

Bright Horizons and DCRC partner to develop the *Resilient Leadership Training Series*



By Susan Damico, M.A.

Resilient Leadership: What the Data Tells Us

The Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC) team often speaks about the importance of the “Resilience Cascade” or the “Resilience Connection.” This notion highlights the point that promoting resilience in children requires that we also pay close attention to our own social and emotional well-being, as well as the overall resilience of our team members and work environments. Over the past two years, DCRC has been fortunate to partner with [Bright Horizons](#) to evaluate how we can best support early childhood programs in fostering cultures of resilience that create this resilience cascade. Our partnership started in December of 2017, and we are thrilled to release the outcomes of a randomized control trial of a training model that provides a framework for leaders/supervisors in early childhood education, to reflect upon and implement strategies designed to promote resilient leadership.

The Resilient Leadership Training Model

DCRC recognizes that leaders in the field of early care and education balance multiple demands and have many competing priorities for both time and financial resources. As such, the Resilient Leadership Training takes advantage of technology to limit time and travel expenses related to participation. The training design includes a series of six live webinars that take place over the course of three months. Two DCRC seasoned trainers, who have refined their distance learning presentation skills in a way that creates an atmosphere of a live training, fosters group participation, and promotes a sense of deep collaboration among participants from across the country, facilitate the webinars. Participants who are not able to attend a webinar live have access to a recording of the session for the entire period leading up to the next scheduled webinar. In between each webinar session, participants are given an assignment that encourages ongoing reflection and engagement in resilient leadership practices. Participants also receive a mid-session e-mail with motivation and inspiration from the trainers, along with tips and strategies for use within their workplace settings. A full description of the session topics and training model are available [here](#).

The Bright Horizons Study: Summary

The DCRC/Bright Horizons partnership included 101 directors who volunteered and were equally divided between the Experimental Group – those who received the training outlined above – and a Control Group – those who did not receive the training experience. All participants in both the Intervention and Control Groups were asked to complete a brief set of outcome measures at three time points: 1) prior to the first webinar session; 2) shortly after the training series conclusion; and 3) six months after the series conclusion. These measures included the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS), the Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey (DERLS), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (MBI-GS).

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[Cont'd.] The Bright Horizons Study: Summary

It was observed that participants in the Intervention Group and Control Group reported very similar levels of personal resilience, resilient leadership, and professional burnout prior to the Resilient Leadership Training. As such, an analysis was completed to assess the impact of the Resilient Leadership Training on those outcome measures over time. Participants in the Intervention Group were also asked to complete additional surveys throughout the training series to report on their impressions of the training and their use of the Resilient Leadership strategies in their practice.

The Bright Horizons Study: Key Outcomes

Data analysis has revealed positive outcomes related to both participant satisfaction and the training's impact on participant behaviors related to resilient leadership. Some key research outcomes include:

- *94% of center directors would recommend this training series to another early childhood leader*
- *Following each of the first five sessions of the training series, 70-100% of center directors reported that they used the strategies they learned in the previous webinar session at least once in the two weeks following the session*
- *100% of directors reported that they would continue to use the resilient leadership strategies they learned in the future*
- *Participation in the Resilient Leadership Training Series is significantly related to long-term increases in competencies related to resilient leadership*

The Bright Horizons Study: Lessons Learned

The DCRC team is tremendously grateful to the leaders at Bright Horizons who not only recognize the importance of providing ongoing professional development to staff, but who also recognize the need for investment in program evaluation. Any kind of quality research requires a significant amount of time and commitment, and the resources required to conduct a randomized control study should not be underestimated. Before the study began, DCRC and Bright Horizons met regularly and frequently to ensure that:

- The Independent Review Board (IRB) proposal was submitted on time
- An adequate sample size was in place
- Data collection measures were completed on schedule
- Intervention Group participants had all of the information needed to support participation
- They regularly check in and communicate to ensure that the study would be completed successfully

According to Kelly Hansinger, Bright Horizons Senior Director of Educational Leadership and Learning, *"Bright Horizons has had a long-standing commitment to providing staff with the necessary resources to deliver high-quality care to the children and families we serve. We believe staff self-care is a necessary component and continue to seek out resources and experiences that foster staff resilience. This partnership with DCRC has strengthened our belief in the importance of resilience and our commitment to sharing this model with the field. Staff need our support and we need to continue to seek solutions that are efficient and effective."*

DCRC and Bright Horizons are planning to host a free webinar this fall to share more information about this experience. A specific date and time will be announced this summer.

Are you interested in this training series for your program or community? Contact Debi Mahler at dmahler@devereux.org or (610) 574-6141. You can also just keep an eye out for registration opening this summer for our national delivery of the training series, starting in January of 2020!