Resilience in everyday healthcare: How to improve the potentials for resilient performance?

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Resilience is not a property of an organisation. It is not something that an organisation or a system has.

It is therefore not meaningful to refer to the level – or degree - of resilience.

Resilience is a quality or a characteristic of how an organisation – and the people in it – performs.

It is something that a system does.
Resilience versus resilient performance

Resilience is an expression of how people and organisations cope with everyday situations - large and small – by adjusting their performance to the conditions.

An organisation’s performance is resilient if it can function as required under expected and unexpected conditions alike (changes / disturbances / opportunities).

Resilient performance requires that an organisation has the potentials to respond, monitor, learn, and anticipate.
Resilience potentials are scale-invariant

Overall strategic goals and functioning of the healthcare organisation.

Organisational functions that support the work of the microsystem.

Clinical front line that works with patients in specific settings.
The four resilience potentials

Resilient performance requires that the system can **respond** to threats and opportunities alike.

Resilient performance requires that the system can **learn** - both from what goes right and what goes wrong.

Resilient performance requires that the system can **anticipate** long-term changes to demands and resources.

Resilient performance requires that the system can **monitor** what happens - externally and internally.
Discussion: The potential to respond

Think of examples where the organisation has responded well - and examples where the responses have been unsatisfactory. What characterised these situations?

For which events is there a response ready? What is the threshold of response? How many resources are allocated to response readiness? ...

How can the potential to respond be assessed? How can it be improved? How can it be sustained?
Discussion: The potential to monitor

Think of examples where the organisation’s monitoring worked well - and examples where the it did not - where signals or indicators were missed. What characterised these situations?

How have the indicators been defined?
How many indicators are leading and how many are lagging?
What is the delay between measurement and interpretation?

How can the potential to monitor be assessed?
How can it be improved?
How can it be sustained?
Discussion: The potential to learn

Think of examples where the organisation learned and changed - and examples where there was no learning. What characterised these situations?

What is the learning based on (successes – failures)? Is learning continuous or event-driven? How are the effects of learning verified and maintained? ...

How can the potential to learn be assessed? How can it be improved? How can it be sustained?
Discussion: The potential to anticipate

Think of examples where the organisation was able to anticipate a development - and examples where it failed to do so. What characterised these situations?

What is the implicit/explicit “model” of the future?
How far does the organisation look ahead (“horizon”)?
What risks are the organisation willing to take?

How can the potential to anticipate be assessed?
How can it be improved?
How can it be sustained?
Resilience potentials are coupled

A potential cannot be developed or managed in isolation, but must take the dependencies into account.
The Resilience Assessment Grid (RAG)

The RAG comprises four sets of questions, one for each potential. The questions are:

**DIAGNOSTIC** – point to details of a potential that are meaningful to assess.

**FORMATIVE** – answers can be used to make decisions about how to improve potentials.

**SPECIFIC** – address issues that are important for a concrete organisation.
How to develop and use the RAG

The RAG (Resilience Assessment Grid) is a set of diagnostic questions to determine the resilience potentials of an organisation.

**Develop** a set of diagnostic questions for the organisation by using a focus group, discussion group or similar. Agree on the answer categories. Include already known issues or problems if possible.

**Apply** the RAG, collate the results and present them to stakeholders, respondents, and the organisation as a whole. Use the findings to decide where changes are needed. Agree on remedial actions to bring about the changes. Repeat the RAG.

The RAG is for **long term use** – repeated assessments rather than a single measurement. Managing an organisation, regardless of type, takes place over a long period of time.

Use a stable set of respondents. The focus should not be the distribution of attitudes among the respondents but the **common view** they represent.
The potential to respond

Is there a prepared list of possible and potential events or conditions (internal or external) for which the organisation should be ready to respond?

Have the events been verified and/or revised on a regular basis?

Have responses been planned and prepared for every event considered?

Has the organisation ensured that the responses are adequate?

Are the triggering criteria well defined? Are there clear criteria for ending the response?

Can an effective response be activated fast enough?

Can it be sustained as long as needed?

Are there sufficient support and resources to ensure response readiness (people, equipment, materials?)

Is the readiness to respond verified and maintained?
The potential to monitor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator list</th>
<th>Does the organisation have a list of regularly used performance indicators?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Is the list verified and/or revised on a regular basis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Has the validity of the indicator been established?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay</td>
<td>Is the delay in sampling indicators acceptable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Are the indicators sufficiently sensitive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Are the indicators measure or sampled with sufficient frequency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis / interpretation</td>
<td>Are the indicators / measurements directly meaningful or do they require some kind of analysis?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational support</td>
<td>Is there a regular inspection scheme or -schedule? Is it properly resourced? Are the results communicated to the right people and put into use?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The potential to learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection criteria</th>
<th>Does the organisation have a clear plan for which events to learn from (frequency, severity, value, etc.)?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning basis</td>
<td>Does the system try to learn from things that go well as well as from failures?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning style</td>
<td>Is learning event driven (reactive) or continuous (scheduled)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Categorisation</td>
<td>Are there any formal procedures for data collection, classification, and analysis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Is it clear who is responsible for learning? (A common responsibility or assigned to specialists)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delay</td>
<td>Does learning function smoothly or are there significant delays in the learning process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Does the organisation provide adequate support for effective learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>How are ‘lessons learned’ implemented? (Regulations, procedures, training, instructions, redesign, reorganisation, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# The potential to look ahead

![Diagram with Learn, Monitor, and Anticipate hexagons]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate culture</th>
<th>Does the corporate culture encourage thinking about the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptability of uncertainty</td>
<td>Is there a policy for when risks / opportunities are considered acceptable or unacceptable?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time horizon</td>
<td>Is the time horizon of the organisation appropriate for the kind of activity it does?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>How often are future threat and opportunities assessed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>Does the organisation have a recognisable model of the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Does the organisation have a clear strategic vision? Is it shared’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>What kind of expertise is used to look into the future? (In-house, outsourced?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Are the expectations about the future known throughout the organisation?</td>
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