

Resilient Leadership Training Evaluation

Final Report – Executive Summary, March 2019

Evaluation Overview

The purpose of the Resilient Leadership Training Evaluation is to evaluate the usefulness and impact of the Devereux Resilient Leadership Training model. This training model provides a framework for leaders/supervisors in early childhood programs to reflect upon and implement strategies designed to promote resilient leadership. In December 2017, the Devereux Center for Resilient Children partnered with Bright Horizons to involve 101 new center directors in a randomized control trial to explore the effect of participating in the Resilient Leadership Training on directors' engagement in resilient leadership practices, as well as on directors' own protective factors related to personal resilience and factors related to professional burnout. To date, the evaluation has explored the short-term outcomes of participating in the Resilient Leadership Training, as reflected in outcome measures collected shortly after the conclusion of the Training series. These findings will be built upon in the forthcoming final report, which will report on outcomes across a period of six months following the conclusion of the Resilient Leadership Training series.

Evaluation Participants and Training Details

A total of 101 Bright Horizons center directors volunteered to participate in the Resilient Leadership Training Evaluation. Directors were recruited from the national population of center directors who were new to the position at Bright Horizons. The majority of participating directors were in their first or second year of working in their position. Participants were largely female, between the ages of 25 and 44, and had between 5 and 20 years of experience in the early childhood field overall. Upon agreeing to take part in the study, participants were randomly assigned to the Intervention Group (n=51), which received the six-session Resilient Leadership Training from March 2018 – July 2018, or to the Wait-List Control Group (n=50), which will receive the same Resilient Leadership Training upon the conclusion of the Evaluation in early 2019.

The Training series took place virtually over six sessions in Spring-Summer 2018. These included an introductory session, one session focused on each of four key adult resilience competencies (Relationships, Internal Beliefs, Initiative, and Self-Control), and a conclusory session. Intervention Group participants attended an average of four out of six sessions.

Analysis and Key Findings

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 Resilient Leadership Training's first session, 2) shortly after the Training series' conclusion, and 3) six months after the Training 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). 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 these outcome measures over time.

Participants in the Intervention Group were also asked to complete additional brief surveys throughout the Training series to report on their impressions of the Training and their use of resilient leadership strategies in their practice.

Key Findings – Implementation and Satisfaction Measures

- **Intervention Group participants used the strategies they learned during the training sessions in their practice.** 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 Training session at least once in the two weeks following the session. Many directors reported using the strategies more than once.
- **Intervention Group participants found the Training sessions and strategies learned to be useful in building personal resilience and the resilience of staff.** Across topic areas, the vast majority of center directors reported that the training sessions helped them understand the importance of cultivating their personal resilience/the resilience of their staff across the various competencies, and reported that the strategies learned were useful in supporting these efforts. 100% of directors reported that they would continue to use the resilient leadership strategies they learned in the future.
- **Intervention Group participants were still using the strategies and resources introduced in the Resilient Leadership Training series six months after the series concluded.** 89% of respondents reported that they had continued to use their previously-selected strategies to enhance their resilient leadership practices over the six months following the conclusion of the Resilient Leadership Training series. 72% of respondents implemented new strategies to enhance their resilient leadership practices over the six months following the conclusion of the Resilient Leadership Training series.
- **Overall, Intervention Group participants were very satisfied with the Training series and associated resources.** 94% of center directors would recommend this training series to another early childhood leader.

Key Findings –Outcome Measures

- **Both the Intervention and Control groups began the Evaluation with high levels of competence related to personal resilience and resilient leadership, as well as low evidence of burnout.** Because of these favorable responses at pretest, it would be unlikely to observe a statistically significant improvement on the outcome measures across the evaluation period, among either group of participants. This is referred to as a “ceiling effect.”
- **Participants in both the Intervention and Control groups maintained similarly low evidence of burnout across the intervention and follow-up period.** The center directors participating in this study did not exhibit evidence of burnout at the start of the Training series. This remained consistent throughout the evaluation period. No differences in burnout outcomes were observed between the Intervention and Control Groups.
- **Participation in the Resilient Leadership Training series is not significantly related to long-term changes in personal resilience.** While the pretest-posttest analysis suggested that the Resilient Leadership Training may serve to protect participants from protective factor decline over the Training period, the analysis which encompasses the six-month follow-up period suggests that Control group participants and intervention group participants eventually reach similar levels of personal resilience.
- **Participation in the Resilient Leadership Training series is significantly related to long-term increases in competencies related to resilient leadership.** A series of two-factor repeated measures ANOVAs examining the conditions of group (Intervention or Control) and Time (Pretest to Posttest to Six-Month Follow-Up) showed a significant interaction effect between time and group on the DERLS total score ($F(2, 84) = 3.61, p = .03$) and a marginally significant interaction effect on the Internal Beliefs scale score ($F(2, 84) = 3.1, p = .05$). This means that the change in scores from pretest through six-month follow-up significantly differed between the two groups, on the DERLS total score and the DERLS Internal Beliefs scale. Follow-up analysis showed that directors who participated in the Training series exhibited a significant increase in resilient leadership practices from pretest to six months post-training, while Control Group participants exhibited no change in resilient leadership practices over time.