

# BOUNCING BACK AND GOING STRONG

In August 2017, the Australian Securitisation Forum (ASF)'s Women in Securitisation subcommittee facilitated a series of lunchtime workshops in Sydney proactively to support the resilience, performance and wellbeing of women in the workplace.

**T**he programme was fully subscribed with 14 ASF members taking part. Pleasingly, attendees ranged from senior industry women right through the spectrum to participants who are relatively inexperienced and new to the workforce.

Presented by Positive Psychology coaches Kate Wilkie and Debra Close, the programme drew upon the science of "positive psychology". This is the science of optimum functioning, performance and wellbeing, and it focuses on what is helpful and what is going right rather than primarily seeking to fix deficiencies.

Resilience is defined as coping with stress, bouncing back from challenges and growing from them. The group agreed that levels of stress and challenge are inevitable in the securitisation industry but noted a desire to respond positively, confidently and flexibly to pressure, challenges and changing situational demands.

To meet this goal, attendees were introduced to three pathways relevant to building resilience at work and in life over the course of four workshops. Research shows that practical skills can develop resilience, so a key outcome of the programme was to allow each attendee to leave with specific actions to improve their resilience and psychological wellbeing immediately. There was also a personal resilience plan for attendees to support ongoing resilience and wellbeing into the future.

The three pathways are:

- Mental toughness: investigating the ways in which people react to stress and challenges.
- Wellbeing: breaking down the components that can help us to feel good and function well in the workplace.
- Performance strengths: harnessing existing internal capacities to build engagement, confidence and energy at work.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDSET

Central to the programme was the concept of mindset. Our mindset is crucial to what we tell ourselves about

our abilities, talents and intelligence. Those with a fixed mindset believe their success is based on their innate ability, and that this probably will not change. In contrast, those with a growth mindset believe success is based on learning, challenging, growing and persisting.

A growth mindset will help us more readily to believe we can develop and cultivate our internal resources to cope with stress. The adoption of a growth mindset was strongly encouraged throughout the workshops as a key to dialling-up resilience in the face of challenges.

To capitalise on the supportive relationships developed during the programme and encourage an ongoing network, the subcommittee sponsored a post-programme lunch which was well-attended. The 14 women have established an informal ongoing network, planning to meet quarterly to discuss challenges and progress, and to provide support and encouragement.

Throughout the programme, Debra and Kate provided email support to participants as desired and arranged follow-up coaching for individuals who wished to explore specific parts of the programme in more detail.

Helping women in the securitisation industry build resilience is an important part of empowering and encouraging women to take charge of their careers. The women who attended this inaugural resilience programme were encouraged to visualise themselves as their best resilient self, and commit to personally meaningful activities to build this level of resilience.

They could see that when we put strategies in place to boost resilience and wellbeing it pays dividends at work and in other areas of our lives.

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

Each of the participants surveyed at the completion of the programme reported that:

- The programme was excellent or very good.
- They would recommend the programme to women in their industry.
- The facilitation and activities helped them understand the various pathways to resilience and how they might use them to build their resilience.

Additionally, they commented that they felt the most beneficial features of the programme were:

- The opportunity to gain self-knowledge and awareness.
- The practical nature of the course with actions to take away.
- The chance to listen to the experiences of other women in the industry.

Given the success of the programme, WIS is considering running future resilience programmes in Sydney and Melbourne. If you would be interested in attending in 2018, please email Lynsey Jackson via [ljackson@securitisation.com.au](mailto:ljackson@securitisation.com.au).