



**Employees
can deal with major
change with minimal
anxiety when an
organization has
healthy practices
in place to help them
heal, adapt
and excel.**

Organizational Trauma

Work environments are not immune to trauma and the toxic environment it can produce. Trauma can occur as a result of destructive leadership, layoffs, workplace violence, mergers and acquisitions, serious injury or death, and natural disaster.

Organizational trauma can erode loyalty and demoralize the workforce, especially if the employees are not able to express their emotions. Without appropriate outlets or support, they can become distracted and detached. This stress can lead to a breakdown in productivity.

Employees can build resilience to trauma with *self-care* and by *accepting change, making connections* and *maintaining a hopeful outlook*. But on a larger scale, leadership must focus on key areas for the organization to move forward.

To prevent or heal from trauma, organizational leadership must:

Be transparent. Eliminate rumors and build trust by providing daily, detailed communication about the changes impacting the organization. Ask for feedback.

Clarify organizational values and goals. Be clear about how change will affect workers and their roles and responsibilities. Discuss the goals to foster stability.

Empower employees. Rebuild confidence by involving them in decision-making. Set clear, measurable objectives and provide assistance to achieve results.

Build connections. Provide ways for employees to support each other during a crisis. Encourage emotional connections throughout the organization. These relationships sustain the workforce during a crisis.

Constantly assess. Know the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and its culture. Understand who are the influencers and thought leaders.

Create a recognition program. Acknowledge and celebrate workers for outstanding performance while creating a positive atmosphere.



2016 Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention

No permission is needed to duplicate this page for educational purposes.

1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline