

Enhancing community resilience during emergencies by building organizational resilience in routine times

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Study Objective To examine the influence of support groups utilizing an integrative model of coping and resiliency (BASIC-PH) on the resilience of senior decision makers. To help the participants develop coping mechanisms for daily stressors and extreme situations in order to enhance their personal and organizational resilience.

Background. The impact of resilient organizations on community resilience during emergencies has been established. Organizations provide social, occupational and economic frameworks for community members. Senior decision makers play an essential role in society while being exposed to extreme pressure, loneliness and conflicts. Management of their day-to-day challenges and extreme scenarios can benefit from improving their coping strategies.

Methods A program was devised to strengthen the preparedness of the participants by developing and enhancing their stress coping skills. The BASIC PH resilience model, which was developed in Israel and has been in use for 35 years in various types of organizations, was applied to four support groups of senior decision makers routinely experiencing high level of stress, 36 participants in total. The components of the BASIC PH model were put into practice using cognitive, emotional and creative supporting tools. The sessions culminated in the creation of a teamwork plan designed to preserve the program's achievements.

Results The act of sharing difficulties within the support group generated cohesion and hope, which are components of resilience. The relationships within the group became more open, and the participants were more easily able to communicate their difficulties and felt more connected. The intervention provided the participants with a support framework and enhanced their ability to cope with stressful situations.

Conclusion Organizational support based on a resiliency model can strengthen the individual's ability to cope with daily stressful situations and enhance cohesion, that in turn may have a positive influence on the organization's ability to handle changes and crisis.