The Dark Side of Leadership and Its Impact on Followers

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Abstract

Over the past two decades research has studied the “dark side of leadership” under the research stream of destructive leadership, variously described as abusive, aversive, derailing, toxic, and tyrannical leadership. While there has been significant research into the consequences of destructive leadership, there has been limited investigation of its antecedents. It has been proposed by a number of researchers, investigating a leader trait approach to leadership, that “dark side” traits (socially undesirable traits that can have negative implications for work success and the well-being of employees) exhibit a curvilinear relationship with key outcomes (e.g., leader and follower performance, follower engagement, and follower well-being): that is, there exist negative consequences for extremely low or high “bright side” personality traits (behavioural traits leaders seem to exhibit when they are performing at their best) and positive consequences for moderate dark side personality traits. Extreme levels of some bright side (e.g., independence, assertiveness, charisma) and dark side (e.g., ego-centred, intimidating, manipulative) traits have been identified as antecedents to exhibiting destructive leadership behaviours. Sustained demonstration of destructive leadership behaviours are associated with harmful outcomes that lead to serious problems for employees in the workplace. Yet there is scarce research into the coping strategies followers employ to cope with destructive leadership.

This research consists of three studies that investigate destructive leadership from both the leader and follower perspective. This research identifies traits that may predispose leaders to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, and explores a range of leadership behaviours that are perceived by subordinates to be harmful to well-being, from derailing behaviours to more extreme forms of destructive leadership behaviours. The research also identifies common strategies employed by followers to cope with their leader’s adverse
behaviour; and evaluates the effectiveness of an intervention to increase follower well-being in the context of destructive leadership.

Study 1 employed a cross-sectional design and a self-report measure to identify personality traits that predict or inhibit a predisposition to exhibit destructive leadership behaviours, and explores possible self-regulation traits as mediators, based on trait-activation theory. To date there has been limited investigation of antecedents to destructive leadership. It is important to understand the mechanisms by which leaders may activate derailing traits through failure of self-regulation. This understanding will then inform the design of leadership development activities that aim to assist leaders to avoid derailment. Analysis of data from 300 managers (profiled for recruitment or development purposes across a number of organisations) revealed that high levels of the personality trait independence, typically viewed as a bright side trait, was significantly related to derailing traits (ego-centred, intimidating, manipulating, micro-managing and passive-aggressive). These associations were significantly mediated by levels of leaders’ negative affectivity, which reduced the effect of self-regulation traits (emotional control, self-awareness, and stress tolerance). The results are discussed in terms of the theoretical implications for activation of derailing leadership traits, and practical implications for the selection and development of managers.

Study 2 employed a cross-sectional design and self-report, qualitative responses to an online survey completed by respondents (N = 76) who perceived they worked for a “toxic leader”. Data were analysed to confirm destructive leadership behaviours perceived by respondents as toxic, together with the psychological, emotional, and physical consequences of perceived destructive leadership behaviours at the individual level through the voices of affected followers. Respondents’ coping strategies to deal with the effect of destructive leadership behaviours were analysed against two organising theoretical coping frameworks: Yagil, Ben-Zur, and Tamir’s (2011) Coping with Abusive Supervision scale; and Skinner,
Edge, Altman and Sherwood’s (2003) family of coping strategies. Implications for coping theory in the context of destructive leadership are discussed. This research extends our understanding of which coping strategies might be protective against harm from destructive leadership, which are ineffective in this context, and which may contribute to escalated leader engagement in destructive leadership behaviours.

Study 3 presents a quasi-experimental evaluation of a secondary stress prevention intervention, a four-hour resiliency training session, to improve followers’ well-being in general and, specifically, when subjected to destructive leadership behaviours. The intervention was based on four theoretical frameworks that have previously been found to effectively minimise the negative effects of stress: stress inoculation therapy, acceptance commitment training, resiliency, and career resilience. Repeated-measures data for psychological, affective, and physical well-being were collected immediately before the intervention and after the training session, and then three months post the intervention. Both intervention process and outcome results were evaluated. Results indicated a positive effect of the resiliency training intervention on follower well-being, with a significant increase in affective well-being and a significant decrease in psychological distress three months post the intervention. No effect was found for physical well-being. A significant increase in participants’ knowledge, confidence, and motivation to use resiliency techniques was found immediately post the training session. Additional analyses to test the mediation effects of participant coping strategies on the association between manager relationship and well-being found significant effects at Time 1 only. Avoidance coping mediated the association between poor manager relationship (low manager support and low manager interpersonal justice) and psychological and affective well-being, such that psychological and emotional distress were reduced, suggesting these coping mechanisms may be adaptive to destructive leadership, at least in the short term. This research demonstrates that an individual intervention conducted
to enhance follower resiliency to destructive leadership behaviours can effectively improve psychological and affective well-being over time. Furthermore, this research is designed to address commonly cited limitations of intervention research, including lack of empirically-based interventions, lack of longitudinal research, lack of evaluation of implementation processes, and failure to address potential mediating effects. Practical implications are discussed, including recommended changes to research design to improve the efficacy of interventions aiming to mitigate the harm of destructive leadership to followers.

Finally, theoretical and practical implications of the results from the three studies in this thesis are discussed. This research contributes to a better understanding of the antecedent traits and characteristics that predispose a leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, highlighting the role of the trait negative affectivity in suppressing self-regulation traits. Practical implications for addressing leader derailment focus on organisational interventions to develop leaders’ resilience and capacity to deal effectively with negative emotions, such as frustration or fear of failure, to prevent them activating their trait predisposition and engaging in destructive behaviours. This research also advances understanding of theoretical coping mechanisms followers engage in when subjected to destructive leadership behaviours, and confirms previous research propositions that employees are likely to employ ineffective coping strategies in this situation. Some support is provided for the utility of existing coping frameworks within the context of followers responding to destructive leadership. Support is also provided for the utility of secondary stress prevention interventions (e.g., resiliency training for followers) in improving the well-being of participants over time, in the context of destructive leadership. Implementation of primary, secondary, and tertiary stress management interventions is recommended in order to protect followers from the occupational stressor of destructive leadership. Collaboration between academics and practitioners is called for in researching this phenomena and
influencing organisations to pro-actively address this significant workplace stressor in order to protect the psychosocial safety and well-being of managers and employees.

Key Words: Abusive supervision, destructive leadership, leader derailment, toxic leadership, occupational stressor, coping, stress management interventions.
Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank the organisations that participated in this research, and especially thank the employees who spent time completing surveys/profiles and/or participating in workshops. I would like to thank Dr Suzie Drummond for her assistance with the PROCESS bootstrapping methodology employed in Study 1, and Tristan Casey for his assistance with the analysis of qualitative data in Study 2. I also express appreciation for the invaluable feedback provided by the anonymous reviewers of the two journal article submissions. Their detailed feedback and suggestions were invaluable.

This thesis research is the product of many years of hard work that was facilitated by the support of family and friends. I would particularly like to thank my partner, John, for his understanding of the curtailment of our social life while I bunkered down in the study in front of the computer, and for making the no doubt arduous effort to accompany me to Melbourne, New Zealand, the UK, and Europe when I presented at conferences. My sister, Annie, assisted with proofing the draft thesis, and university colleagues, Dr Suzie Drummond and Dr Wendy Muller, shared their experiences and encouraged me to persist through to the end.
Finally, I’d like to thank the many individuals who shared their personal experiences of destructive leadership, including how they dealt with its harmful effects. Their stories energised me by confirming the importance of this research. While at times extremely challenging, it is very rewarding to have completed research that can make a useful contribution to the growing body of knowledge on destructive leadership and will inform evidence-based practice.
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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Acceptance Commitment Therapy; Acceptance Commitment Training</td>
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<td>CBT</td>
<td>Cognitive-behavioural Therapy</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Global Personality Inventory</td>
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<td>HDS</td>
<td>Hogan Development Survey</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>LMX</td>
<td>Leader-member exchange theory</td>
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<td>LVI</td>
<td>Leadership Versatility Inventory</td>
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<td>SIT</td>
<td>Stress inoculation training</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMI</td>
<td>Stress Management Intervention</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Stress Management Training</td>
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Statement of Original Authorship

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma at any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference was made in the thesis itself.

Vicki Joy Webster

Acknowledgement of Papers included in this Thesis

Section 9.1 of the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research ("Criteria for Authorship"), in accordance with Section 5 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, states:

To be named as an author, a researcher must have made a substantial scholarly contribution to the creative or scholarly work that constitutes the research output, and be able to take public responsibility for at least that part of the work they contributed. Attribution of authorship depends to some extent on the discipline and publisher policies, but in all cases, authorship must be based on substantial contributions in a combination of one or more of:

- Conception and design of the research project
- Analysis and interpretation of research data
- Drafting or making significant parts of the creative or scholarly work or critically revising it so as to contribute significantly to the final output.
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- Offer authorship to all people, including research trainees, who meet the criteria for authorship listed above, but only those people.
- Accept or decline offers of authorship promptly in writing.
- Include in the list of authors only those who have accepted authorship.
- Appoint one author to be the executive author to record authorship and manage correspondence about the work with the publisher and other interested parties.
- Acknowledge all those who have contributed to the research, facilities or materials but who do not qualify as authors, such as research assistants, technical staff, and advisors on cultural or community knowledge. Obtain written consent to name individuals.

Included in this thesis are papers in Chapters 4 and 5 which are co-authored with other researchers. My contribution to each co-authored paper is outlined at the front of the relevant chapter. The bibliographic details for the published paper and the status of a second paper submitted for publication, including all authors, are:

*Incorporated as Chapter 4*

Incorporated as Chapter 5


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**Conference Presentations**


**Conference Posters**

Chapter 1. The Dark Side of Leadership and its Impact on Followers

Imagine. Imagine that as the alarm goes off, you awake with a sense of dread. Your stomach is churning. Waves of nausea overwhelm you. You feel the beginnings of a headache. The last thing you want to do is go to work and face him. As soon as you walk into work, you can hear him yelling abuse at one of your colleagues. Last week he accepted public praise for the excellent work he had done on a very important project, knowing full well it was your work. Your colleagues avoid your eye as you walk by. They treat you as if you have an infectious disease – you are out of favour and they want nothing to do with you. “Chris, you idiot, get yourself in here!” Red in the face, eyes bulging. Not a good sign, but you daren’t refuse. You just don’t know how much longer you can cope with this.

Traditionally, organisational leadership research adopted the approach that all leaders are inherently good and ethical (Yukl & van Fleet, 1992). The scenario described above, derived from a collage of responses from recipients of the dark side of leadership, collected as part of this research, suggests otherwise. Kellerman, a political scientist, also challenged this view:

In spite of all the work on leadership that assumes it by definition to be good… we exercise power, authority and influence in ways that do harm. This harm is not necessarily deliberate. It can be the result of carelessness or neglect. But this does not make it less injurious and, in some cases, calamitous. (Kellerman, 2004a p. xiii).

As a practitioner in the field of organisational psychology, the researcher has observed first-hand the negative effects of destructive leaders on well-being, both personally and when working with clients. Yet, at the time of commencing this thesis, there was little in the leadership literature to inform evidence-based practice to address this issue in practical
terms. The overall aim of this thesis is to provide guidance to practitioners on evidence-based practices that contribute to addressing the dark side of leadership in organisations from two perspectives: the leader, who is derailing to the dark side; and the employee, the target of the dark side leadership behaviours. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of why the dark side of leadership is a serious issue for organisations and an important area of research, and outlines the research aims of this thesis, the research questions, and the approach taken.

While some researchers regard destructive leadership as an oxymoron, asserting leadership is, by definition, a positive force, other researchers maintain that it is equally important to understand why people follow destructive leaders (Kellerman, 2004a, 2004b; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla, Hogan & Kaiser, 2007; Yukl & van Fleet, 1992). With the demise of large corporations due to fraudulent transactions and the repercussions of a global economic crisis still being experienced, there has been a revival in the promotion of values-based and ethical leadership models, for example, servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1998); spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003); authentic leadership (George, 2004); and responsible leadership (Maak & Pless, 2006). Kellerman (2004a, 2004b) pointed out that a focus on the bright side of leadership resulted in little attention being paid to the followship of “bad” leaders, whether it be in the political arena, the community, or in business. Influential leaders who have subsequently been labeled evil, such as Hitler and Stalin, have been extraordinarily successful in retaining large numbers of followers who adopted their purpose, values, ideas, and directives. Kellerman argued that to ignore this aspect of leadership was to miss an opportunity to better understand the nature of leadership and followship, for example, the nature and effect of followers and following in the leadership process (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Alvesson and Spicer (2012) also espoused the benefits of taking a critical approach to the study of leadership, arguing that many negative consequences implicit
in leadership theory and practice are often masked or ignored. They favoured an approach that fosters investigations of alternative modes and interpretations of leadership, and seeking to uncover the dark side of leadership is one such critical approach (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

Over the past decade scholarly attention has increased in the examination of the dark side of leadership under the research stream of destructive leadership (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007; Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013; Schyns & Hansborough, 2010). This was expedited by a special edition of Leadership Quarterly in 2007 dedicated to the topic of destructive leadership. A key obstacle in researching the dark side of leadership is the emergence in the literature of multiple terms, overlapping definitions, behavioural dimensions, and categories of destructive leaders (Einarsen et al., 2007; Pelletier, 2010; Tepper, 2000). This has resulted in diverse leadership research streams that, until relatively recently, were not cross-referenced (Krasikova et al., 2013; Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007). These have been variously described as incompetent and unethical leadership (Conger, 1990; Kellerman, 2004a); personalised charismatic leadership (House & Howell, 1992); petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994); abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000); aversive leadership (Bligh, Kohles, Pearce, Justin, & Stovall, 2007; Pearce & Sims, 2002); toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 2005); leader bullying (Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley & Harvey, 2007), despotic leadership (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008), and the dark side of laissez-faire leadership (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland & Hetland, 2007).

The phenomenon of the dark side of leadership has predominantly been approached from two perspectives. First, the leader-centric approach focused on leaders’ dark side traits and destructive behaviour (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Hansborough, 2010), such as “the systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the
legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates” (Einarsen et al. 2007, p.208). Leader-centric approaches have been criticised for being too one-sided. Interest has grown in how followers enact their own role in the leadership relationship, with a focus on their followership (e.g., the way they communicate with the leader, comply with their instructions, and respond to their behaviour; Barbuto, 2000; Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Second, a follower-centric approach, led by the abusive supervision literature (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007), focused on the subjective assessment that subordinates make of a “sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact” (Tepper 2000, p. 178). Thus, theoretical perspectives on the dark side of leadership have expanded to include a combination of factors beyond a leader’s role in isolation. Specifically, research now investigates both the role and interaction of leader and follower personality characteristics, leader and follower motivations, and how these are activated by environmental context and opportunity (Coleman, 2006; Furnham, 2007; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Judge & LePine, 2007; Krasikova et al., 2013; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007; Schmit, Kihm, & Robie, 2000; Schyns & Hansborough, 2010; Spreier, Fontaine, & Malloy, 2006; Thoroughgood, Padilla, Hunter & Tate, 2012).

**Research Context**

Based on a relational view of leadership and followship theory, three primary domains related to destructive leadership have been proposed by Padilla, et al. (2007) and Thoroughgood, Padilla et al. (2012; see Figure 1). In the first domain, an individual leader will have a predisposition, through one or more of their personality trait characteristics, to default to dark side leadership behaviours, in combination with a motivation to achieve their own agenda, even at the expense of others.
In the second domain, followers will comply with destructive leaders’ demands, and may even support and promote destructive leadership. Padilla et al. (2007) defined two types of susceptible followers: *conformers*, who lack a clearly defined self-concept and comply with destructive leaders out of fear, to minimise personal consequences of non-compliance; and *colluders*, who may share the leader’s values and actively participate in the destructive leader’s agenda to seek personal gain through their association with the leader.

Finally, in the third domain, the environment or context allows destructive leadership behaviours to be tolerated (Coleman, 2006; Judge, Piccolo & Kosalka, 2009; Kellerman, 2004a, 2004b; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007; Spreier et al., 2006; Trickey & Hyde, 2009). While not the primary focus of the research in this thesis, an understanding of destructive leadership would be incomplete if it did not acknowledge the environment within which dysfunctional leadership occurs. Social constructions of leadership and/or followship are informed by the context in which the leader/follower dyad interaction takes place (van Knippenberg, 2012). Situational influences that are purported to provide an ideal environment for destructive leadership are depicted in Figure 1. They include organisations that foster low control and high co-operation, and large bureaucracies with high power distance between leaders and follower. Organisational instability (e.g., periods of radical change) and perceived threat (e.g., social or economic threats) create environments where more assertive, autocratic leadership will be tolerated. Cultural values and norms (e.g., cultures that endorse the avoidance of uncertainty and collectivism, as opposed to individualism, or fail to provide an ethical climate) also influence whether destructive leadership will be tolerated, as will the absence of checks and balances of power and control that concentrates power in the leader (Ferris et al., 2007; Grijalva & Harms, 2014; Mulvey & Padilla, 2010; O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012; Padilla et al., 2007; Tepper, 2007). Recommended organisational interventions to put checks and balances in place to guard against destructive
leadership include: organisational controls and sanctions; strong corporate governance; setting organisational norms and expectations regarding acceptable behaviour through an ethics code or Code of Conduct; promotion of organisational values; whistleblower policy; robust performance management and disciplinary policies and processes; leadership development programs; team building programs to reduce inter-team and intra-team conflict; and provision of Employee Assistance Programs to counsel and support victims of destructive leaders (Cotton, 2008; Dewe, 1994; Knox Haly, 2008; Lange, 2008; Padilla et al., 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012; Wotruba, Chonko, & Loe, 2001). The three domains portrayed by the researcher in Figure 1, an expansion on Padilla et al.’s model of the “toxic triangle,” proposes the interrelationship between destructive leadership (the continuum from dark side traits and leader derailment through to abusive supervision and the more extreme form of destructive leadership, the Dark Triad), taxonomies of susceptible followers, and the contextual environments that allow destructive leadership to flourish in organisations.

There is now a significant body of work outlining conceptual explanations for destructive leadership, including the consequences for leaders and subordinates, and the role of organisational context. However, there has been less focus on the antecedents that predispose leaders to engage in destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., Bardes & Piccolo, 2010). As most leaders derail at some point, it is important to focus on understanding antecedents to derailment. This can then inform the design of leadership development programs, which are aimed to assist leaders to avoid derailing.
In addition, despite some recent theoretical exploration for how followers may cope with destructive leadership, there has been little field research to validate these theoretical frameworks (e.g., May, Wesche, Heinitz, & Kerschreiter, 2014; Yagil, Ben-Zur & Tamir, 2011). As it is not always possible to remove derailing or destructive leaders, it is important to understand the coping strategies followers employ, that may protect them from the harmful effects of being the target of destructive leadership behaviours, or, alternatively, may contribute to further derailment and abuse from the leader.
Therefore, the research aims of this thesis are to better understand the antecedents for leaders engaging in destructive leadership behaviours, and the strategies followers employ to cope with destructive leadership, so practitioners can employ evidence-based practice to improve interventions designed to address the negative effects of destructive leadership in organisational settings. This thesis may inform leadership development programs, to identify strategies that develop leaders in a way that prevents them engaging in destructive leadership. It may also inform interventions that are designed to protect followers and/or maintain the well-being of targets of destructive leadership, and, as a result, provide a less conducive environment for destructive leadership.

Rationale for Research

Imagine. You are just leaving your doctor’s office with the forms signed so you can take sick leave from work, and lodge a stress claim against your employer, if you choose to. You have insomnia, a skin rash that won’t go away, have been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, and your hair is coming out by the handful. You vacillate between bursts of anger and irritability and becoming teary at the most inconvenient and embarrassing times. Your doctor has referred you to a psychologist. The diagnosis is that all your symptoms have been caused by stress at work. You feel ashamed that you’ve let your boss get to you to the point it has come to this. If you lose this job, you don’t know how you are going to pay the mortgage.

Destructive leadership leads to a range of negative consequences for leaders, individual followers, and organisations, including leader derailment, reduced performance, reduced well-being, reduced employee satisfaction and commitment, increased absenteeism, unwanted turnover, and occupational stress claims as a result of psychological distress (Bond, Tuckey, & Dollard, 2010; Mackie, 2008; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012; Safe Work Australia, 2011; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2000, 2007). Negative psychological outcomes
reported by followers as a result of destructive leadership include reduced self-esteem, feelings of threat to security, and distress at unjust treatment, leading to disengagement and burn out (Pelletier, 2010; Tepper, 2000). In addition, perceptions of abusive treatment by a leader may lead to retaliatory responses by followers (Tepper, 2007).

It is difficult to estimate the financial costs of destructive leadership, but the resultant stress, disengagement, withdrawal, and absenteeism costs have been estimated. Substantial litigation and counselling costs can be incurred to address the effects of hostility, bullying, discrimination, intimidation, and abuse (Richards & Freeman, 2002; Sutton, 2007). Organisations are made aware that they have a duty of care to maintain the safety of their employees (Safe Work Australia, 2011). Organisations typically have codes of conduct or regulatory guidelines to ensure the conduct of desirable activities, although breaches are often not counted in official statistics, and enforcing consequences to leaders exhibiting harmful actions may not be possible. Workers’ Compensation claims focusing on psychosocial injuries have increased over the past decade (Dollard, Shimazu, Bin Nordin, Brough, & Tuckey, 2014). Mental stress claims (for example, stressful interpersonal relationships at work, social or physical isolation, poor relationships with superiors, interpersonal conflict, lack of social support, bullying and harassment) form a significant proportion of the accepted serious workers’ compensation claims in Australia. Mental stress claims have been reported to have increased by 25% from 2001 to 2011 (Safe Work Australia, 2013, 2014), and are the most expensive form of workers’ compensation claims due to the typically lengthy periods of absence from work. When stressful situations remain unresolved, they can result in harm within a short time-frame (e.g., headaches, upset stomach, sleep disorders, and irritability), while chronic illnesses may develop over a long period of exposure (e.g., anxiety disorder, depression). Lack of supportive leadership has been reported to be associated with reduced
well-being and higher distress in Australian workers (Australian Psychological Society, 2013).

Costs to organisations as a result of the impact of work stressors, such as destructive leadership, are significant. A Medibank Private commissioned study (Medibank Private, 2008) reported that in 2007 the total cost of work-related stress to the Australian economy was $14.81 billion; the direct cost to employers in stress-related presenteeism and absenteeism was $10.11 billion. The proportion of stress claims specifically related to “poor relationships with superiors” was not reported. The cost of addressing the impact of workplace bullying and harassment alone has been estimated to be as much as $36 billion per year in Australia (Richards & Freeman, 2002). Destructive leadership is an example of the occupational stressor anti-social behaviour, including abusive behaviours beyond bullying and harassment, and has been shown to result in psychological and emotional harm for subordinates (Tepper, 2000; 2007).

There are also hidden costs incurred as a result of destructive leadership that are difficult to calculate, for example costs resulting from high staff turnover (such as re-staffing and re-training), from the affected employee reciprocating the negative treatment, or from employees withholding voluntary contributions that might benefit their supervisor or the organisation (Rafferty & Restubog, 2011). Gallup research reported active disengagement, caused in part by destructive manager behaviour, costs the US an estimated $450 billion to $550 billion annually (Gallup, 2013). The cost to US corporations of behaviours associated with abusive supervision (e.g., the costs of absenteeism, health care, and lost productivity) has been estimated at $23.8 billion annually (Tepper, Duffy, Henle, & Lambert, 2006), although this claim has recently been questioned as being based on research specifically investigating the cost of leader bullying, not abusive supervision (Martinko et al., 2013). Indirect costs associated with abuse, such as workplace bullying and harassment, include
medical costs, premature retirement, and a greater need for social services and welfare (Samnani & Singh, 2012).

Nevertheless, despite organisations being aware of the personal and financial cost of destructive leadership, many fail to take steps to ensure the quality of their leadership. They make personnel selection mistakes, tolerate bad managers, and fail to monitor their leaders’ performance in key areas (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005). Depending on perpetrator power and intentionality, observers of destructive leadership behaviours are often reluctant to report such behaviour due to fear of repercussions or anticipated regret about reporting the wrongdoing, thus perpetuating a climate of silence. Even when it is recognised that a leader is engaging in unethical or illegal behaviour, the cost of resisting their influence or addressing their bad behaviour (e.g., legal action, escalated conflict and aggression, retaliatory action) can be perceived to be greater than the cost of not addressing the consequences of destructive behaviour (e.g., stress claims from affected followers; Clements & Washbush, 1999; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Rate & Sternberg, 2007; Schabracq & Smit, 2007; Shapiro & Von Glinow, 2007). Despite highly funded and well publicised efforts to address physical diseases, such as cancer, AIDS, diabetes, and heart disease, significantly less effort is put into understanding and addressing destructive leadership. Yet, the effects of destructive leadership can be equally harmful to the health and well-being of individuals and organisations and, through flow on effects, to family well-being and the wider community (Kellerman, 2004a; Martinko et al., 2013). For these reasons, researching and understanding the nature of destructive leadership and its impact on followers is an important and growing, although currently under-developed, research area, with important implications for practice.

Academic discussion and investigations into the processes of destructive leadership have increased over the past decade. There is now a significant body of work providing conceptual explanations of destructive leadership, but limited empirical and field research to
date into why leaders display destructive behaviours, how followers cope with their behaviour, and how the toxic consequences of destructive leadership can be ameliorated (Krasikova et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). There is currently an incomplete understanding of the antecedents and causes of destructive leadership behaviours, followers’ responses to such behaviours, and organisational practices that can prevent harm to employees experiencing destructive leadership.

The research in this thesis is approached from an applied perspective, hence the researcher’s determination to use field research and organisational samples, when a significant share of research in the destructive leadership field uses convenience or student samples (e.g., Pelletier, 2010; Yagil et al., 2011). This thesis research is designed, firstly, to address a call to better understand the types of leader characteristics and behaviours that employees perceive as harmful to their personal and occupational well-being, extending the descriptors of destructive leadership behaviours as a basis for further investigation and research (Pelletier, 2010). Secondly, to inform evidence-based practice, there is clearly a need to build on the research work conducted to date, to verify and extend our theoretical understanding of the mechanisms that cause leaders to engage in destructive leadership, and the mechanisms by which followers choose coping strategies in response to perceived destructive behaviours from their leader. This thesis builds on the extensive coping literature by testing the veracity of two coping frameworks within the context of employees’ coping with destructive leadership (Skinner, Edge, Altman & Sherwood, 2003; Yagil, et al., 2011). Finally, this thesis seeks to address the call for further research to discover effective strategies for coping with destructive leadership at work (Yagil et al., 2011). As previously discussed, there is now a significant body of work offering conceptual discussions and theoretical propositions in the destructive leadership stream of research. However, as a relatively new stream of research, there remains a significant gap in research that tests these theoretical
frameworks. Yet it is important to understand the mechanisms by which leaders derail and by which target employees are harmed, if researchers are to identify evidence-based solutions to this issue.

**Research Questions**

This thesis research is designed to fill the gaps previously discussed by addressing the following research questions:

- What are the antecedent traits that may predispose an individual leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours? What traits may inhibit the predisposition of leaders to employ harmful behaviours?
- What are the leader traits and behaviours that followers perceive as harmful to their well-being? What are the psychological, emotional, and physical outcomes of destructive leadership traits and behaviours for followers? What coping strategies do targets of destructive leadership traits and behaviours employ to deal with those psychological, emotional and physical outcomes? and
- What is an effective, evidence-based intervention to enhance well-being and prevent or reduce harm to followers within the context of destructive leadership?

**Research Goals and Approach**

The goal of this thesis research is to provide evidence-based data for practitioners, to inform how they devise strategies to prevent destructive leadership from emerging in workplaces and to better protect employees from the negative effects of destructive leadership. Choice of research design is based on the desire to address the research questions in a way that contributes to informing practical, realistic interventions that can be employed by practitioners to prevent and/or address destructive leadership in organisations.
Research epistemology. Consideration was given to the epistemology that informs this thesis, including the methodology, and the methods for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The research for this thesis is approached from a combination of two knowledge claim positions: first, pragmatism, investigating a real-world problem (e.g., the negative impact of destructive leadership behaviours on followers in organisations); and second, positivism, challenging the traditional notion of our knowledge of leadership, and utilising empirical observation and measurement to verify existing theoretical frameworks that explain the causes and outcomes of a real-world problem (e.g., dark side traits, self-regulation traits, destructive leadership, coping with abusive supervision, and stress management interventions). Given the pragmatic approach adopted, it is important to the researcher that the results of the research in this thesis are informative to practitioners and contribute to solutions to the problem that are applicable in the workplace.

In addition, a combination of three approaches to the research studies in this thesis are employed: (a) functionalist (identifying correlations between variables associated with leadership), (b) interpretive (meaning-making process associated with leadership), and (c) critical (a negative critique of leadership; Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). The research seeks to identify leader traits correlated with destructive leadership (functionalist and critical), and to investigate how followers interpret and respond to perceived destructive leadership behaviours based on their reports of ongoing interactions between both parties (interpretive). The research then seeks to empirically evaluate an intervention designed to mitigate the negative effects of destructive leadership behaviours on followers (functionalist and critical).

Research methodologies. Given the goal of this thesis, to identify evidence-based strategies to prevent or mitigate the damage and costs destructive leadership causes, and given the limited number of field studies on destructive leadership, the positivistic research approach chosen focussed on accessing samples of employees within organisations for theory
verification to understand the antecedents of destructive leadership and how negative outcomes for followers might be mitigated. Samples from the “real world” were sought, despite the difficulty in conducting rigorous research designs in the field. It is acknowledged that this choice may result in a quasi-experimental methodology, using a non-randomized organisational sample. Both quantitative and mixed methods methodological approaches were considered as approaches to address the research questions of interest.

**Structure of Thesis**

This chapter introduced the argument that destructive leadership is a significant and costly issue for organisations, and that important gaps remain in our understanding of the mechanisms by which leaders derail and by which harm is caused to followers by destructive leadership behaviours. It also introduced the rationale for this thesis research, the research questions, and the core goals and approach for this thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the dark side of leadership literature predominantly through a leader-centric perspective, investigating traits that may predispose leaders to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, and mediating traits and characteristics that may enhance or mitigate that predisposition. It reviews existing measures of the dark side of leadership, and discusses organisational responses when dark side leadership traits and behaviours are identified. It concludes by discussing the challenges to researching destructive leadership.

Chapter 3 reviews the dark side of leadership literature through a follower-centric perspective. It considers the impact of destructive leadership on followers as an occupational stressor, and discusses employees’ responses and coping mechanisms to abusive leadership behaviours. It concludes by exploring interventions that may assist in maintaining follower well-being in the context of destructive leadership.

Chapters 4 to 6 present the three research studies designed to address the research questions. Figure 2 demonstrates the links between the three studies of this thesis: antecedent
personality traits may predispose a leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, which are likely to lead to emotional, psychological, and physical harm when destructive leadership behaviours are perceived by a follower as an occupational stressor. By participating in a secondary stress prevention intervention (e.g., a resiliency training session), followers may maintain their well-being by increasing their ability to cope with this stressor, reducing the potential harm caused.

Chapter 4 outlines the first study, which investigates individual antecedents of destructive leadership behaviours by assessing the personality traits of independence, negative affectivity, and self-regulation traits. A research model (Figure 4) is presented which outlines the hypothesised mediating role of the trait of negative affectivity and the self-regulation traits of emotional control, self-awareness, and stress tolerance. The results may provide guidance to practitioners on manager recruitment, selection, and development processes.

Chapter 5 analyses leader behaviours perceived by followers as harmful, investigating the consequences of destructive leadership proposed in the literature, and explores the coping strategies employed by followers to deal with the impact of destructive leadership behaviours on them. With this study the researcher seeks to build on previous coping frameworks to advance understanding on how followers cope with the effects of destructive leadership by examining the fit of coping strategies reported by respondents with two existing theoretical coping frameworks (Skinner et al., 2003; Yagil et al., 2011), and inform organisational interventions for maintaining employee engagement, performance, and well-being in the context of dealing with destructive leadership behaviours.
Figure 2. Research model for thesis: destructive leadership traits and behaviours and their effect on follower well-being.
Chapter 6 describes and evaluates a trial intervention, designed by this researcher to improve followers’ well-being, through increased resilience. This longitudinal study tests the effectiveness of a stress management intervention on enhancing well-being, specifically within the context of destructive leadership. This research was designed to address the call for evidence-based interventions, underpinned with integrated theoretical frameworks, to mitigate the stress and negative impact on well-being of destructive leadership behaviours.

Chapter 7 discusses the implications of the findings for the design and implementation of interventions to address harm caused by the dark side of leadership. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the thesis studies and relevant directions for future research.

**Thesis Scope.** Given destructive leadership is a complex and growing area of research (Schyns & Hansborough, 2010; Tepper, 2007), in order to confine the research this thesis focuses on the individual (i.e., leadership traits and style) and dyad level (i.e., impact of relationship between leader and follower) only. This thesis does not research the organisational and/or team characteristics that allow destructive leadership to flourish and psychological injury to occur (Cotton & Hart, 2003). It does not explore reasons for the compounding complication of organisational silence once destructive leadership is identified. Nor does it examine organisational interventions to address harm *after* it has been caused by destructive leadership behaviours. All of these are important and urgent topics for further research.

**Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the rationale for this research, the research questions, and the thesis aims and approach to research. The focus of much of the extant research has been on the *consequences* of destructive leadership, with fewer studies focusing on the *antecedents*, *predictors*, and *mediators* of destructive leadership behaviours, or how followers cope with these destructive behaviours, the focus of this research. This thesis focuses specifically on personality traits that may predict or mediate the use of destructive behaviours by
organisational leaders with power and status. It investigates the impact of destructive leadership behaviours on followers’ well-being, follower coping mechanisms within an organisational context, and interventions to enhance follower well-being.

To research this phenomenon, both leader-centric and follower-centric approaches are adopted and are described in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3. A review of the literature focusing predominantly on leader-centric approaches to destructive leadership is discussed in Chapter 2, and follower-centric and followership approaches are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
Chapter 2. Why Leaders Derail to the Dark Side

The previous chapter highlighted gaps in the research that this thesis attempts to address, and established the rationale for why this thesis research is important. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the dark side of leadership literature and, more specifically, to review the literature from the destructive leadership research stream. This chapter takes a leader-centric perspective, including (a) how the dark side of leadership theory has been influenced by, and has itself influenced, leadership theory; (b) the various ways destructive leadership has been conceptualised by theorists; (c) measures of dark side traits and the concept of derailment (dark side of bright side traits); (d) traits that may prevent or inhibit leader derailment to the dark side; and (e) methods for researching leaders’ dark side organisations. Two specific questions in relation to the research model outlined in Figure 2 (see p. 17) arise: (1) what are the antecedent traits and characteristics that may predispose an individual leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours? (2) What traits may inhibit the predisposition of leaders to employ harmful behaviours? Two additional topics are reviewed in this chapter in relation to researching this phenomenon: what measures of destructive leadership are available to researchers, and, once identified, can leaders with dark side traits change.

There is a growing body of evidence that some leaders behave in a destructive manner towards subordinates (Martinko et al., 2013; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2012) and towards organisations (Kellerman, 2004a; Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, & Jacobs, 2012). Few studies have investigated the prevalence of destructive leadership in contemporary workplaces based on a taxonomy of destructive behaviours (Einarsen, Skogstad, & Aasland, 2010). One study found up to 25% of their manager sample \( N = 6,774 \) was at risk of at least one dark side personality trait (De Fruyt, Wille, & Furnham, 2013). Other estimates suggest up to 70% of employees report their manager is the worst aspect of their job, and
abusive treatment by supervisors is one of the most commonly cited causes of stress and compensation claims (Aasland, Skogstad, Notelaers, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2010; Einarsen et al., 2010). Aasland et al. (2010) found up to 60% of all respondents in a sample of 4,500 Norwegian employees reported their immediate supervisor exhibited some kind of consistent and frequent destructive behaviour (active and passive) during the previous six months, while only about 40% reported no exposure to such leadership behaviours. If reported prevalence estimates are correct, it implies that many employees will experience some form of destructive leadership during their career that may cause harm to their well-being.

The dark side of leadership has been influenced by leadership theory and, in turn, has itself influenced leadership theory. The first two chapter sections in this chapter review the history of leadership theory and the dark side of leadership theory. This chapter then describes definitions, theories, and measures under the destructive leadership literature stream, as proposed by those studying leadership derailment, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership. The chapter goes on to discuss organisational responses to destructive leadership, and concludes with a discussion on the challenges of researching destructive leadership behaviours in organisations.

**Brief History of Leadership Theory**

Theoretical conceptualisations of leadership evolved throughout the 20th century (Rost & Smith, 1992; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). At the outset, the primary focus was on studying an individual leader, with traditional leadership definitions highlighting the need for a leader to inspire confidence, influence, and support people toward goal attainment (Dubrin, 2010). More recently, the field of leadership has introduced the concept of shared leadership, focusing not only on the leader, but also on followers, work setting/context, and culture (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). The idea of leadership as action taken by great men (and women) to control organisations and societies was superseded by a group theory of
leadership that concentrated on the actions leaders took to engage a group to achieve goals (Rost & Smith, 1992). During and after World War II, it was purported that certain traits were required to exercise leadership (e.g., personality variables such as dominance and self-confidence; Stogdill, 1948). The behavioural movement in the late 1950s discredited trait theory, finding little association between personal traits and leader effectiveness. Researchers instead focused on how leaders behaved when they exercised leadership (Hollander & Julian, 1969; Stogdill, 1948). Both trait and behavioural theories provided useful lenses to study destructive leadership, as demonstrated “dark side” behaviours, together with the underlying traits and motivations driving such behaviour, are areas of interest. These theoretical perspectives are discussed in the context of destructive leadership later in this chapter. However, these leader-centric theories did not take into account the dyadic relationship and interaction between leader and follower.

The next phase in the evolution of leadership theory was contingency or situational leadership theory. This theory purported effective leaders adjusted their behaviours depending on various factors, such as the skill and motivation of followers (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler’s contingency theory took into account individual differences among leaders to describe their leadership style across different situations, and provided a means to identify different types of leaders. This theory’s perspective facilitates the view that leader behaviour that is effective in one situation may be harmful or distressing to followers in another. Another theory that focused on the development of a two-way relationship between leaders and followers was the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership. Subsequent development of LMX theory suggested that the quality of these LMX relationships influence subordinates’ responsibility, decision influence, access to resources, and performance, and that organisational success is increased by positive relations between the leader and subordinate (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). It could also be argued that a good quality LMX
relationship is beneficial to the satisfaction and well-being of subordinates. Indeed attention has been drawn to the possibility that the construct of abusive supervision overlaps with the concept of low quality LMX relationships. For example, when a leader is unable to select a contextually appropriate behaviour that will elicit the desired behaviour from an employee, they are likely to be perceived by the employee as abusive, reducing trust in and satisfaction with the leader (Ferris et al., 2007; Martinko, Harvey, Sikora, & Douglas, 2011).

In the 1980s, the focus moved to understanding what leaders do to promote excellence. Leadership was defined as mobilizing resources through building common motives and purposes so as to engage, influence, and satisfy followers (Burns, 1978). Leaders were purported to do this by creating a shared mission, shared meaning, and by demonstrating integrity (Bennis, 2003; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Schabracq & Smit, 2007). Concepts of transformational or charismatic leadership and transactional leadership became popular as the models relating to effective leadership, and for enhancing employee motivation, task and contextual performance (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bono & Judge, 2004; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). Transformational leadership characteristics include building trust, inspiring others, demonstrating integrity, and treating followers as individuals. Transactional leadership focused on setting expectations and rewards, dealing proactively with difficulties, and monitoring mistakes. Transformational leadership led to a research focus on values-based leadership models, including authentic, character-based, ethical, servant, and spiritual leadership styles (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Fry, 2003; George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007; Greenleaf, 1998; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Sosik & Cameron, 2010; Steger, 2012; Tanner, Brugger, van Schie, & Lebherz, 2010).

Once attention was drawn to the need to examine the dark side of leadership (Conger, 1990; Kellerman, 2004a), interest returned to the study of individual leader personality traits
and motivations in the context of the potential dark side of personality, that is, the dark side of transformational, charismatic, and authentic leadership styles (Furnham, Trickey, & Hyde., 2012; House & Howell, 1992; Judge & LePine, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Khoo & Burch, 2008; Nyberg & Sveningsson, 2014). Interest also returned to the psycho-sociological study of the interaction between leader personality (e.g., the disposition to think, feel, and act in certain ways), and the situation in which leadership is enacted (e.g., follower and organisational context characteristics), particularly in respect to the role of such interaction in the effectiveness of leader behaviour (Padilla et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; van Knippenberg, 2012). A distinction was drawn between an individual’s intrapersonal leadership (e.g., the link between traits and selected actions) and their interpersonal processes (e.g., the link between selected actions and outcomes; Dinh & Lord, 2012). It was hypothesised that different events or situations may trigger different responses from a particular leader with variable outcomes. Of particular interest was what stimulated leaders to follow, or not follow, their dispositional tendencies; that is, what led to trait activation. *Trait activation theory* purported that trait relevant cues in a particular situation lead to trait expression and, depending on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the trait expressed, the effectiveness of the resulting behaviour was determined (Tett & Burnett, 2003; van Knippenberg, 2012). van Knippenberg (2012) applied Tett & Burnett’s (2003) interactionist model to leadership: trait expression was a function of

\[
\text{the personality trait} \times \text{situation trait relevance (trait relevant cues)} \times \text{situation strength (the extent to which the situation is clear on what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour).}
\]

This model is equally applicable to the activation of dark side personality traits when expressing destructive leadership behaviours (see Figure 3).
As interest in the dark side of leadership grew, depending on the theoretical focus, disparate streams of research resulted in inconsistencies and overlaps of definitions and conceptual models across the literature. These are discussed in the following chapter sections.

**Theoretical Review of the Dark Side of Leadership**

The continuum of dark side of leadership theory outlines a range of negative characteristics and behaviours, from overused personality traits in inappropriate situations, to the presence of the Dark Triad of personality: subclinical narcissism, Machiavellianism, and subclinical psychopathy. For example, at one end of the continuum, attention has been drawn to a proposed curvilinear relationship between leadership trait characteristics and performance/leadership effectiveness. This perspective asserts that leadership traits and behaviours that may be crucial to success in one situation may be unrelated or even negatively related to success in other contexts; the dark side of bright characteristics and the bright side of dark characteristics (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Benson & Campbell, 2007; Dinh & Lord, 2012; Furnham, et al., 2012; House & Howell, 1992; Judge et.al., 2009; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011; Kaiser, LeBreton, & Hogan, 2015; Khoo & Burch, 2008). As discussed previously, it has also been acknowledged that context often fosters destructive leadership behaviours and that susceptible followers and conducive environments can entice leaders to go astray, by fulfilling their desires (e.g., for power/control) or allowing free expression of destructive personal traits (e.g., dark triad) and learned negative behaviours in a toxic environment (Clements & Washbush, 1999; Judge et al., 2009; Kellerman, 2004a; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla, et al., 2012).
Figure 3. Trait activation model of destructive leadership. Adapted from van Knippenberg (2012).
Those driven by needs for power, prestige, and dominance often seek leadership positions that require power and control over resources, and the need to influence those at the highest authority, that is, Chief Executive Officers, boards, and governments. Indeed, some of the elements of personality disorders, such as narcissistic traits, are strikingly similar to characteristics sought in organisational leaders (i.e., aggressiveness, alertness, dominance, enthusiasm, extroversion, independence, risk taking, and self-confidence; Board & Fritzon, 2005; Brown, 1964; Judge et al., 2009). To better understand the individual traits, characteristics, and motivations that contribute to leaders exhibiting destructive leadership, it is useful to turn to psychological and psycho-sociological theoretical perspectives.

**Individual leader traits.** Psychology focuses on personality traits, characteristics, preferences, motivations, and behaviours to explain features of the dark side of leadership. Over the past decade, research has returned to the role of traits in both the bright and dark side of leadership (Judge et al., 2009). The bright side of leadership has been defined as the ability to build and maintain a high performing team, using personality characteristics based on the Big Five: higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, and lower levels of neuroticism, with an absence of dark side traits (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). When compared with the Big Five, dark side traits tend to be correlated with lower levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Judge & LePine, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). For some leadership characteristics, more is not necessarily better; so too with dark side tendencies (Hogan, Raskin, & Fazzini, 1990). Having a moderate level of dark side tendencies can be beneficial to leadership success. In fact they may be viewed as situational strengths (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Furnham et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009). It is only when trait characteristics become extreme or certain behaviours are overused that they create problems (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Judge et al., 2009; Najur, Holland, &
Van Landuyt, 2004). Examples discussed in the literature include the dark side of charisma (House & Howell, 1992; Pundt, 2014), the dark side of transformational leadership (Khoo & Burch, 2008), and the dark side of authentic leadership (Nyberg & Sveningsson, 2014).

At the extreme end of destructive leadership, a dark triad of personality traits has been proposed by theorists: Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, and subclinical psychopathy (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Boddy, 2015; Clarke, 2005; O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012; Padilla et al., 2007; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Leaders with these characteristics are driven by an insatiable need for power to achieve their own ends. Some argue that individuals displaying these traits are unable to be managed and should be exited from the organisation as soon as possible (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005), although these recommendations are based on case studies and anecdotal evidence, rather than empirical research, and so should be read with a certain amount of caution (Boddy, 2015). Others argue that, due to research and methodological limitations, not enough is known about psychopaths in the workplace and making definitive statements regarding their traits, negative attributes and the adverse consequences of their behaviour are premature (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013). A more detailed analysis of the characteristics of this type of destructive leader is discussed later in this chapter.

**Followers and Destructive Leaders.** Leader-centric theories of leadership were challenged by follower-centric and followship theories (May et al., 2014; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This section reviews how these two approaches examine the role of followers in the phenomenon of destructive leadership. Follower-based approaches adopted the follower as the primary focus by exploring how follower perceptions and behaviours are related to organisational outcomes of interest, such as perceived leadership effectiveness (Carsten et al., 2010; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). One follower-centric approach to leadership, implicit leadership theory, contended that leadership exists only in the mind of the beholder, usually
the follower, based on individual conceptions of prototypic leaders and confirmation of expectations formed from global impressions of leadership effectiveness (Hollander & Julian, 1969; Junker & van Dick, 2014; Phillips & Lord, 1981). Thus, depending on the prototypic representation of a leader held by an individual they may (or may not) perceive a particular behaviour of a leader to be destructive (Martinko et al., 2013).

In contrast, a followership approach examines followers’ perspectives of followship, rather than followers’ perspectives of leadership (Carsten et al., 2010). A followership approach explores socially constructed definitions of followship and can be considered a useful lens to better understand why destructive leaders retain a following. Followers’ need for safety, security, group membership, and predictability in an uncertain world may make them susceptible to destructive leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012). Follower silence, compliance, obedience and/or collusion allows destructive leaders to thrive (see Figure 4). A recent component of the leader/follower interaction research into destructive leadership is exploration of the extent to which follower coping responses may encourage or inhibit further abuse (May et al., 2014).

Definitions of Destructive Leadership

As previously discussed, one challenge in researching the dark side of leadership is the overlap between definitions, conceptualisations and models of destructive leadership. Although a number of conceptual dark side leadership theoretical frameworks have been proposed by researchers, there is limited empirical research to demonstrate their validity (Einarsen et al., 2007; Krasikova et al., 2013; Padilla et al., 2007; Tepper, 2000). In Appendix A, Table 1 sets out the range of definitions, destructive leadership behaviours, and categories of destructive leaders emerging in the literature.
Constructive Leadership
Bright Side of Leadership
(Values based leadership)

- Authentic Leadership
- Charismatic Leadership
- Ethical Leadership
- Responsible Leadership
- Servant Leadership
- Spiritual Leadership
- Transformational Leadership

Derailed Leadership
Dark Side of Leadership
(Strengths in Extreme)

- Strengths overused, e.g.,:
  - Extreme self-confidence becomes arrogance
  - Extreme assertiveness becomes intimidation
  - Extreme competitiveness becomes manipulation
  - Extreme affiliation becomes passive-aggressiveness
  - Extreme need for control becomes micromanaging

Negative traits not addressed, e.g.,:
- Low emotional control leads to extreme moods, unpredictability and volatility

Destructive Leadership
Dark Side of Leadership
(Harm to individuals and organizations)

- Abusive Supervision
- Aversive Leadership
- Dark Side Charismatic
- Dark Side Transformational
- Dark Side Authentic
- Laissez-faire Leadership
- Machiavellian Leadership
- Narcissistic Leadership
- Organisational Psychopaths/Sociopaths (subclinical)
- Toxic Leadership
- Tyrannical Leadership
- Unethical Leadership

Leader self-regulation

Negative affectivity and poor leader self-regulation

Follower courage, influence and voice

Follower fear, blind obedience, silence, and compliance

Figure 4. Conceptual model of the interaction of leadership style, leader self-regulation, and followership.
The dark side of leadership literature can best be described under three research themes: leader derailment, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership. This chapter section reviews the definitions, models, and behavioural inventories within these three research themes. For the purposes of this thesis, when discussing the dark side of leadership from a leader-centric perspective the term “destructive leadership” is used. This term includes all forms of leadership that cause harm to followers, e.g., leader derailment, abusive supervision, and toxic leadership. Therefore, when analysing the dark side of leadership from a follower-centric perspective the terms “destructive leadership,” “toxic leadership,” and “abusive supervision” are used interchangeably, depending on the focus of the research discussed, to represent the perceived harm caused to followers subjected to destructive leadership.

**Leader derailers or situational strengths?** Leadership derailment has been defined as either career derailment (McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Najur et al., 2004) or as an overuse of strengths (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2009). It has been estimated that up to 70% of all leaders will derail through alienating others and losing the loyalty and commitment of followers (Trickey & Hyde, 2009). Leader career derailment has been described as a combination of an inability to develop or adapt (e.g., inability to learn from mistakes or from direct feedback) and a lack of important characteristics or abilities to succeed (e.g., low levels of personality traits such as agreeableness, inability to build effective working relations; Benson & Campbell, 2007; Judge & LePine, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Leslie & Velsor, 1996; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Najar, et al., 2004).

Common causes of derailment identified in the literature include: adopting an insensitive, abrasive, or bullying style; adopting an autocratic, controlling style; displaying aloofness, arrogance, or self-centered ambition; being emotionally volatile; failing to listen to a contrary point of view or heed conflicting information; and failing to constructively face an obvious problem (Conger, 1990; McCall & Lombardo, 1983; Najur et al., 2004).
“strengths in extreme” explanation for leader derailment proposes that there is an optimal level of personality traits: an *excessive* level of bright side traits is associated with derailing leadership behaviours, and having a *moderate* level of dark side tendencies can be beneficial to leadership success (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Furnham et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2009; Najur et al., 2004; Schmit et al., 2000). This trait approach explains negative leadership behaviours principally in terms of the occurrence of extreme bright side or dark side personality traits predisposing the leader to exhibit inappropriate or harmful behaviours, which in turn lead to leader derailment: “the tendency to use quasi-leadership tactics or to engage in various behaviours that may prove successful in changing others’ behaviour in the short-term, but ultimately cause the leader to fail or lose support of those around him or her.” (Previsor, 2000, p.4). Therefore, destructive leadership theorists proposed that behaviour towards subordinates and the organisation that departs from constructive leadership behaviour ultimately causes the leader to fail (Einarsen et al., 2007; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011).

Hogan and Hogan (2001) proposed a taxonomy of personality factors that could potentially derail a leader and measured these using the Hogan Development Survey (HDS) within a sample of 10,035 working adults. Table 2 sets out examples provided by Hogan and Hogan, using HDS scales, showing how high scores in a particular attribute may lead to an overuse of bright side characteristics, resulting in a loss of the benefit of that attribute. This can cause a leader to subsequently derail and become ineffective or destructive.

Benson and Campbell (2007) conducted two independent studies (*N* = 1,306 and *N* = 290 respectively) investigating the relationship between personality and leadership performance using Hogan’s HDS and the Global Personality Inventory (GPI).
Table 2

*Degrees of Dark Side Traits using the HDS (Hogan & Hogan, 2001)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HDS scale</th>
<th>Moderate scores</th>
<th>High scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excitable</td>
<td>Consistently generate enthusiasm</td>
<td>Waiver between enthusiasm and intimidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeptical</td>
<td>Vigilant to organisational politics and changes</td>
<td>Think people are after their job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>Take time when making decisions</td>
<td>Take time making even minor decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved</td>
<td>Can make tough calls</td>
<td>Create a ‘cold’ culture and are painfully objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisurly (passive aggressive)</td>
<td>May be ‘diplomatically’ untruthful at times</td>
<td>Frequently say one thing but do another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>Have firm beliefs</td>
<td>Believe that their way is the only way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischievous</td>
<td>Test limits but follow rules when necessary</td>
<td>Enjoy breaking rules and taking risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginative</td>
<td>Have lots of good ideas</td>
<td>Have lots of good ideas that are never implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colourful</td>
<td>Use charisma to charm others</td>
<td>Dominate meetings and consistently melodramatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diligent</td>
<td>Can focus on details</td>
<td>Cannot see the big picture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They found support for the hypothesis that a curvilinear relationship exists between dark side personality traits and leadership performance (e.g., a moderate level of dark side characteristics is related to effective leadership performance). The difference between leaders who leverage situational strengths and those who derail may lie in the variability to control impulsivity.

Leaders able to regulate behaviour between impulse and action are able to utilise their characteristics in situations that are appropriate (Bandura, 1991; Furnham et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009; Karoly, 1993; Kupers & Weibler, 2005; Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

Building on this concept of overused strengths, Spreier, Fontaine, and Malloy (2006) proposed a leadership model that proposed overachievement as contributing to leader derailment. Spreier et al. proposed that leadership styles result from the interaction of the need for individual achievement, affiliation, personalised power (where the leader draws strength from controlling others and making them feel weak), and socialised power (where the leader’s strength comes from empowering people). Specifically, Spreier et al. proposed that an extremely strong drive to achieve, to improve personal performance, and to exceed standards of excellence may cause leaders to micromanage, to pace themselves and others, and focus on goals and outcomes rather than people. A strong need for affiliation may motivate leaders to maintain close, friendly relationships, but in the extreme could lead to passive aggressive behaviours, such as avoiding confrontation or avoiding giving negative feedback. Spreier et al. also hypothesised how these needs interact with a leader’s preference for personalised power. Leaders can derail when their excessive need for individual
achievement is combined with a need for personal heroics, leading to an overreliance on a specific leadership style (i.e., a directive or pacesetting style of leadership). This perspective purports that the more the leader is motivated by personalised power, the more harm they are likely to cause (McClelland, 1970, 1975; Spreier et al., 2006).

Dysfunctional traits and behaviours tend to be demonstrated under stress, when success is seen as crucial, when there are time and workload pressures, or when a leader’s personal and psychological resources are depleted (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Byrne et al., 2014; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Najar et al., 2004). For example, while a self-confident leader can inspire and empower subordinates, an inflated sense of self-confidence may be perceived as arrogance or hubris, and an exaggerated sense of self-worth makes these leaders defensive against most forms of critical feedback. Similarly, a leader’s ability to be assertive and take charge is effective when dealing with a crisis, but extreme levels of control can also be perceived as intimidating and micro-managing. An extreme preference to build relationships and offer support can lead to avoidance of conflict and passive-aggressive behaviours (Ames & Flynn, 2007; Benson & Campbell, 2007; Campbell, Hoffman, Campbell, & Marchisio, 2011; Furnham et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009). Although leaders may be well intentioned and generally focused on achieving individual, team, or organisational objectives, if they have an extreme preference to use these derailing behaviours to achieve their goals, it will hinder their effectiveness through loss of support of followers and peers over time (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Judge et al., 2009; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2009). There is some evidence that managers performing poorly can change derailing behaviours, but they need more intensive training and coaching than that found in traditional leadership development programs (Hogan et al., 1994; Sandler, 2012). However, moderate levels of both bright side and dark side characteristics, if used in an appropriate context, can enhance a leader’s effectiveness. Indeed, as discussed above, in moderation these preferences may be viewed as situational
strengths, especially for leaders with cognitive intelligence, high levels of emotional intelligence, and political skill (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Burke, 2006; Furnham et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2009; McCartney & Campbell, 2006).

This idea that leaders need a balance between their dark side and bright side traits creates a paradox for the concept of authentic leadership: the need to regulate and restrain a leader’s natural inclinations, such as taking centre stage or being too determined and honest, may go against the nature of that leader’s “true self” (Nyberg & Sveningsson, 2014). Effective leaders must, therefore, reconcile the need to be true to themselves with the need to be aware of how their behaviour will be perceived by their followers. In turn, how their behaviour is perceived by followers is theorised to be based on the followers’ implicit prototype of a good/bad leader within the context of social norms (Hollander, 1992; Martinko et al., 2013; Phillips & Lord, 1981). One definition of destructive leadership that is based on follower perceptions is abusive supervision.

**Abusive supervision.** Research on abusive supervision focused on sustained displays of a supervisor’s hostility (non-physical), as determined by subordinates’ assessments, based on their observations of a supervisor’s behaviour. Abusive supervision includes behaviours such as yelling, ridicule, rudeness, breaking promises, invading privacy, lying, and using silent treatment (Tepper, 2000). Supervisors perpetrate abusive behaviour for a purpose, for example, to increase performance or reduce mistakes. However, it is not necessary for the supervisor to intend to cause harm for their behaviour to be included in this category.

While a large volume of research into the dark side of leadership has been conducted under the term “abusive supervision,” this research has been criticised as being fragmented and poorly integrated, due to the use of different terminology and measures (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). Little of the abusive supervision literature has focused on supervisor traits and characteristics. Tepper (2007) hypothesised that supervisors low in agreeableness
(more argumentative, hostile, and conflictive) and high in neuroticism (experiencing greater anger, frustration, and impulsiveness) are likely to be abusive. However, in the abusive supervision literature to date there is little research specifically on the personality traits of supervisors that subordinates perceive as abusive, with the exception of supervisors with psychopathic traits, who are purported to be particularly abusive (Boddy, 2011a). Studies of antecedents of abusive supervision found supervisors who are inclined to abuse subordinates will target their hostility on those who appear to be weak, vulnerable, and unwilling or unable to defend themselves (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007; Tepper et al., 2006). Supervisors who had themselves experienced unfavourable interpersonal treatment, and who embraced dominance and control as legitimate forms of leadership, were also more abusive towards subordinates (Aryee, Chen, Sun, & Debrah, 2007). Abusive supervision was later included by Einarsen et al. (2007) as one type of destructive leadership.

Destructive leadership. Destructive leadership is demonstrated by a pattern of behaviour by a leader that sabotages or undermines the achievement of subordinates and/or organisations, focusing purely on self-interest. In an attempt to integrate the dark side of leadership literature, Einarsen et al. (2007) developed a model, shown in Figure 5, to describe the difference between constructive and destructive leadership, based on whether the leader behaviour benefited individuals and the organisation or caused them harm. The model focussed on the outcomes of systematic, repeated leadership behaviours, rather than a leader’s intent. Their model had two basic dimensions: subordinate-oriented and organisation-oriented behaviours. Anti-subordinate behaviours, such as harassment and mistreatment, violate the organisation’s interests by sabotaging the motivation and well-being of subordinates. By contrast, pro-subordinate behaviours foster subordinate motivation and well-being. The second dimension included anti-organisation behaviours, such as stealing from the organisation, and pro-organisation behaviours, such as working towards the
attainment of organisation goals. Of specific interest to this thesis are the two dimensions concerned with anti-subordinate behaviour: Derailed Leadership dimension (anti-subordinate and anti-organisation), such as manipulating subordinates while simultaneously defrauding the organisation; and the Tyrannical Leadership dimension (anti-subordinate and pro-organisation), such as humiliating or belittling a subordinate to get a task completed. This model incorporated leadership derailment and abusive supervision theory into a more unified theory. However, it failed to take into account the mutual influence of leaders and followers, and the role of environment in allowing destructive leadership to occur, such as anti-subordinate and anti-organisation behaviour.

Figure 5. Conceptual model of destructive and constructive leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007).

As discussed in Chapter 1, Padilla et al. (2007) went further than previous leader-centric models by emphasising that destructive leaders do not act in isolation; they are influenced by followers and their environment. With this broader focus, Padilla et al. identified five elements of destructive leadership (Table 3). Similar to Einarsen et al. (2007),
they highlighted the characteristics of destructive leaders, their focus on self-interest (personalised power), and that destructive leaders cause harm to individuals and to organisations. While both Einarsen and Padilla et al.’s conceptualisations of destructive leadership have been extensively referenced and researched, an integrated theory of destructive leadership was yet to be developed (e.g., a unified theoretical framework with a definition that clarified the boundaries of the construct and distinguished it from related phenomenon).

Table 3

*Five features of destructive leadership (Padilla et al., 2007)*

1. Destructive leadership is seldom absolutely or entirely destructive: there are both good and bad results in most leadership situations.

2. The process of destructive leadership involves dominance, coercion, and manipulation rather than influence, persuasion, and commitment.

3. The process of destructive leadership has a selfish orientation; it is focused more on the leader’s needs than the needs of the larger social group.

4. The effects of destructive leadership are outcomes that compromise the quality of life for constituents and detract from the organisation’s main purposes.

5. Destructive organisational outcomes are not exclusively the result of destructive leaders, but are also products of susceptible followers and conducive environments.

Drawing on existing conceptual models of destructive leadership, including those by Einarsen et al. (2007), Tepper (2000), Lipman-Blumen (2005), and Padilla et al. (2007), Krasikova et al. (2013) proposed a framework to facilitate further development of a unified
theoretical model of destructive leadership. They argued that destructive leadership was a harmful behaviour imbedded in the process of leading, defining destructive leadership as:

Volitional behaviour by a leader that can harm or intends to harm a leader’s organisation and/or followers by (a) encouraging followers to pursue goals that contravene the legitimate interests of the organisation, and/or (b) employing a leadership style that involves the use of harmful methods of influence with followers, regardless of justifications for such behaviour. (p. 1310).

By defining destructive leadership as volitional behaviour, Krasikova et al. differentiated destructive leadership from ineffective or incompetent leadership. Their definition agrees with Kellerman (2004a), that intent may be present but is not required for a leader’s behaviour to be destructive. Similar to Einarsen et al. and Padilla et al., they proposed personal and environmental factors contributed to the enactment of destructive leadership towards followers and the organisation (e.g., predisposing personality traits, frustration of achievement need through goal blockage, high leader discretion), and negative or positive reinforcement mechanisms for deviant behaviour (e.g., the extent to which the organisation fails to discover or respond with countervailing actions). However, their definition does not include the interaction or mutual influence of followers on leaders in enabling destructive leadership.

In their meta-analysis, Schyns and Schilling (2013) attempted to address the problem of different conceptualisations of destructive leadership by providing an alternative definition that also excluded ineffective or incompetent leadership:

A process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive (p. 141).
Drawing on the work of Thoroughgood et al. (2012), they argued the need to differentiate between *destructive leadership*, when leader behaviours are focused towards followers, and the term *destructive leader behaviour*, which includes all forms of negative and harmful behaviour by a leader, which may not be related to their leadership function. Thoroughgood et al. defined *destructive leader behaviour* as voluntary acts (verbal or physical, active or passive) committed by a leader that most people would perceive as harmful towards followers and/or the organisation.

This researcher is concerned with leader behaviours that are specifically focussed towards subordinate followers, and so will adopt the term “destructive leadership,” “destructive leadership behaviours,” or “toxic leadership behaviours” in recognition of the differentiation made by Schyns and Schilling discussed above. Based on the range of destructive leadership definitions in the literature and outlined in Table 1, for the purposes of this thesis *destructive leadership* is defined by this researcher as:

Systematic, volitional behaviour by a leader over a period of time (verbal and non-verbal, active or passive), that can inflict or intends to inflict serious and enduring harm on subordinates by the use of methods of influence that are perceived as hostile or obstructive by subordinates, and that result in the undermining of the effectiveness, motivation, and/or well-being of their subordinates, regardless of justifications for such behaviour.

A number of dark side leadership researchers have now included their research under the stream of *destructive leadership*, including: toxic leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Pelletier, 2010); narcissistic leadership, Machiavellian leadership, and psychopathic leadership (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Boddy, 2015; Campbell et al., 2011; Clarke, 2005; Maccoby, 2004, 2007). These specific types of destructive leadership are discussed in the following sections.
**Toxic leadership.** Toxic leadership is said to be determined by evaluating the consequences of a leader’s behaviour, based on followers’ perceptions and attributions (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007). Lipman-Blumen (2005) considered leaders toxic when they inflicted serious and enduring harm on their constituents by using influence tactics that are extremely hard and/or malicious. That is, the leader is considered toxic when their actions result in long lasting physical, emotional, or psychological harm to the follower.

Again acknowledging situational influences, Lipman-Blumen noted that a leader may be toxic in some situations, but effective in others. In Einarsen et al.’s (2007) model, toxic leadership falls into the tyrannical leadership category, when leaders may harm subordinates in order to achieve results, but be well regarded by the organisation. Based on Lipman-Blumen’s definition of toxic leadership, Pelletier (2010) conducted an exploratory study with 200 US employees to identify a typology of toxic leader behavioural characteristics. These were categorised under eight behavioural dimensions: (a) attacking followers’ self-esteem (e.g., ridiculing and mocking); (b) divisiveness (e.g., pitting one employee against another); (c) social exclusion (e.g., excluding individuals from social functions); (d) promoting inequity (e.g., exhibiting favouritism); (e) abusiveness (e.g., tantrums, yelling); (f) threatening followers’ security (e.g., using physical acts of aggression); (g) lack of integrity (e.g., being deceptive); and (h) laissez-faire leadership style (e.g., failing to respond when employees voiced concerns). These behavioural dimensions have been validated by other research studies in the destructive leadership and abusive supervision streams (e.g.; Martinko et al., 2013; Skogstad et al., 2007; Tepper, 2007).

**The dark triad: narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy.** One of the most serious categories of destructive leadership is the “dark triad”: narcissism, Machiavellianism, and subclinical psychopathy (Boddy, 2015; Furnham, Richards & Paulhus, 2013; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). In Einarsen et al.’s (2007) model these types of destructive leadership fall
into the category of derailed leadership, as they may display anti-subordinate behaviours, such as bullying, humiliation, manipulation, deception or harassment, while simultaneously performing anti-organisational behaviours, such as fraud and corruption.

Individuals with these dark triad traits may be promoted into leadership roles due to their ability to present a positive impression. They may even lie about their qualifications and achievements to enhance their attractiveness as a candidate (Boddy et al., 2015). They are also likely to be promoted if they have the capability to suppress the damaging behaviours associated with these syndromes. Once in positions of authority they may be considered successful if these traits are consistent with the demands of their management/executive role, as long as they are able to control their impulsivity and anti-social tendencies (O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012). However, some support has been found for the role of authority in decreasing performance and increasing counterproductive work behaviour in those with dark triad traits (O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012). Theorists maintained that these types of leaders are difficult to manage and are not amenable to changing their behaviour, as their primary motivations are personal power and self-interest (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Boddy, 2015; Clarke, 2005; House & Howell, 1992).

The literature on narcissism examines the bright side of leadership and authority (charisma and vision), the maladaptive aspects of narcissism (grandiose exhibitionism), and the dark side of this characteristic (exploitativeness and entitlement; Ackerman et al., 2011; Campbell et al., 2011; Grijalva & Newman, 2015; House & Howell, 1992; McFarlin & Sweeney, 2010; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006). Rosenthal and Pittinsky (2006), after reviewing and critiquing the existing literature, provided the following definition: “Narcissistic leadership occurs when leaders’ actions are principally motivated by their own egomaniacal needs and beliefs, superseding the needs and interests of the constituents and institutions they lead.” (p. 629). Narcissistic individuals typically have an inflated view of
themselves and their abilities, feel entitled to excessive rewards and recognition, and seek out roles that provide them with power and influence. Extreme levels of narcissistic self-importance and arrogance can lead to demonstrations of intense desire to compete, high levels of distrust (constantly on the lookout for enemies), sensitivity to criticism that threatens self-image, lack of empathy, and a high level of risk taking, without listening to words of caution or advice from others. Narcissistic leaders can be abrasive and aggressive with anyone who seeks to resist or oppose them. While they seek the admiration and adulation of others, they are at risk of isolating themselves at the very moment of their success, because narcissistic relationships contain low levels of empathy and emotional intimacy. Narcissistic leaders typically have numerous shallow relationships that can range from exciting and engaging to manipulative and exploitative (Campbell et al., 2011; Maccoby, 2004, 2007; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006).

Machiavellian leaders have a propensity to distrust others, engage in amoral manipulation, seek to control others, and seek status for themselves (e.g., personalised power). The concept of Machiavellianism emerged from Richard Christie’s selection of statements from Nicolo Machiavelli’s original books, a political advisor to the Medici family in the 1500s (Christie & Geis, 1970). Research indicates while Machiavellian leaders may be charismatic, they are often unsupportive and inconsiderate of followers. They will engage in political influencing tactics such as strategic self-disclosure, ingratiating, and intimidation (Dahling, Whitaker, & Levy, 2009). Machiavellian leaders tend to be self-promoters, who behave in a cold, manipulative fashion for their own purposes (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). The conceptual distinction between Machiavellian leaders and organisational psychopaths has been debated (Boddy, 2015; Furnham et al., 2013). It has been argued that the common features (e.g., love of money, power and prestige, and a willingness to behave unethically)
suggest that there is significant empirical overlap, and theoretically they may even be the same construct (McHoskey, Worzel & Szyarto, 1998).

The concept of *organisational psychopaths* in the workplace (also referred to in the literature as corporate psychopaths or organisational sociopaths) has been made popular by Babiak and Hare (2007), in their book Snakes in Suits, and by Clarke (2005) in his book Working with Monsters. These authors provided definitions, examples, and case studies where the most negative aspects of the narcissistic and Machiavellian attributes have been demonstrated by organisational leaders. It has been estimated approximately 3-4% of individuals in higher level positions in organisations exhibit subclinical psychopathy traits (Babiak, Neumann, & Hare, 2010; Boddy, 2015). While there are competing conceptualizations of workplace psychopathy, recently it has been conceptualised to consist of affective and interpersonal traits of psychopathy (e.g., guiltlessness, lack of empathy, grandiosity, egocentricity, and superficial charm), impulsivity, irresponsibility, and a lack of behavioural controls (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013).

Characteristics outlined for subclinical psychopathic types of leaders included (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Boddy, Miles, Sanyal, & Hartog, 2015):

- Manipulative organisational behaviour
- Unethical behaviour
- Intolerant/easily bored
- Unpredictable behaviours/shallow emotions
- Parasitic behaviour
- Failure to take responsibility for behaviour
- Intimidating/bullying, creating a culture of fear
- Seek increased personal power and control
- Claim credit for work they have not done
- Blame others for things that go wrong
- Create conflict between organisation members
- Deceitful and devious
- Charming/superficial

When Paulhus and Williams (2002) examined the characteristics of the dark triad of personality, narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, they found the dark triad revealed one commonality in the Big Five personality traits: a low level of agreeableness. However, only psychopaths reported minimal anxiety, making them the most treacherous of the dark triad, even within the normal range of personality found in their sample. Board and Fritzon (2005) found traits associated with the emotional components of the psychopathic personality disorder, including manipulative, narcissistic, and compulsive characteristics, in a sample of 39 UK senior managers. Researchers suggest leaders displaying psychopathic characteristics lead to a disengaged, disheartened and disillusioned workforce; employees with higher levels of fear, distress, despair, insecurity, frustration, anger, and lower levels of well-being (Boddy, 2015). Employees who are perceived by an organisational psychopath as a threat to the progression of the leader’s career are likely to be targeted, threatened, undermined, and eventually removed from the organisation (Boddy et al., 2015).

Despite the widely held view that psychopathy is invariably maladaptive, some researchers have argued that mild expressions of some of its characteristics can be adaptive in certain settings, such as entrepreneurial activities and in negotiating business dealings. For example, it has been suggested that psychopathic traits such as fearlessness, grandiosity, and charm may predispose an individual to maladaptive and/or adaptive behaviours, depending on situational moderating variables (Smith & Lilienfeld, 2013). However, due to the negative behaviours of these leaders, their lack of insight, and the fear they instill in those around
them, this is an extremely difficult area to research. Some theorists recommend the only way to manage this type of leader is to remove them from the organisation “like cutting out a cancer” (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005).

**Measures of Dark Side Leadership Traits and Behaviours**

One of the commonly recommended strategies organisations can use to protect themselves is to screen out destructive leaders during selection, promotion, and/or succession management. Assessing candidates via multiple measures may guard against a poor selection. As destructive leaders are likely to be charming and self-enhancing at interviews, a combination of interviews, self-report inventories (with guards against faking), simulations, and/or 360 degree feedback mechanisms are likely to be more effective in identifying potentially harmful characteristics (Furnham, 2007; Judge & LePine, 2007; McFarlin & Sweeney, 2010; Schmit et al., 2000; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012; Trickey & Hyde, 2009). However, caution has been advised when screening for maladaptive personality traits using personality assessment for selection or development in a workplace environment (Christiansen, Quirk, Robie, & Oswald, 2014; Guenole, 2014).

Assessment using clinical personality assessments for purposes other than that for which they were designed is not recommended as it is likely to lead to ethical and legal implications. While conducting selection screening using personality profiling is well accepted practice in Australia, caution is called for in its application. For example, if the assessment result implies psychological disability (e.g., personality disorder), it may be deemed a medical examination by the courts in some countries and in such a case it is only considered acceptable to conduct such profiling after a conditional job offer (not as part of the screening process). Privacy considerations for applicants must also be taken into account, particularly if a poor personality profile results, due to the possibility that such personality profiles have the potential to offend recipients (Christiansen et al., 2014). While profiles
based on DSM-IV personality disorders may be appropriate as research tools for investigating destructive leadership in experimental settings, when using assessment to predict specific dysfunctional work behaviours, it may be safer for practitioners to refrain from using scales or composites named after an existing clinical diagnosis, such as those outlined in the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Researchers and practitioners may be better advised to select inventories with item content that refers directly to behaviour at work (Christiansen et al., 2014). There are a limited number of inventories designed to specifically measure dark side traits and behaviours in the workplace, and a significant proportion of them are based on the DSM-IV.

**Self-report leadership profiles.** A review of the literature identified five self-report measures of the characteristics of the dark side of leadership (leadership derailers and destructive leadership), designed to be used within a normal population:

- The Global Personality Inventory (GPI; Schmit et al., 2000) is a measure of leadership style preferences and personality characteristics, and includes a composite scale termed “leadership debilitators.” This composite scale measures five characteristics that may predispose leaders to achieve objectives in the short term, but over time may cause them to lose the support of others: ego-centred, intimidating, manipulative, micromanaging, and passive-aggressive. This inventory was developed using a multi-cultural sample of the normal population and is not linked to characteristics of clinical personality disorders (this inventory was employed as a measure in Study 1).

- The Hogan Development Survey (HDS; Hogan & Hogan, 2001) measures the dark side of leadership, based on characteristics of clinical personality disorders outlined in the DSM-IV: excitable, skeptical, cautious, reserved, leisurely, bold, mischievous, colourful, imaginative, diligent, and dutiful.
• Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership – Inventory of Traits (McIntosh & Rima, 2007) is a self-report inventory to assist individuals to identify whether they exhibit any compulsive, narcissistic, paranoid, codependent, or passive-aggressive traits.

• The Dark Triad Dirty Dozen consists of a 12-item measure of the triad of narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy (Jonason & Webster, 2010).

• Finally, Hay Group have recently developed the Talent Q Dimensions personality profile which includes leadership derailers, also based on characteristics of clinical personality disorders outlined in the DSM-IV: hyper-sensitivity, eccentricity, exhibitionism, over-dependence, isolation, iconoclasm, over-confidence, and micro-management (TalentQ, 2013).

By comparison, most measures of psychopathy have been developed and tested in clinical populations (e.g., Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory [MMPQ], Psychopathic Deviate [Pd] scale; the California Psychological Inventory [CPI], Socialization [So] scale; Self-Report Psychopathy Scale – Revised [SRP-R]). These clinical measures have often been developed on delinquent populations and appear to assess antisocial and criminal behaviours, rather than the core personality features of psychopathy (Lilienfield & Andrews, 1996). These tools have limited utility for the study of organisational psychopaths, given that it can be assumed most managers and executives can function successfully, and would not have achieved their positions and status if they had demonstrated antisocial behaviours, specifically towards their managers and peers. The Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI) assesses major personality traits of psychopathy and has been tested in a noncriminal population, although the undergraduate samples used raises the question of generalisability to management populations (Lilienfield & Andrews, 1996). The eight PPI subscales include Machiavellian egocentricity, social potency, cold-heartedness, carefree non-planfulness, fearlessness, blame externalisations, impulsive nonconformity, and stress immunity.
This thesis focuses on the prevalence of destructive leadership traits within a normal organisational population. Yet most dark side inventories continue to link their scales to the DSM-IV criteria for personality disorders. This presents a potential risk: utilising clinically-based measures to identify destructive leaders, even when designed for normal populations, may allow the perpetrators to claim a lack of responsibility for their behaviours, explaining their behaviour away as characteristics of an innate personality disorder (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005). In addition, as discussed above, if aspects of a personality disorder are implied by an assessment carried out as part of a recruitment and selection process, the assessment may be deemed a medical examination by the courts, preventing it being used as part of the applicant screening process prior to selection (Christiansen et al., 2014). Therefore, the use of a valid assessment, which is developed using a normal population and is not based on DSM-IV/DSM-V criteria, may be a more appropriate measure.

**Third-party inventories.** There are a number of third-party inventories designed for individuals to rate their observation of harmful behaviours by their manager. Tepper developed 15 abusive supervision items to be used to survey followers’ observations of their supervisor’s behaviour (Tepper, 2000). Babiak and Hare (2007), Clarke (2005), and Lubit (2004) provided a set of criteria to screen candidates or identify existing destructive leaders in organisations. Crowley and Elster (2009) provided a checklist of 20 behaviours for followers’ reference to detect managerial behaviours that are likely to frustrate them.

Table 4 compares four leader self-report inventories (e.g., GPI, HDS, McIntosh & Rima, and Dimensions) with two third-party typologies designed to be completed by followers/victims, checking the dark side traits they purport to identify or measure, and showing the disparity between measures, in part due to the origins of the inventories.
Table 4

Comparison of measurement tools to identify dark side characteristics (self-report and third-party inventories)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Report</th>
<th>Third-Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schmit et al. (GPI)</td>
<td>Hogan (HDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subclinical Psychopathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Centred; Narcissistic</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidating</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiavellian; Manipulative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsive; Micro-managing</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive-Aggressive</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unethical</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Taking</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement Seeking</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Control</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paranoid</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codependent; Dependent</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizoid</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hogan, McIntosh and Rima, Talent Q, Babiak and Hare/Clarke, and Jonason and Webster inventories have all been based on DSM-IV personality disorder criteria. While third-party diagnostic inventories may be of assistance to followers in determining whether
they work for a toxic manager, for leader development multi-source feedback measures are more commonly employed.

**360 degree feedback.** A 360 degree feedback mechanism that includes self-report, manager, peer, and direct report observations could be an effective way to capture the combination or pattern of effects of destructive leadership by assessing the disparity between self and raters’ responses (Furnham, 2007; Gentry et al., 2007). Using a self-report measure alone to diagnose dark side characteristics of leadership has been criticised, due to the likelihood of target participants manipulating the tool, or providing self-inflated ratings (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Gentry, Hannum, Ekelund, & de Jong, 2007). However, conducting 360 degree feedback assessments on destructive managers who exhibit arrogant, intimidating, and manipulative behaviour may result in raters choosing not to participate, or choosing not to be truthful in their feedback, for fear of reprisals.

There are only three 360 degree tools that purport to measure dark side constructs: (a) Benchmarks® (Centre for Creative Leadership); (b) the Leadership Versatility Index® (LVI; Kaiser et al., 2015; Kaplan & Kaiser, 2008); and (c) CLS360 (Redeker, de Vries, Rouckhout, Vermeren & de Fruyt, 2014). Currently there is no 360 degree feedback tool with comprehensive items that have been designed to cover the range of dark side leadership behaviours and characteristics discussed in the literature: derailed leadership, abusive supervision, and destructive leadership. Therefore, a 360 degree measure was not utilised in this thesis research.

Measuring leadership traits and behaviours to identify potentially derailing characteristics can be useful for selection purposes, and for raising leaders’ awareness of potential derailers, but may have limited utility in assisting leaders to change their behaviour. We turn now to a review of the theoretical mechanisms by which leaders may avoid derailing.
Theoretical Mechanisms for Preventing Leader Derailment

Given the reported prevalence of destructive leadership and its negative impact on followers, it is important for researchers and practitioners to understand whether ‘dark side’ leaders can inhibit or change their destructive behaviour.

The role of leader self-regulation. Impaired leader self-regulation has been associated with enacting destructive leadership behaviours (Kaiser et al., 2015; Krasikova et al., 2013). The literature consistently identifies impulsivity as one of the key characteristics of destructive leader behaviour, often accompanied by an inability to control the high need for power, achievement, money, and/or success (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Jones & Paulhus, 2011; Kellerman, 2004a; Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Vazire & Funder, 2006). The role of intra-personal self-regulatory processes in controlling impulsivity has been identified as an important characteristic in achieving personal goals (Bandura, 1991; Karoly, 1993). It is argued that the capacity to engage in intrapersonal self-regulatory mechanisms (e.g., direct purposeful actions from within to override, alter, or inhibit dysfunctional responses or behaviours) enables better goal selection, goal co-ordination, and goal achievement (Bandura, 1991; Heatherton & Baumeister, 1996; Karoly, 1993). However, an emerging line of research discussed how goals can also have negative consequences. Goal difficulty and the extent to which rewards are contingent upon goal attainment contribute to destructive leadership behaviours through their effect on levels of stress. For example, increased negative affectivity can be associated with the anticipation of impending adversities or anticipation of an inability to attract rewards due to failure to perform through goal achievement (Bardes & Piccolo, 2010).

Krasikova et al. (2013) proposed that perceived goal blockage was a predictor of the choice to engage in destructive leadership, especially in leaders with a high need for individual achievement, such as those motivated by personalised power, or leaders with low
self-esteem who rely primarily on their individual achievements to boost their self-worth (Crocker, 2002). Krasikova et al. argued that leaders with self-regulation impairment are more likely to react to goal blockage by choosing to engage in destructive leadership.

Leaders with high negative affectivity have a negativity bias when interpreting events and are more likely to perceive their goals as being blocked by the organisation or their followers. Failure of self-regulatory processes may also result from a depletion of resources to deal with work related stressors, that is, role overload, organisational constraints, or interpersonal conflict (Byrne et al., 2014; Wang, Sinclair, & Deese, 2010).

Self-regulation (related terms include self-management, self-leadership, self-influence, and self-control; Manz, 1986), as a mechanism for self-goal setting, self-observation, self-reward, self-punishment, and self-control of behaviours, has been put forward as an important variable when dealing with the frustration of goal achievement (Karoly, 1993). Leaders may develop sensitivities due to a set of unconscious emotionally charged beliefs and expectations, generalized from past experience, that serve to protect them from repeating a painful experience. Such leaders are more likely to interpret environmental cues negatively when fatigued or stressed, and to react intensely and compulsively as a form of self-protection (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2006). Alternatively, resilient, emotionally stable leaders are less likely to experience intense negative emotions to stressors. Therefore, personal characteristics such as optimism, emotional control, and stress tolerance are likely to predict better ability to engage in self-regulation processes when under stress (Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Kaiser et al., 2015; King & Rothstein, 2010; Wang et al., 2010). Self-regulatory mechanisms in human motivation and action were considered essential for self-observation and self-monitoring (e.g., impression management) to ascertain the determinants and effects of one’s behaviour. Self-regulatory mechanisms include monitoring self-talk, making cognitive choices, delaying gratification of impulses, and tolerating frustration
Such mechanisms enabled a leader to demonstrate positive performance by managing negative emotions and enhancing cognitions, emotions, behaviours, and moral agency (Bandura, 1991).

Multiple definitions, operationalisations, and models of the term *self-regulation* have arisen from a range of sources, developed across disciplines (e.g., including the domains of personality, motivation/emotion, and social psychology; Karoly, 1993). Depending on the originating discipline, a range of self-regulation processes have been hypothesised: volitional processes, reinforcement processes, biological processes, cultural processes, and social-cognitive processes (Heatherton & Baumeister, 1996). In general, self-regulation refers to the process by which individuals initiate, adjust, terminate, or otherwise alter actions to promote attainment of personal goals (Heatherton & Baumeister, 1996). Karoly offered the following definition as a conceptual roadmap for future study:

> Self-regulation refers to those processes, internal and/or transactional, that enable an individual to guide his/her goal-directed activities over time and across changing circumstances (contexts). Regulation implies modulation of thought, affect, behaviour, or attention via deliberate or automated use of specific mechanisms and supportive metaskills. (p. 25).

Multiple explanations for how self-regulation is enacted have been proposed by researchers, incorporating personal characteristics (e.g., self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-awareness; Karoly, 1993); skills (e.g., political skill; Whitman, Halbesleben, & Shanine, 2013); and behaviours (e.g., self-talk, self-observation, self-monitoring, self-recording; Karoly, 1993; Rogelberg et al., 2013). Individual differences in goal-directed behaviour may depend on an individual’s *regulatory focus*: self-regulation with a promotion focus to realise positive outcomes (e.g., accomplishment of aspirations) versus self-regulation with a prevention focus in order to avoid negative outcomes (e.g., threat to well-being or loss of
reputation; Higgins, 1997; van Knippenberg, 2012). A related theory, self-discrepancy theory, proposed that individuals take action to avoid negative emotions or to experience positive emotions, depending on the discrepancy between anticipated outcomes and actual realization of aspirations (Higgins, 1987, 1997, 1999).

*Social cognitive theory* of self-regulation proposed that through actions such as thought self-regulation and the exercise of forethought, a leader can develop the agency and motivation to think and behave in ways that actively create positive future experiences (Bandura, 1991, 2001). This theory of self-regulation included the ability to form a moral judgment of the rightness or wrongness of conduct as evaluated against personal standards and situational circumstances. For example, through self-reflection on experiences, a leader can gain knowledge on how his or her thoughts and corresponding behaviours lead to positive or negative experiences.

In addition to intrapersonal self-regulation mechanisms, self-regulation has also been defined as a social or interpersonal process. A leader uses dual processes of adaptive self-regulation to plan their behaviour, choosing behaviour based on both their internal standards and attitudes, as well as external social structures and norms (Tsui & Ashford, 1994; Wang et al., 2010). Given these propositions, it is proposed in this research thesis that the ability to engage self-regulatory processes, through activating self-regulatory traits, is likely to mediate the relationship between a strong need for power and personal goal achievement and the predisposition to use constructive or destructive leadership behaviours when facing frustration or perceived failure. The difference between effective leaders, who use their dark side tendencies as strengths in specific situations, compared to derailed leaders, may partially reside in the leaders’ ability to develop self-insight (e.g., awareness of their own conscious and unconscious motivations), which can set in motion a process of corrective change. Effectiveness is also likely to reside in a leader’s ability to regulate their impulsive behaviour.
and need for personal power, even in competitive or stressful situations, so that a leader’s strengths are utilised only in appropriate contexts and goals are achieved in a way that does not cause harm (Goleman, 2004; Hannah, Woolfolk, & Lord, 2009; Judge et al., 2009; McClelland, 1970, 1975; Paulhus & Williams, 2002; Spreier et al., 2006).

Despite the significant body of self-regulation theory, little is understood of the role of self-regulation in inhibiting the predisposition to destructive leadership behaviours. O’Connor, Mumford, Clifton & Gessner (1995) discussed the role of self-regulation in preventing destructive behaviours in a sample of historical charismatic leaders. O’Connor et al. defined self-regulation as “the leader’s ability to monitor thoughts and actions in the presence of others; the degree to which the leader was honest about his or her negative attributes.” (p. 539). O’Connor et al. found weak support that self-regulation acts as an inhibitory influence upon charismatic leaders’ willingness to use others for personal gain, or their willingness to engage in destructive acts. They hypothesised that the ability to self-regulate appeared to be a skill necessary to become a high-level leader and was of little use in differentiating between those motivated by personalised power and those motivated by socialised power. However, there are additional self-regulatory characteristics and behaviours, beyond the ability to control moods and impulses (e.g., emotional self-control), that researchers have suggested can develop positive forms of leadership. These include low negative affectivity; self-awareness (e.g., of motivations, values, goals, strengths and limitations, and their effects on others); the ability to tolerate and endure typically stressful situations without undue physical or emotional reaction; self-confidence; optimism; openness to change; and adaptability (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bandura, 1991; Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Goleman, 2004; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Karoly, 1993; Krasikova et al., 2013; Kupers & Weibler, 2005; Ruderman, Hannum, Leslie, & Steed, 2001; Schmit et al., 2000). Leaders
with these personal characteristics are more likely to be able to self-regulate their behaviour when faced with stressful, adverse, uncertain, or unpredictable situations.

Further investigation is required to confirm the personality traits that enable or hinder effective intrapersonal self-regulation in relation to engagement in destructive leadership behaviours. Once identified, leadership development interventions can focus on building self-awareness of attributes that contribute to self-regulation competency, so that leaders have the agency to choose constructive leadership behaviours, even when fatigued or frustrated.

**Individual leader interventions – can leaders change?** There are a range of interventions proposed in the leadership research to develop individual leaders by increasing self-awareness and assisting them to develop self-regulatory processes to address the negative aspects of their leadership (Harms, Spain, & Hannah, 2011; Nelson & Hogan, 2009). Behavioural coaching to increase self-awareness of the nature and triggers of harmful behaviours may enable toxic leaders to change their behaviour (Moran, 2011; Pelletier, 2010; Trickey & Hyde, 2009). For example, self-awareness may be increased through coaching based on leadership profiling of personality characteristics that informs leadership style and motivation, or through 360 degree feedback on leadership behaviours (Gentry et al., 2007; Hartley & Hinksman, 2003; Nelson & Hogan, 2009). Programs introducing leaders to Acceptance Commitment Training (e.g., strategies for dealing with aversive feelings and moods, reframing unhelpful thoughts, clarifying values, and thoughtful planning of actions) and mindfulness techniques may assist individuals to improve their resiliency in order to respond effectively to stressful situations. Such strategies assist the leader to avoid reacting or being caught up in emotional and cognitive obstacles that distract attention away from their goals (Atkins, 2008; Moran, 2011). However, practices to develop leaders, such as managerial training, multi-source feedback, executive coaching, formal or informal mentoring, networking and action learning, have received little hard evaluation evidence of
their effectiveness (Avolio et al., 2009; Day, 2000; Harms et al., 2011; Moran, 2011; Nieminen, Smerek, Kotrba, & Denison, 2013; Powell & Yalcin, 2010).

There is little empirical research to date into the development of leaders with dark side characteristics to inform the best approach. Theorists recommend coaches be sensitive to the presence of traits that may cause derailment at work or derailment of the development process itself (Harms et al., 2011; Nelson & Hogan, 2009). Even with professional assistance, leaders’ efforts at self-management may not be successful (Karoly, 1993). The consensus appears to be that leaders with high levels of subclinical traits are less likely to participate in or learn from development activities (Harms et al., 2011). Therefore, while leadership development interventions can be useful in addressing leadership derailleurs, to assist leaders to increase their self-awareness, self-regulation, their repertoire of behaviours, and where and when to use their strengths (Sandler, 2012), it has been argued that these interventions have limited success when leaders exhibit subclinical psychopathy (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Boddy, 2015). In fact, leaders with narcissistic and Machiavellian characteristics are likely to utilise the skills and techniques obtained in leadership development and executive coaching sessions to manipulate others even more effectively to achieve their own ends (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Campbell et al., 2011; Clarke, 2005; Nelson & Hogan, 2009).

Organisational Responses to Destructive Leadership

The literature suggests that when destructive leaders are identified or reported, and it is clear that they are unable or unwilling to change their behaviour, there is often a reluctance to resist or remove them; for example, if the harmful behaviour is justified in the achievement of organisationally sanctioned goals or it occurs in order to meet some greater purpose (Krasikova et al., 2013; Rate & Sternberg, 2007). For an organisation to respond to destructive leadership, it must be able to recognise when it is occurring and be motivated to take action once it is discovered (Krasikova et al., 2013). Using potentially destructive
tactics when in a position of authority (e.g., high levels of assertiveness, self-promotion, and politicking) leaders can initially enhance their power and give the perception of high levels of performance (O'Boyle & Forsyth, 2012). However, as discussed previously, over time these behaviours may become destructive to the leader themselves, as well as to others, as their behaviour eventually sabotages relationships and their own career, for example, by their being perceived as intimidating and manipulative (Carson et al., 2012; Clarke, 2005; Ferris et al., 2007; House & Howell, 1992; Padilla et al., 2007; Tepper, 2007; Trickey & Hyde, 2009).

Leaders who maintain tight control, and who have achieved significant power and managerial discretion, are often associated with followers who are not empowered to act or to question authority. Typically, organisational environments with this sort of culture are devoid of meaningful checks and balances and, therefore, fail to provide oversight and scrutiny of their leaders (Mulvey & Padilla, 2010).

Despite the availability of assessment tools to screen out managerial applicants with destructive leadership styles, managers who are known to be “toxic” may be promoted or retained by organisations because of the perceived high costs associated with their removal. For example, such leaders may have powerful allies, hold key relationships, bring in significant revenue, and/or are likely to become litigious if challenged (Boddy, 2015; Clarke, 2005; Kellerman, 2004; Judge & LePine, 2007; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007). Individuals who express concerns about leaders publicly may be marginalized, made to feel irrelevant, or even fired (Perlow & Williams, 2003). As a result, they may choose to suffer in silence, with harmful consequences to themselves, and substantial costs to the organisation.

As has been discussed, failure to take action to prevent and/or address destructive leadership leads to negative consequences for the leaders themselves, their followers, peers, teams and the organisation. Due to the complexity of the dynamic relationship between leaders and followers, and the multiple factors required to allow destructive leadership to flourish,
organisations struggle to respond effectively to destructive leadership, and there is little
evidence-based practice to guide them.

While there is limited research on how organisations should respond to the
predicament of destructive leadership, there is considerable stress management intervention
research that may inform approaches to dealing with destructive leadership as a significant
source of occupational stress. The stress management intervention literature describes three
levels of interventions: primary prevention interventions that attempt to eliminate the sources
of stress in the organisational environment (e.g., codes of conduct, governance frameworks,
recruitment and selection screening, targeted leadership development activities, and
performance management processes); secondary prevention interventions that focus on
improving individuals’ stress responses and coping (e.g., manager and employee training
programs to increase resilience, coping skills, and well-being); and tertiary prevention
interventions that attempt to repair the damage caused by the stressors and assist in the
recovery process (e.g., employee assistance programs, counselling services, conflict
resolution and mediation processes; Berridge, Cooper, & Highley, 1992; Dewe, 1994;
Hargrove, Quick, Nelson, & Quick, 2011; Probst, 2013).

While the most effective organisational response to the phenomenon of destructive
leadership may be to employ all three levels of stress prevention intervention, the literature
suggests that primary prevention is the most effective in addressing the root cause of this
particular stressor, with removal of a destructive leader enhancing follower well-being
(Probst, 2013). Potential liability for failure to provide a safe workplace, the cost of reduced
productivity, absenteeism, disengaged presenteeism, and unwanted turnover provide
compelling reasons for the use of primary prevention tactics. Primary prevention tactics may
include disciplinary action or termination of destructive leaders upon evidence of frequent
and ongoing demonstration of destructive leadership behaviours (Lipman-Blumen, 2005;
In circumstances where the leader is unable to change their destructive behaviours, or the organisation chooses not to act to remove the leader, conducting secondary prevention interventions, such as providing followers with the knowledge and tools to better identify and cope with destructive leadership, may be a useful stress prevention strategy.

**Challenges in Researching Destructive Leadership Traits and Behaviours**

Obtaining access to destructive leaders for research purposes is difficult, making the research of destructive leadership traits and behaviours challenging. Most leaders do not self-identify as destructive, and organisations are generally unwilling to admit that they employ leaders who display destructive behaviours. If access is obtained, ego-centred and Machiavellian leaders are likely to try to manipulate the research processes in order to present themselves in the best possible light, especially if the results of the study are going to be communicated to their own manager or executive.

As a result, archival data that had been collected for other reasons, such as organisational recruitment or manager development, is often employed (e.g., Benson & Campbell, 2007; Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Trickey & Hyde, 2009). This approach has limitations because the data collection instrument has not been designed for research purposes and, as a result, much demographic or contextual information is not available. In addition, it provides cross-sectional data, preventing any analysis of causal relationships, which is necessary to effectively establish antecedents and consequences of destructive leadership. However, when data are collected from participants across organisations and industries, there can be greater generalisability of findings, compared to data from one organisation/sector, or from student samples, such as MBA programs (e.g., Carson et al., 2012; Dahling et al., 2009; Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Najur et al., 2004).
An alternative approach is to recruit followers of destructive leaders to describe the behaviours they experience that cause them harm (Martinko et al., 2013; Pelletier, 2010). In this instance, it is also difficult to get access to data within organisations because employees are often too fearful to participate and/or to be honest about their experiences. As a result, convenience or snowball sampling is often employed to recruit participants external to any specific organisation, such as recruitment through self-selection if participants feel they meet the criteria of working for a toxic leader (e.g., Blase & Blase, 2002; Pelletier, 2010). Data collection is often obtained via cross-sectional surveys (Benson & Campbell, 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Pelletier, 2010). Few studies interview leaders directly (e.g., Board & Fritzon, 2005; Leslie & Velsor, 1996). Some studies conduct research in relation to managers who have left the organisation, but this approach is rare and has the potential for retrospective bias (Carson et al., 2012; Leslie & Velsor, 1996).

The desire for access to data that provides generalisable results must be balanced against the call for longitudinal data that investigates antecedents, causes, and consequences of destructive leadership over time. Additionally, determining from participant responses if a leader’s behaviour is volitionally harmful is a sensitive research topic, with many inherent problems (Krasikova et al., 2013). If the data are collected from the leader, which provides just one view of their behaviour, the problem of impression management must be addressed. Yet data obtained from subordinates, peers, or supervisors would require inferences about intentions (an internal state of the leader), which the respondents are unlikely to be privy to. Moreover, acting on such inferences could have potentially serious implications for the leader (i.e., career derailment) and the organisation, if the inferences are unfounded (Krasikova et al., 2013). Despite the difficulties in researching destructive leadership, the consequent personal and financial costs to individuals and organisations make investigation of this significant psychosocial risk imperative (Boddy, 2015).
Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented a broad overview of the dark side of leadership literature, including the psychological and psycho-sociological theories and explanations for the presence of destructive leadership traits and behaviours. Research challenges of overlapping definitions, multiple conceptual frameworks, inconsistent terminology, the range of foci of researchers, and the diversity of measures of this construct were discussed (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007).

Despite reviews of the study of destructive leadership confirming that destructive leadership is prevalent, studies that test theoretical mechanisms that predispose leaders to engage in destructive leadership, conducted within an organisational setting, remain scarce. Meta-analyses of the current literature have identified theoretical propositions for traits that predispose leaders to choose harmful behaviours, and potential mediators of trait activation. However, empirical support for these conceptual frameworks is limited. There are few replication studies from samples outside of the US, and many researchers use student samples, rather than organisational samples, which limits the generalisability and utility of the results. Nor is it understood whether destructive leaders can change to a more constructive leadership style and, if so, what leadership development interventions may be effective in facilitating behavioural change.

This thesis is concerned with destructive leadership behaviours that are specifically focussed towards subordinates. The first study seeks to further our understanding of the antecedents of destructive leadership behaviours by investigating the roles of negative affectivity and self-regulation traits in mediating the relationship between high levels of independence (a focus on personal goal achievement) and a predisposition to demonstrate derailing leadership behaviours. This study is discussed in Chapter 4.
A second key area of interest in the study of the dark side of leadership is the severity of its effect on individual followers (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). A number of empirical studies in the destructive leadership and abusive supervision literatures have confirmed that there are likely to be serious negative effects on psychological, emotional and physical well-being for subordinates subjected to destructive leadership behaviours (Einarsen et al., 2010; Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). If destructive leaders cannot change their ways, or organisations are unwilling to remove them, an alternative approach to address the issue of destructive leadership and the risk of harm to employees is proposed in this thesis: to investigate interventions that assist followers to maintain their well-being by becoming more resilient to the effects of destructive leadership. In other words, assist organisations to create environments that are less conducive to destructive leadership, and more protective of followers’ well-being, through enhancing follower resilience. The next chapter examines the role of followers, the impact destructive leadership has on them, and their response to it.
Chapter 3. Follower Responses to Destructive Leadership

The previous chapter reviewed the destructive leadership literature predominantly from a leader-centric perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on the destructive leadership research stream from a follower-centric perspective. When studying the consequences of destructive leadership behaviours, a range of negative effects on well-being have been identified, particularly at the individual employee level, which can also impact negatively on performance (Fowlie & Wood, 2009; Richards & Freeman, 2002; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Sutton, 2007; Tepper, 2000, 2007). A review of the followership literature, with a specific focus on followship of destructive leaders, will be provided in this chapter.

In relation to the research model in Figure 2 (see p. 17), this review explores the leadership behaviours that followers perceive as destructive, follower coping strategies, and consequences for followers subjected to destructive leadership. In addition, this chapter investigates interventions to mitigate harm caused to followers by destructive leadership behaviours. Research questions of interest generated by this phenomenon are:

(a) What are the traits and behaviours that followers perceive as harmful to their well-being?
(b) What are the psychological, emotional, and physical outcomes of destructive leadership traits and behaviours for followers?
(c) How do targets of destructive leadership traits and behaviours cope with those psychological, emotional and physical outcomes?
(d) What is an effective, evidence-based intervention to enhance well-being and prevent harm to followers within the context of destructive leadership?
This chapter reviews theoretical explanations for how followers identify, respond to and cope with destructive leadership behaviours, and stress management interventions that may increase follower well-being through enhanced resilience to destructive leadership.

**Destructive Leadership as an Occupational Stressor**

Harmful consequences to followers subjected to destructive leadership include psychological distress (e.g., reduced self-esteem, anxiety, depression, difficulty concentrating); emotional harm (e.g., rumination, anger, fear); physical health problems (e.g., chronic fatigue, hair loss, insomnia, low energy); and a number of career impacts (e.g., reduced effectiveness, disengagement, burnout, reduced job, work and life satisfaction, work and family conflict, and reduced discretionary effort; Martinko et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Extremely abusive behaviours, such as yelling at and berating a subordinate in public, may create an acute stress process within a short duration (e.g., tears or retaliation). However, definitions of destructive leadership styles include the criteria that the destructive behaviours must be systematic, repeated, and sustained. Therefore, such behaviour would be characterised in the stress and coping literature as producing chronic stress processes over a period of months or years (Edwards, 1992). Exposure to even one chronic stressor that is perceived by the individual as threatening can be damaging to well-being; however, followers are likely to be subjected to multiple psychosocial stressors when experiencing destructive leadership behaviours.

**Stressor-strain theory.** Stressor-strain theory suggests that destructive leadership behaviours are likely to cause strain in recipients (e.g., negative psychological, emotional, and physical responses) when they are perceived as a stressor (Beehr, 1998). The negative effects of destructive leadership on well-being may be explained as exposure to a number of stressors identified in the occupational stress literature. These stressors include anti-social behaviours (e.g., ridicule, bullying, harassment, sabotage of work, verbal aggression),
interpersonal conflict, lack of social support, and loss of job/career control, as a result of a destructive managerial style (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2010; Sparks, Faragher, & Cooper, 2001). Responses to stressors vary depending on individual differences, and the way such differences influence an individual’s appraisal of the stressor and their choice of coping strategies. For example, behaviour by a leader may be appraised as a significant stressor by one subordinate, and less of a stressor by another. Therefore, variables proposed in the literature to moderate the stressor-strain relationship include the individual characteristics and personal resources of the follower.

One perspective on the stressor-strain theory, the *challenge stressor-hindrance stressor framework*, proposed an individual’s appraisal of and reaction to a stressor may be determined by whether they view the stressor as a challenge (the individual perceives they can master the situation) or as a hindrance (the individual perceives the stressor as a threat to their well-being and one that they may not be able to control; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Exposure to destructive leadership behaviours is likely to be perceived by most followers as a hindrance stressor (e.g., a threat), which is negatively associated with well-being, motivation, and performance. However, individual variation within followers (e.g., follower characteristics, coping responses, motivations, needs and fears, sense of entitlement) and their environments (e.g., level of social and organisational support available) ultimately determines levels of perceived stress (DeFrank & Cooper, 1987; Harvey, Harris, Gillis, & Martinko, 2014; May et al., 2014; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012).

**Susceptible followers.** The literature suggests some followers are more susceptible to destructive leadership and the consequent harm than others (May et al., 2014; Padilla et al., 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012). Followers seek group benefits, to be provided with a group goal, and the instruments of goal achievement (Kellerman, 2008). Under the
leadership of destructive leaders, inter and intra team conflict often escalates, increasing stress, reducing social support from colleagues, and negatively impacting on employees’ performance and goal achievement (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Boddy, 2015; Kellerman, 2004a; May et al., 2014). The type of interpersonal interaction between leader and follower may also determine whether further perceived mistreatment will be handed out to the follower (May et al., 2014). Social adaptability skills of followers have been proposed by researchers as a mediator between perceived abusive supervision and its consequences for subordinates; that is, followers with the ability to adjust their cognitions and behaviours in response to the perceived threat of abusive supervision will be less strongly affected by it (Mackey, Parker Ellen III, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2013).

Despite negative outcomes for followers, it is often reported that limited action is taken to address offending leaders’ behaviour and, as a result, employees either leave, or remain with the organisation, but in a reduced capacity, that eventually leads to significant harm to their well-being (Sutton, 2007). Further research into the coping strategies followers employ to deal with destructive leadership behaviours has been called for (May et al., 2014; Pelletier, 2010; Yagil et al., 2011).

**Followers Responses to Destructive Leadership**

Followship research studies the behaviours of individuals acting in relation to a leader based on their own schema of good followership, and provide possible explanations for why people comply with destructive leaders. A number of reasons have been hypothesised for why people conform with destructive leaders’ demands and fail to challenge their negative behaviours (Kellerman, 2004a; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012). Despite arguments that followers, with no apparent power or authority, can influence leaders, often individuals choose not to act against toxic leaders, or to report them (Chaleff, 2009; Kellerman, 2008). This failure to act can be due to a range of factors
It may be a specific skill or power the leader has, such as expert knowledge or holding powerful relationships. Lack of knowledge of the characteristics of destructive leadership can lead followers to believe it is themselves, and not the leader, who are at fault. They may feel that it is something about their personality or something that they have done that has caused them to be treated in such a way. Failure to recognise their leader’s behaviour as toxic, reluctance to face conflict and the unpleasantness of addressing these behaviours with the leader, or a fear of retribution, can lead to a failure of courage in acting (Chaleff, 2009).

The destructive leadership literature identifies two primary motivations for compliance with toxic leaders (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012). Compliance may be due to the follower’s self-evaluation (e.g., low self-confidence, low self-esteem, and/or low self-efficacy, driven by fear as a result of a need for safety, security, group membership, and/or predictability in an uncertain world). Followers driven by these motivations have been described as conformers. Alternatively, followers may identify and align themselves with the leaders’ values and beliefs, or they may follow because they benefit from their destructive activities. Followers driven by these motivations have been described as colluders.

Thoroughgood et al. (2012) extended Padilla et al.’s (2007) typology to explain followship of destructive leaders. Table 5 provides a comparison of these two key typologies. Thoroughgood et al. (2012) drew on Barbuto’s theory of follower compliance in an attempt to understand the psychological processes that motivate followers to comply with destructive leaders’ demands. Barbuto (2000) proposed three conditions required to achieve follower compliance: (a) the leader’s perceived power bases (e.g., legitimate, referent, coercive, expert, and reward power; French & Raven, 1959); (b) the follower’s sources of
motivation; and (c) the follower's resistance level. Compliance is likely to be greater when the influence trigger employed by the leader (i.e., power base, goals, or values) is aligned to the follower’s motivation (i.e., self-concept and desired outcomes), and the follower’s resistance to the influence attempt is low.

Table 5

Two typologies of susceptible followers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Padilla et al. (2007)</th>
<th>Thoroughgood et al. (2012)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conformers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lost Souls</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comply out of fear</td>
<td>Low self-concept and strong identification with the leader (susceptible to referent power)</td>
</tr>
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**Bystanders**

Passive, motivated primarily by fear to minimise costs and punishment (susceptible to coercive power)

**Authoritarians**

Obey because of rank and status of leader (susceptible to legitimate power)

**Colluders**

Participate in leader’s agenda

**Opportunists**

Form alliance with leader as a vehicle for personal gain (susceptible to reward power)

**Acolytes**

Share congruent values and goals with the leader (susceptible to expert power)
Moderate support has been found for Barbuto’s proposed relationship between leaders’ management styles or behaviours and targets’ motivation or resistance (Barbuto, Scholl, Hickox III, & Boulmetis, 2001; Barbuto & Xu, 2006). Thoroughgood, Padilla et al.’s (2012) model has been critiqued as leader-centric, focusing on followers’ compliance with the destructive agenda set by the leader and/or followers’ resistance to the leaders’ destructive instrumental influence attempts (May et al., 2014).

May et al.’s (2014) leader-follower interaction process suggested an alternative view; that follower responses to perceived mistreatment by their leader may either trigger or prevent further interpersonal mistreatment. If followers’ behaviour is interpreted by the leader as either submissive (conformers) or aggressive and retaliatory, the leader will maintain or increase their destructive behaviours (May et al., 2014). Followers who are perceived by the leader to cope in a constructive manner (such as colluders) are likely to be the recipient of constructive leadership behaviours. May et al. argued that using this perspective enables a better understanding of how followers cope with destructive leadership.

A number of follower typologies have been proposed by theorists in an attempt to better explain follower responses to destructive leadership.

**Follower typologies.** Jean Lipman-Blumen (2005), in her discussion of why followers willingly obey toxic leaders, suggested three general categories of followers who enabled and supported bad leaders: (a) **benign followers**, gullible followers, unquestioning of what the toxic leader is saying or requesting, and following for pragmatic reasons such as keeping their job (conformers); (b) **the leader’s entourage**, committed to the leader’s agenda (colluders); and (c) **malevolent followers**, driven by greed, envy, or competitiveness, who work against the leader and may wish to depose the leader in order to become the leader themselves.
Similar to Lipman-Blumen’s malevolent followers, Kellerman’s (2008) typology of followers of bad leaders included an additional contribution in the leader-follower interaction process: followers who may, over time, become resisters of destructive leaders, working to overthrow or remove them. Kellerman’s first two types fall into the category of submissive conformers: isolates, who are detached and strengthen leader’s position by not responding to the leader; and bystanders, who observe but do not participate. Participants, who are engaged and trying to have an impact, may be perceived as responding constructively. However, activists, who work hard, either on behalf of their leader or to undermine them; and diehards, who are prepared to die for their cause, and are either deeply devoted to their leaders or ready to remove them. Activists and diehards may be perceived by the leader as constructive if supporting the leader’s agenda, and aggressive or retaliatory if they are perceived to be working against their leader, thus perpetuating abuse by the leader (Kellerman, 2008; May et al., 2014).

Carsten et al. (2010) investigated how individuals’ schemas of followership informed the way they responded to and complied with their leader, on a continuum from passive to proactive followership. They found passive followers held hierarchical views of followership, regarding it as deference, subordination, and obedience, being less willing to speak out or take risks (e.g., likely to comply with a destructive leader holding a high level position within the organisational structure). Active followers saw their role as a partner in delivering leadership outcomes and felt able to voice their opinions in a positive way. Active followers were described as emphasising the importance of supporting their leader’s decisions, even if they didn’t agree with them (e.g., not speaking up when observing negative behaviour by a leader). Proactive followers were less concerned with obedience, preferring to take initiative and ownership for outcomes. Proactive followers were described as being
more likely to voice their concerns and offer solutions to problems before being asked to do so (e.g., confront their leader on their negative attitude or behaviour; Carsten et al., 2010).

In a similar typology to Carsten et al., Chaleff (2009) proposed four followership styles to address the power dynamics between leaders and followers, based on the level of support and challenge offered to the leader by the follower: *partner* (high support, high challenge); *implementer* (high support, low challenge); *individualist* (low support, high challenge); and *resource* (low support, low challenge). These follower taxonomies provide a possible explanation for the individual differences in responses to destructive leadership.

Finally, Crowley and Elster (2009) incorporated a leader-follower interaction process when developing 10 follower types based on follower expectations of leaders, and their own needs and fears. They developed an inventory for 20 “bad boss” behaviours, advised typical follower responses to perceived mistreatment for each follower typology, such as sulking, self-doubt, and retaliation, then suggested more adaptive responses, such as detecting mistreatment, detaching, and depersonalising (Crowley & Elster, 2009). While their typology was based on their own work experience rather than on a theoretical framework, their work does provide a self-help tool to assist followers to understand their reactions when dealing with destructive leadership behaviours.

Follower typologies highlight follower characteristics and make distinctions between types of followers. However, discussion on theoretical explanations for how these different types of followers influence the interaction between leader and follower is still in its early stages (Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The typologies for followers of destructive leaders discussed above are descriptive and help us to theorise how followers may react and behave towards a toxic leader; for example, avoid, support, challenge, or overthrow the leader. However, individuals may self-identify in more than one follower type, or their follower type may change over time depending on the context (Kellerman, 2008).
Perhaps due to the relatively recent growth in conceptualisations of followership and follower typologies in the context of destructive leadership, no empirical research validating these theories and typologies was found. Further empirical research is required to validate theoretical follower typologies in field studies to inform future research, and to identify how understanding follower types can assist individuals to cope better with destructive leadership. As no unified, validated measure of follower types has been designed, such typologies provide limited assistance in researching leader-follower interactions in the context of destructive leadership. In practical terms, descriptions of follower typologies may assist in developing some self-awareness by followers into their needs and wants from a leader and their responses to leader behaviours, but have limited utility in assisting individuals to develop personal initiative or resilience when dealing with the adversity caused by destructive leadership behaviours (Thoroughgood, Padilla et al., 2012). In addition, many of the follower typology labels presented in the literature (e.g., colluder, malevolent, isolate, bystander) are not useful terms for practitioners to employ in their endeavours to support and assist followers to maintain well-being in the face of destructive leadership.

**Follower Well-being in the Context of Destructive Leadership**

As discussed previously, theoretical frameworks and research relevant to addressing the negative impacts of destructive leadership can be found in the occupational stress management literature. In order to determine ways of reducing the harmful effects of destructive leadership and enhancing follower well-being, theories that inform the design of interventions to build follower coping skills and resilience to the occupational stressor of destructive leadership will now be reviewed. There are many similarities between the resilience and coping literatures, even though they appear to have evolved along parallel yet separate paths (Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005). Resilience research has largely been conducted by developmental psychologists, predicting the development of
resilience in children and adolescents, whereas coping research has mainly focused on adult populations. Yet both literatures have investigated the individual factors (e.g., personality traits such as optimism) and situational factors (e.g., social support) influencing resilience through effective coping with stressful experiences (Harland et al., 2005; Seligman, 1992). Both resilience and coping literatures have also focused on assessing the effectiveness of strategies used by individuals when faced with challenges. It has been argued that coping strategies employed by individuals to address and deal with an adverse experience are the very processes by which the outcome of resilience is achieved (Harland et al., 2005). In the following sections, resiliency and coping theories are discussed in relation to their relevance to maintaining follower well-being by building follower resilience to destructive leadership.

**Follower resiliency.** Resiliency is the process by which well-being is restored and includes the characteristics that influence the return to a state of well-being following an adverse event (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). The study of resiliency in the workplace is a relatively new area of research (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). Resiliency goes beyond the definition of resilience, which has been defined as an outcome: “the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict or failure” (Luthans et al., 2007, p.18). Resiliency includes what a person learns when dealing with adversity and the processes that lead to personal choices, career recovery, and personal growth (King & Rothstein, 2010). Specifically, resiliency has been conceptualised as involving cognitive, affective, and behavioural self-regulatory processes to assist recovery and restoration of optimal functioning after a significant adverse workplace experience (King & Rothstein, 2010). It is purported that resiliency processes involve three domains: (a) self-regulation of beliefs or cognitions; (b) self-regulation of emotions; and (c) engagement of behavioural strategies that provide a sense of personal control and personal self-efficacy (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). If successful, these adaptive responses will result in
outcomes that demonstrate resilience has occurred (e.g., psychological, emotional, and physical well-being). However, outcomes may differ depending on the situational context and the adversity experienced.

McLarnon et al. (2013) developed a conceptual model of resiliency adapted from the framework proposed by King and Rothstein (2010). As no conceptual model for resiliency in the context of destructive leadership was found, McLarnon et al.’s model has been further adapted by this researcher in the context of destructive leadership (see Figure 6). Followers exhibit an initial response to the traumatic work experience, in this instance, destructive leadership behaviours. Personal characteristics (e.g., follower type, self-efficacy, self-discipline) will affect the initial response (e.g., negative cognitions and emotions, perceived stress). The relationship between the follower’s initial response to perceiving toxic leadership behaviours, and the cognitive, affective, and behavioural self-regulatory processes they employ in response, will be mediated by their personal characteristics, as well as situational factors, such as supports and resources (e.g., social support from colleagues, friends and family, organisational support). Achieving positive life and work outcomes will depend on the effectiveness of their self-regulatory processes (e.g., their ability to understand and control ineffective thoughts and thinking patterns, negative emotions, and counter-productive behaviours). In sum, the ability of a follower to return to a state of well-being is determined by their level of resiliency, and follower coping skills will determine their resiliency in recovering from the experience of destructive leadership.

**Follower coping.** With destructive leadership shown to be related to occupational stress, it follows that targets of destructive leadership may employ a range of coping strategies when attempting to deal with this particular occupational stressor (Nandkeolyar, Shaffer, Li, Ekkirala, & Bagger, 2014; Schyns & Schilling, 2013).
**Personal Characteristics**
- Follower Type, i.e. conformer, colluder
- Perception of personal control

**Destructive Leadership Behaviour**
Major threat to follower self-esteem, identity, fundamental values and/or beliefs

**Initial Responses**
Interpretation of experience and resulting disequilibrium, e.g., negative cognitions and emotions, perceived stress

**Self-Regulatory Processes**
- Cognitive, affective, and behavioural strategies
- Coping skills

**Supports and Resources**
- Peer support
- Social support
- Organisational support

**Outcomes**
- Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being
- Life and career satisfaction

*Figure 6. Conceptual model of follower resiliency to destructive leadership. Adapted from McLarnon & Rothstein (2013).*
Destructive leadership behaviours form part of the psychosocial occupational stressor antisocial behaviours, which have been found to lead to anxiety, fear, depression, and avoidance behaviours in affected individuals (O’Driscoll & Brough, 2010; Yagil et al., 2011). In the occupational stress and coping literature, occupational stress is hypothesised to affect both well-being (e.g., the psychological, emotional, and physical health of an employee) and coping responses (e.g. efforts to prevent or reduce the negative effects of stress on well-being; Edwards, 1992; Goh, Sawang, & Oei, 2010). Upon perceiving a threat, initially a fight-flight-freeze stress response can be triggered; a physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived threat. The fight or flight response is activated when an individual believes there is a chance they can survive the threat. The freeze response, however, is activated when an individual’s coping capacity is overwhelmed, when they believe that there is no hope of dealing effectively with the stressor (Cannon, 1929).

How coping responses fit within the psychological stress process to preserve well-being is still being discussed. There has been some debate in the literature over the definition of coping, including whether coping should be defined as a conscious process, a cognitive behavioural (transactional) process, or as a form of adaptation (Dewe, O’Driscoll, & Cooper, 2010). The transactional model of stress coping defines coping as a conscious, intentional, goal-directed response to the specific demands of a stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). More recently coping has been defined as “. . . conscious, volitional attempts to regulate the environment or one’s reaction to the environment under stressful conditions” (Connor-Smith & Flaschsbart, 2007, p. 1080). There has been considerable research in the occupational stress and coping literature on how employees deal with a range of stressors within the work environment, but few studies have focused on understanding how followers cope with the stress produced specifically by destructive leadership behaviours and which coping responses might preserve well-being (e.g., May et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011). When researching how
individuals manage work stress, there are a number of types of coping proposed in the
literature, and many approaches to categorizing coping strategies (Dewe et al., 2010; Skinner
et al., 2003).

One of the most influential models of stress and coping was proposed by Lazarus and
Folkman (1984), who considered individual responses to stress to be shaped primarily by
individuals’ appraisal and coping responses. The first major component of their transactional
model is appraisal of a stressor. Two forms of stressor appraisal were specified in the model:
primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal is triggered in response to
exposure to a potentially stressful event that involves an assessment by the individual as to
whether the event or person poses a potential threat to well-being, and the degree of that
threat. If the stressful event is appraised as a threat, secondary appraisal occurs to determine
the individual’s perceived ability to cope with and manage the threat, including an evaluation
of the resources available to them to deal with the threat, such as potential courses of action
they might be able to take. Such cognitive appraisals determine whether the individual views
the stressor as a challenge, which they feel able to confront with some level of confidence
and which may enhance their well-being, or as a threat to their psychological, emotional, or
physical well-being. How an individual appraises a threat is likely to determine the coping
behaviours or strategies they employ to deal with the potential stressor. The second major
component of the transactional model is coping responses, defined as a complex sequence of
behaviours that include action impulses and psycho-physiological reactions. Lazarus and
Folkman (1984) proposed two higher order coping responses initiated after primary and
secondary appraisals: problem-focused coping (e.g., attempting to remedy or change a
threatening or harmful situation); and emotion-focused coping (e.g., ventilating one’s
emotional responses to stressors or removing oneself from exposure to stressors). Therefore,
Lazarus and Folkman’s transactional model describes a linear process, whereby primary
appraisal, secondary appraisal, and coping responses mediate the relationship between stressor (e.g., destructive leadership behaviours) and the individual’s stress outcomes (e.g., psychological and emotional distress).

Goh, Saway, and Oei (2010) revised Lazarus and Folkman’s proposed linear transactional process of appraisal, stress, and coping. Goh et al. incorporated stress outcomes (e.g., psycho-physiological distress resulting from the interaction between the stressor and the individual’s perception of control over the stressor) into the process, as an intermediary variable, in a more dynamic representation of the relationship between stress and coping. Goh et al. proposed their model accounted for how individual affectivity, that is, the influence of strong emotions, may determine both the choice of coping strategy and stress outcomes over time. Goh et al. found support for their proposal that, while both primary and secondary appraisals influence choice of coping strategy and stress outcomes, stress outcomes themselves may have a direct or indirect effect on subsequent stress outcomes over time, via the coping strategies employed. For example, if the coping strategies employed are unable to resolve the stressor, resulting in a negative stress outcome, this itself is likely to lead to even more negative outcomes over time, such as severe anxiety or depression (Goh et al., 2010). However, Goh et al. did not delve into appraisals and coping strategies for specific occupational stressors.

Other coping researchers have developed alternative coping categorisations to that proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, (e.g., cybernetic coping and active/avoidance coping). Cybernetic coping theory viewed stress as an important discrepancy between an individual’s perceived state and their desired state, and conceptualized coping as attempts to reduce or eliminate the negative effects of stress on well-being, outlining five forms of coping: change the situation (take steps to bring the situation into line with their desired state); symptom reduction (taking direct steps to improve well-being), avoidance (repressing uncomfortable
or distressing emotions and thoughts about the stressor), *accommodation* (adjusting individual desires so they are better aligned with the perceived situation), and/or *devaluation* (minimising the importance of the discrepancy between the desired situation and reality; Edwards & Baglioni, 1993).

Another perspective compares *active coping* (behaviour directed toward the stressor), a variation of problem-focused coping, with *avoidance coping* (behaviour directed away from the stressor), a form of emotion-focused coping (Connor-Smith & Flaschsbart, 2007; Suls & Fletcher, 1985). A classification proposed along similar lines to active/avoidance coping is the *approach coping* and *avoidance coping* categorisation (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Roth & Cohen, 1986). Approach coping strategies aim to reduce, eliminate, or manage the internal or external demands of a stressor. As with previous definitions, avoidance coping referred to disengaged coping, where the aim is to ignore, avoid, or withdraw from the stressor or its emotional consequences (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006; Roth & Cohen, 1986; Suls & Fletcher, 1985).

Nes and Segerstrom (2006) combined the approach/avoidance coping classification with the problem-focused/emotion-focused classification to propose four types of coping behaviour: *problem-focused approach coping* (e.g., planning, active coping, seeking instrumental support); *emotion-focused approach coping* (e.g., cognitive restructuring, seeking emotional support, acceptance); *problem-focused avoidance coping* (e.g., avoiding the problem, behavioural disengagement); and *emotion-focused avoidance coping* (e.g., denial, mental disengagement, wishful thinking, social withdrawal). The coping classifications reviewed above have been discussed in the abusive supervision literature in the context of destructive leadership behaviours in the workplace (Aquino & Thau, 2009; May et al., 2014; Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Tepper, Moss, Lockhart, & Carr, 2007; Yagil et al., 2011).
May et al.’s (2014) conceptual paper on follower coping with destructive leadership adopted Nes and Segerstrom’s approach, combining Lazarus and Folkman’s problem-focused versus emotion-focused strategies, with Roth and Cohen’s approach versus avoidance coping strategies (e.g., whether behaviour is directed toward or away from the destructive leader). May et al. proposed that followers of destructive leadership were likely to engage in multiple problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, and these strategies would vary in the level to which they confronted the leader (e.g., degree of assertiveness and aggressiveness of the coping behaviour). Problem-focused approach coping may include strategies such as challenging the leader’s behaviour, employing upward influencing tactics such as ingratiation, or seeking instrumental support. Emotion-focused approach coping may include strategies such as cognitive restructuring (reframing) and seeking emotional support. Examples of problem-focused avoidance coping included avoiding all contact with the leader. Examples of emotion-focused avoidance coping included denial of the situation and wishful thinking (May et al., 2014).

May et al. proposed perceptions by leaders of submissive and/or aggressive reactions from followers would lead to leaders engaging in further destructive leadership behaviour. May et al. assumed the level of follower confrontativeness would influence how leaders perceived the follower was coping with their leadership, and would determine their behaviour in response to the follower. There are three limitations with this approach: (a) the leader must be able to observe the follower coping strategy to be able to perceive it as submissive, aggressive, or constructive, and emotion-focused strategies (e.g., cognitive restructuring) in particular are unobservable; (b) the leader’s perception of the follower’s coping behaviour may not be accurate; and (c) the leader must have the resources and inclination to follow up with constructive behaviour when responding to follower coping attempts (May et al., 2014). In addition, one of the few research studies into coping with abusive supervision and well-
being found employees were more likely to use avoidance-focused (non-assertive, non-confrontational) coping strategies. Yagil et al. (2011), in their study on follower coping responses to abusive supervision in two employee samples, found that while problem-focused coping was associated with positive affect, most of their participants chose emotion-focused coping strategies and, in particular, avoidance-focused coping responses. Yagil et al.’s finding corresponds with research that reported followers withdraw and/or leave in the face of abuse delivered by organisational psychopaths (Boddy, 2011b). These findings support the proposition that if an individual feels they cannot avoid the stressor, or their attempts to cope with the stressor do not work, this may lead to “learned helplessness,” when the individual gives up, resulting in them experiencing higher levels of stress outcomes and longer-term harm after unsuccessful coping over time (Goh et al., 2010; Seligman, 1992). Yagil et al. concluded that individual employees do not know how to cope effectively with abusive supervision.

It is generally maintained in the literature that problem-focused coping is more effective in perceived controllable situations, whereas emotion-focused coping may be better in situations where the individual has limited or little control (e.g., Dewe et al., 2010; O'Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2009). There is some support in the literature for this proposition. One study with a sample of 109 college students found that individuals who are capable of deploying both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies to fit the demands of the stressor experience experienced lower levels of distress; that is when they employed problem-focused for controllable stressors (taking an exam) and emotion-focused for uncontrollable stressors (the terminal illness of a friend; Roussi, Miller, & Shoda, 2000). A longitudinal study with a community sample of 72 adults found appraised control over the stressor significantly predicted the type of coping, such that greater control was associated more with problem-focused coping and less with emotion-focused coping (Zakowski, Hall,
Klein, & Baum, 2001). Therefore, if the situation is perceived as uncontrollable or previous coping efforts have failed, as is likely in the case of destructive leadership, emotion-focused attempts to minimise distress are likely to be employed. Two studies researching coping with abusive supervision found respondents dealing with abuse from their manager reported using emotion-focused coping, specifically avoidance coping (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011).

One of the emotion-focused coping strategies, seeking social support, including emotional and instrumental support, have been posited as an important coping resource to alleviate stress and strain and promote well-being at work (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; O'Driscoll & Brough, 2010; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). There has been considerable research on the role of social support in mitigating the negative impact of stressors, but the mechanism by which it reduces strain and enhances well-being is not well-understood (Dewe et al., 2010). There have been a number of mechanisms proposed in the literature, for example: that social support can have a direct effect on reducing strain; that those who have access to social support are less likely to experience strain and are likely to have greater well-being than those who do not; that social support may have a buffering effect by protecting individuals from potentially harmful consequences, moderating the stressor-strain relationship; or it may be a mediating variable, that the stressor induces the affected individual to seek support (Dewe et al., 2010; Viswesvaran et al., 1999).

Irrespective of which theoretical mechanism is preferred, there is considerable evidence for the beneficial effects of social support in relation to work stress, though limited evidence of its role in the relationship between destructive leadership and strain (Martinko et al., 2011). As an interpersonal stressor, destructive leadership threatens the abused subordinate's social support, potentially reducing their external resources. Strategies for gaining social support in the workplace, such as from effective ingratiation tactics, may increase the individual’s
perceived control, and this feeling of control (e.g., the perceived ability to cope with stressors) has been argued to improve individuals' coping abilities (Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007). Alternatively, it may be that peer support provides a buffering effect in the face of a common enemy, the abusive manager. Seeking social support in order to discuss experiences with sympathetic colleagues, or to express anger or frustration may provide the emotional support necessary to cope with the abuse and adverse work conditions created by their manager (van Emmerik, Euwema, & Bakker, 2007). Furthermore, cross-domain buffering theory proposed that social support in one domain (e.g., that of coworkers) may buffer the negative effects in another domain (e.g., abusive supervisor; Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002).

The role played by social support may depend on a number of factors, such as the situation, the type of social support being provided, and the stressor being confronted (Dewe et al., 2010). For example, when dealing with destructive leadership behaviours, social support offered by colleagues may exacerbate the negative impact of this stressor if it confirms the aversive nature of the stressor. Social support may also encourage the individual to ruminate on the negative aspects of their experience, particularly if the individual is susceptible to emotional contagion and easily influenced by the emotions of others (Wu & Hu, 2009). There is some evidence to suggest that negative interactions (e.g., causing feelings of resentment or shame, making critical remarks, failing to provide the promised help, social undermining) have been found to negate the benefits of social support on psychological well-being (Lincoln, 2000). Coworkers are likely to also be engaging in self-protective behaviours against the abuse of their common manager, which could lead to a lack of positive support for victimized colleagues. Indeed, employees report lowered levels of friendliness and communication under the abusive leadership of organisational psychopaths (Boddy, 2011b).
More investigation into the role of social support in mitigating the effects of destructive leadership is needed. One study found the impact of perceived abusive supervision reduced when peer support was high (Hobman, Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2009) and, conversely, another study found the impact of perceived abusive supervision on emotional exhaustion was stronger when perceived coworker support was high (Wu & Hu, 2009). One explanation offered for this finding was the reverse buffering effect, that support from coworkers may remind individuals of the negative aspects of the work environment and aggravate their discomfort. Therefore, it may be that a reduction in stress is more likely to be experienced when victims are provided with social support from outside the organisation (e.g., emotional support from friends and family, or instrumental and informational support, such as guidance and advice from a trusted advisor external to the workplace). In support of this proposition, cross-domain buffering theory suggests that family sources of social support can buffer workplace stress by engendering feelings of belonging and solidarity. This buffering results in improved mood and perceptions of the workplace as a less aversive place. In summary, supportive relationships in one domain, the family, may compensate for less desirable relationships at work (Duffy et al., 2002).

Further research is required to investigate functional versus dysfunctional coping strategies employed by followers to deal with the stressor of destructive leadership. Yagil et al.’s (2011) Coping with Abusive Supervision Scale, based on the cognitive model of stress and coping (Harvey et al., 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), measured five coping strategies: ingratiation, direct communication, avoidance of contact, support-seeking, and reframing. However, Yagil et al.’s scale focused on positive coping strategies when responding to destructive leadership behaviours and does not advance our understanding of commonly used, less effective coping strategies that may increase the severity of outcomes over time. While May et al. (2014) did include both functional (e.g., ingratiation, negotiating better
treatment from the leader) and dysfunctional responses (e.g., retaliation by verbally attacking or ridiculing the supervisor and/or their co-workers), they acknowledged that the possible strategies they posited to cope with destructive leadership were not exhaustive.

Finding a consistent taxonomy of coping behaviours has remained elusive (Brough, O'Driscoll, & Kalliath, 2005). Skinner et al. (2003) argued that existing coping models failed to explain the full range of coping responses. Skinner et al.’s meta-analysis of the coping literature proposed a theoretical structure of 12 families of coping behaviours. These 12 coping categories included: problem solving, information seeking, opposition, negotiating, and self-reliance (problem-focused coping); and seeking support, delegation, accommodation/distracting, submission, helplessness, escape, and isolation/withdrawal (emotion-focused coping). Skinner et al.’s categories of coping behaviours provide a useful and comprehensive framework for analysing a fuller range of coping responses to destructive leadership. It has been utilised in subsequent coping research (e.g., Koole, 2009).

Given the ongoing discussion in the literature as to which coping theory/taxonomy best explains coping behaviours, and the limited field research into coping specifically with destructive leadership, an exploratory approach was adopted in this research. Qualitative questions were employed to investigate the behaviours employees found harmful, the coping strategies they chose in response to the perceived threat of exposure to destructive leadership, and how they coped with the resultant stress outcomes, such as emotional, psychological, and physical harm. The subsequent data were analysed through the lenses of Yagil et al. and Skinner et al.’s coping frameworks reviewed above. This study is discussed in Chapter 5.

In the context of destructive leadership, it is difficult to employ another form of coping, proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Proactive coping describes efforts undertaken in advance of exposure to the stressor to prevent or modify its impact. Proactive coping distinguishes itself from the reactive forms of coping described above, which are
enacted after the person has encountered the stressor. While it may not be possible to prevent this stressor from occurring in the first place, it may be possible to modify the potential impact of destructive leadership on followers. The next section reviews approaches to follower interventions that will assist followers to acquire the resources and skills to tackle destructive leadership behaviours when they arise in a way that is more likely to preserve their well-being.

**Interventions to Maintain Follower Well-being**

While experiencing positive, supportive relationships with direct managers can significantly offset workplace stressors and can reduce overall stress experiences, conversely, experiencing aversive relationships and negative interactions with supervisors is a significant cause of occupational stress (O'Driscoll & Brough, 2010; Sparks et al., 2001). If Kellerman (2004a and 2004b) and Kraskova et al. (2013) are correct in their propositions that all leaders are likely at some time to cause negative interactions with followers that will create stress, it is argued in this thesis that more than leadership development programs are required. It would be effective to also employ interventions that protect followers from potential harm caused by destructive leadership behaviours. Rather than focusing purely on trying to change the behaviour of the offending leader, whether intentional or not, a more effective approach would be to improve the personal resiliency of followers to destructive leadership (Clements & Washbush, 1999; Cotton, 2008; Hollander, 1992; Kellerman, 2008; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla et al., 2007). However, there is scarce empirical research investigating the most appropriate psychological interventions to assist susceptible followers in coping with the specific occupational stressor of experiencing destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., Pelletier, 2010).

A review of the *stress management intervention* (SMI) literature for dealing with occupational stress was conducted in order to inform practice within the context of
destructive leadership (Webster & Brough, 2015). DeFrank and Cooper (1987) proposed a classification system focused on the target of the interventions, highlighting the need for multiple approaches to stress reduction: interventions directed at *individuals* (equipping individuals with skills to manage stress, e.g., coping skills); the *individual/organisational interface* (interactions between individuals and their workplace, e.g., level of organisational and social support); and *organisations* (the organisational context, e.g., code of conduct, counselling services). When designing interventions, the foci identified by DeFrank and Cooper are often embedded in a tripartite framework that describes three levels of SMIs: *primary prevention* organisational interventions to eliminate stressors from the work environment and prevent stress (e.g., sanction or remove the destructive leader; put policies, procedures, and practices in place that promote positive values and protect the well-being of employees); *secondary prevention* interventions, detecting stress and providing stress management skills (e.g., resilience and coping training for individuals to deal with the stressor of destructive leadership); and *tertiary prevention* interventions to rehabilitate stressed workers (e.g., providing safe reporting mechanisms, counselling, mediation, workplace conferencing; Bond et al., 2010; Dewe, 1994; Murphy, 1988). To date, much of the SMI research has focused predominantly on secondary prevention stress management interventions for individuals, with cognitive-behavioural programs producing larger effect sizes in reducing distress, at least in the short term (Murphy, 1996; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & van Dijk, 2001), with limited evidence of individual interventions producing long-term effects (Giga, Noblet, Faragher, & Cooper, 2003; Lamontagne, Keegel, Louie, Ostry, & Landsbergis, 2007). To maximise their effectiveness, secondary prevention interventions are best held in organisations with strong governance frameworks and explicit organisational support for well-being programs (primary
prevention), as well as effective mechanisms to support staff after a stressful interaction (tertiary interventions; Brough, Brown, & Biggs, in press).

One of the criticisms of SMI is the failure of intervention design to be theory-based (Dewe, 1994). In this thesis four theoretical approaches are proposed to underpin an effective secondary prevention stress management intervention, designed to improve well-being through increased resiliency and coping skills in employees experiencing occupational stress as a result of the effects of destructive leadership (Webster & Brough, 2015). These four approaches include: (a) stress inoculation training (SIT; Saunders, Driskell, Johnston, & Salas, 1996); (b) positive psychology techniques (Seligman, 1992; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000); (c) Acceptance Commitment Therapy/Training techniques (ACT; Bond & Bunce, 2000; Burton, Pakenham, & Brown, 2010); and (d) career management strategies to increase perceptions of personal control and enhance career resilience (Vuori, Toppinen-Tanner, & Mutanen, 2012). These four theoretical approaches are discussed in detail next.

**Follower interventions to build psychosocial resilience.** Three interventions, based on cognitive behavioural principles, relevant to addressing the stressor of destructive leadership, are: SIT, positive psychology, and ACT. To date, the concept of SIT has been utilised in organisations to mitigate the effects of psychological and emotional distress as a result of stress, burnout, and/or physical injury (Foley & Stone, 1988; Meichenbaum, 1996; Saunders et al., 1996; Van der Hek & Plomp, 1997). SIT emerged from an attempt to integrate research on the role of cognitive and affective factors in coping processes with the emerging technique of cognitive behaviour modification. SIT has been implemented to help individuals cope with the aftermath of exposure to stressful events and on a preventative basis to “inoculate” them to future and longer term stressors (Cotton, 2008; Meichenbaum, 1996).
It is proposed by this researcher that the same principles used in SIT may be useful in building employees’ awareness of the potential harm resulting from destructive leadership behaviours. For example, how employees recognise early in the relationship when they may potentially fall victim to such behaviours, and what techniques they can employ to develop resiliency to prevent or minimise psychological, emotional, and/or physical harm. In essence, an intervention to inoculate them to the effects of destructive leadership. Meichenbaum (1996) recommends three overlapping phases of SIT strategies, described in Table 6, which this researcher proposes can be applied to an organisational setting when dealing with the effects of destructive leadership. SIT techniques include increasing knowledge and awareness of stress triggers, providing reading materials, problem articulation skills, describing emotions likely to be experienced on the job, focusing on the transient nature of unpleasant situations, conflict resolution, and self-regulatory training (Meichenbaum, 1996; Van der Hek & Plomp, 1997; Waung, 1995).

Based on a meta-analysis of 37 SIT studies, Saunders et al. (1996) concluded that SIT is likely to be effective for non-clinical groups with “normal” levels of anxiety, such as targets of destructive leadership. In this context, SIT may be effective in reducing state anxiety and enhancing performance under the stress of working for an abusive supervisor. Of the 37 studies reviewed, three were conducted in an occupational setting. All three studied teacher stress and found support for the positive effect of SIT in reducing teacher stress and anxiety resulting from multiple stressors, including relationships with supervisors (Saunders et al., 1996).
### Table 6

**Phases of stress inoculation training (SIT) applicable to destructive leadership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of stress inoculation training (SIT)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptualisation phase</td>
<td>Establish a collaborative relationship between employees and the trainer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Educate employees about the nature and impact of the stress (i.e., how to recognise specific destructive leadership behaviours)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Encourage employees to identify and view the perceived threat as a problem to be solved</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Help them to distinguish between which elements of the problem they may be able to change and those which they cannot (which may be especially useful with destructive leadership)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Teach employees to set specific short, medium, and long term coping and resilience-building goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill acquisition phase</td>
<td>Education (i.e., follower style)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Skills practice (i.e., emotional self-regulation, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, using social support systems, acceptance of uncomfortable emotions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and follow-through phase:</td>
<td>Help employees to identify high risk situations and warning signs to prevent harm (i.e., to identify destructive leadership behaviours when they occur and plan mitigation strategies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Encourage employees to help others with similar problems (social support)</td>
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</table>
Results of a study investigating the efficacy of SIT in reducing stress in student nurses suggested SIT may be a promising approach, given it reduced anxiety and negative affectivity in the experimental group, but interpretation of the results was limited by the small sample (Foley & Stone, 1988). SIT was found to effectively reduce occupational stress in a sample of 60 registered acute-care nurses over a four-month period (West, Horan, & Games, 1984). Flaxman and Bond (2010b) found that SIT, delivered as part of a stress management program in two large local government organisations, was effective in reducing psychological distress across a three-month assessment period. While SIT appears to offer a useful component to stress management interventions, due to the limited evidence of the efficacy of SIT for non-clinical, workplace populations, features of the SIT approach were included in the intervention, and additional cognitive behavioural based approaches were investigated to complement SIT techniques.

Traditional stress management interventions, such as teaching employees coping skills, have been criticised as having limited enduring effect on employee well-being and performance (Cotton & Hart, 2003; Ivancevich et al., 1990). Stress management training (SMT) has been shown to have been moderately effective in improving employees’ psychological health (Flaxman & Bond, 2010a). SMT has typically been based on principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). More recently, the focus has moved to interventions to increase psychosocial resilience based on two areas of psychology that have emerged within the CBT movement: positive psychology (Seligman, 1992, 2002) and ACT (Burton et al., 2010). Resilience-building programs have been reported as showing some efficacy (e.g., Pipe et al., 2012), with resilience in this context being defined as “positive adaptation and normal functioning following exposure to a significant threat” (Zellars, Justice, & Beck, 2011, p. 6).
Positive psychology, founded by Martin Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), is primarily concerned with using psychological theory, research, and intervention techniques to understand the positive and adaptive aspects of human behaviour, especially in relation to reducing anxiety and depression resulting from stress. Positive psychology strategies are designed to help individuals change negative styles of thinking in order to change their feelings, even in situations where they experience negative emotions and/or helplessness. Tactics include reviewing life satisfaction, identifying personal values and signature strengths, and using mindfulness techniques to stay in the moment, rather than ruminating about the past or worrying about the future (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Burton et al., 2010; Gander, Proyer, Ruch, & Wyss, 2012; Pipe et al., 2009; Pipe et al., 2012).

A review of 15 studies examining the effects of positive psychology interventions in organisations revealed these interventions seem to enhance employee well-being and tend to decrease stress and anxiety (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Bakker, 2013).

ACT, also a cognitive behavioural and mindfulness-based approach, uses a range of techniques designed to increase psychological flexibility and facilitate values based action (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006). ACT promotes six core processes to increase psychological flexibility and resilience: (a) choosing acceptance rather than avoiding negative emotions; (b) cognitive defusion, changing the interaction with thoughts to defuse the believability of unhelpful thoughts; (c) self-observation, being aware of one’s thoughts and experiences without attachment to them; (d) being present or mindful so an individual can experience the world more directly, in the moment, rather than ruminating about the past or worrying about the future; (e) using personal values to drive purposeful action; and (f) committed action aligned to personal values (Harris, 2009; Hayes et al., 2006). Techniques to provide affected followers with the opportunity to choose a more constructive response to abusive supervision may include: practising mindfulness exercises to increase present
moment awareness and reduce the struggle with undesirable and aversive thoughts and emotions; completing a values inventory; and completing an action plan to facilitate clarification of goals and actions. Research suggests that including ACT techniques in workplace stress management training interventions is suitable for addressing work-related stress (Bond & Bunce, 2000; Brinkborg, Michanek, Hesser, & Berglund, 2011; McConachie, McKenzie, Morris, & Walley, 2014; Öst, 2014; Stafford-Brown & Pakenham, 2012). Furthermore, it is found to be particularly beneficial for participants experiencing psychological distress (Flaxman & Bond, 2010b), with one study demonstrating that both SIT and ACT have been found to be equally effective in reducing psychological distress at work (Flaxman & Bond, 2010a).

No research has investigated the efficacy of using SIT, positive psychology, and/or ACT, either individually or combined, to reduce stress caused by experiencing destructive leadership. This researcher proposes that adopting a combination of these processes in an intervention will better enable individuals to cope effectively with destructive leadership by teaching them to identify destructive leadership behaviours early and to address such behaviours assertively, before they can cause harm. If the toxic behaviour was ongoing, psychosocial strategies (e.g., reaffirming individuals’ personal values, and providing participants with a framework within which to choose a response) may enable individuals to cope with the psychological and emotional distress caused by this stressor (Bond & Bunce, 2000), although limited research into stress management training on physiological symptoms has been conducted (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008).

**Follower interventions to build career resilience.** Interventions based on cognitive behavioural principles have been found to be more effective when combined with techniques to increase individuals’ personal resources (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). Engaging individuals in their own career development has been identified as one strategy to increase
personal resources, subsequently reducing workplace stressors (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997). A review of interventions based on career resilience theory will now be discussed. In contrast to the literature on career success and satisfaction, less attention has been given to what happens when careers go badly (Kidd, 2008). Kidd (2008) found in a study of 89 UK workers that the most common negative career experience was interpersonal difficulties with their manager, such as working for an aggressive, undermining, or unsupportive boss. These negative career experiences lead to many negative emotions, including unhappiness, dejection, anxiety, frustration, and feelings of worthlessness (Kidd, 2008). Given the effect destructive leadership has on followers’ careers and job satisfaction, career management skills are likely to enhance followers’ personal resources and, as a result, their sense of control. London (1997) suggested individuals high in career resilience, defined as an individual’s “resistance to career disruption in a less than optimal environment” (London, 1983, p. 621), are better able to cope with the strong emotions generated by a negative work situation, such as manager abuse, interpersonal conflict, or unfair treatment. London (1997) proposed that lack of support in building career resilience can result in dysfunctional or destructive coping strategies when confronted with career barriers.

Destructive leaders have been shown to create unpredictable work environments, leading to a negative effect on individuals’ well-being, interpersonal relationships, and careers, for example, through creating conflict, harming a follower’s reputation, or by taking credit for their work (Boddy et al., 2015; Webster, Brough, & Daly, 2016). Career resilience interventions focus on encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own career development in an unpredictable work environment. Career resilience can be enhanced by training interventions that help individuals interpret career barriers accurately, deal with strong, negative emotions, and formulate coping strategies that remove the barriers, by reframing their ideas, repositioning their energies, and/or changing career direction (London,
Career management skills training may assist individuals with their sensemaking (the ongoing process through which individuals attempt to make sense of the circumstances in which they find themselves and determine how the situations affect them) when facing adverse career experiences, by enabling them to evaluate their choices and choose an appropriate response (Zellars et al., 2011).

A group training intervention to enhance individuals’ career management skills has been shown to improve career resilience and reduce mental distress symptoms (e.g., Vuori et al., 2012). Resiliency is defined as more than self-management of one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions in response to traumatic workplace experiences. Building resiliency assists individuals to be able to restore their sense of well-being following an adverse event (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). Therefore, including components to enable followers to improve their career management skills (e.g., identifying their strengths, finding the means to attain career-related resources, solve interpersonal conflicts with their supervisor/manager, and learning concrete means for managing their own career), as well as inoculating them against career barriers (e.g., providing them with the ability to anticipate setbacks and giving them the skills to cope or to adjust to their work environment), are likely to be essential techniques when dealing with the stressor of destructive leadership (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013; Vuori et al., 2012). Without career management skills, followers are likely to “unwillingly stay” in their job, which may lead to longer term harm to their well-being (Webster, Brough & Daly, 2016). While most SMT programs include cognitive-behavioural techniques to build personal resilience, with a goal setting component, there are few research studies into the efficacy of training programs to improve career resilience and career well-being. The author could find no studies evaluating the impact of career resilience training on individuals’ ability to cope with the stressor of destructive leadership.
Due to the psychological, emotional, physical, and career harm reported as a result of being subjected to destructive leadership behaviours, it is proposed in this thesis that an intervention that draws on a combination of stress management training techniques, based on theoretical foundations of CBT, SIT, positive psychology, ACT, and career resilience, is likely to be useful in improving follower well-being by enabling them to become more resilient to destructive leadership behaviours. Such an intervention formed the basis of the research study discussed in Chapter 6.

**Challenges to implementation of individual follower interventions.** It is difficult to find a compromise between administering an effective intervention that employs appropriate theoretical components with an optimal research design (e.g., adheres to a randomised procedure when enrolling organisational employees to participate in a longitudinal study), and one that facilitates active participation in an intervention that fulfils organisational requirements and is sponsored by the executive (Nielsen, Taris, & Cox, 2010). Individual interventions still dominate the stress management intervention literature, and many such interventions include group training sessions (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). However, interventions with a preventative focus have had limited evaluation of outcomes and any reported effects of the intervention on outcomes have been typically small (Murphy, 1996). This may be due to the challenges in conducting SMI research in organisations (Biggs & Brough, 2015a; Brough & Biggs, 2015; Nielsen, 2000; Wickstrom, 2000). Implementing the data collection activities in the workplace is often inconvenient and there can be many constraints to address, for example, accommodating shift workers, or releasing staff from operational duties for the intervention. Higher participation rates can often be gained by holding the intervention on site; however, this can lead to interruptions when employees are called away from sessions for work reasons.
Support from executive and local managers (champions) has been found to be crucial to effective participation and implementation of interventions (Biggs & Brough, 2015a; Giga et al., 2003). However, executive organisational priorities can change over the months of a longitudinal study, and competing projects can be undertaken, altering the level of support provided to the study. Commitment from employees is required for successful data collection, especially for longitudinal designs, when there are often varying interests across different parties. It can be difficult to find a control group for comparison, especially if relying on third-party managers to recruit participants. “Waiting” control group participants may feel data collection is too demanding when they are not participating in the intervention, even if they will receive the program at a later date (Nielsen, 2000). Alternatively, it may not be ethical to keep the control group waiting for the intervention long enough to carry out longitudinal analyses (Pipe et al., 2009). These factors often negatively affect the ability to include a control group and on adequacy of sample sizes.

Employees are not passive recipients to interventions. Therefore, the role of process factors in intervention research has been highlighted (Biggs & Brough, 2015b). Lack of support for the intervention, employee readiness to change, employee perceptions of the value and relevance of the intervention, level of manager support, and adequacy of managerial follow-up are all factors that influence implementation and participant outcomes such as well-being (Dewe et al., 2010).

To address the potential barriers discussed above, interventions must be designed to be practical, highly relevant to the workplace, and as interactive as possible. Teams with high levels of manager support are more likely to be encouraged to implement the intervention back in the workplace and this can mediate the effect of the intervention. However, this may be difficult to influence if the manager’s behaviour is the stressor. In addition to level of manager support, other external factors that have been identified as
uncontrollable are the need for executive sponsorship to implement an organisation-wide intervention, the executive team choosing the departments/teams they wish to participate in the intervention, managers selecting employees for participation, and the readiness of the individuals selected to use the skills learned (Pipe et al., 2012; Wickstrom, 2000). These challenges were considered by the researcher in relation to the design of an intervention to enhance resiliency and coping skills in the context of destructive leadership.

Despite these implementation challenges, organisational/field research may be able to identify and test potential solutions to coping with destructive leadership that are not possible to examine in traditional experimental research. To determine whether this has been achieved, the effectiveness of interventions to assist followers to manage the stressor of destructive leadership must be evaluated. Due to the difficulty of controlling the influence of external factors to the intervention process itself, it has been recommended that an evaluation be made of the extent to which the intervention was implemented as intended, including recording participation in the intervention (Biggs & Brough, 2015b; Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2013). Furthermore, SMI research has been criticised for the paucity of studies that conduct follow-up assessment of the effectiveness of the interventions and, when follow-up assessment is included, the variable range of outcome assessments employed, which prevents easy comparison of intervention effectiveness (Lamontagne et al., 2007; van der Klink et al., 2001). Finally, attention has been drawn to the importance of evaluating both micro processes (e.g., increased participant resilience and well-being) and macro processes (e.g., participant attendance and participant appraisal of quality of intervention), when evaluating the implementation of an individual-level, secondary prevention stress management intervention (Biggs & Brough, 2015b). The specific evaluation factors, micro, and macro processes discussed above were incorporated into the design of the follower intervention discussed in Chapter 6.
Tertiary interventions to address harm to followers. It is acknowledged that while interventions to build resilience to stressors may assist in preventing future harm, a number of employees are likely to have already been targeted by destructive leadership practices during the course of their career, with significant negative impact on their psychological, emotional, and physical health (Lipman-Blumen, 2005). The efficacy of tertiary stress management interventions is not the subject of this research thesis, but for the sake of completeness it is included in this literature review. In addition to a consideration of primary and secondary prevention interventions, tertiary interventions, such as providing employee assistance programs and counselling support, may be useful in addressing the effects of harm caused by the workplace stressor, destructive leadership. However, the evidence suggests their success may be short lived (Berridge et al., 1992; Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; Dewe, 1994; Ivancevich et al., 1990). A review of the literature suggests little research has been conducted into how organisations address the negative impacts of destructive leadership “after the fact” (Kellerman, 2004a; Lipman-Blumen, 2005). Mediation that involves bringing the perpetrator and victim together as accused and accuser may not be appropriate or helpful in the context of destructive leadership. One approach that may effectively address the significant harm caused by exposure to destructive leaders is workplace conferencing, based on a restorative justice approach. This approach has been employed to address the effects of leader bullying (Thorsborne, 1999).

Principles of restorative justice have been applied to workplace dilemmas through workplace conferencing, for example, when dealing with conflict or broken relationships in a workplace context, addressing internal staff complaints and grievances, and/or inappropriate behaviours from employees and managers as they arise (Davey, 2007; Moore, 1996; Thorsborne, 1999; Wachtel, 1999). Restorative practices offer those who have been harmed the opportunity to have the harm acknowledged and amends made. Sometimes this approach
is referred to as “transformational justice,” when it can do more than restore the person to the way they were before, but goes on to create a healing and transformational experience for all parties (Liebmann, 2007; Moore, 1996). With the formation in 1995 of Transformative Justice Australia, workplace conferences have been conducted to deal with inadequate and abusive management in organisations, including abusive supervision at a television station and at a coal mine (Moore, 1996).

In addition, in the US, Fitzgerald (2006) pioneered the use of *corporate circles* to build trust in organisations by addressing conflict, resolving disputes, and rebuilding damaged workplace relations. Corporate circles, like workplace conferences, bring together those people who are affected by abuse or bullying. Circles focus on providing a safe environment, where participants sit in a circle and feel safe to share their perceptions about what has been happening in the workplace, to express even negative feelings, and explain how they have been impacted (e.g., by interpersonal conflict, group conflict). The group discusses how best to repair any harm, and how to prevent future conflict (Fitzgerald, 2006).

There are some risks associated with using interventions based on restorative justice principles in the context of destructive leadership. One key principle of restorative justice is that the offender makes admission of the offending and takes responsibility for their actions (Liebmann, 2007; Moore, 1996; Wallis & Tudor, 2008). If this does not happen, as is likely with destructive leaders, the victim can feel abused again and further harmed. Where it is deemed by the facilitator that there is a risk the offender will not admit offending, accept accountability for their behaviour, or express remorse for their actions, two options are open: indirect mediation between the parties, without a face-to-face meeting; or a workplace circle between executive management and the victim (excluding the offending destructive leader), with the organisational community accepting responsibility for the harm the organisation has caused through the behaviour of the destructive leader and exploring ways to prevent it
happening again (Wallis & Tudor, 2008). This thesis focuses on strategies to prevent harm to followers, rather than investigating post harm interventions, such as workplace conferencing or corporate circles. However, restorative justice interventions present an alternative, complementary approach to stress prevention interventions that warrants further research in the context of destructive leadership (Webster & Brough, 2015).

**Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the role of followers in destructive leadership, including factors that might make them susceptible to abuse. It provided an overview of theory and research on follower responses to destructive leadership and how targets may choose to cope with the psychological, emotional, and physical effects of destructive leadership behaviours. Much is still to be learned about the interaction within the follower and destructive leader dyad, with few field studies having investigated follower coping strategies in the wake of destructive leadership. Conceptual papers propose that conformers are more likely to use passive, submissive, or avoidant coping strategies, while colluders may be perceived by destructive leaders as using constructive, assertive responses to their leadership. However, if colluders over time decide to undermine or overthrow the destructive leader, they may be perceived by the leader as exhibiting aggressive responses, and the leader is then likely to feel justified in retaliating. Irrespective of the follower’s coping response, if the leader does not have the resources to choose a constructive response, they will continue to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, and harm is likely to be caused to followers’ well-being. Possible interventions to reduce harm to followers were discussed, including an intervention to build follower resilience to destructive leadership behaviours, based on principles from multiple theoretical frameworks: CBT, SIT, positive psychology, ACT, and career resilience.

This chapter concludes the literature review of the theoretical frameworks relevant to antecedents to engagement by leaders in destructive leadership behaviours, follower
responses to destructive leadership, and theories that inform strategies to mitigate the impact of destructive leadership on followers. These theoretical typologies and frameworks guide our understanding of the causes and effects of destructive leadership, and followers’ responses to it, but there is a dearth of field studies that have tested their efficacy and validity.

The purpose of this thesis is to address the research questions (refer p. 13) by undertaking research that contributes to practical, realistic interventions that practitioners can employ that will assist in addressing the issue of destructive leadership in organisations. The next three chapters describe each of three studies conducted as part of this thesis: Study 1, a quantitative, cross-sectional analysis of archival data, investigating the traits that may predispose or inhibit leader engagement in destructive leadership behaviours; Study 2, a cross-sectional, mixed methods analysis of the coping strategies followers report after experiencing leadership behaviours they perceive as toxic; and Study 3, a longitudinal, quasi-experimental study, which trials and evaluates an intervention designed to assist followers employed in a healthcare organisation to maintain well-being through building resiliency, within the context of destructive leadership.
Chapter 4. Antecedents to derailing leadership traits: The mediating roles of negative affectivity and self-regulation traits (Study 1)

Statement of contribution to co-authored published paper

This chapter includes a co-authored paper. The status details of the co-authored paper, including all authors, are:


My contribution to the paper involved the design of the study, the collection and provision of data, providing direction on the data analysis, and as primary author in writing the journal article.

A copy of the abstract is provided in Appendix B.

(Signed) (Date) 26th October 2015
Vicki Webster (Corresponding Author)

(Countersigned) (Date) 21st October 2015
Supervisor: Paula Brough

(Countersigned) (Date) 31st March 2015
Co-Author: Suzanne Drummond
In spite of all the work on leadership that assumes it by definition to be good… we exercise power, authority and influence in ways that do harm. This harm is not necessarily deliberate. It can be the result of carelessness or neglect. But this does not make it less injurious and, in some cases, calamitous. (Kellerman, 2004 p. xiii).

The past three decades has produced an increase in research assessing the “dark side” of leadership performance under the research stream of destructive leadership; variously described as abusive, derailing, toxic, and tyrannical leadership (e.g., Einarsen, et al., 2010; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Martinko et al., 2013). Most research within the destructive leadership field has focused on the outcomes of destructive leadership (e.g., Tepper, 2007; Webster et al., 2016), while the antecedents of destructive leadership have received considerably less attention. It is clear, for example, that destructive leadership behaviours are often employed by ‘toxic’ leaders to resolve goal blockages that thwart their own achievement aspirations (e.g., Bardes & Piccolo, 2010). Leaders with a high need for independence and personal achievement are especially likely to perceive non-attainment of goals as a significant failure, and anticipated failure commonly produces negative emotions that can lead to engagement in destructive behaviours (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982).

The research reported in this article extends current discussions examining specific personality traits of leaders associated with negative leadership performance. In these discussions maladaptive individual differences have been conceptualised as extreme variants of adaptive or “bright side” traits. Theoretical explanations of the “dark side of leadership” describe the common negative personality characteristics exhibited by destructive leaders (Judge et al., 2009), including for example, the ‘Dark Triad’ of personality traits consisting of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Boddy, 2015). Indeed, some elements of personality disorders, such as narcissistic traits, are strikingly similar to characteristics actively sought in organisational leaders (i.e., aggressiveness, alertness, dominance,
enthusiasm, extroversion, independence, risk taking, and self-confidence; Board & Fritzon, 2005). Dark side leadership personality traits are often assessed with the Big Five personality test (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and specifically consist of low levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (Judge & LePine, 2007). Negative affectivity, the tendency of an individual to differentially dwell on the negative aspects of themselves and their life, to experience negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, and anger, and to react impulsively to such emotions, has also been positively associated with destructive leadership performance (Schyns, & Schilling, 2013; Tepper, 2007; Watson & Clark, 1984). Individuals with high levels of the trait negative affectivity are particularly sensitive to the minor failures and frustrations of daily life. In contrast, the ‘bright side’ leadership personality is defined as the ability to build and maintain a high performing team and is characterized by the Big Five personality traits of high levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness, and low levels of neuroticism (Hogan et al., 1994).

Recent research attention has focused on the proposed curvilinear relationship between leadership trait characteristics and performance/leadership effectiveness. The key argument here is that leadership traits and behaviours that may be crucial to success in one situation may be unrelated or even negatively related to success in other contexts; i.e., the dark side of bright characteristics and the bright side of dark characteristics (e.g., Furnham, Trickey, & Hyde, 2012; Kaiser et al., 2015). More specifically, it has been suggested that a leader’s personality traits exhibit a curvilinear relationship with their followers’ levels of engagement, well-being and performance. That is, there are negative consequences for both low levels and high levels of bright side personality traits and positive consequences for moderate levels of dark side personality traits (e.g., Judge, et al., 2009). For example, high levels of assertiveness, a person’s tendency to pursue and speak out for their own interests, may bring short term goal achievement, but is also likely to have an adverse effect on
relationships over time (Ames & Flynn, 2007). One aspect which has received surprisingly scant attention within these discussions is the ability of leaders to self-regulate when they have high levels of these ‘bright side’ and ‘dark side’ traits. We argue here that self-regulation is a crucial element for both the prediction of leader derailment and the management of destructive leadership performance.

The Role of Self-Regulation in the “dark side” of Leadership

Self-regulatory processes, such as emotional control (also referred to as emotion management or emotion regulation; Lawrence, Troth, Jordan, & Collins, 2011) have been theorized to result in functional or dysfunctional outcomes, depending on an individual’s ability to regulate negative emotions in response to organisational stressors (Jordan & Lindebaum, 2015; Ruderman, et al., 2001). Low levels of stress tolerance (i.e., the inability to tolerate stressful situations without undue physical or emotional reactions) and low levels of self-awareness (i.e., lack of ability to read one’s emotions and motivations and understand their effects on others) have both been associated with self-regulation impairment (Wang, et al., 2010). For example, leaders low in stress tolerance are more likely to have intense negative reactions to stressors, such as goal blockage, leading to impulsive, ineffective responses. Furnham et al. (2012) demonstrated in a sample of British working adults that the trait of stress tolerance was significantly negatively related to “dark side” traits. In addition, leaders low in self-awareness are unlikely to be aware of their limitations, which may lead them to take on unachievable goals or prevent them delivering the outcomes they desire. They are also more likely to interpret constructive feedback as a threat or a sign of failure and become angry or dismissive, resorting to destructive behaviours (Goleman, 2004). In a test of this specific association, Harms, et al. (2011) demonstrated that self-awareness training was effective in mitigating the negative effects of destructive personality traits within a sample of military cadets. However, empirical research testing these theories in the specific
context of organisational leadership is surprisingly scarce and this is one limitation which is directly addressed by the current research.

We suggest that an individual’s ability to self-regulate their behaviours in the achievement of goals, is an important characteristic of successful leaders. Leaders with high levels of independence and negative affectivity, and with self-regulation impairment are more likely to react to goal blockage by choosing to engage in destructive leadership behaviours. This study therefore investigates the (indirect) effect that negative affectivity and three common self-regulation traits (self-awareness, emotional control, and stress tolerance) have upon the likelihood of leaders engaging in destructive behaviours.

**Leader independence**

A leader’s desire for independence has typically been described as one of the “bright side” personality traits, particularly in Western society, where hierarchical power with a focus on individual achievement is rewarded (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2002). In this study the trait of *independence* is defined as a desire for autonomy and decision-making, without input from others (Schmit et al., 2000). Independence has been incorporated under the Big Five factors as being related to openness to experience (Schmit et al., 2000) and emotional stability (Hogan et al., 1994), and is commonly associated with effective leadership performance (e.g., Judge, Bono, Illies, & Gerhardt, 2002).

It is paradoxical that, as leaders emerge based on their independence and personal achievements, they are promoted into positions that require them to be interdependent, to influence and work through others, so that to be effective they can no longer rely solely on their own skills and efforts (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2002). A shift in focus in the literature to models of shared leadership has emphasised the importance of interdependence. The trait of *interdependence* is defined as a person’s preference to work toward the goals of the group, rather than individual goals, in order to effectively achieve team and organisational goals.
(Fletcher & Kaufer, 2002; Schmit et al., 2000). There is also an established link between personality traits and motivation, that is, that individuals high in independence are likely to be motivated by personalised power, such as the achievement of personal goals (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982), as compared to individuals high in interdependence, who are more likely to be motivated by socialised power, achieving their goals through others (McClelland, 1970). Leaders with a strong need for independence are likely to ignore others’ points of view or requests, and become irritated or argumentative if others persist (Hogan & Hogan, 2001). If the leader remains wedded to their own agenda and fails to listen to others they become susceptible to derailment (Hogan et al., 1994). Thus leaders with high levels of independence may be predisposed to exhibit ‘dark side’ behaviours because they are more likely to be motivated to use any means at their disposal to achieve their personal goals, and to prioritise their personal goals over the needs of the group (Hogan et al., 1994; Krasikova, et al., 2013). However, research to test the hypothesised direct relationship between high levels of independence and the predisposition to exhibit derailing behaviours is surprisingly scarce. Similarly, the impact of the indirect role of negative affectivity and/or self-regulation traits on the negative effects of high levels of “bright side” traits (e.g., assertiveness; Ames & Flynn, 2007) is also scarce.

In the current research it is specifically predicted:

Hypothesis 1: High levels of independence will be positively associated with leadership derailment, and this association will be increased by negative affectivity (H1a), but reduced (mediated) by self-regulation traits (H1b).

The hypothesized relationships between independence and leadership derailing traits are illustrated on Figure 7.
The Role of Negative Affectivity in Destructive Leadership

As noted above, a pertinent area of recent research in the destructive leadership field is the impact that the trait negative affectivity has upon the levels of psychological stress experienced by leaders and consequentially, their good/bad performance outcomes. Individuals with high levels of negative affectivity are typically viewed as more independent, are more likely to perceive failure as a stressor, and in stress situations tend to exhibit a decreased need for affiliation (Watson & Clark, 1984). Krasikova et al. (2013) proposed that negative affectivity (e.g., anxiety and worry) is an important antecedent to a range of destructive leadership behaviours. Krasikova et al. (2013) suggested that if a leader perceives the progress from their current state towards their desired goal is too slow, levels of negative affectivity increase, stimulating actions to reduce this goal attainment discrepancy. In this context, increased negative affectivity is associated with either the anticipation of impending adversities, or the anticipation of an inability to attract rewards, resulting in an increased predisposition to engage in destructive behaviours.

**Figure 7.** Hypothesized main effect and mediating relationships.
Negative affectivity is commonly defined as reducing an individual’s ability to self-regulate their behaviours and reactions (Magno, 2010). Leaders with high levels of negative affectivity are likely to experience greater impulsivity, a key characteristic of destructive leadership performance (Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Conversely, leaders with low levels of negative affectivity are less likely to have intense negative reactions to stressors, and are more likely to engage in self-regulation processes when under stress or when fatigued. These hypothesized relationships between negative affectivity, self-regulation and leadership derailing outcomes are illustrated on Figure 1. Specifically, it is predicted:

Hypothesis 2: Negative affectivity will be negatively associated with each self-regulation trait (self-awareness, stress tolerance, and emotional control) and this association will mediate the effect of the self-regulation traits on the relationship between independence and derailing leadership outcomes.

Study 1 Method

Participants and Procedure

Archival data consisting of leadership profiles collected from $N = 300$ organisational managers during processes for candidate selection, promotion, and leadership development was utilized by this research. Data were collected from individuals across a heterogeneous sample of Australian industries and occupations, with the most common sectors consisting of commercial, not for profit, and government owned corporations ($n = 210$ respondents; 70%). Public sector organisations consisted of federal, state, and local government departments and agencies ($n = 90$ respondents; 30%). The data were collected over two years (2007 to 2008) via a self-report online survey. Limited demographic details of the respondents were made available to the researchers, limiting the level of analysis that could be conducted, such as controlling for tenure or age. Over half of the respondents were male ($n = 192; 64\%$) and
most were Australian (n = 289; 96%), with 11 participants (4%) from New Zealand, the UK, South Africa and Asia.

**Materials**

**Global Personality Inventory (GPI).** Eleven subscales (84 items) of the Global Personality Inventory (GPI; Schmit, et al., 2000) were included in this study. The GPI describes personality traits based on the traditional Big Five model of personality, and also assesses a composite “dark side” scale Derailing Leadership. Independence (8 items; \(a = .67\)) was measured as the independent variable, e.g., “I like the freedom to decide how things are going to be done.” The five facet scales that make up the Derailing Leadership composite were used as the dependent variables: ego-centred (7 items; \(a = .64\)), e.g., “I am continually forced to work with simple-minded people”; manipulating (10 items; \(a = .73\)), e.g., “There are people who deserve to be used for my own purposes”; intimidating (7 items; \(a = .56\)) e.g., “People are afraid to question or contradict me”; micro-managing (7 items; \(a = .53\)), e.g., “Things get done more efficiently when I do them myself”; and passive-aggressive (7 items; \(a = .60\)), e.g., “I find that it is just as effective to block an idea by doing nothing to support it as it is to publicly disagree with the idea.” The mediating variables consisted of: negative affectivity (7 items; \(a = .58\)), e.g., “I am dissatisfied with what I have achieved so far”; and three self-regulation subscales: emotional control (7 items; \(a = .75\)), e.g., “Even when I am upset it is easy for me to control my emotions”; stress tolerance (8 items; \(a = .79\)), e.g., “I worry about things that I know I should not worry about”; and self-awareness (9 items; \(a = .76\)), e.g., “I know what motivates me”

Given the purpose of this data collection, the desire to impress may have influenced respondents’ answers. The impressing facet scale (7 items; \(a = .48\)), e.g., “It is always best to keep important people happy”, was therefore also included to control for any bias in the analysis (Schmit, et al., 2000). The respondents indicated their level of agreement with each
of these GPI items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree; Previsor, 2001). Construct validity has been demonstrated by the scale developers as well as in other leadership research (e.g., Benson & Campbell, 2007; Schmit, et al., 2000).

**Data Analysis**

The tests of mediation were undertaken via bootstrapping using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2012). Following recent advances in the literature regarding the testing of indirect effects (Hayes, 2013), a significant indirect effect is deemed to be present when the confidence intervals for the indirect effect do not contain zero. For each of the bootstrapped analyzes, 95% bias corrected confidence intervals and 5,000 bootstrap resamples were specified. Serial mediation was tested with negative affectivity in the M1 position and the self-regulation variables added as mediators in the M2 position, between independence and each of the five derailing traits, with the control variable, impressing, included as a covariate. As this serial model only enables one mediator in the second position to be tested at one time (e.g., IV → M1 → M2 → DV), three separate analyzes were conducted for each DV, substituting one of the three self-regulation variables in the M2 position each time.

**Study 1 Results**

**Descriptive Results**

The majority of respondents (n = 185; 62%) reported a strong predisposition for exhibiting derailing leadership behaviours, reporting elevated levels of Derailing Leadership traits (70% or higher compared to the norm of Australian managers), e.g., ego-centred (n = 58; 19%), intimidating (n = 86; 29%), manipulative (n = 87; 29%), micro-managing (n = 83; 28%), and passive-aggressive (n = 59; 20%). The means, standard deviations, and correlations between the research variables are displayed in Table 7. As expected,
independence was positively related to the derailing leadership traits (Hypothesis 1). Independence was positively related to negative affectivity (H1a) and negatively related to the self-regulation variables (H1b). Also as expected, negative affectivity was negatively associated with each self-regulation trait (Hypothesis 2). The self-regulation traits were negatively associated with four of the derailing leadership traits. Interestingly, ego-centred was not significantly correlated with any of the self-regulation traits, but was positively correlated with negative affectivity. The significant associations between impressing and all dependent variables (except intimidating) justified its inclusion as a covariate (control variable) in the bootstrap analyzes.

**The Mediating Role of Negative Affectivity and Self-Regulation Traits**

In the serial mediation analysis, independence was found to have a significant direct effect on the derailing leadership traits: ego-centred ($c' = .51, p < .001$), intimidating ($c' = .34, p < .001$), micromanaging ($c' = .32, p < .001$), passive-aggressive ($c' = .20, p < .01$), and manipulating ($c' = .30, p < .001$).

A summary of the significant results for the serial mediation analyses are presented for each of the dependent variables in Table 8 (full results are available on request). The traits of self-awareness and stress tolerance were found to significantly mediate the relationship between independence and some of the leadership derailing traits. Emotional control was not found to mediate these relationships. No indirect pathways predicted ego-centredness. Significant serial indirect effects were observed for self-awareness with three dependent variables: intimidating, micromanaging, and passive-aggressiveness, as well as for stress tolerance with micromanaging and manipulating. As serial mediation posits a causal link between two (or more) mediators, it is necessary to rule out whether their relationship may be due to their shared common cause (i.e., the independent variable; Hayes, 2013).
### Table 7

**Correlations between the research variables of interest (N = 300)**

|   |   | M   | SD  | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    | 7    | 8    | 9    | 10   |
|---|---|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1.|   | Impressing (control) | 3.04 | 1.06 |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 2.|   | Independence (IV)    | 2.66 | 1.08 | .10  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|   |   | **Mediation Variables**   |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 3.|   | Emotional Control     | 3.52 | 1.11 | .27*** | -.17** |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 4.|   | Self-Awareness        | 3.29 | 1.02 | .19**  | -.17** | .42*** |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 5.|   | Stress Tolerance      | 3.45 | 1.15 | .11   | -.18** | .54*** | .40*** |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 6.|   | Negative Affectivity  | 2.57 | 1.22 | -.09  | .22*** | -.37*** | -.45*** | -.37*** |      |      |      |      |      |
|   |   | **Dependent Variables**|     |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 7.|   | Ego-Centred           | 2.58 | 1.30 | .22*** | .46*** | -.05  | -.04  | -.05  | .17** |      |      |      |      |
| 8.|   | Intimidating          | 3.03 | 1.20 | .04   | .36*** | -.12* | -.23*** | -.12*  | .30*** | .37*** |      |      |      |
| 9.|   | Manipulating          | 2.96 | 1.25 | .15*  | .34*** | -.17** | -.21*** | -.23*** | .23*** | .45*** | .43*** |      |      |
|10.|   | Micromanaging         | 3.05 | 1.09 | .13*  | .41*** | -.27** | -.28** | -.34** | .26**  | .38*** | .29*** | .41*** |      |
|11.|   | Passive-aggressive    | 2.86 | 1.11 | .16** | .29*** | -.15** | -.29** | -.21** | .26**  | .23**  | .25*** | .47*** | .26*** |

*Note.* *p* < .05. **p** < .01. ***p** < .001.
Table 8

Unstandardized paths and significant indirect effects for the serial mediation models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Mediator 1</th>
<th>Mediator 2</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Intimidating</td>
<td>.167**</td>
<td>-.242***</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>.335***</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Micromanaging</td>
<td>.167**</td>
<td>-.242***</td>
<td>-.139*</td>
<td>.318***</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Passive-aggressive</td>
<td>.167**</td>
<td>-.242***</td>
<td>-.229**</td>
<td>.197**</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>Stress Tolerance</td>
<td>Micromanaging</td>
<td>.142†</td>
<td>-.132*</td>
<td>-.169**</td>
<td>.318***</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Negative Affectivity</td>
<td>Stress Tolerance</td>
<td>Manipulating</td>
<td>.142†</td>
<td>-.132*</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>.301***</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CI = 95% bias correct confidence interval. a = IV → Mediator 1; d = Mediator 1 → Mediator 2; b = Mediator 2 → DV; c’ = direct effect IV → DV; ab = indirect effect. All indirect effects are significant.

* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001.
Therefore, prior to analyzing the serial mediation models, the partial correlations between negative affectivity and the two significant self-regulation variables were examined after controlling for independence. The results revealed negative affectivity remained significantly correlated with each of the two self-regulation variables after controlling for their shared predictor: self-awareness $r = -.43, p < .001$; and stress tolerance $r = -.35, p < .001$. All of the indirect effects were positive, such that independence increased derailing leadership traits through a process of increasing negative affectivity which decreased self-regulation traits (self-awareness and stress tolerance). No significant effects were found for emotional control. These results provide partial support for the hypothesised relationships (Hypothesis 2).

As this study is cross-sectional in nature, the serial mediating variables were also tested in reverse order to provide further support for our hypothesized direction of relationships (Magno, 2010). Negative affectivity and each of the self-regulation variables were tested in reverse order, such that independence $\rightarrow$ self-regulation $\rightarrow$ negative affectivity $\rightarrow$ derailing behaviours. Impressing was again included as a control covariate. The results revealed no significant relationships, thereby providing support for the direction of relationships tested in the Hypothesis.

**Study 1 Discussion**

This research explored the role that negative affectivity and self-regulatory traits play in mediating the relationship between independence and a predisposition to engage in specific derailing leadership behaviours. Our results confirmed the complexity of the relationships. The hypothesised main effect between independence and the derailing leadership traits was confirmed (Hypothesis 1), while partial support was produced for the mediation hypothesis (Hypothesis 2). Self-awareness and stress tolerance did significantly mediate the relationship between independence and some of the derailing behaviours, after negative affectivity was
included as a mediator. However, emotional control was not found to be a significant mediator between independence and derailing leadership traits. No effects were found for leaders with a predisposition to be ego-centred.

For leaders reporting high levels of independence and negative affectivity, a predisposition to be intimidating, micro-managing, or passive-aggressive was increased by their reduced (suppressed) level of self-awareness. One explanation for this pattern of results may be that negative affectivity makes factors that lead to intimidating, micro-managing, or passive-aggressive behaviours more salient (i.e., fear of conflict, fear of loss of control), reducing the individuals’ ability to have insight into the ineffectiveness of these responses. Another explanation is that as the discrepancy between the current and desired future state broadens, and as leaders’ anxiety about perceived blockage to achievement of their personal goals increases, their ability for self-reflection is impaired. Self-awareness did not significantly mediate the hypothesised path from independence to manipulation. It could be that leaders reporting a strong preference to engage in manipulative behaviours have a good level of self-awareness into their own motivations, actions, and the outcomes they desire, so that negative affectivity does not suppress their self-awareness or their focus on achieving their agenda.

In relation to the mediator of stress tolerance, the results are more difficult to interpret. For leaders reporting a strong preference to be independent and to be micro-managing or manipulating, the more negative affectivity they reported the less predisposed they were to maintain stress tolerance and to regulate their behaviour. However, for leaders reporting a strong preference for passive-aggressive or intimidating behaviours, neither negative affectivity nor stress tolerance mediated the relationship between independence and these potentially derailing behaviours. It may be that in stressful situations passive-aggressive leaders maintain positive affect by avoiding all engagement or confrontation with
the stressor, thus negating any mediation effects. For those with a preference to be intimidating, they may maintain positive affect by using intimidation to overcome any resistance or “bulldoze” their way through any obstacles encountered, and this enables them to achieve their outcomes even in stressful situations, thereby negating any mediation effects. Despite these mixed results, our findings expand Krasikova et al.’s (2013) work by demonstrating that when self-regulation traits were included in the serial mediation models, negative affectivity was influential in increasing the effects of four of the derailing traits (intimidation, passive-aggressiveness, micromanaging, and manipulating) through reducing the effects of the self-regulation mediating traits of self-awareness and stress tolerance.

It was hypothesised that emotional control would reduce engagement in derailing leadership behaviours, e.g., that regulation of negative emotions in response to workplace stressors would result in functional outcomes (Jordan & Lindebaum, 2015; Lawrence et al., 2011). Contrary to expectations, this association was not found to be significant. In this study only one component of emotional regulation (suppression regulation) was analyzed. If enacting emotional control failed to decrease the intensity of the emotion being experienced (i.e., anger or frustration), then attempting to suppress such emotion may actually amplify the experience and increase the likelihood of an impulsive, dysfunctional response.

Negative affectivity and the self-regulation traits were not found to mediate the relationship between independence and a predisposition for ego-centredness. These findings may be explained by the narcissism literature. Leaders showing narcissistic traits are typically highly self-confident, with an inflated view of their own abilities, and are unlikely to consider others’ viewpoints or to engage in self-reflection (Padilla, et al., 2007; Vazire & Funder, 2006). In their efforts to manage the impressions of others and achieve their own self-interests such leaders are likely to employ the tactics required to achieve their goals, believing that they are justified in their behaviours towards others, irrespective of the
circumstances (House & Howell, 1992). As a result, they are unlikely to develop insight into the impact of their behaviour, nor are they likely to see the need to regulate or change their behaviour, even in stressful situations.

An alternative explanation, posited by Campbell, et al. (2011), is that leaders with narcissistic traits employ different self-regulatory mechanisms. This explanation is supported by the descriptive statistics in this study: ego-centredness was not significantly correlated with any of the self-regulation variables. Primary motivators of narcissistic behaviours include self-enhancement, a sense of entitlement, and a need for power. Narcissists are more focused on approaching success or sensation seeking, than avoiding failure or minimizing anxiety. Therefore, they will be less amenable to self-regulatory strategies that present a different view of their capabilities to their own inflated view (building self-awareness), or to dealing with stress-induced anxiety (stress-tolerance). Leaders with high levels of ego-centredness are more likely to use narcissistic self-regulatory strategies, such as bragging, seeking fame, and using self-serving biases to build pride, esteem, and excitement when their goals are met, and expressing anger and aggression when their goals are thwarted. These research findings suggest sub-clinical narcissism should continue to be researched independently, as a sub-category of destructive leadership, to validate theoretical antecedents and self-regulatory processes that specifically predispose leaders to engage in ego-centred, narcissistic behaviours.

**Practical Implications**

Given the strong focus on achievement of results in most organisations, this study highlights the importance of selecting and developing leaders who have, not only a need for independence and individual achievement, but also the self-regulation traits to be successful, without overusing their strengths in a way that may derail them. Based on these findings it is recommended that organisations continue to include personality assessment as an objective
measure to screen out individuals reporting extremely high levels of ego-centredness or negative affectivity. Such assessment can also advise whether an individual reporting higher levels of independence, manipulation, intimidation, micromanaging, and/or passive-aggressiveness has the self-awareness and stress tolerance required to effectively manage the effects of such tendencies (e.g., Judge & LePine, 2007). Doing so can minimize the risk of employing or promoting a leader who may resort to destructive behaviours under pressure.

**Limitations and Future Research**

As with all studies utilizing cross-sectional data, true causality among variables cannot be established. We are, however, confident in the direction of relationships tested in this research because, not only are the hypotheses consistent with theory, but non-significant results were produced when the serial mediating variables were reversed. However, we acknowledge that longitudinal research designs tracking the impact of these personality traits and mediators is necessary to empirically demonstrate causality.

A second research limitation concerns the reliance solely on self-report measures, which presents a potential issue of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). However, a review of misconceptions regarding common method bias has challenged the view that relationships between self-reported variables are necessarily and routinely upwardly biased (Conway & Lance, 2010). Self-reports are deemed appropriate for analysing private events. In this case the constructs of interest related to innate dispositions (e.g., leader personality traits), and as a result self-report measures were considered appropriate to generate accurate representations of respondents’ inner thoughts, affect, and motivations.

**Conclusions**

The results presented here extend current knowledge of the antecedents of five specific destructive leadership traits. Leaders with both dispositional negative affectivity and
a strong need for independence are more likely to be predisposed to derailing behaviours through reduced self-regulatory processes. That is, they have the potential to use derailing behaviours to ensure achievement of their personal goals. These relationships were not evident however, for ego-centred traits, suggesting these individuals will be particularly resistant to feedback, and are unlikely to be able to modify their reactions when achievement of their goals is challenged. Further research in this field, especially the inclusion of longitudinal research designs, is recommended to increase our understanding of the antecedent traits or combination of traits that predict leader derailment over time.
Chapter 5. Fight, flight or freeze: Common responses for follower coping with toxic leadership (Study 2).

This chapter includes a co-authored paper. The bibliographic details of the co-authored paper, including all authors, are:


My contribution to the paper involved the design of the study and qualitative survey, the collection and provision of data, providing direction on the preliminary analysis and categorisation of the data, data analysis, and as primary author in writing the journal article.

A copy of the abstract is provided in Appendix B.

(Signed)  
(Date) 26th October 2015

Vicki Webster (Corresponding Author)

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(Date) 21st October 2015

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The considerable coping literature describes how employees manage a variety of workplace stressors, but few studies have focused on understanding how followers cope with the specific stressor of toxic leadership behaviour. Toxic leadership, also described as abusive supervision and destructive leadership (Krasikova et al., 2013; Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Tepper, 2007), describes leaders who engage in a consistent range of negative behaviours that, if systematic and repeated, cause psychological harm for their followers (Pelletier, 2010). Toxic behaviours include, but are not limited to, intimidating, bullying, manipulating (Machiavellianism), micromanaging, arrogance (narcissism), and engaging in abusive or unethical behaviour. For affected followers toxic leadership behaviours are associated with psychological distress (e.g., anxiety and depression); emotional harm (e.g., emotional exhaustion, fear, and social isolation); and physical health problems (e.g., chronic fatigue and insomnia; Einarsen et al., 2010; Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Tepper, 2007). Field studies investigating the coping strategies of affected employees are limited, despite repeated calls for this research (Martinko et al., 2013; Pelletier, 2010; Yagil et al., 2011). The current research directly responds to these calls by assessing the specific coping strategies adopted by employees who experience toxic leadership.

**Coping Frameworks**

Little consensus can be found among coping researchers on how to conceptualize, classify and measure coping behaviours (Skinner et al., 2003). At the highest level coping has been referred to as an adaptive process, sometimes unconscious and involuntary, that intervenes between a stressor and its psychological, emotional and physiological outcomes, for example the fight, flight or freeze response to stress (Skinner et al. 2003; Vaillant, 1977). At the lowest level coping responses are referred to as numerous real-time actions individuals take to deal with stressful situations (Skinner et al., 2003). Researchers are challenged to construct an organising coping structure that spans the conceptual space between higher level
adaptive processes and specific coping instances. One example of such an organising coping structure is Skinner et al.’s (2003) four level hierarchical coping structure, consisting of: adaptive processes, families of coping, ways of coping, and coping instances. Based on their meta-analysis of existing coping literature, Skinner et al. proposed a theoretical structure of 12 families of coping as an intermediate level between adaptive processes and ways of coping. Their structure denotes that lower order categories are nested within the higher order coping categories, rather than as a delineation between good and bad, healthy and harmful, or mature and immature ways of coping (Valliant, 1977). Skinner et al.’s typology has been independently validated (e.g., Koole, 2009) and provides a useful organizing structure for analysing coping responses to destructive leadership.

To the best of our knowledge, there is only one coping scale specifically focussed on coping instances of followers in response to toxic leadership. Yagil et al. (2011) utilised Lazarus and Folkman’s coping model to develop a specific coping measure for dealing with abusive supervision at work. Yagil et al.’s scale consisted of five coping strategies: ingratiating, direct communication, avoidance of contact, support-seeking, and reframing (Harvey et al., 2007; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Yagil et al.’s study suggested that as employees experienced high levels of abuse they tended to disengage with the leader and use avoidance tactics (i.e., emotion-focused coping; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which was related to high negative affect. Seeking emotional support was also related to increased negative affect. Although associated with positive affect, few respondents reported using problem solving coping responses (i.e., problem-focused coping; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Yagil et al. concluded that followers do not have solutions on how to cope effectively with abusive supervision, and followers’ reliance on support seeking or avoidance responses appeared to prevent them utilising problem-focused coping strategies. This study emphasised
the importance of better understanding the coping strategies followers commonly employ in response to this stressor in order to be able to assist them to access effective coping strategies.

Similarly, Skinner et al. argued that some coping instances fall outside the higher order categorisation of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Four of Skinner et al.’s coping families demonstrate apparent construct overlap with Yagil et al.’s (2011) theoretical framework: problem solving (direct communication); support seeking (support seeking), escape (avoidance of contact) and accommodation (reframing). Skinner et al.’s additional coping families consist of: information seeking, self-reliance, negotiation, as well as perceived maladaptive coping responses of helplessness, delegation, isolation, submission, and opposition. Skinner et al. suggested such responses may be viewed as an indicator of a stressor the individual cannot handle and, depending on the circumstances and the personal resources available to an individual, such coping responses may be regarded as locally adaptive.

In consideration of the above, the current research included both Yagil et al.’s (2011) coping scale and Skinner et al.’s (2003) coping structure to categorise the coping responses reported by followers exposed to toxic leadership. This study, therefore, aims to understand the coping strategies employed by individuals who perceive their leader’s behaviour to be harmful. This research adopted a mixed method approach via the use of open ended survey questions and data analyses based on two theoretical coping models. The key aim of this study is to understand how well these theoretical coping frameworks explain the coping responses adopted by employees adversely affected by toxic leader behaviours. The results of this study have practical implications for how organisations can facilitate the use of effective coping strategies when they respond to victims of abusive leader conduct.
Study 2 Method

Participants and Procedure

A purposive sample of individuals who perceived they had worked or were working for a toxic leader was invited to participate in an electronic survey. Given that victims of destructive leadership are often missed in organisational research, as they are too fearful to participate or have left the organisation (Lipman-Blumen, 2005), this study sought volunteers across multiple organisations. This sampling method also controlled for the effect of other potential confounds, such as specific organisational cultures and work contexts (Padilla et al., 2007; Tepper, 2007). The survey hyperlink was advertised by seven professional human resources, psychology, and university associations across Australia and New Zealand to their members. Of the self-selected respondents, \( N = 76 \) participants reported behaviours consistent with toxic leader behaviour typologies and completed the survey. The majority of these respondents were female \( (n = 54; 70\%) \) and predominantly Australian \( 22 (n = 73; 96\%) \). Most respondents were aged between 30 years and 49 years \( (n = 46; 70\%) \). Eighteen respondents \( (24\%) \) held undergraduate qualifications and 44 respondents \( (58\%) \) had postgraduate qualifications. Forty-two respondents \( (55\%) \) were employed in the public sector, 24 respondents \( (32\%) \) were employed in the private sector, and 10 respondents \( (13\%) \) were employed in the not-for-profit sector. The main industries represented were education \( (n = 21; 28\%) \), healthcare \( (n = 14; 18\%) \), professional services \( (n = 9; 9\%) \), and financial services/accounting \( (n = 8; 11\%) \). Job tenure ranged from less than five years to over 16 years, with a modal tenure of less than five years \( (n = 44; 58\%) \). Forty-two respondents \( (55\%) \) no longer worked for the organisation where the reported incidents happened.

Survey Questions

In order to confirm the behaviours that followers perceived to be harmful, and to avoid influencing their responses, no formal definition of toxic leadership was provided to
respondents. The survey consisted of six open-ended qualitative questions focused on three areas of interest: (1) specific behaviours that toxic leaders demonstrate (e.g., “What specific behaviours did they [the leader] demonstrate?”); (2) the impact of that behaviour on the respondent (e.g., “What impact did the incident/s have on you personally?”); (3) the coping strategies followers employed to cope with toxic leadership behaviours (e.g., “How have you coped, both at the time of the incident/s and since?”). Participants were invited to respond via free text to each question.

**Data Analysis**

A mixed method analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken to identify the key coping strategies employed (Creswell, 2009). Specifically, *directed content analysis* was employed based on the premise that an existing theory of research was drawn on to inform (1) the coding schedule (2) the relationships between variables, and/or (3) the nature of relevant variables (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). First, the data were coded by an independent data analyst using a cycle method of initial coding (Saldana, 2009). The data analyst reviewed the themes in the data, after being briefed on the nature of the research, without having any preconceived notions from the guiding literature. Coding took place at the sentence level, taking into account the context of the paragraph surrounding each sentence. First cycle coding reduced the raw data to an initial set of 402 codes, based on the three key survey topics.

A second review of the data was conducted using a higher-order coding schedule based on destructive leadership theory and the three selected theoretical coping models. The initial codes were refined by eliminating redundant instances (respondent comments that fell outside the research question and theoretical typologies). A total of 255 unique codes were retained. Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) via NVIVO 8, was employed to analyse this data. The 255 codes were aggregated into three subcategories
of perceived toxic leadership, consequences of toxic leadership, and theoretical coping strategies. Frequencies of responses in each subcategory were employed to identify common themes emerging from the data. The resulting themes which were common to both the data analyst and the researcher are reported here. Coping themes were categorised by the researcher based on the definitions provided by the theorists (Skinner et al., 2003; Yagil et al., 2011).

**Study 2 Results**

**Followers’ Perceptions of Toxic Leader Behaviours**

Behaviours perceived by respondents as harmful were consistent with theoretical typologies described within the destructive leadership literature. The six behaviours most frequently reported consisted of *manipulating behaviours* ($n = 56; 74\%$): such as creating conflict - “she had her favourites,” “pitted subordinates against each other;” use of deception - “lying,” “presented my presentations to the board, replaced my name with his;” and professional misconduct - “he started undermining my authority,” “had inappropriate personal relationships with several female staff members below his level.” Second, *intimidating and bullying behaviours* ($n = 49; 64\%$): such as an autocratic management style - “my way or the highway,” “bullying, overbearing and control freak”; belittling staff – “swearing and using intimidating language”; and targeting dissenters - “would target people who for some reason had fallen out of favour,” “if an employee spoke up against the manager he would target them and systematically try to get rid of them.” Third, *abusive or emotionally volatile behaviours* ($n = 20; 26\%$): “abuse, tantrums and threatening behaviour,” “had very erratic behaviour towards staff - peaks and lows of mood.” Fourth, *narcissistic behaviours* ($n = 20; 26\%$): such as an arrogant demeanour - “constantly seek and need praise,” “lapses into numerous, time consuming, self-praising anecdotes”; and no regard for the needs of others – “He has to win at all costs.” Fifth, *micromanaging behaviours* ($n = 18;
24%): “treated workplace interactions as a fault-finding exercise,” “had to know what I was
doing every minute of the day.” Finally, passive aggressive behaviours (n = 17; 22%): “the
leader agreed to take action and then later negated on this,” “if people persisted in raising
issues, he would ignore them from that point on – no greeting.”

Impact on Follower Well-being

A variety of distressing consequences were reported as negatively impacting on
respondents’ well-being, including physical health complications, emotional harm, and
psychological distress (refer Table 9 in Appendix D). Psychological effects included self-
doubt (n = 22; 29%): “I lost confidence in myself”; feeling highly stressed (n = 17; 22%):
“…eventually I was unable to function in the role … from the stress.”; anxious (n = 13; 17%)
and depressed (n = 10; 13%): “anxiety, loss of professional and personal esteem…”
Emotional effects included mistrust (n = 17; 22%): “The incident created feelings of
mistrust.”; anger (n = 15; 20%): “I was very angry and disappointed.”; and fear (n = 10;
13%): “I felt vulnerable and unable to stand up for myself.” Twenty-two respondents (29%)
reported a range of physical symptoms, including health problems such as colds, gastric
upsets, hair loss, skin rashes, headaches and insomnia. While the literature conceptualizes
destructive leadership as regularly exhibiting a number of harmful behaviours, for 17 (22%)
respondents, significant harm was reported with just one perceived toxic behaviour.

Follower Coping Strategies

The most frequently reported ways of coping when dealing with toxic leadership
were: seeking social support; leaving the organisation or taking leave; ruminating; and
challenging the leader. An analysis of the reported coping instances demonstrated strong
support for four of Yagil et al.’s (2011) five coping scales, as shown in Table 10 (Appendix
D). Only two respondents (3%) reported the use of the ingratiating coping response: “I
attempted to challenge him. That did not work at all, so then I tried flattery and wheedling.
That was semi-successful.” “I just worked harder, longer, and tried to please.” As can be seen from Table 10, respondents’ coping instances supported nine of Skinner et al.’s (2003) 12 coping families for dealing with toxic leadership. Three of Skinner et al.’s coping families not represented by the data were: Negotiating with the leader to reach a compromise; social withdrawal; and using aggression. However, Skinner et al. provided five additional coping categories over and above Yagil et al.’s scale, extending our understanding of responses to this specific stressor by including perceived maladaptive coping responses (e.g., ruminating) and adaptive coping responses (e.g., seeking social and instrumental support).

Referencing both Yagil et al. and Skinner et al.’s coping frameworks, commonly reported direct communication/problem-solving coping strategies included: assertively challenging or confronting the leader (n = 17; 22%): “Tried to name poor behaviours if I actually witnessed them.”; formal complaint (n = 11; 14%) and documenting incidents (n = 9; 12%): “I raised the issues as a grievance through a formal process.” In addition to seeking social support, frequently reported support seeking coping strategies included: seeking social support from a mentor or colleague (n = 26; 34%) or family and friends (n = 20; 26%): “Discussed the incident with family, friends and trusted colleagues.” Frequently reported avoidance of contact/escape strategies included: leaving the organisation (n = 34; 45%) “…while she was on leave I did my hand over and left.”; taking leave (n = 16; 21%): “Sick leave and recreation leave were my biggest defence…”; bypassing the leader (n = 13; 17%) or ignoring them (n = 7; 10%): “I tried to avoid and work around him as much as possible.” Frequently reported reframing/accommodation coping mechanisms utilised cognitive restructuring strategies (n = 13; 17%): “I tried… to reflect on the fact that it wasn’t personal – it wasn’t about me.” Nine respondents (12%) reported trying problem-solving approaches “at first,” but when these failed to work, they resorted to avoidance-based strategies. Coping strategies explained by Skinner et al.’s model only were:
experiencing *submission*, i.e., rumination (*n* = 23; 30%): “To this day I still feel angry for the unfair treatment that I received.”; *self-reliance* by focusing on work (*n* = 10; 13%): “My response was to work harder.”; *seeking information* and professional support, such as from a counsellor (*n* = 6; 8%) or General Practitioner (*n* = 6; 8%): “Get counselling to try to survive.”, and experiencing *delegation*, i.e., feelings of shame (*n* = 4; 5%); and *helplessness* (*n* = 4; 5%).

The 10 families of coping with toxic leadership that were described by these results were directly compared employing Skinner et al.’s (2003) coping structure. This comparison is illustrated in Figure 8. Clear similarities between Yagil et al.’s and Skinner et al.’s coping families and the coping responses reported in this research are demonstrated. These results illustrate that neither Yagil et al.’s framework nor Skinner et al.’s framework alone accounts for the comprehensive range of coping responses exhibited by employees experiencing toxic leadership. Instead the coping responses are better explained by a combination of both frameworks.

**Study 2 Discussion**

This research examined coping responses reported by followers to reduce the psychological, emotional, and physical impact of their experiences of toxic leadership. The toxic leadership behaviours described as distressing were consistent with other reported observations (e.g., Krasikova et al., 2013; Pelletier, 2010). This study provides a unique contribution to the literature by identifying both adaptive and perceived maladaptive strategies that followers employed to cope specifically with leadership behaviours they perceive to be toxic.
Figure 8. Structure of Coping with Toxic Leadership, based on Skinner et al.’s (2003) organising structure (Study 2).
Key reported coping strategies using Skinner et al.’s (2003) framework, that Yagil et al. (2011) didn’t capture in their abusive supervision measure, were problem-solving strategies such as *instrumental action* (e.g., making a formal complaint, seeking mediation, whistle blowing), or *information seeking* (e.g., seeking professional advice); and emotion-focused strategies such as *self-reliance* (e.g., working harder), *submission* (e.g., ruminating), *helplessness*, and *delegation* (e.g., feelings of shame, self-blame, disgust). While some of these emotion-focused coping responses may be considered maladaptive, the current research shows they are common strategies employed when an individual feels powerless to prevent ongoing abuse and are likely to cause significant harm if not addressed.

Our findings support observations that when an individual feels they are in an uncontrollable situation they are likely to revert to avoidance-focused coping strategies, such as taking leave (O’Driscoll et al., 2009; Yagil et al., 2011). This is particularly relevant for the design of research investigations when conducted in a workplace where employees may not feel in control of the situation and/or do not feel supported by the organisation. In such circumstances, affected employees are (at best) unlikely to participate in any investigation of this organisational problem.

**Implications for Practice**

At least a third of respondents reported being as distressed by the lack of support received from their organisations, as they were by the behaviour to which they were subjected. Instead of seeking advice and support from Human Resources (HR) most respondents sought support from colleagues, social networks, and experts outside the organisation. As victims are often reluctant to report abuse, this suggests a proactive approach to gathering information on instances of toxic leadership is required, because organisational representatives are likely to hear about such difficulties anecdotally, rather than through formal channels. Employees who chose to remain in the workplace, those who
could not deal with leader toxicity, nor felt able to leave the situation, reported learned helplessness, chronic health problems, and long-term harm. Given the potential liability for failure to provide a safe workplace, together with the cost of reduced productivity, and increased absenteeism, presenteeism and unwanted turnover, empirical research supports the need to take prompt action (including disciplinary action or removal of destructive leaders) upon evidence of frequent, ongoing demonstration of toxic leadership behaviours (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Richards & Freeman, 2002).

When their assistance is sought, organisational representatives have a significant role in advising and supporting victims of toxic leadership behaviours. Employees are just as likely to try ineffective coping strategies (including ruminating, feeling shame and confusion) as they are to try more effective direct coping strategies. For many respondents, once their preferred coping strategies failed, they took leave or left the organisation. Employees who remained in the workplace reported a variety of adverse consequences. Promotion of organisational policies and procedures, codes of conduct, Employee Assistance Programs and other external counselling services are basic requirements to promote employee well-being, but are often inadequate to deal effectively with this specific problem (Bond et al., 2010; Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Cooper, & Poelmans, 2009). Instead it is recommended that proactive organisational training programs focusing on effective coping strategies to deal with toxic behaviours, advice on the social and professional support available, and an emphasis on the importance of taking responsibility for maintaining personal health and well-being, may equip employees with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent them from coming to harm, or to deflect harm when it first occurs (Brough et al., 2009).

**Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

In this study there was potential for a biased sample given the use of the convenience method, recruiting only those participants reporting particularly negative experiences with
their manager/s. It may be that some respondents had their own personal difficulties with their manager, e.g., interpersonal conflict, being under performance management, or disciplinary processes. These factors were not assessed here and are recommended to be controlled for in future research. However, it is important to note that the reported leader behaviours were all described as harmful by the respondents, irrespective of the relationship and circumstances between the respondent and their manager. Alternatively, individual characteristics and attributions of followers may inform whether a manager’s behaviour is perceived as harmful, and may also influence the coping strategies followers use (Thoroughgood et al., 2012). Future research investigating follower characteristics that mediate the relationship between perceived toxic leadership behaviours and the specific coping strategies chosen by victims will improve our understanding of this complex relationship.

In this study respondents were not asked to rate the effectiveness of the coping strategies they used, although their responses gave some indication of their perceived efficacy. Given that some reported strategies appear maladaptive, it is recommended future research test the effectiveness of the coping strategies identified here (Skinner et al., 2003; Yagil et al., 2011).

**Conclusion**

This study furthers our understanding of how followers cope with the psychological, emotional, and/or physical impact of toxic leadership behaviours. The responsibility of organisations to effectively address destructive leadership is clear: to prevent employee exposure to toxic behaviours and to support employees who become targets of such behaviours. This research informs the development of organisational interventions to increase levels of employee coping and well-being by helping followers to identify and become resilient to toxic leadership behaviours.
Chapter 6. Intervention: Resilience-Building Training Session to protect Followers’ Well-being (Study 3)

In Australia, like many countries, workplace health and safety legislation effectively holds employers responsible for ensuring the psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of employees (Safe Work Australia, 2011). If it is proven that an employer has breached this responsibility, stress compensation claims may be lodged by affected employees. Costs of health insurance premiums form a significant proportion of employment costs in organisational budgets and premiums rise when there is an increase in claims. If the claim is disputed, litigation costs are also incurred. Therefore, there are both legislative and financial reasons for organisations to effectively manage occupational stress. The aim of Study 3 was to design and evaluate a brief, theory-based, practical intervention to assist followers to enhance their well-being by becoming resilient to the occupational stressor of destructive leadership behaviours (e.g., abusive supervision behaviours). The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the aims and rationale of Study 3, the design and methodology employed, the key findings, and how they can inform theory and practice.

The design of Study 3 was informed by the findings of Study 1 and Study 2. Study 1 researched leaders’ personality traits to better understand the antecedents and mediators to derailing leadership behaviours. Results of this cross-sectional study suggested leaders with dispositional negative affectivity were more likely to be predisposed to derailing behaviours through reduced self-regulatory processes. Therefore, if a leader was unable to self-regulate to avoid engaging in destructive leadership behaviours, even if they were made aware of such behaviours through leadership development activities, the abuse was likely to continue. Based on these findings, the research focus then shifted to follower responses to destructive leadership behaviours. Study 2 researched the leadership behaviours followers found to be abusive, and the mechanisms by which followers responded and coped with destructive
leadership. The results showed that being regularly exposed over time to even one leadership behaviour that was perceived by followers as abusive caused harm to psychological, emotional, and ultimately physical well-being. Qualitative responses reported that significant harm was experienced by respondents who remained working with the destructive leader over time. A key contributor to such harm was a lack of knowledge of how to deal effectively with the situation, negatively affecting their well-being.

Study 3 focused on the evaluation of a stress management intervention designed to build resiliency in followers within a private healthcare organisation (nurses and support staff) to deal effectively with abusive leadership behaviours at work, thereby enhancing their psychological, emotional, and physical well-being. While there is debate about the comparative efficacy of individual versus organisational stress prevention interventions, the decision about which type of intervention to employ should be based on a thorough assessment of the specific situation (Briner & Reynolds, 1999; DeFrank & Cooper, 1987).

To prevent or address the emotional and psychological distress caused to individual followers by abusive leadership behaviours, an individual, secondary prevention intervention is likely to be the most appropriate. Secondary prevention interventions have been found to be most effective in reducing stress and enhancing psychological well-being in individuals when they include a short group training session based on cognitive behavioural principles. Secondary prevention interventions focus on improving individuals’ stress responses and coping (e.g., employee training programs to increase well-being through enhanced resiliency and coping skills to deal with the stressor of abusive leadership behaviours). Secondary prevention interventions promote the recognition of dysfunctional cognitions, allow a positive reframing of cognitions, and increase personal resources and perceptions of control (Bond & Bunce, 2000; Lamontagne et al., 2007; Murphy, 1996; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; van der Klink et al., 2001).
This stress management intervention was based on the premise that resiliency involves the processes and characteristics by which an individual is able to return to a state of well-being following an adverse event, i.e., being the target of abusive supervision (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). Resiliency includes learning to deal with adversity by self-managing beliefs, cognitions and emotions, and engaging in behavioural strategies that provide a sense of personal control. Once engaged, these adaptive responses will result in outcomes that demonstrate resilience has occurred (e.g., psychological, emotional, and physical well-being). In this research context, psychological well-being refers to experiencing positive thoughts and affective states, with an absence of psychological distress. Individuals with good psychological well-being report feeling happy, capable, well-supported, and satisfied with life (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Emotional well-being refers to experiencing positive emotions, with an absence of emotional distress (Warr, 1990). Physical well-being refers to feeling healthy and energetic at work (Randall et al., 2009).

**Study 3 Research Aims**

This quasi-experimental research evaluates the effectiveness of a secondary prevention stress management intervention to improve well-being in the context of abusive supervision. The association between destructive leadership behaviours, psychological distress and reduced affective and physical well-being has been documented (Pelletier, 2010; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Webster et al., 2016). Individual-level stress management interventions typically aim to increase well-being by enhancing employees' capacity to cope with occupational stressors (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008), and destructive leadership behaviours, such as abusive supervision, have been conceptualised as an occupational stressor (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). To the author’s knowledge no stress management training interventions have been conducted, evaluated, and reported within the context of coping with abusive supervision.
The research also seeks to address a limitation identified in the abusive supervision literature: the pre-dominance of cross-sectional studies (Martinko et al., 2013; Yagil et al., 2011). In this study, repeated-measures data for psychological, emotional, and physical well-being were collected at three time points. Figure 9 outlines the Study 3 design. The experimental group took part in a 4 hour resiliency training session and completed a pen and paper survey to assess well-being outcomes immediately pre and post the training session. They then completed the same survey 3 months later. As the control group did not attend the training session, and there would be no change at a Time 2 survey, they completed their surveys at the same time as the experimental group completed their Time 1 and Time 3 surveys. By employing a longitudinal research design, the researcher was able to measure the effect of the intervention on well-being over time. As a result, where a significant change
was measured from Time 1 to Time 3, a causal relationship could be inferred between the intervention and the significant well-being outcomes (Biggs, Brough & Barbour, 2014).

In addition, much of the destructive leadership and abusive supervision research has been conducted in the US (Martinko et al., 2013), with increasing contribution from Norway, UK, and Europe (Schyns & Hansborough, 2010; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Follower perceptions of leadership in Australia have been investigated (e.g., research suggests Australian followers’ need to know the leader is committed to their welfare, they have a preference for genuine but understated praise, they desire to be kept informed, and to receive direct and truthful feedback; Dalglish & Evans, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2015). Conducting this research within an Australian context, therefore, provided an important contribution to assessing the applicability of theory predominantly developed in the US to the Australian culture (e.g., is an intervention informed by the positive psychology and stress management literatures effective in assisting Australian workers to identify and cope with abusive leadership behaviours; Lamontagne et al., 2007; Martinko et al., 2013; May et al., 2014).

Stress management interventions have been criticised for their lack of theoretical foundations (Brough & Biggs, 2015; Murphy, 1996). Such interventions need to achieve a balance between being tailored to the unique needs of the work situation and being underpinned by a strong theoretical foundation (Ivancevich, Matteson, Freedman, & Phillips, 1990; Murphy, 1996). This intervention, a group training session to build and maintain resilience, was designed based on the principles of four theoretical frameworks, three originating from CBT: SIT (Saunders et al., 1996); psychosocial resilience strategies from the discipline of positive psychology; and ACT (Burton et al., 2010; Flaxman & Bond, 2010a; Pipe et al., 2009; Seligman, 1992, 2002). The fourth theoretical framework underpinning this intervention was career resilience theory. Destructive leaders often negatively affect followers’ careers, so techniques to maximise career resilience (London, 1997) were included.
to enhance participants’ personal resources. Selection of techniques and tools included in the training session was also informed by the results of Study 2 (e.g., coping strategies reported to be helpful, such as accessing social support, participating in physical health and well-being activities, and reframing negative thoughts.)

This intervention was conducted within the healthcare sector. Mental stress claims are highest in Australia within the Health and Community Services sector at 20.5% of claims (Safe Work Australia, 2013). While there has been some evaluation of resilience programs conducted within a healthcare workforce (e.g., Pipe et al., 2009; Pipe et al., 2012), more studies of SMIs within this industry have been called for (Dollard, LaMontagne, Caulfield, Blewett, & Shaw, 2007). This study has responded to this call by conducting the Study 3 resiliency training program in a private, acute healthcare organisation. The program was specifically designed to help employees identify positive ways of coping with stress and abusive leadership behaviours in their workplace. The effects of the program were evaluated over a three-month period.

**Study 3 Intervention Evaluation Measures**

Both *intervention implementation process* measures (participant attendance, participant evaluation of the quality of the intervention, and the extent to which the intervention was implemented as planned) and *intervention outcome evaluation* measures (participant emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and physical well-being) were employed in evaluating this resiliency training intervention (Biggs & Brough, 2015b).

Including measures to evaluate the intervention implementation process is important for two reasons: (a) to acknowledge the complexity of conducting longitudinal designs in organisational research, and identify ways to improve outcomes in future research, such as reducing attrition over time to ensure sufficient sample size; and (b) to acknowledge other
factors that may have had an impact on employees’ experiences during the intervention and/or affected the well-being outcomes.

Participants’ ratings of their knowledge, motivation, and confidence to undertake the tasks learned were measured (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Judge & Bono, 2001). Where individuals believe they have the knowledge, motivation, and confidence to undertake the tasks learned, they are likely to exert sufficient effort, coping, and persistence that, if well executed, will lead them to successfully deal with occupational stressors. Conversely, individuals with a perception of insufficient knowledge, low confidence and/or poor motivation are more likely to avoid implementing the strategies or to give up prematurely. Training methods to enhance knowledge included providing information about the required tasks and the task environment. Training methods to enhance confidence and motivation included discussions on how to use the new skills successfully in their work environment, and how to implement behavioural and cognitive strategies that lead to better coping performance, including the pros and cons of the various strategies (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). It was expected that participants’ knowledge, confidence and motivation to build and maintain their own well-being would be increased by attending the resiliency training session, as measured pre- and post-training. However, while confidence and motivation may be increased when measured immediately after an intervention, it may not continue to increase over time in some situations, such as when the environment in which the skills are employed evokes a sense of risk or anxiety, or if the individual perceives they have no control over the environment, as is often the case when working for an abusive supervisor (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Based on these findings, it is expected that knowledge, confidence and motivation will be significantly increased immediately after the training session, but it is possible that these may not significantly change from Time 2 to Time 3, three months post the intervention.
H3.1: Participating in a resiliency training intervention based on cognitive behavioural principles will increase participants’ knowledge, confidence, and motivation in undertaking resilience-building activities in the experimental group, with no significant change in the control group.

It was expected that well-being would significantly increase over time with practice. As outlined above, the three well-being outcome measures were collected at three time points: immediately prior to the training session, at the end of the training session, and three months after the training session. Therefore, the well-being outcome evaluation component of this study tested three hypotheses:

H3.2a: Participating in a resiliency training intervention based on cognitive behavioural principles will reduce participant psychological distress for the experimental group over time, measured post-intervention (Time 3), with no significant change in psychological distress for the control group.

H3.2b: Participating in a resiliency training intervention based on cognitive behavioural principles will improve participant emotional well-being for the experimental group over time, measured post-intervention (Time 3), with no significant change in emotional well-being for the control group.

H3.2c: Participating in a resiliency training intervention based on cognitive behavioural principles will improve participant physical well-being for the experimental group over time, measured post-intervention (Time 3), with no significant change in physical well-being for the control group.

The Role of Manager Support and Well-being

Supportive leadership has been found to enhance employee well-being for Australian employees and for healthcare workers (Australian Psychological Society, 2013; Bennett, Lowe, Matthews, Dourali, & Tattersall, 2001; Brough & Pears, 2004). Manager attitudes and
actions have also been identified as a resource that enhances the application of stress management interventions in the workplace to improve well-being. This relationship is likely to be due to the role managers have in determining employees’ access to stress management interventions and their ability to either enable or obstruct the extent to which the strategies learned can be implemented in the work situation (Randall, Nielsen, & Tvedt, 2009). The quality of the manager relationship is particularly relevant in the context of abusive supervision. In addition to evaluating individual well-being outcomes of the resilience intervention, the impact on well-being of the quality of participants’ relationship with their direct manager was also investigated. It was important to verify that the resilience intervention had significant outcomes for all participants, including those who did not have a supportive manager relationship. In relation to manager support this study tested the hypothesis:

H3.3a: Participants who report low levels of support from their manager will report higher psychological distress, and lower affective and physical well-being.

The Role of Manager Interpersonal Justice and Well-being

Abusive supervision, the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, is difficult to measure in organisational research; respondents participating in interventions conducted within their organisation are typically reluctant to answer surveys truthfully. For example, a five-item measure of one aspect of abusive supervision, active interpersonal abuse developed from Tepper’s (2000) measure of abusive supervision (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007) asks respondents whether their manager interpersonally abuses them (e.g., ridiculing staff, telling them their thoughts and feelings are stupid, putting them down in front of others, making negative comments about them to others, telling them they are incompetent). To the extent that abusive supervisors are frequently rude and publicly critical towards some team members, there is likely to be member reports of low interpersonal justice treatment
(Ogunfowora, 2013). It was determined that interpersonal abuse would be a difficult measure for respondents in this study to respond to. Therefore, to measure this aspect of abusive supervision in a way that was deemed appropriate for this research study, respondents were asked to assess the level of *interpersonal justice* they felt they received from their manager (e.g., the extent to which their manager is polite, treats them with dignity and respect, and refrains from making improper remarks or comments; Bies & Moag, 1986). The interpersonal justice measure provided acceptable face validity in this study, while at the same time measuring perceived low interpersonal justice from a leader (e.g., showing lack of respect and dignity to followers) as a pseudo-measure of interpersonal mistreatment, one reported characteristic of abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000). It was hypothesised that participants with low levels of interpersonal justice from their manager would report lower levels of well-being. In relation to interpersonal justice demonstrated by the manager this study tested the hypothesis:

H3.3b: Participants who report receiving lower interpersonal justice from their manager will report higher psychological distress, and lower affective and physical well-being.

In addition to manager support, manager interpersonal justice, knowledge, confidence and motivation to employ the resilience tactics, and the well-being outcomes (psychological, affective, and physical well-being), three coping strategies were measured as mediating variables in this research: active coping, avoidance coping, and social support coping strategies.

**Accounting for Mediating Variables: Coping Strategies**

In addition to examining the direct effect of the resiliency training program on well-being outcomes, a mediated model was tested investigating the role of follower coping strategies in the relationship between the resilience intervention and intervention outcomes (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Webster et al., 2016). The hypothesised relationships are depicted
in Figure 10. The destructive leadership literature has paid relatively little attention to the level of control or volition that rests with targeted employees through their use of effective or ineffective coping strategies when dealing with the effects of abusive supervision (May et al., 2014). The few studies investigating the relationship between abusive supervision and employee coping propose that the negative effects of abusive supervision will be weaker for individuals who implement active coping strategies, and stronger for individuals who implement avoidance coping strategies (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011). Therefore, it is hypothesised that active and avoidance coping strategies will mediate the relationship between the intervention and well-being:

H3.4a: The positive effect of participation in a resiliency training intervention on well-being (affective, psychological, and physical) will be mediated by participants’ coping strategies, such that those reporting active coping strategies will report higher levels of well-being, and those reporting avoidance coping strategies will report lower levels of well-being.

Results of Study 2 of this thesis (see Table 10, Appendix D) found that a significant proportion of respondents drew on social support from mentors, colleagues, family, and friends for emotional support to assist them to cope with toxic leadership. They also reported drawing on instrumental support by seeking expert advice from professionals (Webster et al., 2016). Yagil et al. (2011), in their research study on coping with abusive supervision, found that seeking social support mediated the negative effects of abusive supervision and lowered respondents’ negative affect. Therefore, it is hypothesised that social support seeking coping strategies will mediate the relationship between the intervention and well-being.

H3.4b The positive effect of participation in a resiliency training intervention on well-being (affective, psychological, and physical) will be mediated by participants’ social
support coping strategies, such that those reporting they frequently sought social support for emotional and instrumental reasons will report higher levels of well-being.

In the context of abusive supervision, active coping and seeking social support have been proposed to be more effective in protecting well-being than avoidance coping (Yagil et al., 2011). While avoidance coping may be adaptive in the short term, over a longer period it can be harmful to well-being (Webster et al., 2016). In this study, the role of coping strategies in mediating the association between manager relationship (e.g., manager support/interpersonal justice) and well-being was investigated (see Figure 11).

![Mediation Model Diagram](image)

Figure 10. Study 3 Intervention Multiple Parallel Mediation Model.

H3.4c: The positive relationship between manager support and participant well-being (psychological, affective, and physical) will be mediated by participants’ coping strategies, such that active coping and seeking social support will be positively related to well-being, and avoidance coping will be negatively related to well-being.
H3.4d: The positive relationship between manager interpersonal justice and participant well-being (psychological, affective, and physical) will be mediated by participants’ coping strategies, such that active coping and seeking social support will be positively related to well-being, and avoidance coping will be negatively related to well-being.

![Figure 11. Study 3 Manager Relationship/Well-being Multiple Parallel Mediation Model.](image)

**Controlling for Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness has been correlated with psychological (Kotov, Gamez, Schmidt & Watson, 2010), emotional (Javaras et al., 2012), and physical well-being (Bogg & Roberts, 2013). In the stress management literature, conscientiousness is purported to be one trait affecting how individuals react to work stressors. Individuals high in conscientiousness are likely to have higher levels of motivation to act as they take goal directed activity to regain personal control over the situations they find themselves in. People high in conscientiousness may report higher levels of well-being because they are likely to select more proactive coping strategies and apply better emotion regulation in aversive situations, such as in the context of
abusive supervision (Smith, Ryan, & Röcke, 2013). Nandkeolyar et al. (2014) found some support for the proposition that conscientiousness influenced the employment of coping strategies adopted in response to active interpersonal abuse by the supervisor (e.g., conscientiousness being positively related to active coping strategies and negatively related to avoidance coping strategies).

Offering an alternative view, Lin, Ma, Wang and Wang. (2015) found that individuals high in conscientiousness may also experience increased psychological strain when responding to stressors, because stressful work situations require cognitive and emotional effort (i.e., appraisal and coping) that results in forms of strain such as fatigue and anxiety. It may well be that active, problem-focused coping activities, such as confronting the abusive leader about their behaviour, or persevering under duress by working harder, may have adverse effects on psychological well-being in the longer term. Lin et al.’s proposition was partially supported by the findings in Study 2 of this research. Study 2 participants reported challenging the leader and/or working harder were not effective in reducing anxiety and feelings of stress. Recently a curvilinear relationship between conscientiousness and psychological well-being was posited by Carter, Guan, Maples, Williamson and Miller (2016), with extreme levels of conscientiousness related to obsessive compulsive tendencies. Due to the range of suggested effects of conscientiousness on well-being and coping with stressors and, conscientiousness was treated as a control variable when evaluating the well-being outcomes of the intervention, and when investigating coping strategies as mediating variables.

In summary, this research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a secondary prevention stress management intervention in improving well-being within the context of abusive supervision, by designing a resiliency training session underpinned by four
theoretical frameworks: SIT, ACT, positive psychology, and career resilience, and employing a longitudinal research design to measure effects over time.

**Study 3 Method**

**Participants**

Employees within a not-for-profit, private, acute care healthcare organisation, comprising four hospitals and 4,000 employees, were invited to participate in an intervention, comprising a four-hour *Building Career Resilience* training session. This workshop was specifically designed by the researcher to teach participants positive coping strategies and resilience-building techniques they could use at work and in their personal lives. Participants were assigned either to the experimental group, who participated in the workshop, or a waitlist control group. Units of employees to be included in the experimental group were determined by the executive leadership team of each hospital. Information on the training session was provided to supervisors of the units, who passed this information on to staff. A list of attendees was then provided back to the trainer (researcher) by unit supervisors. This process was employed in order to release staff from their occupational duties and ensure that there was sufficient cover for them while they were participating in the workshop. Control group participants were recruited via supervisors of units comparable to the experimental group (e.g., nursing, administration, support services).

**Intervention Design**

Decisions about the content, structure, and facilitation techniques of the training session were made with respect to the desired intervention outcomes within the constraints of organisational requirements (e.g., due to shift and labour management requirements, releasing staff for one four-hour training session was approved by hospital executive). The primary purpose of the intervention was to increase psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of participants when dealing with occupational stressors within the work environment, by
providing additional techniques they could employ to build personal and career resilience. Firstly, a review of the destructive leadership, abusive supervision, resilience, coping, and well-being literatures was conducted to identify outcomes of stress and coping mechanisms, specifically in the context of dealing with abusive supervision. Secondly, the content and format of evidence-based interventions within the stress management interventions and stress management training literatures that were relevant to this specific occupational stressor were investigated. Thirdly, a review of the grey literature was conducted to identify training tools used by practitioners. These literature reviews were presented in Chapters 1 to 3 and inform the content of the intervention implemented in this study. Table 12 outlines the specific theoretical frameworks that informed the design of the intervention.

As the literature demonstrates that secondary prevention interventions based on CBT principles have been found most effective, a balance had to be drawn by the researcher between designing an intervention with a strong theoretical foundation and meeting the requirements of the organisation by customizing the training sessions to the work context (Murphy, 1996). The approach adopted incorporated psycho education (SIT), cognitive behavioural skills training (ACT and mindfulness skills), and group facilitation techniques to allow participants time to process and apply learnings to their situation and workplace (e.g., self-reflection on own stressors and coping strategies; identification of work-related problems in relation to abusive leadership experiences through group discussions and pair activities). Discussions were practical and relevant to participants’ workplaces, providing the opportunity for participants to discuss stressful situations they were dealing with, and they were encouraged to generate potential solutions to minimise stress resulting from the workplace problems they identified. Problems raised by participants in the workshops were kept confidential by the researcher, with only main themes being communicated back to unit managers and executive.
### Table 12

**Theoretical basis for Intervention (Study 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention component</th>
<th>Underpinning theoretical framework</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative facilitator</td>
<td>SIT (Meichenbaum, 1996)</td>
<td>Facilitator demonstrated appreciation of workplace context and understanding of culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationship with participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructive leadership</td>
<td>SIT (Meichenbaum, 1996)</td>
<td>Education on nature and impact of the stressor; indices to recognise values-based versus destructive leadership (abusive supervision) and its impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follower styles</td>
<td>SIT (Meichenbaum, 1996)</td>
<td>Managing Up – what sort of follower am I? Focus on what participants are able to control/change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with destructive leadership</td>
<td>SIT (Meichenbaum, 1996)</td>
<td>Education on effective/ineffective coping tactics for dealing with destructive leadership; skill acquisition; identifying mitigating strategies; setting coping and resilience-building goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Personal Resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of resiliency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resiliency (Luthans et al., 2007)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBT; Positive psychology</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment measures of resiliency: positive emotions, signature strengths, meaning and purpose</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Mindfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education on ACT and mindfulness techniques; skills acquisition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT (Harris, 2009; Hayes et al., 2006)</td>
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</table>

#### Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection activity on social networks and support; encourage employees to support each other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support seeking (Yagil et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Application and follow-through

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive sessions and group discussions to encourage peer learning; action plan to transfer learnings to the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer learning (Salas &amp; Cannon-Bowers, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SIT (Meichenbaum, 1996)

The literature also demonstrated that secondary prevention interventions are most successful when conducted in an environment where primary prevention strategies have been employed. The healthcare organisation where the research was conducted had a values-based leadership framework, a code of conduct, policies and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, and a disciplinary management process in place. Tertiary interventions were also available to staff: counselors, chaplains, and an employee assistance program. However, for the purpose of this thesis, Study 3 will only evaluate the impact of the resilience workshops conducted as a secondary prevention intervention.
The primary aim of the workshop was to educate participants about building resilience to stressors, in particular the impact of abusive leadership behaviours as a workplace stressor, and provide strategies to mitigate the negative effects of this stressor. The intervention was based on social cognitive and cognitive behavioural theories, in relation to individual coping and resilience from the positive psychology, ACT, SIT, and career resilience literatures (Harris, 2008; Meichenbaum, 1996; Seligman, 2002; Vuori et al., 2012). The workshop was designed for a minimum of six participants and a maximum of 15 participants per session. At the beginning of each session, the objectives of the workshop were presented. Personal resiliency and career resilience were defined and characteristics of resilient people discussed. The session then provided education for employees to identify values-based versus destructive leadership behaviours. Tactics for identifying and dealing with frustrating or harmful leader behaviours were provided, based on the dark side of leadership and followship literature and research (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Clarke, 2005; Crowley & Elster, 2009; Kellerman, 2004a, 2008; Lubit, 2004). The workshop aimed to equip participants with the skills to distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive responses and coping strategies. It was also intended to enhance participants’ perception of personal control within the workplace by focusing on strategies they could employ within their circle of influence, such as drawing on social support (colleagues, friends, and family), taking ownership of their career, and regularly participating in health and well-being activities.

The facilitator (researcher) created a supportive learning environment that encouraged peer learning by modeling and acknowledging appropriate behaviour as it occurred in the groups (Vuori et al., 2012). Facilitator-led interactive sessions encouraged peer learning by allowing participants to discuss obstacles and share experiences (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Group discussions can enable a greater depth of learning, and may promote attitude changes as opinions and insights are challenged by other group participants (Blanchard &
Thacker, 2004). In peer groups, participants identified their own preferences, lifestyle, and career-related goals; defined tasks for carrying out these goals; and practised the required actions in small groups.

The facilitator also utilised active teaching methods, such as making use of participants’ own life and career knowledge as part of the learning process, in small and large group discussions (Vuori et al., 2012). Participants were assisted to understand their own follower style, as well as their personal values, motivations, fears, and needs. Maladaptive responses to fear triggers or unmet needs were explored. Strategies for building career resilience to enhance job satisfaction and employability, irrespective of work environments and situations, were included (e.g., understanding career phases, aligning work with participants’ own values and sense of purpose, and a review of work/life integration).

Resilience was strengthened utilising the principles of SIT: participants shared experiences of barriers in their work environment, empathised with the feelings aroused by these discussions, and then suggested possible solutions for these setbacks (Vuori et al., 2012). Techniques to prepare for setbacks, and to deal appropriately and assertively with them as they arose, were provided. Strategies for building personal resilience, utilising Martin Seligman’s (1992; 2002) positive psychology principles and techniques, were covered. Mindfulness exercises, based on ACT principles to create a happier, more satisfying life, were introduced (e.g., gratitude exercises, health and well-being evaluations, reviewing social support networks; Chu, Koh, Moy, & Müller-Riemenschneider, 2014; Harris, 2008; Webster et al., 2016).

Participants completed a Building Resilience Action Plan to take away with them. Therefore, the focus of the intervention was on increasing participants’ confidence in their ability to manage their own personal and career resilience generally and, specifically, when confronted with abusive leadership behaviours.
**Intervention Implementation**

Twenty workshops were facilitated by the researcher between June and December 2011. One hundred and eighty-six healthcare employees attended the workshops. Of those attendees, a total of $N = 178$ participants completed the Time 1 survey at the beginning of the workshop. The Time 2 survey was administered at the conclusion of the workshop and was completed by $N = 171$ (96%). The Time 3 survey was administered three months later and was completed by $N = 76$ (43%). A total of $N = 54$ (30%) respondents completed (matched) surveys. In the control group, $N = 54$ employees completed the survey at Time 1 and only $N = 8$ employees completed a second survey in the same period the experimental group completed Time 3 (15% return rate; refer Figure 10 for research design). As surveys were delivered to managers of control group units for distribution at both Time 1 and Time 2, and to the experimental group unit managers at Time 3, there is no way to accurately estimate how many of the surveys were actually received by target recipients.

Respondents in the experimental group who attended the resilience session and completed the survey at Time 1 and Time 2 (immediately pre- and post-training session) consisted of 135 females (76%) and 43 males (24%). Respondents’ ages ranged from 18 years to over 60 years, with the mean range between 40 and 49 years ($SD = 1.19$). Respondents reported tenure with the organisation ranging from less than five years to over 20 years, with a mean range of less than five years ($SD = 1.21$). The most common occupational groups were nurses ($n = 103; 58\%$) and administration and clerical staff ($n = 28; 15\%$). Fifty-two (29%) held undergraduate degrees and 30 (17%) held post graduate qualifications. Respondents in the experimental group at Time 3 consisted of 43 females (80%) and 11 males (20%), and the most common occupational group was nurses ($n = 43; 80\%$).
Control group respondents consisted on 44 females (82%) and 10 males (18%), with a mean age range of between 18 and 29 years ($SD = 1.18$). Control group respondents also reported a mean of less than five years tenure ($SD = 1.15$ years). The most common occupational groups were nurses ($n = 28; 52\%$) and HR staff ($n = 13; 24\%$). Twenty-one (39%) held undergraduate degrees and 10 (19%) held post graduate qualifications.

**Procedure and Administration**

Approval was obtained from the organisation’s executive team to implement the intervention. The hospital executive nominated units they wished to participate in the intervention and areas that would be comparable for recruitment of control subjects. The executives in each participating hospital also confirmed the components of the intervention, and the implementation and data collection processes. The researcher project managed and facilitated the implementation of the intervention and the data collection. Participants in the experimental group were asked to complete one pre- and two post-evaluations. The first baseline measurement was administered at the start of the workshop, with a second measurement being conducted at the end of the workshop. Participants completed the two pen and paper self-report surveys in the training room and placed their completed surveys in a large envelope at the back of the room. Copies of the third survey for the experimental group and the surveys for the control group were sent out by internal mail and returned to a centralized location in the corporate office. Control group participants were invited, via their supervisors, to complete the survey twice, three months apart. A full explanation of the research, its purpose, and participant requirements were outlined at the beginning of the survey. Participation in the surveys was taken as informed consent. Surveys were matched using a code participants were asked to construct for themselves, following instructions and an example provided at the beginning of the survey: first two letters of participant’s father’s surname, first two letters of their mother’s first name, and the day of their own birth (e.g.,
Using this confidential code for tracking purposes was preferable to collecting identifying information (e.g., name or employee number) in order to ensure anonymity of respondents. Reply-paid envelopes addressed to Griffith University researchers were provided with the survey to the experimental group at Time 3 and to the control group.

**Measures**

**Manager relationship - manager support.** Manager support was measured using two items \( r = .77, p < .01 \). Participants were asked to rate the quality of their working relationship with their immediate manager on a 5-point scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (very effective). They were also asked to what extent they agreed their immediate manager is positive and supportive of strategies to maintain well-being and resilience at work on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Manager relationship - interpersonal justice.** Interpersonal justice, a subscale of the interactional justice scale (Bies & Moag, 1986), was measured using four items \( a = .96 \). Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their immediate manager treated them in a polite manner, with dignity and respect, and to what extent their manager refrains from making improper comments. Respondents used a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (to a small extent) to 5 (to a large extent) to indicate the extent to which each item accurately described the treatment they received from their immediate manager.

**Intervention evaluation - implementation process.** The effectiveness of the implementation process was measured by participant attendance recorded with signed attendance sheets noting any apologies, written participant evaluation of the resiliency training session, and the post-implementation review of the extent to which the intervention was implemented as planned.

**Intervention evaluation - effectiveness using pre- and post-measures.** Effectiveness of the intervention was assessed using pre- and post-evaluation measures for
the experimental group. Due to a lack of access to computers by employees, pen and paper surveys were used. In addition to an information cover sheet on the survey, containing details of the research process (e.g., that is was voluntary, confidential, and adhered to the university’s ethical requirements), the research aspects of the study were also explained to the experimental group verbally at the beginning of the training session. It was reiterated that participation in completing the research surveys was voluntary, that participation in completing the survey would be accepted as consent to use the data for the research purposes outlined in the information sheet, and that participants could withdraw at any time. For the experimental group the pre- and post-surveys were delivered at the beginning and conclusion of the workshop, and distributed to their workplace three months post the workshop.

Knowledge, Confidence, Motivation. These items were designed for this study intervention by the researcher. Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge, confidence and motivation ($r = .32$ to .64, $p < .001$) in using resilience strategies on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The three items included: “You are motivated to use strategies to maintain your well-being and resilience”; “You have the knowledge you need to maintain your career and personal resilience”; and “You feel confident to implement the strategies and techniques you need to in order to maintain your career and personal resilience.”

Well-being. Three well-being variables were measured: psychological well-being was measured using Kessler’s Psychological Distress Scale, rating frequency of distress on a five point scale from none of the time to all of the time ($K10: a = .88$; Furukawa, Kessler, Slade, & Andrews, 2003); emotional well-being was measured using eight items measuring job-related affective well-being ($a = .84$; Warr, 1990), for example, “In the past four weeks about how often have you felt the following at work: depressed, enthusiastic, miserable, optimistic, gloomy, cheerful?” on a six point scale from never to all of the time; and two
items for physical well-being ($a = .85$), asking participants to rate how often they felt physically well and healthy, and active and energetic over the past four weeks on a six point scale from never to all of the time (Randall et al., 2009). Survey items were contextualized to the work environment (Lievens, De Corte, & Schollaert, 2008). For example, the K10 item “Please indicate how often you have had these feelings over the past four weeks: so sad that nothing could cheer you up” was changed to “so sad at work that nothing could cheer you up.”

**Mediating Variable Measures**

**Active and avoidance coping strategies.** Coping strategies were measured with the 14-item Cybernetic Coping Scale (CSS; Brough et al., 2005; Edwards & Baglioni, 1993). A factor analysis, conducted using Time 1 data ($n = 144$), resulted in three factors: avoidance coping (8 items), active coping (4 items), and symptom reduction (2 items). Based on the proposed mediating role of coping strategies in the literature (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014), in this research the avoidance coping ($a = .82$) and active coping ($a = .93$) factors were employed in the data analysis. The items measuring avoidance coping incorporated the avoidance and devaluation subscales of the CCS. Sample items included: “Told yourself the problem was unimportant”; “Refused to think about the problem”; and “ Tried to keep yourself from thinking about the problem.” The items measuring active coping incorporated the change the situation and accommodation scales of the CCS. Sample items included “Worked on changing the situation to get what you wanted” and “ Tried to adjust your expectations to meet the situation.” Participants were asked to indicate the coping strategies they employed at work in response to stressful events on a scale ranging from 1 (did not use) to 6 (used very much).

**Social support coping strategies.** Social support coping strategies were measured using eight items from the COPE subscales for emotional support and instrumental support
Sample items included “Talked to someone about how you felt” and “Asked people who have had similar experiences what they did.” Participants were asked to indicate the coping strategies they employed at work in response to stressful events on a scale ranging from 1 (did not use) to 6 (used very much).

**Control Variables**

**Conscientiousness.** Conscientiousness was measured using a 10 item NEO scale ($\alpha = .70$; Goldberg, 1992). Respondents used a 5-point frequency scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) to indicate the extent to which they felt each item accurately described the way they preferred to work, such as “Get tasks done straight away.”

**Age and job role.** These variables were also treated in the analyses as control variables where they had a significant relationship with the dependent variables.

**Study 3 Data Analysis**

**Testing of assumptions for statistical analysis.** Due to the high attrition rate at Time 2 for the control group, this data could not be used for statistical analysis. Therefore, data analysis was conducted on experimental group data only. Within group differences in knowledge, confidence and motivation over time were tested with univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), while within-group differences in well-being over time were tested with multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and multiple regression analyses using the SPSS statistical program. Prior to conducting the analyses, the data were screened to ensure the assumptions for ANOVA, MANOVA, and multiple regression analyses were met: the presence of multivariate normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance, the absence of missing data, absence of univariate and multivariate outliers, and absence of multicollinearity and singularity, following the recommendations made by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Psychological distress displayed minor heterostasticity, but this was not unexpected given the use of field experimental data. The results for this variable should therefore be interpreted
with caution. Transformations were carried out on seven variables that demonstrated skewness (skewness statistic greater than 1.0): psychological distress Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 was positively skewed; and affective well-being Time 3 was negatively skewed; interpersonal justice Time 1 and Time 3 was negatively skewed. These non-normal distributions were subjected to logarithmic transformations. Eight multivariate outliers were identified as cases with Mahalanobis distance values greater than 15 (Field, 2013). Seven univariate outliers were identified as items with standardised scores outside the range of $z = +3.29$ to $z = -3.29$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Analyses were run using transformed and untransformed research variables. Analyses run with univariate and multivariate outliers removed, and using transformed variables, did not show significantly different results. Given these factors, together with the small sample at Time 3, it was decided to use the raw data for interpretation of results. Scale descriptives and bivariate correlations were run for all research variables. The hypothesised mediating variables of active coping, avoidance coping, and social support coping were found to have significant relationships with the dependent variables.

**Statistical analysis.** Once data screening was completed, Hypotheses 3.1 and 3.2a – 3.2c were tested using ANOVA and MANOVA: the independent variable being the intervention (difference Time 1 to Time 3) and the dependent variables being knowledge, confidence, motivation to use the tactics, psychological, emotional, and physical well-being. These analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical program version 18.0. In respect to the association between the manager relationship and the dependent variables, Hypotheses 3.3a – 3.3b were tested using multiple regression analyses, and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted when control variables (i.e., age and role) were included.

Tests of parallel multiple mediation (Hypotheses 3.4a – 3.4d) were undertaken via regression analyses with bootstrapping using PROCESS Model 4 in the PROCESS macro for
Parallel multiple mediation assumes the independent variable (the intervention; manager relationship) affects the mediator variables (coping strategies) and the mediator variables are causally linked to the dependent variables (well-being), but the mediators are assumed not to affect each. All hypothesised mediators were added at once, to account for the variance each explained in mediating the IV/DV relationship. For example, when testing possible mediators between the intervention and well-being, the coping strategies (active coping, avoidance coping, and seeking social support) were included simultaneously as mediators between Time 1 well-being and Time 3 well-being (Hypotheses 3.4a and 3.4b). This statistical process estimates all mediator variables (coping strategies) are operating in parallel. Research supports the premise that individuals engage in multiple coping strategies at the same time when dealing with stress caused by abusive supervision (Webster et al., 2016; Yagil et al., 2011). Therefore, by adding all mediators simultaneously, any significant indirect effect found for a mediating coping strategy is independent of the variance explained by the other mediators.

A significant indirect effect is deemed to be present when the confidence intervals for the indirect effect do not contain zero (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Preacher & Kelley, 2011; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). For each of the bootstrapped analyses, 95% bias corrected confidence intervals and 5,000 bootstrap resamples were specified. Control variables were added as covariates (e.g., conscientiousness, for affective well-being (job role), and physical well-being (age and job role). Mediations analyses between the intervention and the well-being dependent variables were tested both cross-sectionally (Time 1) and over time (Time 1, Time 3).

To test Hypotheses 3.4c and 3.4d the independent variables were manager support and interpersonal justice respectively, the dependent variables were psychological, emotional, and physical well-being, and the mediators were active, avoidance, and social support coping.
The three coping measures were included simultaneously as mediators between the independent variables of manager support and manager interpersonal justice and each of the three well-being variables at Time 1 only, as a test of the multiple parallel mediation model. Due to the small Time 3 sample, this analysis could not be conducted over time (Hypotheses 3.4c – 3.4d). Mediation effect sizes were reported using indirect effect (\(ab\)). As the hypothesised mediators were added in the analysis together it was not possible to report Kappa-squared \( (k^2) \) statistic, recommended by Preacher and Kelley (2011) as the best measure of effect size, because this statistic is currently only available for simple mediation analyses.

**Study 3 Results**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Bivariate relationships between the research variables at Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 for the experimental and control groups are presented in Tables 13A, 13B, 14 and 15. Age and job role were significantly related to physical well-being, and job role was significantly related to affective well-being. Significant demographic variables were controlled for in the data analysis. Gender, education, and tenure were not found to be significantly correlated with the well-being dependent variables, and as a result were not included as control variables in further data analysis.

Table 16 presents the scale descriptives for the research variables at all three phases of the research. The internal reliability for all measures exceeded the minimum recommended cutoff of .70, with the exception of two variables at Time 3 for the control group only: manager support (.57) and conscientiousness (.56). However, due to the high level of attrition \( (n = 8 \text{ at Time 2}) \), control group data could not be used in the data analysis.
Evaluation Results of Implementation Process

The training session intervention was implemented with the experimental group as intended, with a high percentage of attendees participating in the research at the commencement and staying to the end of the workshops. Attendance sheets for participants in the experimental group confirmed attendance levels met expectations ($N = 186$) and provided a good sample size for this research. On a few occasions individual staff were contacted by their pager and called out of the session to the ward/theatre, but returned as soon as they were able. Participant attendance at workshops was maximised by offering short, 4-hour sessions, scheduled at times that fitted in well with shifts. Night shift staff were rostered at times during the day that allowed them to attend the sessions. Sessions were conducted on site at hospital training centres or theatre meeting rooms. Participants could join a morning session before they attended an afternoon shift, or come off shift and join a morning or afternoon session. Lunch was provided between morning and afternoon sessions to encourage attendance and punctuality.

Perceived quality of the intervention was measured using participant evaluation forms at the conclusion of the training session (refer Appendix E). The majority of participants reported that their knowledge and skills in implementing resilience strategies had improved from adequate (54%) to good (67%), and 84% felt the workshop was relevant to their needs. The workshop overall was rated as excellent by 50%, and by 43% as good (93%). Participants reported the most beneficial parts of the workshop were learning about workplace resilience, learning about themselves, learning techniques for dealing with obstacles, and the group discussion.
Table 13A

Study 3 Correlations for Full Sample: Experimental and Control Groups at Time 1 (N = 232)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.34**</td>
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<td>.25**</td>
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<td>.37**</td>
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<td>.37**</td>
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<td>.13</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
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<td>.21**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.05</td>
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<td>-.10</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>.72**</td>
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</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 13B

Study 3 Correlations of Research Variables for Experimental Group at Time 1 (n = 178)

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<th>Variable</th>
<th>1.</th>
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<th>5.</th>
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<th>10.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
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<td>-.65**</td>
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<td>7. Physical Well-being</td>
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<td>.25**</td>
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<td>.41</td>
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<td>-.38**</td>
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<td>-.16</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 14

*Study 3 Correlations of Research Variables for Experimental Group at Time 2 (n = 178)*

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<td>.95</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.71</td>
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<td>.26**</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Affective Well-being</td>
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<td>-.73**</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Coping – Avoidance</td>
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<td>-.26**</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>8. Coping – Active</td>
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<td>.64**</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 15

**Study 3 Correlations of Research Variables for Experimental Group at Time 3 (n = 54)**

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<td>4.09</td>
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<td>-.65**</td>
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<td>.68**</td>
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<td>.69**</td>
<td>-</td>
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*p < .05; **p < .01
Table 16

*Study 3 Means and Standard Deviations of Research Variables for Experimental and Control Groups (Full sample N = 232; Experimental n=178; Control = 54)*

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<th>Variable</th>
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<td>.93</td>
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</table>

Note: as Manager Support consisted of two items, the correlation was calculated and no alpha co-efficient was included in this table.
Qualitative responses included: “how to identify a toxic manager,” “what is my ‘follower style’,” “discussing how to talk to/approach your manager,” ‘knowing that others have the same/similar experiences,” “learning how to achieve a quality of life in the workplace,” and “writing our action plan for building resilience.” Actions participants advised they will do as a result of the workshop included: “having a discussion with my manager,” “being more positive,” “practising strategies learned in the workshop,” “think about discussing my work issues with the people who cause my discomfort,” “speak up when I feel issues need to be addressed,” “talk more to resolve problems,” and “try different ways to build career/life resilience and stress relief measure.” In addition to the positive feedback, some candidates expressed doubt that things could change, “I understand the organisation is trying to change and has good intentions, however it will take many years to undo and remove harmful elements.” Qualitative responses can be viewed in detail in Appendix E.

The method for collecting Time 3 evaluation data for the experimental group, and for collecting data from the control group was not implemented as intended. In these cases reliance on unit managers to distribute and collect pen and paper surveys resulted in high attrition (reduction from 176 participants at Time 1 to 54 at Time 3 for the experimental group, and from 54 at Time 1 to 8 for the control group at Time 2). Despite planning a control group for comparison to the experimental group, the control group attrition rate at Time 2 led to the exclusion of control group data from the statistical analysis due to the inadequate sample. The small sample size for Time 3 experimental group also limited the statistical analyses that could be conducted.
**Evaluation Results of Intervention Outcomes**

ANOVA analysis showed a significant increase in knowledge, confidence, and motivation to use the learned resilience techniques, reported by the experimental group between Time 1, immediately before the intervention, and Time 2, immediately after the intervention, $F(1,175) = 69.88$, $p < .001$; Wilks’ $\Lambda = .175$, partial $\eta^2 = .285$, $T1 M = 3.77$, $SD = .64$, $T2 M = 4.16$, $SD = .51$ (Hypothesis 3.1). No significant difference in knowledge, confidence, and motivation was reported between Time 1 and Time 3, three months post the intervention.

MANOVA analyses showed a significant increase in reported well-being over time for the experimental group: from Time 1 to Time 2, $F(3,171) = 4.72$, $p < .01$, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .92$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$; and between Time 1 and Time 3 $F(3, 50) = 4.80$, $p < .01$; Wilk’s $\Lambda = .77$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$. Univariate analysis found significant differences from Time 1 to Time 2 in psychological distress, $F(1,173) = 6.65$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, and affective well-being, $F(1,173) = 9.56$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$; and significant differences from Time 1 to Time 3 in psychological distress, $F(1,52) = 5.57$, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, $T1 M = 1.53$, $SD = .49$, $T3 M = 1.37$, $SD = .46$; and affective well-being, $F(1,52) = 14.53$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$, $T1 M = 4.78$, $SD = .72$, $T3 M = 5.10$, $SD = .73$ (Hypotheses 3.2a – 3.2b). There were no significant changes in physical well-being over time (Hypothesis 3.2c).

**Mediation effects of coping strategies on intervention outcomes.** No significant indirect effects were observed for active coping, avoidance coping, or seeking social support with affective well-being or psychological distress from Time 1 to Time 2, or Time 1 to Time 3. Therefore, Hypotheses 3.4a and 3.4b were not supported. The nil effects found could be due to the short duration of four hours between Time 1 (immediately before the training
session) and Time 2 (immediately after the training session) being insufficient time for the mediators to take effect, and lack of power due to the small sample at Time 3 (three months later).

**Manager Relationship and Well-being**

Before investigating the potential mediating effect of follower coping strategies on the association between abusive supervision, measured as low manager support/interpersonal justice, and well-being, regression analyses were conducted to confirm the hypothesis that lower levels of manager support and manager interpersonal justice had a negative effect on well-being. *Manager Support* was significantly positively associated with well-being at Time 1 for the experimental group: affective well-being, after job role was controlled for (*R* = .43, *R*^2^ = .19, *F*(1,222) = 40.52, *p* < .001); psychological distress (β = -.34, *F*(1,176) = 22.66, *p* < .001); and physical well-being, after age and job role were controlled for (*R* = .39, *R*^2^ = .15, *F*(1,217) = 28.21, *p* < .001). However, no significant relationships were found, with or without control variables, at Time 3 (Hypothesis 3.3a). Significantly higher manager support was reported from Time 1 (M = 3.46, SD = .94) to Time 3 (M = 3.74, SD = .87), *F*(1,53) = 4.67, *p* < .05; Wilks’ Λ = .92, partial η^2^ = .08.

*Interpersonal Justice* was also significantly positively associated with well-being at Time 1: affective well-being, after job role was controlled for (*R* = .36, *R*^2^ = .13, *F*(1,222) = 23.42, *p* < .001); psychological distress (β = -.32, *F*(1,175) = 19.61, *p* < .001); and physical well-being, after age and job role were controlled for (*R* = .32, *R*^2^ = .09, *F*(1,217) = 13.55, *p* < .001). Again, no significant relationships were found, with or without control variables, at Time 3 (Hypothesis 3.3b). No significant difference in interpersonal justice was reported from Time 1 (M = 3.89, SD = 1.16) to Time 3 (M = 4.09, SD = 1.06), *F*(1,53) = 2.39, *p* > .05; Wilks’ Λ =
Therefore, respondents reporting higher levels of manager support and interpersonal justice at Time 1 also reported higher levels of affective and physical well-being and lower level of psychological distress. Conversely, as expected, respondents reporting lower levels of manager support and interpersonal justice at Time 1 reported lower levels of well-being.

One explanation for the non-significant results for a relationship between manager support/manager interpersonal justice and well-being at Time 3 could be that only participants with supportive managers were encouraged to participate and complete the survey, leading to ceiling effects in levels of manager support and interpersonal justice. This explanation is supported by the significant increase in manager support reported at Time 3. Another explanation is that the training intervention may have been successful in reducing dependency on the manager relationship for well-being. Alternatively, due to the small sample size at Time 3, there was insufficient power to find a significant result.

**Mediation effects of coping strategies on manager relationship and well-being outcomes.** Results of mediation analyses for coping strategies mediating the association between manager relationship and well-being are set out in Table 17, and between manager interpersonal justice and well-being in Table 18. After controlling for conscientiousness and correlated demographic variables (age and job role), cross-sectional analyses found significant indirect effects for avoidance coping: between manager support Time 1 and psychological distress Time 1, estimated to be -.07 (95% CI [ -.12, -.03]); and between manager support Time 1 and affective well-being Time 1, estimated to be .04 (95% CI [ .01, .12]).
Table 17

Study 3 indirect effects for the parallel multiple mediation model for manager support and well-being at Time 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c’</th>
<th>ab</th>
<th>SE ab</th>
<th>CI LL, UL</th>
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<td>Affective well-being</td>
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<td>-.08</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>.12*</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.04, .01</td>
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<td>Physical well-being</td>
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<td>.01, .12</td>
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<td>.30*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
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</table>

Note. CI = 95% bias corrected confidence interval.  a = IV \rightarrow Mediator; b = Mediator \rightarrow DV; c’ = direct effect IV \rightarrow DV; ab = indirect effect. Significant indirect effects are bolded.  *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.
Table 18

Study 3 indirect effects for the parallel multiple mediation model for manager interpersonal justice and well-being at Time 1

<table>
<thead>
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<th>IV</th>
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<th>DV</th>
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<th>(c')</th>
<th>(ab)</th>
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Note. CI = 95% bias corrected confidence interval. \(a = IV \rightarrow \text{Mediator}\); \(b = \text{Mediator} \rightarrow \text{DV}\); \(c' = \text{direct effect IV} \rightarrow \text{DV}\); \(ab = \text{indirect effect}\). Significant indirect effects are bolded. *\(p<.05\); **\(p<.01\); ***\(p<.001\).
However, no significant indirect effect was found for avoidance coping between manager relationship and physical well-being. A significant indirect effect was also found for avoidance coping between interpersonal justice Time 1 and psychological distress Time 1, estimated to be -0.07 (95% CI [-.12, -.04]); and interpersonal justice Time 1 and affective well-being Time 1, estimated to be 0.05 (95% CI [.01, .13]), with no significant indirect effect for physical well-being Time 1. No significant indirect effects were found for active coping or social support coping between manager relationship (manager support or interpersonal justice) and the three well-being outcomes at Time 1. Overall, avoidance coping significantly mediated the association between low manager support and low manager interpersonal justice and psychological and affective well-being at Time 1. Contrary to expectations, avoidance coping significantly reduced psychological distress and increased affective well-being. This suggests that in the context of abusive supervision avoidance is likely to be a common coping strategy, and may even be adaptive in reducing distress in these circumstances. Therefore, Hypotheses 3.4c and 3.4d were not supported.

Analyses conducted over time, with Time 1 well-being, correlated demographic variables, and conscientiousness controlled for as covariates, found no significant indirect effects for active coping, avoidance coping, or social support coping strategies between manager relationship (manager support and interpersonal justice) and the well-being outcomes (affective, psychological, and physical) at Time 3. These non-significant results are likely to be due to the small sample at Time 3. A second explanation is that, given the small indirect effects in the cross-sectional analysis at Time 1, the effects of avoidance coping strategies became insignificant once the resiliency training intervention had been conducted. Thirdly, avoidance coping may be adaptive in the short-term but becomes insignificant in reducing stress symptoms over time.
Study 3 Discussion

When evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention in increasing participants’ knowledge, confidence and motivation to use the tactics, and to increase their well-being, the results provided support for three of the four hypothesised main effects. Participants reported significantly increased knowledge, motivation, and confidence to employ learned resiliency-building strategies in the workplace immediately after the training session (Hypothesis 3.1). Participants also reported significantly increased psychological and affective well-being three months after the resiliency training session (Hypothesis 3.2a and 3.2b).

No change to physical well-being over time resulted from the intervention (Hypothesis 3.2c). There are three possible explanations for this lack of effect on physical well-being: (a) there was no direct relationship between the resilience tactics in the training session and physical well-being; (b) the negative impact of abusive supervision on physical well-being results from long-term psychological and emotional distress (supported by the significant correlational relationship between affective well-being, psychological distress, and physical well-being), and the three-month evaluation period may have been too short to show the effects of the intervention on physical well-being; and (c) the correlation between age and physical well-being suggests that this dependent variable may have been directly related to the demographic variable of age and, as a result, was not likely to change with a training session intervention.

Contrary to expectations, employees’ choice of coping strategies did not mediate the effect of the intervention on well-being over time (Hypotheses 3.4a and 3.4b). This may have been due to the intervention focusing on techniques to build resilience, rather than teaching specific coping skills. Alternatively, given the small sample at Time 3, there may not have been enough variation in participants’ coping skills or enough power to find an effect. Overall, this study provides initial
support for the utility of conducting short resiliency training sessions in the context of abusive supervision to improve employee well-being over time, irrespective of individual differences in participants.

**Intervention Process Evaluation**

Difficulty was experienced in finding a compromise between administering an effective intervention with an optimal research design, and one that facilitated active participation in the intervention, while fulfilling organisational requirements. While it is acknowledged that a true experimental design is the most effective methodology to evaluate interventions because it controls for potentially confounding factors, true experimental designs are extremely difficult to apply in organisational settings (Nielsen et al., 2010; Wickstrom, 2000). In this research a quasi-experimental design was adopted because random allocation to intervention sessions was not practical. Unlike most preventative interventions, this study did not rely on voluntary participation. Executive and management selection of participants and support for the program ensured good attendance rates at the workshops. Quasi-experimental designs have been adopted in many studies and have been regarded as an acceptable compromise for evaluating interventions if using a pre- and post-test methodology (Lipsey & Cordray, 2000). One of the benefits of adopting the quasi-experimental approach was being able to carry out the research in a natural organisational setting, where reactions of test subjects are more likely to be genuine, because they are not in an artificial, unrealistic research environment. It also enhanced the feasibility of the research, removing time, resources, and logistical constraints often associated with true experimental designs.

A methodological strength of this study was the evaluation of both micro processes (e.g., increased participant knowledge, confidence, motivation, and well-being) and macro processes (e.g., participant attendance and participant appraisal of quality of intervention) because such evaluations
can partially explain why or how the intervention affected outcomes. Such evaluation can also identify the influence micro and macro processes have on the variation in the outcomes of the study, beyond the effects of the intervention (Biggs & Brough, 2015b; Randall et al., 2009). Participant evaluations of the intervention at the end of the training session were positive in relation to the quality of the workshop and the benefits gained (Appendix E).

Intervention process evaluation also allows insight into how stress management interventions could be better designed for future studies. The main design complication in this research study was the process for collecting longitudinal evaluation data due to the attrition for the experimental group at Time 3 and the control group at Time 2. Relying on unit/ward managers to ensure pen and paper surveys were completed and submitted was not an effective strategy, and it resulted in sub-optimum sample sizes, negatively affecting the statistical analysis that could be conducted (e.g., analysing mediation effects over time). This research intended to address the limitations of stress management intervention research by adopting a longitudinal design with a control group, but this could not be accomplished due to the constraints discussed.

**Manager Relationship and Well-being**

The results provided support for the hypothesised associations between manager relationship and well-being (Webster et al., 2016): lower levels of manager support and manager interpersonal justice were significantly related to lower levels of psychological, affective, and physical well-being (Hypotheses 3.3a and 3.3b). Similarly to Nandkeolar et al.’s (2014) findings on mediators between abusive supervision and job performance, support was found for the hypothesised mediation of avoidance coping on the relationships between manager support and manager interpersonal justice, but only for affective and psychological well-being. No significant mediating relationship was found for active coping or social support coping as mediators between manager relationship and the
well-being outcomes (Hypotheses 3.4c – 3.4d). The higher the levels of manager support and interpersonal justice reported, the less frequently avoidance coping was reported. Tepper’s (2007) review of the abusive supervision literature found that individuals employing direct communication, such as confronting an abusive leader with their concerns, experienced less psychological distress than those who employed avoidance coping tactics to reduce their exposure to abusive supervision (Tepper, 2007). However, although Yagil et al. (2011) confirmed Tepper’s findings, in their study most employees did not confront supervisors, resorting to avoidance coping strategies. In Study 3, those participants who reported lower levels of manager support and interpersonal justice and higher levels of avoidance coping also reported significantly reduced psychological distress and increased affective well-being. These findings suggest that while avoidance coping is not considered an effective strategy for dealing with occupational stressors, it may relieve distress in the context of coping with an abusive manager relationship, at least in the short term. Active coping strategies, such as speaking up in such a situation, or trying to negotiate to change the situation, may trigger further mistreatment, leading to increased abuse by the leader and negative career consequences for the individual, resulting in significant harm over time (May et al., 2014; Webster et al., 2016). An extended evaluation period of 12 to 24 months may demonstrate whether avoidance coping is an adaptive response over the longer term.

**Theoretical Implications**

**Stress management intervention for abusive supervision.** The results of Study 3 support the utility of secondary stress prevention interventions in assisting followers to deal with abusive leadership behaviours in a way that maintains well-being. The Study 3 intervention and evaluation addressed the call for theory-driven, longitudinal studies into the efficacy of SMIs. The intervention was developed using evidence-based practice, underpinned by two main theoretical frameworks:
cognitive behavioural principles and career resilience theory. Educating employees to recognise abusive leadership behaviours and inoculate them to potential harmful effects (SIT) may be particularly effective in dealing with destructive leadership, when abuse occurs over time in an environment that the employee cannot control, and when such behaviour may be tolerated by the organisation. SIT provides a mechanism to increase awareness of potentially harmful situations and validates follower experiences, giving some control back to potential targets. Combining SIT techniques with career resilience strategies further enhances followers’ personal resources and facilitates an avenue of potential escape from an abusive situation. This may prevent learned helplessness or chronic mental health problems. The increase in affective well-being and the reduction in psychological distress found at Time 3 post-intervention supports the proposition that individuals with career resilience are better able to cope with the strong emotions generated by a negative work situation (London, 1997; Vuori et al., 2012).

ACT techniques allow followers to review their values and priorities, which may protect them from falling victim to manipulation by their manager or being caught up in the leader’s agenda. It also provides mechanisms for accepting and tolerating uncomfortable and distressing thoughts and emotions in a way that maintains well-being. This is particularly salient when dealing with abusive leadership behaviours in situations where the victim has a less powerful position when trying to address or change the situation. Supporting previous findings that SIT and ACT are equally effective in reducing psychological distress (Flaxman & Bond, 2010a), the combined techniques in the Study 3 intervention were found to be effective in increasing psychological and affective well-being in the context of coping with abusive supervision.
Coping with Abusive Supervision

Targets of abusive supervision are likely to engage in several coping strategies (May et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011; Webster et al., 2016). This study investigated three strategies: avoidance coping (avoiding thinking about the problem), active coping (accommodating and changing the situation), and social support coping (seeking emotional and instrumental support). The proposition that avoidance coping can be adaptive in some contexts was confirmed (Skinner et al., 2003). Indeed, avoidance coping may alleviate distress in stressful circumstances. Directing thoughts away from the source of stress (i.e., the manager) may lead to behaviour that is perceived by the leader as submissive, which could relieve abusive behaviour in the short-term. However, it may increase abusive behaviour over time when the leader experiences no resistance to their negative behaviour (May et al., 2014). In this study, the avoidance coping measure focussed on avoiding thinking about the stressor. It would be difficult to avoid thinking about a leader’s abusive behaviour if the follower had to interact with their manager on a daily basis. Yagil et al.’s (2011) scale for coping with abusive supervision measured avoidance of contact with the abusive supervisor and found avoidance coping to be maladaptive. Study 2 also found that while avoidance strategies, such as ignoring or bypassing the leader, relieved distress in the short term, such strategies often led to increasing periods of absenteeism (i.e., taking extended stress leave) and to psychological harm in the longer term.

The coping literature suggests that both active and avoidance coping may be complementary processes, with individuals cycling between the two, and that the emotional and psychological respite gained through avoidance coping may provide the energy and resources needed for more active coping responses. However, in this intervention, active coping to change the situation and to accommodate or adapt to the stressor was not found to be an adaptive mechanism to enhance well-
being in this context. This could be because active coping may be considered confrontational by an abusive manager, which could lead to an increase in abusive leadership behaviours (May et al., 2014). Alternatively, if the follower felt the situation was outside their control, they may not feel enabled to engage in active coping strategies.

Despite the findings of Study 2, that social support reduced distress, and the results of Yagil et al.’s (2011) study, that seeking support (talking with others about abusive occurrences and consequent emotions) mediated the effect of abusive supervision on negative affect, social support coping was not found to mediate the effects of the quality of manager relationship on affective well-being or psychological distress in this study (Hypotheses 3.4c and 3.4d). One explanation may be that there are both positive and negative consequences of seeking social support when coping with abusive supervision, negating a significant effect. The ability to vent emotions to a third-party and seek advice may reduce negative affect and distress, while social reinforcement of the adverse nature of the stressor may increase negative affect and distress. Additional field research using consistent coping measures across studies is required to better understand the role of active, avoidance, and social support coping in the context of abusive supervision.

**Practical Implications**

It is incumbent on organisations to minimise the detrimental effects to well-being of abusive leadership, when it exists in the workplace, by implementing intervention strategies to build employees’ coping, and resilience (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014). Human Resources professionals are well placed to detect signs of stress in employees that may be caused by abusive supervision, such as anecdotal feedback, grievance reporting, reduced engagement by unit, and high levels of absenteeism. As well as addressing the leader’s behaviour, a brief resiliency training intervention can be offered to staff in the affected areas. Adding psycho-education and self-evaluation
components to recognised resilience building techniques in the literature enabled design of an effective intervention that caused minimal disruption to business. Brief interventions meet organisational needs, especially when pressure on budgets and labour management is experienced in relation to releasing staff for training. This is particularly relevant in a healthcare environment, where training is treated as non-productive hours (hours away from patient care), negatively affecting key performance indicator measures. Therefore, executives are more likely to invest in individual, short interventions that fit into shift cycles (Nytrø, Saksvik, Mikkelsen, Bohle, & Quinlan, 2000).

In addition to addressing the lack of evidence-based interventions for the stressor of abusive supervision, this research also addressed the lack of evidence-based workplace interventions for nurse stress (Pipe et al., 2009). Occupational stress has been identified as an dilemma for nurses and healthcare workers, and the importance of providing a work environment where employees can learn to use effective coping skills that enables a safe, effective, and highly satisfying care environment for patients has been discussed (Pipe et al., 2012). The cost of unplanned absenteeism or employee turnover related to occupational stressors, such as abusive supervision, has been found to be significant. If the absent nurse is not replaced, the staff members who are left behind to carry the load without the absent team member will experience an increased workload. An increased workload is likely to incrementally increase the stress in an already challenging work environment, potentially having a negative impact on patient care (Pipe et al., 2012). This study confirmed the effectiveness of a four-hour training session in improving well-being within the context of abusive supervision. Participants of units were uniformly exposed to the planned intervention, contextualized to their workplace, maximizing the opportunity for colleague support, which has been found to contribute to an optimal transfer climate for training (Randall et al., 2009).
Limitations and Future Research

As discussed in the intervention process evaluation section, the main limitation for Study 3 was sample attrition over time for both the experimental and control groups. A future research design would benefit from employing a mechanism to bring participants back together to complete the longitudinal surveys as a way to reduce attrition during the data collection period. For example, the experimental group could attend a short refresher session, and the control group could be invited to an information session on an unrelated topic, such as communication skills.

While participants did complete a resilience action plan prior to leaving the session, due to the brief nature of the intervention, no follow-up process was put in place to assess whether the action plans were enacted; nor were relapse prevention strategies included in the training session. Autonomy within a hospital workplace is limited and may inhibit healthcare workers’ ability to enact workplace change, or to minimise exposure to the stressor of abusive leadership (van der Klink et al., 2001). Despite a three-month evaluation period being deemed sufficient when measuring individual outcomes (Giga et al., 2003), the short evaluation period may have precluded an analysis of possible relapse effects post the data collection period (Ivancevich et al., 1990). If experimental groups were to be brought back together briefly for data collection purposes in order to reduce attrition, then relapse prevention strategies could be included at that time (e.g., refresher on key points from the training session, reflecting on the actions they have taken since the training session, or asking participants to share what they have learned with others.) Collecting additional measures, such as absenteeism and performance data, pre and 12 months after the intervention may also demonstrate the sustainability of participants implementing the learned strategies in the workplace.
Another challenge was the choice of measures for the abusive supervision and coping constructs. When conducting research within one organisation, where the results will be shared with executive staff, it is difficult to obtain approval to employ dark side measures, such as the Abusive Supervision Scale, the active interpersonal abuse sub-scale, or the Abusive Supervision Coping Scale (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007; Yagil et al., 2011). It may be that if these measures were employed, in place of the pseudo measures of quality of manager relationship, interpersonal justice, active coping, avoidance coping, and social support coping, the efficacy of this intervention to directly address abusive supervision, and mediators that affect the intervention-well-being relationship, could have been better evaluated. Collecting data from one organisation reduced the range of potential confounding variables, such as work environment and culture, while potentially limiting generalisability of findings. Future studies collecting data from participants drawn from more than one organisation, especially when results are not shared with those organisations in a way that identifies their own employees, would facilitate the use of more direct measures of abusive supervision and coping with abusive supervision and their impact on well-being (e.g., Nandekeolyar et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011.)

Additionally, there is little consensus among coping researchers on how best to measure and classify ways of coping when dealing generally with work stress, let alone the specific occupational stressor of abusive supervision (Skinner et al., 2003). Nandekeolyar et al. (2014) recommended using specific measures of coping with abusive supervision in future research, such as that developed by Yagil et al. (2011). Yagil et al. (2011) did investigate five coping styles with abusive supervision based on two classifications, problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping. Consistent with Nandekeolyer et al. (2014) and Yagil et al. (2011), in this research, avoidance coping was found to be effective in reducing psychological distress and improving affect. However,
the avoidance coping scales used in the two examples discussed above were different from each other (e.g., Yagil et al. measured avoidance of contact with the abusive supervisor; Nandekeolyer et al. employed the 17-item avoidance coping scale in the Ways of Coping Checklist), and both were different from the measure used in the current research (e.g., avoidance and devaluation scales of the CCS.) Furthermore, due to sample attrition, this part of the Study 3 analysis also relied on cross-sectional data, precluding the ability to draw any causal inferences from the data. Future longitudinal research, using a consistent measure of coping specific to this occupational stressor, such as the Coping with Abusive Supervision Scale, is recommended to enable researchers to gain a better understanding as to why avoidance coping may be an adaptive coping mechanism to maintain follower well-being in the context of abusive supervision. Employing the Coping with Abusive Supervision Scale would also allow a broader examination of coping with abusive supervision strategies beyond what was evaluated in this research, such as physically avoiding the abusive supervisor, and employing ingratiation tactics.

Chapter Conclusion

Building on the findings from Study 1 and 2, Study 3 evaluated an evidence-based, quasi-experimental intervention that informed participants within an acute healthcare organisation on how to recognise and deal with abusive leadership behaviours, as well as to build and maintain their personal and career resilience. Results showed that their knowledge, confidence and motivation in employing resilience strategies increased at the end of the training session, and psychological and emotional well-being were significantly improved three months post the intervention. No effects were found for physical well-being.

Participant coping strategies did not mediate the effect of the intervention on their well-being. However, avoidance coping did significantly mediate the association between poor manager
relationship (low levels of manager support and interpersonal justice) and well-being by reducing psychological distress and increasing affective well-being. Contrary to expectations, no significant effects were found for active coping or seeking social support (emotional and instrumental support) mediating the impact of a poor manager relationship on well-being. While a robust research design was intended, including evaluating micro/macro implementation processes and intervention outcomes, and comparing experimental group data with control group data over time, a significant limitation of this study was the inability to analyse control group data due to the high attrition rate. The theoretical and practical implications of all three research studies in this thesis are discussed in Chapter 7.
Chapter 7. General Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to identify evidence-based strategies to prevent the damage and costs destructive leadership behaviours cause to organisations, through their negative effect on followers. This research sought to inform practical, realistic interventions that practitioners can employ to prevent and/or address destructive leadership in organisations. As was outlined in Chapter 2, for the purposes of this thesis destructive leadership was defined by the researcher as:

Systematic, volitional behaviour by a leader over a period of time (verbal or non-verbal, active or passive), that can inflict or intends to inflict serious and enduring harm on subordinates by the use of methods of influence that are perceived as hostile or obstructive by subordinates, and that result in the undermining of the effectiveness, motivation and/or well-being of their subordinates, regardless of justifications for such behaviour.

Three studies were conducted to advance current theoretical and empirical knowledge of the dark side of leadership and its impact on followers, each study contributing to achieving the aim of this thesis. Study 1 provided information on antecedent personality traits that predispose leaders to engage in destructive behaviours. Study 2 investigated behaviours followers perceived as toxic and ways of coping employed by followers when attempting to mitigate the psychological, emotional, and physical consequences of those perceived toxic leadership behaviours. Study 3 evaluated an intervention to enhance follower well-being through improved resilience to abusive supervisory behaviours. Figure 2 (see p. 17) outlined the contribution of the three studies of this thesis: antecedent personality traits may predispose a leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, which are likely to lead to emotional, psychological, and physical harm, when abusive leadership behaviours are perceived by a follower as an occupational stressor. By participating in a secondary stress prevention intervention (e.g., a resiliency training session), followers may increase their
This final chapter discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the three studies’ findings, together with the strengths and limitations of each research methodology. This chapter also identifies areas for future research that will contribute to better understanding the complex relationship between perpetrators and targets of destructive leadership in the context of the workplace.

**Theoretical Research Implications**

The documented negative consequences of destructive leadership behaviours for followers and organisations have not been ignored by researchers (Martinko et al., 2013). Indeed, interest and focus in this research field has grown exponentially over the past decade (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). By focusing on the dark side of leadership this research increases understanding of the leader/follower leadership process. It goes beyond the assumption of traditional leadership theory that leaders strive to be noble, by acknowledging the continuum from constructive, values-based leadership to destructive leadership, with a specific focus on antecedents to derailed leadership (see Figure 4, p.30). The two specific areas of interest this research aimed to explore were, firstly, specific antecedent personality traits that predispose leaders to engage in destructive behaviours (bright and dark side leader trait theory and trait activation theory), and, secondly, theoretical processes by which the harm these destructive leadership behaviours cause for followers can be mitigated (coping, resiliency, and stress management intervention theories).

This thesis research builds on previous studies that have provided some initial testing of theoretical frameworks relevant to destructive leadership. In the first instance, this research builds on studies on the dark side of leaders’ bright side traits theory (e.g., charisma, Hogan et al., 1990; assertiveness, Ames & Flynn, 2007) by researching the negative effects of high levels of the bright
side trait, independence. It also explores the role of intrinsic rewards in trait activation, e.g. the need to express strong personality traits (see Figure 3, p. 26; van Knippenberg, 2012), and the role of self-regulatory traits in curbing that expression. Secondly, this research builds on previous taxonomies of leader behaviours perceived by followers to be harmful (e.g., investigation of toxic leader behaviour, Pelletier, 2010). Thirdly, this research extends previous coping research by investigating follower coping in the context of destructive leadership to better understand which strategies may protect followers from harm (e.g., coping with abusive supervision, Yagil et al., 2011), including coping strategies that may be considered maladaptive in other contexts (Skinner et al., 2003). Finally, it furthers stress management intervention research by investigating the utility of a number of theoretical frameworks when designing interventions to reduce employee stress and enhance well-being in the context of destructive leadership. The theoretical frameworks utilised were based on cognitive behavioural principles (e.g., positive psychology, Meyers et al., 2013; stress inoculation therapy and acceptance commitment training, Flaxman & Bond, 2010a) and mechanisms for increasing personal resources (e.g., career resilience, Vuori et al., 2012).

Theoretical implications derived from the results of this research are discussed in more detail in the following chapter sections.

**Antecedent personality traits to destructive leadership.** While the leader trait paradigm has come under some criticism, the results of Study 1 support the argument that there is value in attempting to understand the role of individual differences in leadership effectiveness versus derailment, and specifically how some traits may be associated with positive outcomes in some circumstances but negative outcomes in others (Judge et al., 2009). Study 1 provided support for the theory that bright side leader traits can be overdone, with high levels of the bright side trait, independence, significantly associated with derailing leadership traits (ego-centred, manipulating,
intimidating, micro-managing, and passive-aggressive traits). This is consistent with trait activation theory, which purports that an individual will seek out opportunities for expressing his or her personality traits. Leaders with high preferences for a trait are, therefore, likely to express it more often and across more situations, which is likely to lead them to express dominant traits inappropriately in some situations (van Knippenberg, 2012).

In addition, Study 1 provided support for part of Krasikov et al.’s (2013) proposed theoretical model of factors that contribute to the enactment of destructive leadership. Dispositional negative affectivity, likely to be triggered when achievement of a leader’s goals is threatened or frustrated, was found to suppress self-regulatory traits (self-awareness and stress tolerance), increasing the leader’s predisposition to four derailing leadership traits (intimidation, passive-aggressiveness, micromanaging, and manipulating). Study 1 results suggested that the trait of negative affectivity had an important role to play in mediating the relationship between dispositional tendencies that emphasise personal achievement (e.g., high levels of the personality trait independence), and a predisposition to employ a leadership style that involves the use of harmful methods of influence (e.g., derailing leadership traits). This provides support for the proposition that negative affectivity has a role in its own right as an independent or mediator variable to destructive leadership, rather than as a control variable (Spector et al., 2000). While the cross-sectional nature of Study 1 does not enable exploration of whether individual leaders with high levels of the trait negative affectivity are more likely to perceive personal goal blockage, it does provide confirmation for the mechanism that, when combined with high levels of bright or dark side traits, negative affectivity plays a role in suppressing self-regulation traits and, as a result, may prevent the leader from choosing a constructive response.
Despite a strong emphasis in the literature on the importance of emotional regulation in the workplace (Jordan & Lindebaum, 2015; Lawrence et al., 2011) and previous findings that leaders with emotional instability experience negative moods and create toxic environments, limited support for these theories was found in Study 1. Emotional control was not found to be a significant mediating trait between independence and derailing traits. The findings from Study 1 suggest leader traits of self-awareness and stress tolerance may be more effective in facilitating self-regulation than merely trying to suppress or control negative emotion (Kaiser et al., 2015; Rothstein & Burke, 2010). Longitudinal research is required to study over time hypothesised mechanisms of leader enactment of high levels of bright or dark side traits into destructive leadership behaviours, in order to fully understand the role of traits in the leader’s choice between constructive and destructive leadership behaviours (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Judge et al., 2009).

Neither negative affectivity nor self-regulation traits were found to mediate the relationship between independence and a predisposition for ego-centredness. This supports previous findings that leaders with narcissistic traits are unlikely to develop self-awareness, because they are resistant to feedback. Leaders who lack insight are less likely to manage their counterproductive tendencies, especially if they are prone to experience negative emotions when feeling threatened or under stress (Kaiser et al., 2015). The narcissism literature also suggests ego-centred leaders will be recalcitrant to change their negative behaviour if such behaviour is meeting their self-interests, even at the expense of others’ welfare (Padilla et al., 2007). The lack of significant findings for self-regulation traits and ego-centredness also provides support for the theory that narcissistic leaders may employ different self-regulatory mechanisms to less ego-centred leaders (e.g., self-enhancement, bragging, accessing self-serving biases, seeking fame; Campbell et al., 2011). This hypothesis of differing self-regulation mechanisms is supported by the leader behaviours reported in Study 2 (see Table 11,
Appendix D): self-enhancement, “They constantly seek and need praise.”, bragging “Lapses into numerous, time consuming, self-praising anecdotes.”, and accessing self-serving biases, “He has to win at all costs and it is pointless arguing with him.” Research findings from Study 1 and 2 suggest sub-clinical narcissism should continue to be researched independently, as a sub-category of destructive leadership, to attempt to identify strategies that can mitigate the negative impact of this specific form of dark side leadership.

**Behaviours perceived by followers as toxic.** Study 2 investigated specific leadership behaviours that followers perceived as toxic. Although these were summarised briefly in Chapter 5, specific theming of participant respondents was not included in the journal article, and is therefore outlined in detail in Table 11, Appendix D. Respondents reported harm from experiencing Dark Triad behaviours (narcissism, intimidation, manipulation; Boddy, 2015) and behaviours consistent with those outlined in the abusive supervision literature (emotional volatility and abuse; Tepper 2007).

Results are also consistent with Pelletier’s (2010) typology of toxic leader behaviour. Pelletier separated out many of the behaviours themed in Study 2 as manipulative into specific dimensions: *lack of integrity* (being deceptive), *social exclusion, divisiveness*, and *promoting inequity* (favouritism). Pelletier categorised two dimensions for intimidating behaviours, called *attack on self-esteem* and *threat to followers’ security* (aggression and threats), and one for *abusiveness* (emotional volatility). Destructive leadership behaviours identified in Study 2 that are not included under Pelletier’s typology include *ego-centredness*, “They demonstrated that they do not have any care for anyone other than themselves.”, and *micromanaging* “fault finding” and “nit picking”. Therefore, Study 2’s inventory of leadership behaviours, perceived by followers to cause
harm to their well-being, includes a broad range of behaviours from destructive leadership theory, beyond just abusive supervision and/or toxic leadership.

Study 2 confirmed that it is not just active behaviour that is harmful. Respondents provided examples of negative outcomes resulting from a leader’s non-action and passive-aggressive behaviour, such as when their manager failed to provide them with important information, or delayed decisions. Passive leader behaviour is likely to lead to follower perceptions of low-quality interpersonal treatment by the leader, which, in turn, leads to stress (Skogstad et al., 2007). Study 1 found that high levels of independence was positively associated with passive-aggressiveness, especially if respondents reported high levels of negative affectivity. Pelletier (2010) cited laissez-faire as one of the toxic leader behaviour dimensions. Debate continues as to whether passive and indirect styles of leadership (e.g., laissez-faire, passive management-by-exception, passive-aggressive leadership) should be categorised as destructive leadership (Einarsen et al., 2007; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Skogstad et al., 2007). Longitudinal studies focused on leader/follower dyads or leader/teams, measuring engagement, well-being, and performance as dependent variables, are required to study the effects of passive leadership styles in order to establish whether they become destructive over time.

**Follower strategies for coping with destructive leadership.** Study 2 responded to the call to employ qualitative methods to better understand followers’ responses to manifestations of destructive leadership, the consequences of follower reactions, and the effect of follower perceptions of complaint mechanisms and organisational support for victims (Krasikova et al., 2013). There is now a considerable body of research on the consequences of destructive leadership, and Study 2 confirmed the psychological, emotional, and physical harm that destructive leadership behaviours have been found to cause respondents (Einarsen et al., 2010; Martinko et al., 2013;
Tepper, 2007). Study 2 found that perceived toxic behaviours by managers led to negative individual reactions such as inter-personal conflict, work withdrawal behaviours (absenteeism and resignation from the organisation), psychological distress (anxiety and depression), emotional distress (anger and fear), and poor physical health (insomnia, stomach upsets, and skin rashes; Webster et al., 2016). Study 2 also found that even single destructive leadership behaviours may incur substantial harm if they are not addressed immediately by the organisation and allowed to become chronic. This confirmed the proposition that, based on stressor-strain theory, destructive leadership behaviours are consistent with the stressor of anti-social behaviours and interpersonal mistreatment, and cause strain to recipients (Beehr, 1998). This potentially adds destructive leadership as another key component to the anti-social behaviour research, over and above the stressors of workplace violence, aggression, bullying, and harassment (Martinko et al., 2013; O'Driscoll & Brough, 2010). Respondents in Study 2 reported the stressor of toxic leadership as a threat to their wellbeing and one that they did not feel they could control, e.g., a hindrance stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

An area that has received less attention in the literature is the coping mechanisms followers employ when confronted with destructive leadership (May et al., 2014). Study 2 investigated the coping strategies followers employed to deal with the negative consequences of perceived toxic behaviour by leaders, based on a combination of two existing coping frameworks (Skinner et al., 2003; Yagil et al., 2011). Data analysis provided support for 10 families of coping strategies for this specific stressor (refer Table 10 in Appendix D). Reported coping strategies included instances of problem-focused approach coping (e.g., seeking instrumental support), emotion-focused approach coping (e.g., cognitive reframing), problem-focused avoidance coping (e.g., avoiding the leader), and emotion-focused avoidance coping (e.g., denial; Nes & Segerstrom, 2006). As suggested in the
literature, choice of coping strategies was found to be influenced by individuals’ perception of control over the stressor and their appraisal of the success of their coping strategies (Goh et al., 2010; Yagil et al., 2011). Respondents who initially tried active coping or problem-focused approach strategies resorted to emotion-focused strategies, in particular avoidance tactics, when they found their first attempts did not work. Many changed their situation by choosing to take extended leave and/or resign (Edwards & Baglioni, 1993).

Followers’ coping skills determined their resiliency in recovering from the experience of destructive leadership (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). As depicted in Figure 6 (see p. 77) and discussed above, respondents in Study 2 experienced negative cognitions and emotions when they interpreted their manager’s behaviour as a threat, and chose their coping strategies based on their perception of personal control. The psychological, emotional, physical, and career outcomes they experienced depended on the effectiveness of their coping skills, and the level of peer, social and organisational support they received.

It is proposed that if an individual finds their coping strategies are unable to resolve the stressor, this leads to even more negative outcomes over time (Goh et al., 2010). This proposition was supported in Study 2. Those who did not change their situation reported experiencing significant harm over time. Respondents in Study 3 also reported employing avoidance coping strategies when receiving low levels of interpersonal justice and support from their manager. In Study 3, avoidance coping significantly mediated the relationship between a poor manager relationship and poor well-being, reducing psychological and emotional distress. These findings support two previous studies that found avoidance coping reduced distress caused by abusive supervision (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011). There are two possible explanations for these findings that require further investigation: (a) avoidance coping is adaptive when dealing with
the occupational stressor of destructive leadership, at least in the short term (Suls & Fletcher, 1985); or (b) given the power differential and organisational context in which destructive leadership takes place, there is little opportunity for active coping to be demonstrated.

There is limited evidence for the role of social support in reducing the negative effects of destructive leadership (Martinko et al., 2011). Seeking social support, posited as an important coping strategy to alleviate strain from an occupational stressor, was confirmed as a useful coping strategy in Study 2. Those who had access to social support from co-workers, friends, or family reported it reduced distress and improved their sense of well-being (Viswesvaran et al., 1999). However, in Study 3 social support coping was not found to be a significant mediator between manager relationship (low interpersonal justice) and psychological and emotional well-being. More research is required to understand the specific role of seeking social support in the context of destructive leadership (e.g., main effect, mediator and/or moderator; Dewe et al., 2010).

**Stress management interventions and follower well-being.** Study 3 provided initial validation for the implementation of a secondary stress prevention intervention, based on cognitive behavioural principles, within the context of abusive supervision, to enhance well-being (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008). In an attempt to identify strategies that can prevent the damage caused by destructive leadership behaviours, Study 3 evaluated the efficacy of a four-hour workshop to teach followers how to identify abusive leadership behaviours early and to build their coping skills, so that they can remain resilient when dealing with stressors, including an abusive supervisor. Study 3 responded to the criticism that many stress management intervention designs are not underpinned with theoretical frameworks. Support was found for adopting a multidisciplinary approach to designing the intervention, utilising techniques based on theoretical frameworks from CBT, positive psychology, ACT, SIT, stress management, resilience, coping, and career resilience.
literatures and practices. Participants reported significantly higher knowledge, confidence and motivation to use the coping and resilience strategies at the end of the workshop, and significantly improved psychological and affective well-being over time. These results support the strategy used of combining resiliency-building techniques with tactics to build personal resources, such as career management exercises (Richardson & Rothstein, 2008; Vuori et al., 2012).

In addition, Study 3 confirmed the importance of undertaking program implementation process evaluation to better understand context and process factors (macro-process factors) and theoretical mechanisms between the intervention and outcomes (micro-process factors) that influence the effectiveness of stress management interventions (Biggs & Brough, 2015b). As a result, factors that may have had an impact on employees’ experiences during the intervention and/or affected the well-being outcomes were acknowledged, explanations for non-significant effects were provided, and improvements for future intervention designs identified, such as reducing attrition over time to ensure sufficient sample size. Participant evaluation forms confirmed that when designing SMIs ensuring sufficient time is allowed for reflection, group discussion, interaction, skills practice, and learning are effective techniques for transfer of knowledge and potential application of stress management tactics. Strategies that enhanced participation included management support, conducting short sessions that fitted in well with shifts, and conducting sessions on site. However, relying on third parties to collect pen and paper surveys was not found to be conducive to acquiring adequate sample sizes.

**Implications for Organisational Practice**

A lack of scientific knowledge is detrimental to developing effective organisational strategies to deal with destructive leaders and the effects of their behaviour (Martinko et al., 2013). Despite significant research documenting the harmful consequences of destructive leadership
behaviours, destructive leadership is still relatively under-researched. In addition, with employers held liable for maintaining the well-being of their employees, employing a combination of primary, secondary, and tertiary stress management interventions is recommended to effectively deal with the consequences of destructive leadership, and to avoid financial and legal repercussions (DeFrank & Cooper, 1987; Murphy, 1988).

Practical implications of this research in relation to preventing destructive leadership include providing organisations with suggested strategies to constrain destructive leader behaviour (e.g., rigorous selection processes, governance frameworks, policies, and sanctions) and enhancing leadership development programs with activities designed to protect leaders from derailing (e.g., leadership style profiles, resiliency training, reflective practice, self-regulatory mechanisms).

In relation to managing occupational stress as a result of destructive leadership, three key processes are recommended based on this research, namely: (a) preparing employees for stress experiences (e.g., provision of training interventions to better prepare followers to identify and deal effectively with destructive leadership behaviours; and provision of clear guidelines for escalating problems, lodging grievances, and formal complaints); (b) minimising the risk of stress exposure, via the removal of leaders who regularly demonstrate destructive leadership behaviours; and (c) providing support for exposed employees, including formal support systems (e.g., EAP, counselling services, and workplace conferencing; Brough et al., in press; Webster & Brough, 2015). Practical implications derived from the results of this research are discussed in more detail in the following chapter sections.

**Primary interventions - organisational constraints to destructive leadership.** This research, in particular Study 2, emphasises the importance of organisations dealing effectively with managers displaying destructive leadership behaviours, no matter what power or status they hold.
Organisations can foster destructive behaviour by focusing on achievement of strategic and operational goals at any cost, by only measuring outcomes, and/or by punishing failures and non-achievement of key performance indicators. Setting difficult goals or placing pressure on managers to achieve their individual goals may lead to engagement in dispositional negative affectivity leading to negative affect, if failure or underperformance is likely to result in punitive measures and/or non-achievement of an incentive, such as a financial bonus (Bardes & Piccolo, 2010; Krasikova et al., 2013; Mawritz, Folger & Lathan, 2014). Creating an environment where negative affectivity is likely to be triggered in leaders (e.g., when their goals are thwarted) increases the likelihood of activation of dark side traits, leading to engagement in derailing behaviours through inhibited self-regulation (Study 1). Organisations that place equal emphasis on how organisational goals are achieved, that is, the behaviours demonstrated in goal achievement, together with goal outcome, are less likely to encourage destructive behaviours to ensure goal attainment.

In addition, primary interventions to prevent organisations becoming conducive environments for destructive leadership, such as standard governance frameworks with codes of conduct, clearly articulated organisational values, policies and procedures, and controls in place to detect and deal with leader’s destructive behaviour, are a minimum requirement (Tepper, 2007). Cultural and climate surveys, multisource feedback, high rate of complaints and grievances, and patterns of leave or turnover in a particular department or team can provide indicators of potential destructive leadership that require further investigation. Once detected, boards, executives, and HR professionals then have to decide how they are going to deal with destructive leaders. Removing such leaders can be challenging, time consuming, and costly. Therefore, prevention is a more effective option for organisations.
A key prevention strategy is screening out leaders predisposed to engage in destructive leadership behaviours during selection processes for recruitment and succession management. While it is acknowledged this practice is more favourably viewed in Australia than some other countries, such as the US, such testing provides an important mechanism to identify extreme levels of personality traits that may derail leaders, such as those found in Study 1. Assessment results can flag potential obstacles to leadership effectiveness and allow further investigation of candidates, through behavioural simulations, behavioural interviewing, and reference checks based on behavioural criteria, to prevent poor selection decisions.

Despite these preventative measures, organisations are likely to experience their share of destructive leaders. The financial and personal cost of ignoring the behaviour of such leaders was clearly demonstrated in Study 2. Executives and HR professionals have a duty of care to their employees to remove such leaders, through performance management or disciplinary processes, as soon as repeated and systematic behaviours that cause distress and harm to followers are identified. Destructive leaders often hold relationships with people in powerful positions, are politically and socially astute, and are likely to become litigious when challenged; thus, removing them can be difficult. Careful planning, with expert legal advice, is often necessary (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Boddy, 2015; Clarke, 2005).

**Practical implications for leadership development programs.** Relationships between narcissism, Machiavellianism, subclinical psychopathy, and leader emergence have been demonstrated, but no relationship has been found between the dark triad and leadership effectiveness (Babiak et al., 2010; Grijalva, Harms, Newman, Gaddis, & Fraley, 2015). Indeed, leaders with these traits may be viewed as having leadership potential, despite having negative performance reviews and low ratings on leadership by peers and subordinates, providing some
evidence of the ability of such individuals to manipulate decision makers (Babiak et al., 2010; Boddy, 2015). Individuals with these traits are likely to perform well in traditional selection methods (i.e., interviews, executive sponsorship). Taking into account the resources and finances invested by organisations in leadership development programs, it is recommended that psychometric profiling continue to be included as part of the application and selection processes for such programs. Rigorous selection processes may include a combination of assessment of personality traits, multi-source feedback, team engagement and performance indicators, and leader performance ratings (Babiak et al., 2010). For those identified with some potential leadership derailers, providing an in-depth debrief of assessment data will be important, to increase the individual’s self-awareness of development areas, and to identify contexts where their strengths will lead to effective leadership versus contexts where they may derail (Kaiser et al., 2015).

Should an organisation decide to hire a candidate with extreme derailing personality traits, perhaps due to the individual’s rare technical expertise and skills, or other unique characteristics required by the organisation, additional support and professional development strategies may be required during their onboarding, such as providing coaching by a psychologist, to prevent engagement in destructive leadership behaviours. There has been some support for the proposition that psychologist coaches are more likely to effectively assist managers with skill application and setting behavioural change goals (Bono, Purvanova, Towler, & Peterson, 2009). Coaching can assist the coachee to understand their implicit mental models or schemas and identify faulty assumptions that lead to self-defeating strategies or engagement in counterproductive behaviours. Participants may be coached through cognitive restructuring to replace faulty mental models and counterproductive behaviours with more constructive alternatives (Gaddis & Foster, 2015; Kaiser et al., 2015). Developing self-regulatory strategies requires commitment by the individual leader to an
ongoing cycle of practice, feedback, reflection, and guidance. Therefore, before investing time and money into developing a leader with significant potential derailing traits, an assessment of the individual’s motivation to engage in ongoing self-development should be conducted. This should be combined with an assessment of whether the leader is likely to be able to engage the newly learned strategies in the workplace, or whether they are more likely to use the tactics learned to manipulate the coach, their manager, and their followers, and to better mask their dark side (Nelson & Hogan, 2009).

To develop leadership styles that enhance employee well-being, it is recommended practitioners include training in their leadership development programs on both constructive leadership behaviour (such as transformational and transactional leadership styles, that take into account the needs and wants of leaders and followers by focusing on democratic leadership and democratic followership) and destructive leadership behaviour (Kellerman, 2008). Leader development should also include mechanisms to increase executive and managers’ self-awareness of the impact of their leadership style and their capacity for self-regulation to effectively self-manage their behaviour (Kaiser et al., 2015). Techniques to increase leaders’ self-awareness could include feedback from their selection assessments, self-reflection journaling, and multi-source observer feedback (Kaiser et al., 2015; Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Sparks et al., 2001). In addition, providing a mentor to facilitate learning from failures and mistakes may reduce psychological distress, if leaders are willing to learn (Boies, Robinson, & Robertson, 2010).

Practitioners should also bear in mind that not all dark side traits lead to derailment. In some contexts, leaders with moderate levels of these traits are successful, such as in sales roles (Furnham et al., 2012). Study 1 provided important information on components to be included in leadership programs to ensure leaders utilise their strengths, while self-regulating impulses that may lead to
derailment. This research identified the importance of building leaders’ resilience and, specifically, their ability to deal with negative affectivity (King & Rothstein, 2010). The more leaders can deal with frustration, thwarted personal goals, and failure effectively, the less likely they are to employ destructive leadership behaviours. Engaging in moderate levels of physical exercise has been found to buffer the relationship between supervisor stress and abusive behaviour, so including physical exercise components into leadership development programs may be beneficial (Burton, Hoobler, & Scheuer, 2012). In addition, teaching and coaching advanced interpersonal communication skills, and resilience strategies, such as mindfulness techniques, cognitive reframing, and ways of coping with uncertainty, enables leaders to better employ self-regulation tactics when under stress or fatigued in order to enable an effective response (Atkins, 2008; Moran, 2011). The resulting improvement in managers’ ability to build effective relationships with their staff and garner the support and co-operation of their workforce is, in turn, likely to reduce managers’ stress levels and, therefore, their predisposition to employ destructive leadership behaviours (Sparks et al., 2001).

Interventions to enhance follower well-being. In addition to protecting followers from exposure to destructive leadership behaviours by organisational leaders, organisations can also take measures to protect followers from the negative effects of destructive and abusive leadership behaviours. Study 3 demonstrated that a short training program, designed to increase followers’ ability to quickly identify destructive leadership behaviours when they occur, and to take steps to build their resilience to it, can be effective in raising participants’ perceived knowledge, confidence and motivation to use resiliency strategies leading to improved emotional and psychological well-being over time. It is recommended such programs include educational components to recognise destructive leadership behaviours, learn effective responses to destructive leadership behaviours, become aware of follower needs and styles, learn mindfulness techniques and gratefulness activities,
review and assess current health and well-being, identify social support networks, and participate in career management activities. Results from Study 3 suggest attending this type of training can enhance staff well-being and reduce psychological and emotional distress. The literature suggests that this, in turn, is likely to lead to reduced absenteeism and/or turnover (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). In summary, organisations can implement a number of strategies (e.g., primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions) to guard against incidents of destructive leadership and to protect followers from abuse (prevention). At the same time, organisations can ensure governance mechanisms are in place that allow boards and executives to act promptly to deal with or remove a leader exhibiting destructive behaviours as soon as they are identified.

**Research Strengths of this Thesis**

Reviewing the strengths and limitations of this research allows identification of useful theoretical frameworks and/or methodologies that should be repeated in future research into the dark side of leadership. It also identifies what could be changed in future research design to increase the validity and reliability of results (e.g., to address the challenges the researcher experienced in accessing adequate field samples).

Five primary strengths of the thesis research were identified. Firstly, by studying destructive leadership, this research broadens the scope of traditional leadership theory. As Kellerman (2004b) and Alvesson and Spicer (2012) purported, the study of the dark side of leadership informs an understanding of the bright side of leadership. Taking a critical approach to the study of leadership, this research aimed to advance knowledge of the dark side of leadership, such as antecedent traits that may lead to manager derailment, and to understand why followers may conform to domination and relinquish their autonomy and agency (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). This research also adopted functionalist and interpretive approaches to the leadership phenomenon. Functionalist studies view
leadership as an objective phenomenon amenable to scientific enquiry. From a leader-centric perspective, they focus on traits and behaviours of leaders (e.g., in this research, traits and characteristics that may derail a leader) and, from a follower-centric perspective, they acknowledge the role of followers in the leadership process (e.g., in this research avoidance coping to reduce distress, which may allow destructive leadership behaviours to continue). Interpretive studies employ qualitative measures to understand how leadership is enacted and interpreted from ongoing interactions between leaders and followers (e.g., in this research, understanding the leadership behaviours that followers perceive to be toxic). This research demonstrated that drawing on multiple theoretical approaches (critical, functional, and interpretive) and multiple perspectives (leader-centric, follower-centric, and followership) can improve our understanding of the interactional leadership process between the leader-follower dyad (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Secondly, this research was designed to address a significant real-world organisational problem with the objective that the research results would be informative to both practitioners and theorists; that is, the findings contribute to theory development that can inform solutions applied in the workplace and tested in future field studies. Given this research was primarily informed by two epistemological knowledge claims, pragmatism and positivism, a range of methodologies and methods were employed across the three studies, including: quantitative self-report, qualitative self-report, cross-sectional, and longitudinal designs. The program of research in this thesis addressed two organisational problems across three studies that informed each other. Study 1 showed that some leaders have traits that are associated with leadership derailing traits and may predispose them to engage in destructive leadership behaviours. It also confirmed that some, such as leaders with high levels of ego-centredness, are likely to be resistant to modifying their behaviour. Study 2 showed the harm caused by destructive leadership behaviour and the difficulty followers had coping
with even one toxic behaviour. Respondents also reported distress at the lack of action by organisations to protect them from harm. If the demonstration of destructive leadership behaviours is a fact of organisational life, as the evidence suggests (Aasland et al., 2010; Martinko et al., 2013), then followers are likely to be subjected to destructive behaviours by leaders at some time in their career. Therefore, more interventions, such as that used in Study 3, are called for - to pilot and evaluate programs designed to assist followers to identify and be resilient to abusive behaviours in the workplace, in order to maintain well-being.

Thirdly, there is a dearth of field studies on destructive leadership, both from the leader and follower perspective, with convenience, snowballing, or student samples often used in cross-sectional research designs (Martinko et al., 2013). All three studies collected data from participants employed in organisations across a range of industries and sectors. In addition, this research includes one of the few studies that have directly investigated follower coping in response to destructive leadership (e.g., May et al., 2014; Pelletier, 2012; Yagil et al., 2011), using both cross-sectional and longitudinal study designs. Using field samples increased generalisability of findings and allowed inferences to be drawn that inform a scientist-practitioner approach to dealing with the problem of destructive leadership in organisations.

Fourthly, this research draws on multiple theoretical frameworks within the psychology and sociology literature: specifically, destructive leadership/abusive supervision, coping, resiliency, stress management interventions, and program implementation evaluation theories. Given the complex relationship between destructive leaders and their followers, within the context of their behaviour in the workplace, it is unlikely that one theoretical perspective can explain the full range of antecedents, interactions, causes, and consequences. For example, Study 2 confirmed that one coping framework alone was insufficient to explain the range of coping instances reported by
respondents who perceived they worked for a toxic leader. These three studies informed a number of theoretical areas for future research (e.g., engaging in destructive leadership versus constructive leadership, followership, coping with destructive leadership, and stress management interventions).

Finally, most existing field studies investigating destructive leadership or abusive supervision are based in the US (Martinko et al., 2013). Of 21 non-US examples, Martinko et al. (2013) could only identify one Australian study examining abusive supervision (Kiazad, Restubog, Zagenczyk, Kiewitz, & Tang, 2010). While the studies in this thesis do not look specifically at cultural differences, they do allow an investigation of whether the theories, models, and frameworks in the destructive leadership and coping literatures are supported by research findings using Australian samples.

**Research Limitations of this Thesis**

There were two main limitations of this research: common method variance through the use of single source, self-report data, a method employed in all three studies in this thesis; and the high attrition rate in the longitudinal research, Study 3. The sole use of self-report data is a limitation which is frequently noted in the literature (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Firstly, it has been argued that it tends to increase the reported size of relationships (correlations) between measures employing common methods, although this assumption has recently been challenged (Conway & Lance, 2010). Secondly, it is considered to be subjective and raises the problem of social desirability. However, because the constructs of interest related to innate dispositions (e.g., leader personality traits, and follower self-perceptions of stressors and coping responses), self-report measures were considered most appropriate to generate accurate representations of respondents’ inner thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviours (Chi & Liang, 2013; Eatough & Spector, 2013). Therefore, in this context, when leaders and employees are in the best position to report on their appraisal of others’
behaviour, their own attitudes, affect, and responses, it was not possible to obtain measures of key variables from different sources (Cash & Gardner, 2011).

The possibility that the results may be influenced by social desirability bias (e.g., respondents wanting to appear a certain way) is often raised as a critique of using self-report instruments. In Study 1, impression management was controlled for. Nevertheless, objective measures of outcome variables (e.g., performance review data, multi-source data, number of grievances or complaints filed, team turnover by leader, behavioural observations in the workplace) would have provided a useful insight into the accuracy of self-report data. In Study 2 and Study 3 procedural design remedies were used (e.g., assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, and reversing the measure order of items in the questionnaires) to alleviate potential common-source bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2012). In Study 2 respondents may have answered desirably in relation to their reported responses to toxic leadership behaviours, as none reported using aggression or retaliation. However, as noted by Cash and Gardner (2011), the use of anonymous survey reporting can reduce this bias by giving participants little incentive to misrepresent themselves. Again, collection of objective measures (e.g., co-worker reports of follower behaviour, absenteeism, and turnover records) would have provided confirmation of self-report data; however these data are not always available or easy to collect. In Study 3, participants in the experimental group completed the self-report survey three times, making it more difficult to manipulate their answers across time.

The most important limitation of Study 3 was the modest response rate at Time 3 in the experimental group (approximately 30%), and the poor response rate at Time 2 for the control group (approximately 15%). Chapter 6 provided an analysis of the reasons for this attrition. This is an often cited deficiency of applied research, and the difficulty of applying rigorous research
methodologies, such as longitudinal designs, using field studies has been frequently discussed (Biggs & Brough, 2015a, 2015b; Nielsen, 2000). Sufficiently large sample sizes are important to ensure the appropriate analyses can be conducted for the particular research question being examined. Research conducted in healthcare organisations is particularly challenging, given the combination of shift work, lack of access to computers on the wards, and reliance on supervisors and managers to release staff and encourage them to participate in the research intervention. It is possible that the reported response rate obtained at Time 3 for the experimental group and Time 2 for the control group represented a lower bound estimate of the actual response rate, because the pen and paper surveys were distributed by supervisors of the department/ward of respondents, and it was impossible to assess whether the surveys were actually received by all employees. Difficulties with matching the longitudinal data sets also contributed to the poor response rate. Respondents were asked to provide a unique code that allowed surveys to be matched over time, while preserving anonymity of their responses. Numerous respondents failed to produce consistent codes, making it difficult to match their data. Similar challenges have been cited in previous research (Pipe et al., 2012). Due to insufficient longitudinal (matched) sample sizes for the Study 3 control group, a comparison of experimental and control group results was not possible. While this limited the conclusions that could be drawn regarding the causal relationships between the variables, the results are still deemed to be informative because of their contribution as one of the few field studies available investigating an intervention to increase well-being, resilience and, in particular, coping with destructive leadership behaviours (Pipe et al., 2012; Yagil et al., 2011).

**Future Directions for Research**

Reviews of the current destructive leadership literature have identified research gaps that warrant further investigation, for example, the need for more field studies, more longitudinal
studies, and more research conducted with sample populations outside the US to assess cultural
differences (Martinko et al., 2013; Tepper, 2007). While the consequences of destructive leadership
have been studied, more research is required into the antecedents of destructive leadership (Schyns
& Schilling, 2013) and the mechanisms by which followers can effectively cope with the effects of
destructive leadership behaviours (May et al., 2014; Pelletier, 2010; Webster et al., 2016; Yagil et
al., 2011). In addition, the research discussed in this thesis has raised additional research questions
for investigation, which are discussed next.

**Destructive leadership.** Firstly, to better understand the role of leader personality trait
activation in the engagement of destructive leadership behaviours, longitudinal field studies that
follow leaders and their subordinates over time are required. Such studies enable an investigation of
follower and environmental triggers of emotions, such as frustration and anger, or negative
affectivity, which can lead to reduced self-regulation, and ultimately engagement in destructive
leadership behaviours. Objective outcome variables, such as: leader performance reviews; number
of grievances and complaints against the leader; achievement of leader KPIs; and subordinate
engagement, coping, and well-being will enable a better understanding of the relationships between
leader traits, leader performance, and outcomes of leadership style. Such research may also
highlight the situations when strategic use of dark side leadership behaviours, such as strategic
bullying, are effective in achieving goals (Ferris et al., 2007) and when the effects of passive styles
of leadership, such as laissez-faire leadership, are indeed destructive (Skogstad et al., 2007). This
methodology would enable researchers to study trajectories of leader-follower interactions over
time, including how follower coping behaviours and leader reactions to subordinate coping develop
in the course of the interactional process. These may either trigger or prevent further interpersonal
mistreatment by leaders (May et al., 2014).
Secondly, this thesis demonstrates the benefits of introducing resilience-building interventions for both leaders and followers (Study 1 and Study 3). An optimal longitudinal research design would study three groups of leader/follower dyads or leader/team groups: (a) leaders of teams with high performance and high engagement style; (b) leaders of teams with low performance and low engagement; and (c) a control group. Such a design would enable a better understanding of the link between antecedent personality characteristics and destructive leadership behaviours. Experimental groups may be assigned to a resiliency-building intervention, while the control group undertakes a non-related activity. Pre- and post-measures of leader traits (e.g., abusive supervision scale, GPI – derailing leadership traits), leader performance reviews, achievement of leader KPIs, and engagement and well-being of subordinates by team within each of the three groups, may provide confirmation of the role resiliency-building interventions play in improving follower well-being by mitigating the effects of destructive leadership.

**Susceptible followers.** There is much discussion in the literature on the need for a unified and comprehensive coping structure (Skinner et al., 2003), and this is also a problem for the study of subordinate coping with the occupational stressor of destructive leadership (May et al., 2014; Yagil et al., 2011). A framework for coping with destructive leadership may be further developed by conducting field research to validate the coping frameworks investigated in Study 2 (see Table 10 in Appendix D), with followers reporting the coping strategies they employed, and an evaluation of the perceived effectiveness of each coping response. Such studies could also investigate which followers are best able to cope with destructive leadership behaviours and how followers may contribute to, or hinder, the process of toxic leadership (Krasikova et al., 2013; May et al., 2014). An examination of followers’ ingroup status would also be informative, to understand whether
leaders are more likely to translate dark side personality traits into abusive behaviours towards individuals in their outgroup (Babiak & Hare, 2007; Schyns, 2015).

Longitudinal field studies are needed that include a detailed description of follower interventions for replication across sectors and cultures, a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness and efficacy of interventions, and a methodology to reduce attrition in both experimental and control groups over time.

Organisational responses to destructive leadership. Study 2 demonstrated that the harm to well-being caused by destructive leadership behaviours is increased when senior managers in organisations fail to act on complaints and grievances lodged by followers. One reason for the silent response by organisations may be that they do not feel equipped to deal with the effects of destructive leadership. This could be due to a range of factors, such as an avoidance of confrontation, fear of retaliation by a destructive leader, negative career implications if they challenge the destructive leader, the difficulty of obtaining objective evidence of the destructive behaviours due to observers’ fear to speak up, an unwillingness to engage in disciplinary processes, or a reluctance to terminate the offending party (Perlow & Williams, 2003). One area of research and practice that is showing promise when dealing with workplace conflict is the use of workplace conferencing based on restorative justice principles (Fitzgerald, 2006). This could be an effective tertiary intervention for organisations to undertake when they would like to acknowledge the harm caused to employees by one or more of their leaders. This process may allow organisations to identify ways to prevent harm happening in future, while supporting the complainant/s, without becoming liable to litigation or compensation claims. While there have been papers outlining the workplace conferencing process and its application to a range of sectors such as IT, education, legal and government, with supporting case studies (Davey, 2007; Thorsborne, 2009), these have
generally been conducted by practitioners, and they would benefit from replication using more rigorous experimental designs. In the context of destructive leadership, such a process could provide a safe avenue for each party to tell their story, to discuss what happened, to describe the impact of the harmful behaviours, and explore whether there is a way forward that can ensure the future psychosocial safety and well-being of affected employees in the workplace.

An investigation of the utility of workplace conferencing in mitigating the negative impact of destructive leadership, using a longitudinal field study methodology, would require the target organisation to bring representatives from their executive (as discussed in Chapter 3, in this context it would not be appropriate to conduct the workplace conference with the offending leader present) together with complainant/s of destructive leadership and their support people, to have a discussion facilitated by an expert in restorative justice techniques. Dependent variables measured pre- and post the intervention could include employees’ well-being, coping, resiliency, and performance. If proved effective, this intervention would provide an additional option for organisations to effectively deal with the occupational stressor of destructive leadership.

In addition to the three specific areas for future research outlined above, there are many additional theoretical areas identified for future research within the destructive leadership literature. These include: developing a comprehensive theoretical model of destructive leadership, integrating leader, follower, and organisational characteristics (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013); the role of leader intent and/or perceived intent on follower experience of destructive leadership (Krasikova et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013); validation of assessment tools to screen dark side personality traits, and validation of abusive supervision scales with actual behaviours (Martinko et al., 2013; Schyns, 2015); the role of implicit leadership theories in shaping follower perceptions of their leader and perpetuating their leader’s power (Hansbrough & Schyns,
role of followers in the process of destructive leadership, including subordinate characteristics and behaviours that may lead to abuse (Krasikova et al., 2013; Martinko et al., 2013; May et al., 2014); cultural factors such as varying power distances between abusive supervisor and subordinate (Tepper, 2007); validation of follower coping scales (Webster et al., 2016; Yagil et al., 2011); moderators of choice of follower coping strategy (May et al., 2014); and moderators between destructive leadership and well-being outcomes, such as organisational support (Martinko et al., 2013).

**Research Conclusions**

In conclusion, the research in this thesis identified traits as antecedents to predisposing leaders to exhibit destructive leadership (Study 1), and the negative consequences experienced by followers of leaders displaying toxic leadership behaviours (Study 2; Aasland et al., 2010; Martinko et al., 2013; Schyns & Schilling, 2013; Webster et al., 2016). This thesis has contributed to a more complete understanding of the dynamics of destructive leadership, from both leader-centric and follower-centric perspectives, to provide a starting point for the development of leader and follower interventions to counteract the negative effects of destructive leadership in organisations. This research contributed to a better understanding of the antecedent traits that predispose a leader to engage in destructive leadership behaviours, highlighting the importance of developing resilience in leaders to tolerate negative emotions and respond effectively to goal blockages, frustrations, and failures (Study 1). In addition, the results of this research demonstrated that followers are likely to employ ineffective coping strategies when dealing with toxic leadership (Study 2). This research has demonstrated that a multidisciplinary approach, from psychological and sociological perspectives, is beneficial when designing interventions to build follower resilience against the negative effects of destructive leadership. Research results demonstrated that teaching followers
effective ways to deal with destructive leadership behaviours, and to build personal and career resilience, was effective in improving well-being over time (Study 3). We return to the example from Chapter 1, which highlights how necessary it is for organisations to address destructive leadership in an effective way that mitigates harm to followers.

Well, my work stress claim was accepted, and I went on extended leave. A few months later my boss was “headhunted” to a senior executive role overseas. My organisation offered me a part-time “return to work” arrangement, but I couldn’t face going back. By then I was on medication for chronic depression. Eventually my partner gave me the ultimatum – get off the couch and find a new job or the relationship was over. It took me six months to find this job. I investigated the culture and leadership team thoroughly before I accepted this role, and my new boss seems OK. Still, there are no guarantees. I find it hard to trust – I keep waiting for that Jekyll and Hyde moment! Once I’m through the probation period, I plan to gradually come off my medication. I’ll keep seeing my counselor though. I look forward to getting my life back.

Imagine. Imagine if my claims had been acknowledged by my employer, and my boss counseled or terminated. Imagine if my organisation had provided me with training and support on how to deal more effectively with my manager’s toxic behaviours. Imagine...

Collaboration between academics and practitioners in influencing organisations to address the occupational stressor of destructive leadership by employing a combination of primary, secondary, and tertiary stress prevention interventions is necessary if leader derailment and enactment of destructive leadership behaviours are to be prevented, and the psychosocial safety and well-being of followers is to be protected. The implementation of evidence-based resilience-building interventions across organisations provides a real opportunity to improve leader’s self-
regulation mechanisms, while at the same time optimising well-being outcomes for all employees, including those working with destructive leaders.
References


Centre for Creative Leadership. Benchmarks 360 degree feedback from [www.ccl.org](http://www.ccl.org)


Hansborough (Eds.), *When leadership goes wrong: Destructive leadership, mistakes and ethical failures* (pp. 145-171). Chicago: Information Age Publishing.


leadership goes wrong: Destructive leadership, mistakes and ethical failures (pp. 247-283).

Chicago: Information Age Publishing.


Appendix A

Destructive Leadership Definitions and Research Foci

Table 1

Summary of destructive leadership definitions and focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Focus of research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lombardo et al. (1988)</td>
<td>Leader derailment</td>
<td>Plateaued, demoted, or fired below the level of anticipated achievement or reaching that level only to fail unexpectedly.</td>
<td>Career derailment; harm to the leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schmidt et al. (2000)</td>
<td>Leader derailment</td>
<td>The tendency to use quasi-leadership tactics or to engage in various behaviours that may prove successful in changing others behaviour in the short term, but ultimately cause the leader to fail or lose support of those around him or her.</td>
<td>Harm caused to followers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Derailing personality traits (GPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogan and Hogan (2001)</td>
<td>Leader derailment</td>
<td>Managerial incompetence due to a dysfunctional disposition</td>
<td>Harm caused to followers:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Derailing personality traits (HDS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

264
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Harm caused to followers:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tepper (2000)</td>
<td>Abusive Supervision: A sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact.</td>
<td>- Behaviours perceived as abusive by followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipman-Blumen (2005)</td>
<td>Toxic leadership: Leaders who engage in numerous destructive behaviours and who exhibit certain dysfunctional personal characteristics. To be toxic these behaviours and qualities of character must inflict some reasonably serious and enduring harm on their followers and their organisations.</td>
<td>- Dysfunctional personality characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Destructive behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einarson et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Destructive Leadership: The systematic and repeated behaviour by a leader, supervisor or manager that violates the legitimate interest of the organisation by undermining and/or sabotaging the organisation's goals, tasks, resources, and effectiveness and/or the motivation, well-being or job satisfaction of subordinates.</td>
<td>- Tyrannical leadership;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Derailed leadership;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Supportive – Disloyal;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasikova et al. (2013)</td>
<td>Destructive Leadership</td>
<td>Volitional behaviour by a leader that can harm or intends to harm a leader’s organisation and/or followers by (a) encouraging followers to pursue goals that contravene the legitimate interests of the organisation and/or (b) employing a leadership style that involves the use of harmful methods of influence with followers, regardless of justifications for such behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schyns and Schilling (2013)</td>
<td>Destructive Leadership</td>
<td>A process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Constructive**
Appendix B

Abstracts from papers presented in Chapters 4 & 5

Antecedents to derailing leadership traits: The mediating roles of negative affectivity and self-regulation traits

Abstract

Scholarly discussions have proposed the association of extreme levels of some personality traits with the “dark side of leadership”. This study investigates the relationship between high levels of the personality trait of independence and the predisposition to exhibit negative leadership behaviors, and the role of self-regulatory personality traits in mediating these relationships. A sample of senior managers (N = 300) from a range of public and private industries responded to a self-report survey assessing their personality traits. Managers reporting high levels of independence were more likely to be predisposed to exhibit derailing leadership behaviors. These associations were significantly mediated by the leaders’ levels of dispositional negative affectivity, which reduced the impact of the self-regulation traits of self-awareness and stress tolerance. Understanding how intrapersonal differences increase or inhibit the enactment of potentially derailing leadership behaviors furthers our understanding of antecedents of the managerial derailment process and inform ways to address this risk.
Fight, flight or freeze: Common responses for follower coping with toxic leadership.

Abstract

Sustained destructive leadership behaviours are associated with negative outcomes that produce serious workplace problems, yet there is scant research into how followers effectively cope with toxic leader behaviours. Despite numerous attempts to develop typologies of coping behaviours, there remains much to learn, especially in relation to this specific workplace stressor. This mixed method research investigates the coping strategies reported by 76 followers to cope with the psychological, emotional and physical consequences of their leader’s adverse behaviour. Coping instances were categorised using two existing theoretical coping frameworks, and the ability of these frameworks to explain responses to real world experiences with toxic leadership are discussed. Common coping strategies reported included assertively challenging the leader, seeking social support, ruminating, taking leave, and leaving the organisation. Organisational interventions to increase effectiveness of follower coping with the impact of toxic leadership are also discussed.
Appendix C

Consequences of Leadership Behaviours Survey (Study 2)

Have you worked with or for a leader who has engaged in destructive behaviours that inflict harm on their followers and their organisation? We are keen to hear your story.

You are invited to participate in this survey, which is being conducted to investigate the impact of poor leadership behaviours on the leader themselves and their followers and what strategies followers use to protect themselves from bad leadership.

This research forms part of a PhD being conducted by Griffith University. The results of this survey will form the basis for designing leadership and follower interventions to assist in the reduction of the negative effects of poor leadership. The conditions for undertaking this research are outlined below. Please print off this page and retain for future reference.

This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary and you may withdraw from completing the survey at any time.

All the information you provide in this survey will be treated in the strictest confidence. Data collected will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location and password protected, with access only granted to the research team. No individual respondent will be identified in reporting of results.

Please be advised that by completing this survey you are giving consent for your responses to this survey to be used as part of the researchers’ aggregated data for a Griffith University PhD research project.

Do you give further specific permission for this story to be used as a deidentified, anonymous case study? Y/N
Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this research project please contact the Manager, Research Ethics at research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you would like further information about this research or to receive a summary of the overall results of the research, please contact Vicki Webster at Vicki.Webster@student.griffith.edu.au

Tell us about your experience:

- What did the manager do? What specific behaviours did they demonstrate? Why? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]
- What was the context or situation? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]
- What was your response? What impact did the incident/s have on you personally? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]
- Are you still working for the organisation? Y/N
- Overall, what was the result of their behaviour (for individuals, team/s and the organisation)? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]
- What were the consequences for the leader/manager themselves, if any? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]
- Is the leader/manager, the subject of your story, still working for the organisation? Y/N/Don’t know

On reflection, how do you feel about the incident/s now?

- How long ago did the incident/s happen?
How long did you stay with the organisation after the incident/s you have described?

- Under 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- Over 15 years

What factors did you take into consideration, when deciding whether to stay or leave?

[TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]

What is your view of this manager now? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]

Looking back, what strategies did you use to deal with the poor behaviours? How have you coped, both at the time of the incident/s and since? [TEXT BOX – 200 word limit]

The following demographic information is being collected for research analysis purposes only and will not be used to identify respondents.

- Age
- Gender
- Tenure with organisation
• Sector
• Industry
• Occupation
• Level of education
• Country
• Industry
• Date event/s occurred – Year

Thank you for assisting with this research and contributing your story to be used as part of the researchers’ aggregated data for a Griffith University PhD research project.

Please note, your story will only be used as a deidentified, anonymous case study if you have given specific permission to do so at the commencement of this survey.
### Appendix D

**Results Tables (Study 2)**

Table 9

**Follower Effect on Well-being (Study 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Theme</th>
<th>Example outcome</th>
<th>Example respondent statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Loss of self-confidence/self-doubt</td>
<td>“I became very confused and isolated and started to doubt what I knew to be true.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>((n = 22; 29))</td>
<td>“It created some self-doubt when the employer used this incident to cast doubt on my professionalism generally.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling highly stressed</td>
<td>((n = 17; 22%))</td>
<td>“I did move interstate and occasionally see a female figure that resembled my boss and I still get a nasty adrenaline rush.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I have been physically sick on a Sunday night thinking about work and going to work on a Monday.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anxious \((n = 13; 17\%)\)  “The incident has led to me suffering a major depression and developing an anxiety disorder, where every day I have to adjust my lifestyle to avoid anxiety attacks. I am also on numerous medications and have weekly visits to numerous specialists. I am unable to work or function ‘normally’. I am withdrawn, sensitive, lack confidence and motivation, agoraphobic, and suffer many side effects of the medication.”

“I did not cope at all and became very depressed and unwell. I am still suffering with my illness. I needed help to complete this survey.”

“Due to this series of events I suffered a nervous breakdown.”

Emotional Mistrust \((n = 17; 22\%)\)  “… the seeds of mistrust and antipathy that the verbal attack had sown.”

“It served to engender an atmosphere of division and mistrust amongst staff.”

“Loss of communication and trust.”

Anger \((n = 15; 20\%)\)  “I am angry and frustrated; my life is drastically changed.”

“To this day I still feel angered for the unfair treatment that I received.”

Fear \((n = 10; 13\%)\)  “I experienced fear and anguish.”
“My outrage was silenced by my fear… I was terrified of taking on my manager.”

“This led to a fear response by staff when they picked up the phone or opened email, as all communications were negative.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Health problems (n = 22; 29%), e.g. hair loss, colds, insomnia, rashes, weight loss/gain, headaches, digestive problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I suffered from 6 colds and took around 15 days off work, as my immune system had been affected by stress. My wisdom tooth became infected, and due to the reduction in my immune system, the infection took over and required serious dental work. I also was grinding my teeth harshly as I slept, requiring the use of a plate. My bowel movements were also not consistent at this time. I underwent blood tests to determine if there was a more serious cause, but was informed that I must reduce stress.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I lost weight from an average size 10-12 I dropped to a size 8.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was not sleeping. I was displaying stress signs by loss of hair and itches etc.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

*Follower Coping Strategies (Study 2)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping with Abusive Supervision Scale (Yagil et al., 2011)</th>
<th>Higher Order Families of Coping (Skinner et al., 2003)</th>
<th>Ways of Coping</th>
<th>Coping Instances reported by respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Communication Problem-solving Assertively confronting or challenging leader $(n = 17; 22%)$</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I used problem solving behaviours. I confronted the bullies.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Communication Problem-solving Managing up/direct communication $(n = 3; 4%)$</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I stood my ground and defended myself when confronted.”</td>
<td>“My approach was to have straight talks with the manager.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“At the time I would not compromise my integrity and I would still advocate for myself.”</td>
<td>“… and on numerous occasions I have challenged her line of thinking.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“At first I attempted to clarify expectations and roles, manage up.”</td>
<td>“I initially tried to coach my manager when certain behaviours started to impact on the team.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem-Solving Instrumental Action: "Upward managing to attempt to get her to be more responsible."

Formal complaint \((n = 11; 14\%)\),
- "We attempted whistle blowing but it went nowhere through official channels. The only option was to leave."

Documenting incidents
- "I chose to document each incident and make sure it was witnessed."

Informal complaint \((n = 9; 12\%)\)
- "I made numerous attempts to discuss issues as they arose… I finally attempted a formal mediation process that failed completely…"

Problem-solving Instrumental Action: "I openly challenged and raised the issues as a grievance through a formal process and resigned."

Undertaking health and well-being activities: exercise
- "I undertook activities such as yoga, breathing exercises, and increased my walking activities."

- "I exercised by running every day, and I think this helped with the stress."

- "NLP techniques on myself; yoga and meditation."
(n = 6; 8%); yoga, meditation and/or mindfulness (n = 5; 7%), diet (n = 2; 3%)  

“I exercise every day, and try to eat healthy, because it keeps me feeling relaxed and fit during the day.”

Support Seeking  Support Seeking Social Support:  “I found one other colleague, with whom I could debrief and that made things more bearable.”  
Mentor or colleague (n = 26; 34%)  
“I had a small network of people I had worked with previously with whom I was able to vent.”  

“Seeking support by other team members.”

Support Seeking  Support Seeking Social Support:  “Spent a lot of time discussing the situation with my husband and other friends.”  
Family or friends (n = 20; 26%)  
“I coped by being supported by friends and family.”  

“Support from other senior leaders in the company who had left.”

Avoidance of contact  Escape Leaving the situation:  “Ultimately it led to my taking 3 months stress leave.”  
resigning, retiring or  “I took some sick leave when it got too much.”
taking redundancy  

“…on advice from the HR Manager and my Dr I removed myself from the environment and have been on my accrued sick and recreational leave since.”

package (n = 34; 45%), taking leave (n = 16; 39%); seeking a transfer (n = 3; 4%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance of contact</th>
<th>Escape</th>
<th>Bypassing leader</th>
<th>(n = 13; 17%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The section in which I worked tended to work around the person, forming our own informal work groups to solve problems and make the work happen.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I chose to not engage with the manager.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I just managed to get through each day with little or no personal contact with him.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance of contact</th>
<th>Escape</th>
<th>Ignoring the leader</th>
<th>(n = 7; 10%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Low profile - don't question or challenge.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I would ignore and not respond to the behaviour so I believe my strategies were submissive, rather than assertive.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reframing

Accommodation Cognitive restructuring: depersonalizing issues positive thinking and reframing to keep calm ($n = 5; 7\%$)

“I have focused on what I can get out of a bad employment situation.”

“I had to work hard to maintain a sense of inner calm and manage my state of mind.”

Information Seeking

Seeking professional support and advice: Counselling ($n = 6; 8\%$), GP ($n = 6; 8\%$), Psychologist ($n = 5; 7\%$), union ($n = 4; 5\%$), HR ($n = 2; 3\%$).

“Saw my GP to have the incident and my reaction documented in case there are further incidents which may make me consider stress leave.” “I sought treatment from an organisational psychologist who was very helpful. I also had a supportive GP.”

“I have attended stress workshops, which teach you how to cope with all the different stresses in your life.”

“I contacted the HR group manager for advice.”
Self-education
/reading (n = 5; 7%)

Submission Rumination
(n = 23; 30%)

“I still feel disgust and outraged that basic human rights, like the right to feel safe, to feel protected from bullying and harassment, is not even represented in some of the institutions that purport to study it.”

“I had lost a sense of proportion or perspective because of how odd and surreal everything was.”

Self-Reliance:
Working harder (n = 10; 13%); maintaining emotional and behavioural regulation (n = 4; 5%), humour (n = 4; 5%)

“I stayed calm and tried to keep the conversation focused on facts, diffuse his anger or finish the conversation quickly - although that was not always easy.”

“Worked really hard, lots of extra hours, compliant… Worked harder and harder.”

“I came in put my head down and worked.”

“We used humour…to try to deal with the stress.”
| Helplessness | Feelings of helplessness | “…a sense of helplessness around the options.” “Do I still doubt and feel insecure about my ability to do my work totally - there is nothing I do not question or analyse to death.” |
| Delegation | Shame; self-blame | “I actually feel sick when I look back on it. It was so shameful that a group of intelligent, thoughtful articulate staff were completely unable to meet the challenge of addressing this director’s behaviour.” “…still feel degraded and annoyed at myself for allowing that behaviour to be conducted towards me.” |
| (n = 4; 5%) | (n = 4; 5%) | |

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Table 11.

*Leader Behaviours perceived as harmful by Respondents (Study 2) [note: this table was not included in the published journal article]*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Example respondent statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating/Machiavellian</td>
<td>Deception, denials and cover ups; excluding staff; playing favourites; professional misconduct; taking credit for others’ work; withholding information</td>
<td>“Only over time realised that he actually had an amazing ability to charm, cultivate and manipulate everyone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=56; 74%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>“At first, the manager appeared quite charming and appeared interested in knowing all employees at a ‘personal’ level. It soon became obvious, however, that this simply a way to gather information that could later be used against the employee.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“When the manager identified a weakness in an employee, he would use this against the employee.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“She has her favourites.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The manager would have 'favourites of the week' where that team member was given whatever they wanted and all others were ignored or excluded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The manager ‘pitted’ his subordinates against each other.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Anyone who he believed was going to make him look bad was isolated.”

“Kept important information away from me.”

“Lying.”

“Not taking advice, then blaming others.”

“No deliverables were completed yet the manager wasn't held to account yet was happy to take credit for things they had no involvement with/work done in their ongoing sick absences.”

“Presented my presentations to the Board, replaced my name with his and gave me no acknowledgement.”

“She persistently presented others’ work as her own.”

“He led a stacked board who seemingly rubber-stamped his activities, some of which boarded on the fraudulent, or at the outside, represented a misuse of the (public) funds entrusted to the organisation.”

“The manager had inappropriate "personal" relationships with several female staff members below his level.”
“The manager made inappropriate comments to employees about their personal lives.”

“…sidelining and discrediting staff…”

“The reason I found out he had blocked my forward progression was he gossiped the fact to a staff member, who was concerned enough to eventually tell me.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intimidating (n=49; 64%)</th>
<th>Authoritative dictatorship; belittling staff; bullying; targeting dissenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Constant use of fear based directives.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A dictating and bullying style of management.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They would reply with a cutting and nasty manner, resorting to personal insults.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Criticising employees to others privately &amp; publicly.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Would ‘target’ people who for some reason had fallen out of favour.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If an employee spoke up against the manager, he would &quot;target&quot; them and systematically try to get rid of them.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“He indulged in bullying of staff and had a tendency to dismiss - as in fire - anyone who challenged him.”

“Bullying, overbearing and control freak.”

“Many were the targets of the bullying and harassment.”

“Basically demanded control of all facets of the business and absolute obedience from his employees.”

“If he wanted me to do something outside of my normal job scope and I didn't want to do it, he would make me feel guilty and threaten me with various things such as redundancy or not being offered overtime if it came up.”

“She would make fun of people when they got upset at her behaviour or when she made very cutting comments.”

“Staff were afraid of him and would not provide any support. He would pick winners in the team to get them onside in working against his bullying victim.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ego-centred</th>
<th>Arrogant; no regard for the needs of others (Narcissistic) (n=20; 26%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He was arrogant.” (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Arrogance - my way or the highway.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He has to win at all costs and it is pointless arguing with him.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Lapses into numerous, time consuming, self-praising anecdotes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They constantly seek and need praise.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I worked with a very narcissistic manager who was used to keep my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>position distant from the CEO.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“They demonstrated that they do not have any care for anyone other than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>themselves.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotionally</td>
<td>Abusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volatile</td>
<td>“The manager had very erratic behaviour towards staff – peaks and lows of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=20; 26%)</td>
<td>mood.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Yelling, swearing and belittling managers in senior managers' meetings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The person regularly became abusive towards me and my staff. He yelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and swore, including the F word.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“…abuse, tantrums and threatening behaviour…”

“Temper tantrums.”

“Her behaviour was erratic and she was prone to bad tempered outbursts, shouting and crying.”

“She firstly cried a lot then got angry and used body language and other subtle measures that made me feel resented and ignored.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micromanaging</th>
<th>Controlling; unreasonable demands; questioning staff’s capability; critical – ‘fault finding’ and ‘nit picking’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n=18; 24%)</td>
<td>“He cheerfully got out his red pen and scribbled all over my documents. He seemed to believe it was his responsibility to do it to EVERY document, regardless of how good it was.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Treated workplace interactions as a fault-finding exercise. It made me feel pretty awful to feel under constant unfriendly scrutiny.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Had to know what I was doing every minute of every day.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He took all of my decision making authority away.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“He would talk about me behind my back, go directly to my staff and request work from them, and not include me. He would further assign my</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
staff to other duties without including me. I had a great working relationship with my staff and they would come and tell me as soon as it happened.”

Passive Aggressive (n=17; 22%)

Avoids important targets and ignores issues; defensive when questioned; unsupportive

“…ignoring my questions or requests of him in a meeting. Suddenly ending meetings he did not like…”

“If there were problems and he was approached concerning them, he would listen, not engage in any discussion, take no notes, and take no action.”

“If people persisted in raising issues, he would ignore them from that point on – no greeting.”

“…the leader agreed to take action and then later negated on this”

“Ignore and avoid attempts to meet with them.”

“Manager overlooked destructive behaviour by one of the staff…The behaviour is so bad that manager has decided to overlook it and has told other staff to just ignore the behaviour.”
“She would appear to agree with staff… then imply, (not explicitly say no) that she would act on staff requests, but then she would not act at all, and also, not respond to any communication about follow up on agreed to actions.”

“…over promised, under delivered and was unsupportive…”

“This leader was a smart guy, but basically lazy and uncaring.”

“No deliverables were completed yet the manager wasn't held to account.”
Appendix E

Participant Evaluations of Intervention (Study 3)

Workshop Title: Building Career Resilience

Date: Workshops conducted between 06/06/2011 and 23/11/2011

Facilitator: Vicki Webster

1. How would you rate your overall level of skill/knowledge before attending the workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How would you rate your overall level of skill/knowledge after attending the workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What was the most beneficial part of the workshop?

Learning about workplace resilience (3)
- discussing how to talk to/approach your manager (5)
- knowing where to improve in our behaviour towards other team members
- career resilience education
- employability discussion
- knowing there is help in the workplace to effect change
- learning how to achieve a quality of life in the workplace
- building career resilience – career phases
- will help with my own assignments and upcoming performance reviews
• helping us learn more about moving ahead
• focusing on resilience and the importance of it in long-term success
• how to identify a toxic manager
• learning about personal and career resilience
• writing our action plan for building resilience

Learning more about myself/personal reflection (9)
• identifying areas where my resilience could be strengthened even more (2)
• learning what I can do to improve myself
• how to deal with life
• provision of ‘life’ scenarios
• what is my ‘follower style’
• accepted my problems and feelings when I was in stressful situations
• learned how to empower my feelings to put on positive sides

Strategies and techniques for problem solving/dealing with issues (21)
• mindfulness (4)
• conflict management (4)
• practise having difficult conversations (2)
• learning strategies we can use in our personal lives as well as at work
• identifying how to be resilient
• how to resolve situations calmly
• be aware of coping mechanisms and ways to address a problem
• identifying problems
• how to evaluate situations
• to look at a problem from a different perspective and deal with it in another way
• to reflect and write down issues to get a clearer picture
• got more confidence with dealing with issues
• encouraged to speak to colleagues about better communication

Interaction/Group discussion (36)
• being able to voice problems/vent (6)
• being able to say what we really thought openly (5)
• knowing that others have the same/similar experiences (3)
• hearing other people’s thoughts (2)
• discussing ways of approaching problems and people
• the opportunity to share some positive outcomes for SAWMH
• one on one and a small amount of people in the class

All of it was good (5)
• made me think out of the box (2)
• positive thinking (2)
• interesting topic (2)
• overview, being made aware
• the information was clear and well presented

Other
• the examples given made it easier to understand
• more understanding
• getting career resilience workbook
• the workbook activities
• access to literature and websites
• chatting informally with the facilitator throughout the session
• learning that resilience covered a wide gamut of issues in my personal and career life

4. What was the least helpful?
• nothing – all helpful (35)
• too long (3)
• only having a 10 minute break (2)
• the abundance of material (2)
• having such short notice and leaving colleagues with less staff at short notice
• not knowing about the course until it happened
• quiet reflection time
• some people talking for too long
• pairing up with other people for activities
• don’t always feel comfortable talking with colleagues about some things
• having discussion with others or a partner about issues with career
• very sleepy time of day
• maybe have some physical exercises
• trying to be courageous
• signature strengths
• 8 steps toward a happier more satisfying life as not credible source
• survey

5. The course content was relevant to my needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The course allowed opportunities for interaction, practice and learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How would you rate this workshop overall?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How would you rate the facilitator/s?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Inadequate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. **What is one thing you will do as a result of this workshop?**

**Be more positive (14)**
- stay focused and positive in life
- think about how I can develop/broaden my work life so I feel more positive about it
- make positive changes

**Have a discussion with my manager (5)**

**Work on /maintain physical well-being (14)**
- investigate meditation techniques

**Practice strategies learnt in this workshop (12)**
- use template
- complete the 8 steps on a regular basis
- use the ‘Dealing with Issues at work’ tool
- try different ways to build career/life resilience and stress relief measures
- try and achieve one of the career and personal action plan goals
- further investigations into concept and practice

**Study/learn more (5)**
- think more about further studies
- speak to my manager regarding further training/courses
- be more pro-active with learning opportunities and career development

**Talk more to resolve problems (3)**
- listen more (3)
- communicate better (2)
- be more mindful of my abilities and strategize before dealing with issues (2)
- speak up when I feel issues need to be addressed (2)
- think before I speak/jump in
- pass on to relevant person some feedback
- think about discussing my work issues with the people who cause my discomfort
- approach the situation and circumstances before they spiral out of control
- focus on addressing problems in department minus the emotion
- try and look at issues from different sides
- try to be diplomatic
- resolve conflicts
- handle conflict better
- be more vocal
- change the way I deal with issues

**Make more time for me (3)**
- focus on my own needs (2)
- take rest breaks and meal breaks
- plan time off

**Reflect more (3)**
- review my career and personal resilience status
- be more aware of personal and career resilience
- start a journal
- think more about decisions I need to make and the ability to make changes

**Try and be more confident at work (3)**
- do not be afraid of being in stressful situations

**Seek further help (3)**
- spend precious time with supportive networks

**Update resume (2)**
- focus on career future and change
- re-evaluate and look at what I want from my job
- take a risk and look at new roles

**Other**
- act/be proactive (3)
- spend time building my own personal resilience (2)
• access resources available to me (2)
• try to implement some of my findings
• try to implement changes that will effectively help my overall resilience
• try to change my ways
• try and fulfil my promises
• count my blessings more frequently
• social and emotional intelligence
• look at the bigger picture
• embrace change
• be more tolerant
• be more considerate to colleagues
• learn to forgive and be kind
• try harder
• look after my colleagues
• work on improving myself
• think about what was presented
• be mindful of how to be resilient

10. How could we improve this workshop?

• nothing/good as is (23)
• more audio/visual representation of the subject matter (5)
• more interaction with other staff (2)
• more interactive if possible
• hold more often
• provide a follow up in 12 months’ time
• have follow up workshops
• offer pre-read of information on the subject
• more time to reflect
• offer more hope and ability to make positive changes
• maybe more ways to deal with disappointment
• information on further training/courses that are available
• less emphasis on first half of the topics in the booklet and more in the latter
• bring managers into meeting with regular staff
• delve more into how to practice various strategies
• have more notice to enable correct numbers of staff attendance
• more advance notice from managers
• don’t pair people up for activities
• more time
• maybe a touch shorter
• break time up

11. Other comments

• thank you (4)
• enjoyed the workshop (3)
• well-presented (2)
• very good (2)
• relaxed and interesting
• very insightful
• The facilitator was very clear and provided a very structured learning experience
• allowed things to follow their course to conclusion which has helped with the healing process - didn’t follow to the letter and stop the natural flow
• I found this session most beneficial
• managers need to have this input too
• look forward to the next workshop
• made me aware of how I can self help
• lots of good ideas
• good size group
• it was a good workshop that can be applied to both work and home life
• hope to have another full session of this workshop
• I really think this workshop has helped me and my co-workers
• keep up the good work
• I look forward to seeing some change "slowly" in the organisation
• I think these workshops offer a confidential opportunity to 'vent' but one still wonders if change can actually happen
• unthreatening environment to discuss issues and felt it can be 'looked' into
• as I am at the end of my career the course wasn't as relevant, however for the newer staff very good info
• I was not sure what the course was about but now very enlightened about tactics to use in confronting other managers or staff
• did not find it particularly helpful
• I understand the org. is trying to change and has good intentions however it will take many years to undo and remove harmful elements