification of resilience issues		6	17	
Improving resilience		3	9	
Not calling it resilience		7	16	
Resilience is personal and interactive		3	8	
XXXConcept map	3	4		
XXXQuotes to use	4	7		

Appendix 8 – Participant Information Sheet - Leaders

Doc 2



Participant Information Sheet - Leaders
Study Title
What is the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders?

Dear Leader

You are being invited to take part in a research study that seeks to enlighten 'What is the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders'. This is being undertaken as part of a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and mentoring Practice with Oxford Brookes University. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this research is to understand the role of coaching in the resilience of leaders. In the challenging climate facing many leaders in organisations 'resilience' has been identified as a valuable characteristic. However there is little empirical research on this capacity and it's development in the adult population. This study aims to understand more about how coaching might contribute to the resilience of leaders. The study will involve interviewing both coaches and leaders who have been coached to gather their experiences on the topic. The aim is to interview eight coaches and six leaders to gather experiences of resilience and the potential link with coaching. Leaders and coaches will be interviewed independently and there is no requirement for matched pairs to take part.

Why have I been invited to participate

We are inviting six leaders to participate who expressed an interest and who completed a coaching engagement before February 2010.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and data collection will take place between February and September 2011, with final results available by September 2012.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

All participants will take part in one interview which is expected to last between one and two hours. The topic of discussion will be experiences of resilience and the link to coaching. Participants will be able to suggest suitable times and locations with which the researcher will attempt to comply. All interviews will be audio recorded but any comments subsequently used or referred to will be de-identified to ensure confidentiality. However the participant will be free to decline to answer any questions they wish to and may request recording to stop at any time. Participation will remain voluntary so participants may choose to withdraw at any time, even if the interview has already started.

Since the topic of discussion may cause participants to describe potentially difficult times every effort will be made to ensure participant well-being. The researcher has completed ethical approval for this research and will have the interests of the participant as a primary concern.

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What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is anticipated that the interview may enlighten the concept of resilience for participants as the interview will be a collaborative process that will include the discussion and elaboration of a potential model of resilience.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

The audio recordings made will be transcribed and analysed to generate themes and quotes about experiences. All the data will be stored securely, be password protected and only pseudonyms will be used following data collection. Data generated will be retained in accordance to the University's policy on Academic integrity and the Data Protection Act. The final Thesis will be completed by October 2012 and all data will need to be retained for five years following submission. After this all data will be destroyed. The data will be analysed only by the primary researcher so examiners will only have access to anonymised data.

What should I do if I want to take part?

Within one week of receiving this Information Sheet you will be contacted to see if you still wish to take part. If you decide to go ahead, this will allow a mutually convenient time to be arranged.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the data analysis will form part of a thesis for the Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice with Oxford Brookes University. It is hoped that the data will subsequently be used in publication but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in any written report. Names of all participants will be kept confidential. However it must be recognised that with small samples it is impossible to guarantee total anonymity. A summary of research findings will be available for all participants. If you wish to receive a copy of this 'Summary of Findings' please request this at the time of the interview.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research is being conducted as part of the Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice with Oxford Brookes University within the School of Business. The research has been approved by the supervisory team and the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Supervisory Team

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If you have any concerns about how this study has been conducted you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk

Contact for further information?

If you have any further questions please contact the **Primary Researcher**
Carmelina Lawton Smith
clawton-smith@brookes.ac.uk
Oxford Brookes University
School of Business, Wheatley Campus
Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.
October 2010

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Appendix 9 – Participant Information Sheet - Coaches

Doc 2

Participant Information Sheet - Coachees Evaluating the impact of the TalkTalk Spot Coaching Programme

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UNIVERSITY

Dear Coachee

You are being invited to take part in an evaluation of the Spot Coaching Programme because you attended at least one session and we are interested in your opinion of the programme.

This is being undertaken by researchers who are not employees of TalkTalk to establish the efficacy of short term coaching interventions during major change programmes. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

This research will gather information from a variety of sources to understand the impact that the Spot Coaching programme has had. It will include questionnaires to coachees, follow up interviews for those willing to take part, plus interviews with managers, HR and coaches. The aim is to build a picture of how the scheme works, how it might be improved and what impact it has had on individuals and the business.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and data collection will take place between February and October 2011, with final results available by September 2012. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

All coaches will take part in one interview which is expected to last between one and two hours. The topic of discussion will be experiences of working with resilience and ideas for enhancing leadership resilience.

Participants will be able to suggest suitable times and locations with which the researcher will attempt to comply.

All interviews will be audio recorded but any comments subsequently used or referred to will be de-identified to ensure confidentiality. However the participant will be free to decline to answer any questions they wish to and may request recording to stop at any time.

Participation will remain voluntary so participants may choose to withdraw at any time, even if the interview has already started.

Since the topic of discussion may cause participants to describe potentially difficult times every effort will be made to ensure participant well-being. The researcher has completed ethical approval for this research and will have the interests of the participant as a primary concern.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is anticipated that the interview may enlighten the concept of resilience for participants as the interview will be a collaborative process that will include the discussion and elaboration of a potential model of resilience.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

The audio recordings made will be transcribed and analysed to generate themes and quotes about experiences. All the data will be stored securely, be password protected and only pseudonyms will be used following data collection. Data generated will be retained in accordance to the University's policy on Academic integrity and the Data Protection Act. The final Thesis will be completed by October 2012 and all data will need to be retained for five years following submission. After this all data will be destroyed. The data will be analysed only by the primary researcher so examiners will only have access to anonymised data.

What should I do if I want to take part?

Within one week of receiving this Information Sheet you should e-mail Carmelina Lawton Smith to express your interest, this will allow a mutually convenient time to be arranged. If your coaching role is within an organisation we will also need a brief e-mail from them to the Primary Researcher (shown below) to confirm they are happy for you take part.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the data analysis will form part of a thesis for the Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice with Oxford Brookes University. It is hoped that the data will subsequently be used in publication but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in any written report. Names of all participants will be kept confidential. However it must be recognised that with small samples it is impossible to guarantee total anonymity. A summary of research findings will be available for all participants. If you wish to receive a copy of this 'Summary of Findings' please request this at the time of the interview.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research is being conducted as part of the Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring Practice with Oxford Brookes University within the School of Business. The research has been approved by the supervisory team and the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Supervisory Team

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If you have any concerns about how this study has been conducted you can contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk

Contact for further information?

If you have any further questions please contact the **Primary Researcher**
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Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1HX

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.
August 2011

Appendix 10 – Table of Resilience Attributes

Appendix 10 – Potential Components of Resilience

Author(s):	Description	Population	Mode of completion	Purpose of the measure
Bartone (2007)	The Dispositional Resilience Scale	Adults	Self-report 45 items	Designed to measure psychological hardiness (commitment, control, and challenge).
Baruth and Carroll (2002)	The Baruth Protective Factors Inventory	Adults (tested mainly on female)	Self-report 16 items	To measure adaptable personality, supportive environment, fewer stressors and compensating experiences using a Likert-type scale.
Block and Kremen (1996)	The ER 89	Young adults (18 and 23)	Self-report 14 items	To measure ego-resiliency (a stable personality characteristic).
Clough, Earle and Sewell (2002)	Mental Toughness	Adults in Sport and Business	Self-report 18 or 48 items versions	Build on the concept of hardiness covering commitment, control, challenge and confidence.
Connor & Davidson (2003)	The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)	Adults (mean age 43.8)	Self-report 25 items	Developed for clinical practice as a measure of stress coping ability. Five factors (1.personal competence, 2.trust/tolerance/strengthening effects of stress, 3.acceptance of change and secure relationships, 4.control, 5.spiritual influences).
Davda (2011)	Ashridge Resilience Questionnaire	Adults	Self-report on 58 items	Assessing attitudes of: purpose, emotional control, challenge, balance, determination, self-awareness, awareness of others.
Donnon and Hammond (2003, 2007)	Youth Resiliency: Assessing Developmental Strengths	Youth (age 12-17)	Self-report with 94 items	To examine protective factors; intrinsic developmental strengths (e.g. self-esteem, self-efficacy) and extrinsic developmental strengths (e.g. family, school, community, peers).
Friborg et al. (2003)	The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)	Adults (mean age women=33.7, men=36.2)	Self-report with 37 items	To examine intrapersonal and interpersonal protective factors presumed to facilitate adaptation to psychosocial adversities (personal competence, social competence, family coherence, social support, personal structure).

Friborg et al. (2005)	The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)	Adults (mean age 22, 24, mid 30s)	Self-report 33 items on 6 scales	To examine intrapersonal and interpersonal protective factors presumed to facilitate adaptation to psychosocial adversities (personal strength, social competence, structured style, family cohesion, social resources).
Hurtes and Allen (2001)	The Resiliency Attitudes and Skills Profile	Youth (age 12-19)	Self-report 34 items on 7 scales	To measure resiliency attitudes (Insight; independence; creativity; humour; initiative; relationships; values orientation) in youth for recreation and other social services providing interventions.
Oshio et al. (2003)	Adolescent Resilience Scale	Japanese Youth (19-23 years)	Self-report 21 items across 3 scales	To measure the psychological characteristics (novelty seeking, emotional regulation, positive future orientation) of resilient Japanese Youth.
Ryan and Caltabiano (2009).	Resilience in Midlife Scale	Midlife population (35-60 years)	Self-report 25 items on 5 scales	Scale can be used to identify at risk individuals that would benefit from intervention programs to build resilience defined as Self-efficacy, Perseverance, Internal locus of control, Coping and Adaptation Skills, Family or social support networks.
Sun and Stewart (2007)	California healthy Kids Survey - The Resilience Scale of the Student Survey	Primary School Children (mean ages 8.9, 10.05, 12.02)	Self-report 24 items with 12 scales	To assess student perceptions of their individual characteristics, protective resources from family, peer, school and community (Communication and cooperation, Self-esteem, Empathy, Problem solving, Goals and aspirations, Family connection, School connection, Community connection, Autonomy experience, Pro-social peers, Meaningful participation in community Activity, Peer support).
Smith et al. (2008)	The Brief Resilience Scale	Adults (mean age range 19-62)	Self-report 6 items contributing to one scale	Designed as an outcome measure to assess the ability to bounce back or recover from stress.
Ungar et al. (2008)	The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)	Youth at risk (age 12 to 23) in different countries	Self-report 28 items on 4 scales	To develop a culturally and contextually relevant measure of child and youth resilience across four domains (individual, relational, community and culture).

Wagnild and Young (1993)	The Resilience Scale (RS)	Adults (some application with 16-23)	Self-report 25 items on 2 scales	To identify the degree of individual resilience (personal competence and acceptance of self and life); a positive personality characteristic that enhances individual adaptation based on equanimity, perseverance, self-reliance, meaningfulness and existential aloneness.
Windle, Markland and Woods (2008)	Psychological Resilience	Older Adults (subscales previously used with adolescents)	Self-report 19 items on 3 scales	To assess psychological resilience (self-esteem, personal competence and interpersonal control) that acts as a protective factor against risks and adversities.
Non-psychometric approaches				
Benard (1993)	Based on studies of children.			Resilient children demonstrate good problem solving skills, social competence, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future.
Reivich and Shatté (2002)	Reported in book and said to be based on business working population.			Self-efficacy, emotion regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, realistic optimism, empathy and <u>reaching out</u> .
Clarke and Nicholson (2010)	Reported in book and said to be based on 26 business leaders.			Optimism, freedom from stress and anxiety, individual accountability, openness and flexibility and problem orientation.
Wanberg and Banas (2000)	Degree to which resilience was a predictor of openness to organisational change.			Resilience measured as a composite of self-esteem, optimism and perceived control.

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