



Developing Psychological Capital

Psychological Capital is a set of four resources—optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resiliency—that can help improve both performance and well-being. (Check out a deep dive into the meaning [here](#)) Importantly, you can learn and develop Psychological Capital. It's something that can be trained surprisingly easily. [One intervention](#) was developed back in 2006 and has continued to find [support](#) in several subsequent studies. This resource includes exercises from those studies that can be done alone and in groups to develop Psychological Capital in team settings.

DEVELOPING GOALS

The first part of the training can all be done individually and is all about creating realistic goals. Write down three specific, realistic, and achievable goals for the near future. Maybe you want to read a professional development book next month or you want to leave work on time twice a week to make it to your favorite spinning class. After setting the three goals, pick one to focus on for the following exercises. You'll spend a bit of time really diving into the goal to help you develop Psychological Capital.

Develop goals that are realistic and specific. You want to make sure you can achieve them!

GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Now that you've picked a goal, spend some time thinking of different ways you can achieve the goal. Also, think through various obstacles and things that might get in your way. If we go back to the leaving work on time example, we can think of many ways to get that done. First, you can create a block on your calendar on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the time you have to leave making sure to use the alert functionality to remind you. Second, you can tell your team that you won't be available after 4:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Third, you can recruit an accountability partner from work to go with you to class and help you get out the door. The list goes on...

Obstacles

Now that we know some possible ways to leave work on time, what are the obstacles? Maybe, you have a hard time getting to work early enough to get your tasks done before 4:30. Your coworkers might also ignore your calendar blocks and schedule meetings that conflict with your calendar. You can also just be bad at packing up your things quickly enough to leave on time.

After understanding the obstacles, think through possible ways of overcoming them. Prep the night before work to minimize your getting ready tasks and help you get to work more quickly. Talk to your coworkers about checking your calendar before making meetings and let them know you will decline anything that conflicts with your blocks. Create an alert for 20-30 minutes before you have to leave work to get your stuff packed up.

Sub-Goals and Resources

The last part of the solo part of the training includes creating sub-goals and identifying resources. What are some smaller goals that can help you achieve your bigger goal? For example, maybe leaving work early two days a week is too much right away so you start with one day. After successfully achieving a pattern of leaving early on Tuesdays, you then will add the second day. Meeting that first goal will help you feel accomplished and get you moving in the right direction to meet the bigger goal!

Finally, list out all of the resources available to help you achieve your goal. For our spinning class goal, you can list phone alerts, calendar blocks, willpower, coworkers, accountability partners, and spouses/significant others/roommates. Think of all the people and things that can help you meet your goal.

After doing some individual work, group brainstorming will help your development!





GROUP BRAINSTORMING

The last part of the training to increase your Psychological Capital includes working with others. As a small group (around four to five people), share your goals and plans with each other. Share all of the different ways to achieve your goals, your potential obstacles and ways to overcome them, and your sub-goals and resources. Spend time discussing everyone's goals in detail. Everyone should provide constructive feedback and different perspectives on how the goals can be achieved. Keep it positive but make sure you are actually providing each other with new ideas that can help make goals more attainable.

Finally, you should end this development exercise with what is called 'positive brainstorming'. Share positive phrases, thoughts, and quotes that can help bring inspiration and support when facing challenges to meeting the goals. Write them down and keep them handy for when you actually begin the work to achieve your goal!

Obviously, if possible, do this development exercise with your work group. Everyone can benefit from supporting each other and working on their own Psychological Capital. While this is done traditionally at work and in a formal training setting, you can try these types of activities with friends and others as an alternative audience. Research supports these activities in a training setting with a facilitator (if you can ask for this as formal training from your leaders, do it) but there's no reason to believe you couldn't reap similar benefits with your own work in this area. Just make sure you spend sufficient time on each step of the process. These trainings typically last two to three hours. Spend that first hour or so working individually and spend the last portion brainstorming as a team.

Finally, let us know how it goes! We would love to hear from you if you've ever had a training like this one or if you try this out yourself. Good luck!

