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**Title:** Taking a Positive Approach to Organizational Downsizing

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**Key Messages:**

We drew from the literature on positive organizational behaviour (Luthans & Youssef, 2007) to test a process model relating generalized optimism (Carver & Scheier, 1999) to the cognitions, affect and behaviour of 237 Canadian federal government managers during and following a major organizational downsizing. Our data support a model in which generalized optimism measured 18 months prior to the downsizing (T1) associated positively with managers' cognitions, attitudes, job performance, and self-reported coping effectiveness measured 12 months postdownsizing (T3). Analyses suggested that some of these associations were partially mediated by a positive thinking coping strategy and expectations for future career and job success reported during the downsizing (T2). We advocate for more research that draws from the positive organizational behaviour literature to study the effects of downsizing on survivors.