We’re in this together
Leading In Crisis

The scale and unpredictability of this pandemic is disconcerting and distressing. Many of us are feeling anxious and scared. The chaos thrust upon us has required us to rapidly create and learn new ways of working. As we are adjusting to change, we seek to find our ground and rhythm within this new reality.

The universal truth is that this crisis affects us all. Community and connection have never been more important. It is a time of solidarity. A time for leaders to rise up and positively impact their people as they lead and support them through the chaos.

We offer you this snapshot of leadership mindset, techniques and behaviours.

Practice Empathy
Your first consideration in a crisis is the people around you. Acknowledge and empathise with their professional and personal circumstances to build safety and trust. Demonstrate that you are fully present, available and approachable to your team.

Leaders Wellbeing
It is so important that you take care of yourself. Physical and mental breaks really help with stress and endurance so keep time aside for personal practices. Stay active during the day. Schedule time to move between meetings. Remember to pause and take three deep breaths and be open to sharing challenges with colleagues and advisors.

Calm Optimism
One of the most important leadership impacts at this time is practicing deliberate calm to set the tone for your team. Reflect on the impact you seek to import within every interaction – the leader you seek to be. If you are in a challenging situation remember to pause to support, clear thinking so that you respond rather than react to the situation.

Realistic -Expectations
Set clear and realistic expectations. Check in with the team and as required, adjust your expectations based on their reality and feedback. Ask people what they need. Focus on outcomes and objectives rather than working hours.

Be Flexible
Be fair in your expectations at a time when morale and productivity tend to trend downwards. Communicate your awareness that a standard working day may simply not be possible for some members of your team. Be open and invite the team to develop new work patterns that are practical and effective in delivering objectives.

Stay Connected
It is important to encourage team connection to build camaraderie – use technology when office interactions are not possible. Consider daily morning check ins, virtual coffee or lunch breaks and don’t forget to pick up the phone for 1:1’s with your team.

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Acknowledgment Accomplishments
Recognition is more critical when people are under pressure and out of their comfort zone and routine. Say thank you more often than you usually do. Take time at team meetings to recognise and celebrate what has been achieved.

Honesty and Courage
Staying calm and having honest, realistic conversations, will help your team remain positive. Deliver your message confidently with clear rationale and empathy.

This might be useful to print this out and hang in your workspace so that you can refer to it throughout your day as a prompt to inform how you are showing up as a leader.

We appreciate all that you are doing to navigate unchartered waters. May your leadership practice support calm, clarity and trust within our community at this critical time.

Thank you and take good care

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Community and Connection
“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

MAYA ANGELOU

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