

A note from the CEO

Welcome to the Winter issue of CiC's quarterly newsletter.

Whatever hopes there might be now for the "green shoots" of economic recovery, we know that many organisations and their employees have been through some very tough times in the last year. And although there were those who say they saw the whole disaster coming, the credit crunch and consequent fallout came as a nasty shock for many people.

Unanticipated events can have a profound impact, not just on the performance of organisations, but on the emotional wellbeing of their staff. And that is why at CiC we take helping our clients to prepare for the unexpected very seriously indeed. In this issue, we examine the kinds of unexpected events that can destabilise organisations and what CiC can do to help you prepare for them.

As the festive season approaches, I'd also like to take this opportunity – on behalf of everyone at CiC -- to wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a joyful, productive and safe New Year! It has been a pleasure supporting you and your organisation this year and we look forward to further collaboration in 2010.

With very best wishes.

Kate Nowlan
CEO, CiC-Supporting Organisations



CiC's London location

Dealing with the Unexpected



All of us, whether in our private or professional lives, are looking for some kind of stability. We create routines, we form habits, we establish relationships and rituals and we gather around us familiar objects that root us in our sense of who we are.

In an increasingly unstable and uncertain world, it becomes ever more important to feel that we have created an environment that we can rely on. And we all like to think that we have some idea of what is going to happen.

And then the unexpected happens.

The credit crunch has amply demonstrated what a sudden – and for many people unanticipated -- economic downturn can do to the bottom-line of any business. But it's also vital that we don't overlook what the impact can be on the emotional and psychological lives of the people involved.

Organisations will often have contingency plans to deal with the practicalities of sudden and overwhelming events. But they will less often have an idea of how to manage their people through a period of rapid and often frightening change.

So how does one prepare effectively for that which cannot be anticipated? First, one needs to be aware that the unexpected can strike in many different ways.

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Dealing with the Unexpected (cont'd)

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation is the critical incident. Terrorist attacks, natural disasters and serious accidents at work easily overwhelm our capacity to cope. Individuals can quickly feel completely lost after a critical incident. Teams can rapidly fall apart in the confusion. On a more personal scale, bereavement, divorce, bankruptcy, redundancy, sudden illness, or being the victim of a crime all have the capacity to turn our worlds upside down.

On a subtler level, apparently mundane events can have a deeply destabilising effect if they follow a long period of cumulative stress. The smallest incidents – an everyday computer malfunction or a routine transport delay, for instance -- can trigger dramatic reactions if there are unresolved or unaddressed personal issues floating around. We call it “the straw that breaks the camel’s back”.

We all like to think that we leave our personal problems at home when we go to the office, but for managers, it is essential to understand that difficulties at home and problems at work can often overlap. A crisis for one person can ripple out and have an impact on an entire team. But then comes the next step.

A crisis may have an impact on a small team or a whole organisation, but the individuals involved will all have very different responses. If organisational resilience is to be maintained, managers need to be able to spot who’s doing well, and who’s not. And that means appreciating the breadth and unpredictability of human emotions. Unexpected events can leave people angry, frightened, numb, guilty, or even euphoric. The key is to create an environment in which all of these responses are acknowledged and accepted.

Several things have to happen to create this kind of space. Managers need to make sure that everyone is included and kept up to date with unfolding events, especially if they have taken people by surprise. People want to know what’s going on. Even if you don’t know what’s happening, you need to tell them that. But perhaps most importantly, managers have to learn the skills needed to listen to their people, find out how they’re feeling, and think together about the best way forward.

Unexpected events can tear teams apart, but given a bit of time and attention, organisations can emerge from crisis stronger, more resilient and more productive.



Featured services

Crisis Management Helpline. Aside from the 24/7 Confidential Care Adviceline, CiC can set up a standing arrangement with your organisation to activate a dedicated helpline in the event of an emergency or critical incident. Staffed by experienced clinicians, the helpline can operate both as a source of emotional support for your staff and management, as well as a signpost to practical services.

Dealing with the Unexpected. Delivered as a half-day workshop or webinar, this interactive seminar examines the physical and psychological impact of unexpected events on both individuals and organisations and offers practical guidelines for managing the human aspects of

business continuity. The seminar is designed for anyone working in a managerial or Human Resources role and is aimed at bolstering both practical preparedness and emotional resilience.

Contingency planning. In partnership with Security Exchange, a leading independent security management group, CiC can offer clients a quick and simple review of their business contingency and continuity plans. This includes a full assessment of the threats presented by the current security climate and an analysis of the measures required to protect personnel and assets and comply with legislative duty-of-care requirements.



CiC unveils Meaning and Motivation

We are proud to launch CiC's latest learning and development product, "Meaning and Motivation". The seminar, which can be delivered in a one-hour lunchtime slot or as a longer half-day workshop, examines the ways in which people can burn out at work, losing both their sense of meaning and their motivation to keep going. The course then looks at practical and engaging strategies for re-connecting with values and sources of energy.

The seminar has quickly proved popular among our clients and has already been delivered at a City law firm as well as a firm of Chartered Accountants in London. If you would like to run this seminar in your organisation, please contact Business Director Ralph Holtom at ralph.holtom@cic-eap.co.uk.

New website goes live

Our fresh new website is now up and running, packed with information and background on CiC, its services, its people and its history.

The new site features a comprehensive survey of all our products, as well as a "latest news" section and a selection of features written by CiC staff. You can also download a

range of CiC brochures, or click through to our E-Briefing module, which provides a rich interactive introduction to the Confidential Care helpline. CiC clients can also access Well Online, CiC's online wellbeing resource.

Come and visit us at www.cic-eap.co.uk.

Applause for Olivier Mythodrama seminar

CiC garnered rave reviews in November after an unforgettable autumn seminar delivered by Olivier Mythodrama.

The morning workshop, delivered by Olivier Mythodrama's Nick Ross, took participants on a journey through Shakespeare's Henry V, focusing on the theme of inspirational leadership. Ross, himself an experienced counsellor and development coach, drew parallels between different aspects of Henry's mission to conquer France and different styles of leadership.

In between colourful and dramatic introductions to different acts of Shakespeare's masterpiece, participants explored the ways in which we each draw on different archetypes of leadership, such as the Good King, the Warrior, the Great Mother and the Medicine Woman.

Held in the magnificent surroundings of the National Liberal Club, the seminar provided an engaging space in which to reflect on leadership qualities such as empathy, creativity, purpose and vision.

Clinical Perspectives – Substance Misuse

Every quarter we take a look at an issue that's high on the agenda for CiC's clinical services team. In this issue, we explore the thorny issue of substance misuse in the workplace.

As the party season gets into full swing, organisations across the country are gearing up for their Christmas festivities. For most people, this will mean a time of winter cheer, a few more parties than usual, and perhaps the odd sore head on the way to work in the morning.

For others, however, Christmas will be just another round in the seemingly never-ending battle with addiction. While the fact that everyone is out drinking might make it a little easier to cover up a problematic relationship with booze or drugs, this time of year can also turn into an escalating battle to hold everything together.



"Christmas is a difficult time for those with alcohol and substance misuse issues," says CiC Clinical Manager Jane Hetherington. "The general mood of excess can result in an increase in consumption, which can lead to a whole range of behavioural problems that can have a serious impact on relationships and family life."

Clinical Perspectives – Substance Misuse (cont'd)

While most people are enjoying the festive mood, Jane says people struggling with addiction will often be left feeling isolated and rejected, which can increase the risk of both self-harm and suicide. "One simply cannot under-estimate how valuable it can be to talk to someone else about these kinds of issues," Jane says. "So no matter how stuck you feel, give the CiC Adviceline a call and a trained and experienced counsellor will help you figure out the best way forward."

But it's not just individuals who are affected.

The economic cost to organisations of substance misuse amounts to billions of pounds every year. "As alcohol and drug consumption rises, so does abstenteeism and a general loss of productivity," says Jane.

Experts have also noted increases in addictive behaviour since the start of the credit crunch. Cocaine use in the City of London, for instance, has reportedly shot up by a quarter this year as office workers struggle to cope with redundancy fears. And as Christmas approaches, anxiety can combine with heavy partying to create a dangerous and unpredictable mix.

As Jane points out, substance misuse can pose serious challenges for managers, but help and support is never far away. "The CiC Managerial Consultancy line can really come into its own at this time of year. If you are a managers faced with a situation that feels overwhelming, give us a call, and we'll help you think about practical and sensitive solutions."

Explore Confidential Care



CiC has developed an innovative new online resource, designed to provide the employees in your organisation with an engaging and interactive guide to the full range of CiC services.

The E-Briefing takes you on a step-by-step journey through the CiC Confidential Care service, outlining both the resources and support that we offer as well as how to access them. Using text, short documentary films and video case studies, the site also describes the counselling process and gives you a clear idea of what to expect when you call up for help.

Getting started couldn't be easier. Go to www.cic-learning.co.uk/confidentialcare and click on the 'Register here' button on the Welcome page. Enter your e-mail address when prompted and a link will be sent to your account. Open that up and click on the link to create a Username and Password.

You can either work through the whole resource from beginning to end, or pick and choose the sections most relevant to you.

Last thoughts...

"True stability results when presumed order and presumed disorder are balanced. A truly stable system expects the unexpected, is prepared to be disrupted, waits to be transformed."

Tom Robbins, American author (born 1936)

Upcoming events



Tuesday January 26, 2010

Employee Engagement Conference, London:

Organised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the gathering will look at how organisations can inspire, motivate and retain staff as the economy begins to recover. For more information, go to www.cipd.co.uk.

Friday February 5, 2010

Stress Down Day: A day of events sponsored by the Samaritans aimed at encouraging people to seek support before problems run out of control. For further information, go to www.samaritans.org.

Friday February 19, 2010

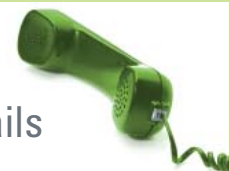
Repeating the same relationship: Breaking the Cycle: A workshop at WPF Therapy in London from 6-9 pm, open to anyone who would like to understand their relationship patterns. For more information, go to www.wpf.org.uk.

Dates to be confirmed

Professional Workplace Mediation Skills

Course: A comprehensive 7-day mediation training designed for individuals wishing to develop and offer professional-level mediation skills. Delivered by CiC in association with Scotcoach (www.buon.net). For further information, phone 0207 937 6224 or write to info@cic-eap.co.uk.

Contact Details



For general information email us at info@cic-eap.co.uk

For sales or product information email us at sales@cic-eap.co.uk

Alternatively,

Phone: 020 7937 6224

Fax: 020 7376 1914

CiC, 23 Kensington Square, London, W8 5HN

www.cic-eap.co.uk