Module 12: Organizational Change and Stress Management

Module 12 focused on organizational change and stress management. There are six types of forces for change and planned change. These include the older and more diverse nature of the workforce and their associated social trends, faster, cheaper technology, domestic and global economic shocks, and other global effects (competition, politics). There are positive ways to overcome resistance to change, such as utilizing communication, participation, building support, developing positive relationships, implementing changes fairly, and selecting people who accept change. Negative techniques include manipulations, cooptation, and coercion. There are four main approaches to managing organizational change. Lewin's unfreezing-movement-refreezing model seems most simplistic. Kotter's 8-step plan is more involved and relies on emotional responses (establish urgency, create a new vision), communication (form coalition, communicate vision, empower action), and behavioral techniques (reward short-term wins, consolidate/ reassess/ address changes, reinforce changes). There are potential environmental, organizational, and personal sources of stress at work, as well as individual and cultural differences. For example, though US employees are stressed when they lose control or work more hours, people in collectivist countries may find heavy workloads rewarding and may be more stressed by job evaluations or lack of training (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

The Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale was interesting because I am a lot more tolerant of uncertainty than I suppose many women in my demographic may fall. Overall, I scored a 4.3/ 5 (high range), further broken down into novelty (5/ 5), complexity (4.4/ 5), and insolvability (3.7/ 5). As the author suggested, I enjoy working in a diverse setting and thrive in a high-paced environment. When I leave for work in the morning, I have no idea which direction my day will head. I may be walking into one of dozens of possible surgeries with personnel I know or am unfamiliar with. I meet strangers each day and I meet them where they are. I am comfortable solving complex issues as they arise, whether they be interpersonal, logistical, or physical. For example, in my experience as a trauma center operating room charge nurse, I never knew what might rush through the door, but I always had a rough plan in the back of my head. I am confident that most—if not all—problems have solutions. Said solutions may not be popular or easy, but they are solutions nonetheless. I think my ratio of high-tolerance will help me to become and remain a resilient and innovative psychologist.

The organizational change and stress management takeaways are numerous. I am particularly interested in stress management because it has a profound impact on not only employee performance, but human wellness as a whole. According to a recent metanalysis, flexible work arrangements and stress-management training have positive effects on attributes such as employee health, job performance, and job satisfaction (Kröll, Doebler, & Nüesch,

2017). Since the context of a stressful situation sometimes dictates whether the emotional response is viewed by the employee as distress or eustress (Brulé & Morgan, 2018), it is imperative that organizations not only provide stress management training, but encourage employees to remain engaged in wellness programs and take sabbaticals before it becomes absolutely necessity (Robbins & Judge, 2019). This will ensure that employees feel supported and organizations reap the rewards of sustained increased performance and lower absenteeism/ turnover.

References

Brulé, G., & Morgan, R. (2018). Working with stress: Can we turn distress into eustress. *Journal of Neuropsychology & Stress Management*, *3*, 1-3.

Kröll, C., Doebler, P., & Nüesch, S. (2017). Meta-analytic evidence of the effectiveness of stress management at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *26*(5), 677-693.

Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2019). *Organizational behavior*. Pearson.