

Resources

Exercises/Discussion questions (to reflect on or discuss with a colleague)

Compassion and compassionate leadership

1. Think of an example of compassion others have shown to you and identify the four elements of compassion in their behaviour.
2. Think of an example of compassion you have shown to another person (ideally a neutral person or someone you had found difficult). Identify the four elements and reflect on the consequences of your compassion (for you and the other person).
3. Think of an example of compassion at work that has moved you recently. How did it make a difference and what can you learn from it?
4. Which of the four elements of compassion come to you more easily? Which might you focus on developing more? Look at the resources and videos and plan for how you can best accomplish that.
5. To what extent are each of the four compassionate leadership behaviours generally modelled by those in your team/organisation?
6. What are the barriers to you modelling each of the compassionate leadership behaviours and how can they be overcome?
7. How can you as a leader better model compassionate leadership? What goals would you commit to setting for yourself to develop your compassionate leadership? For example, this might include having two days a week where you deliberately practise 'listening with fascination' in interactions and/or practising reflective listening to establish shared understanding.
8. Where should leaders focus their help for those they lead to ensure high-quality compassionate care for patients and for staff?

Managing performance

1. Think of a situation you currently face or have faced in the past involving addressing performance issues. What did you learn from this? How could you manage this situation more effectively, considering the guidance here?
2. Think of a situation you currently face or have faced in the past where your team needed to develop new and improved ways of doing things at pace. What did you learn from this about leadership? How could you manage this situation more effectively, considering the guidance here?

3. Think of a situation you currently face or have faced in the past involving addressing an abusive, aggressive or dominating individual. What did you learn from this about leadership? How could you manage this situation more effectively, considering the guidance here?
4. Think of a situation you currently face or have faced in the past involving a difficulty with the culture or leadership of another organisation. What did you learn from this? How could you manage this situation more effectively, considering the guidance here?

Questionnaires

Compassionate leadership can be measured using the following items, based on four dimensions of compassion: attending, understanding, empathising and helping. These can be used by team members or could be adapted as a self-report measure for leaders.

Attending

This person

... listens carefully to others when exploring problems

... pays close attention to you when listening

... is very attentive when you are telling them about difficulties

... gives you their full attention when you are describing challenges you face

Understanding

... is helpful in understanding the reasons for difficulties we face

... does not impose their understanding of the cause of difficulties we face

... takes time to understand carefully the causes of problems

... works together with us to come to an understanding of problems

Empathising

... is genuinely warm and empathic

... is emotionally in touch with others' feelings when they are upset

... is sensitive to what others are feeling

... genuinely cares about others' difficulties

Helping

... helps people practically with problems they face

... takes effective action to help others with the problems they face

... deals effectively with problems in order to help others

... is genuinely committed to making a difference in helping others

A shorter scale capturing the same core dimensions:

This person ...

... gives you their full attention when you are describing challenges you face

... works together with us to come to an understanding of problems

... genuinely cares about others' difficulties

... takes effective action to help others with the problems they face

Response scale:

Never	Rarely	Frequently	Almost always	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Guidance on using these questionnaires is provided in Appendix 1.

Websites

1. The Compassionate Mind Foundation

Founded as an international charity in 2006 by Paul Gilbert and colleagues including Drs Deborah Lee, Mary Welford, Chris Irons, Ken Goss, Ian Lowens, Chris Gillespie, Mrs Diane Woollands, Mrs Jean Gilbert and other supporters, the foundation promotes an evolution and neuroscience-informed approach to compassion, which now forms the basis of a psychotherapy (Compassion Focused Therapy) and Compassionate Mind Training. The last 10 years have seen an expanding evidence base for both the therapy and Compassionate Mind Training for the alleviation of mental health difficulties and promoting well-being. It is now being used internationally in hospitals, prisons, schools and businesses. One of the greatest challenges facing humanity is how to stimulate compassionate ways of thinking and problem-solving for the benefit of all.

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/>

This pdf from the Compassionate Mind Foundation offers guidance to help develop qualities of inner compassion focusing on valuing compassion, empathy, sympathy, forgiveness, acceptance and tolerance. It also helps in developing feelings of warmth and growth, and taking responsibility and training to strengthen compassion.

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/GILBERT-COMPASSION-HANDOUT.pdf>

2. The Compassion Institute

The institute offers an 8-week Compassion Cultivation Training programme, developed at Stanford University, with insights and techniques from psychology, neuroscience and contemplative (meditation) practice. The course integrates evidence-based meditation techniques, interactive discussions, and lectures as well as real-world exercises to put learning into practice.

<https://www.compassioninstitute.com/the-program/compassion-cultivation-training/>

3. The International Compassion Community

The community provides an online space for those working in health and care with daily guided meditations (live), webinars, question and answer sessions.

<https://ccmm.care/>

4. Compassion in Politics

A cross-party organisation working to put compassion, inclusion and co-operation at the heart of politics. From their website: "Compassion has the power to change politics for good. From inequality and racial discrimination to homelessness, divisions over how covid-19 has been handled to refugees dying at sea - imagine how these issues would be tackled if compassion was the main motivation of decision-makers. Yet compassion has been edged out of the political debate, replaced by a politics of fear, anger and divisions, and a narrative which emphasises individual success over collective well-being and happiness. Through a new kind of politics and with a new set of values at the heart of decision-making we can create a nation that cares for one another, improves everyone's lives, and protects our natural world."

<https://www.compassioninpolitics.com>

5. The King's Fund

The King's Fund, a leading UK health and social care charity and think-tank, has a website with a range of blogs, videos, webinars and reports that address compassionate leadership.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/>

The King's Fund publication on compassionate leadership and innovation in healthcare.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/caring-change>

A King's Fund blog post on why compassionate leadership matters so much during the covid-19 crisis.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2020/03/covid-19-crisis-compassionate-leadership>

6. Hult Ashridge Business Education: Compassion makes teams stronger
A website with a blog and other resources by Dr Amy Bradley on compassion at work.
<https://www.hult.edu/en/executive-education/insights/compassion-makes-teams-stronger/>
7. A Roffey Park paper on compassionate leadership and why organisations need such leadership.
<https://www.roffeypark.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Compassionate-Leadership-Booklet.pdf>
8. A recent publication (2021) exploring the importance of healthcare worker well-being, patient safety and organisational change, edited by Montgomery, A., van der Doef, M., Panagopoulou, E., Leiter, M. P. *Connecting Healthcare Worker Well-Being, Patient Safety and Organisational Change. Aligning Perspectives on Health, Safety and Well-Being.* Springer, Cham. See also within this edition a chapter on Compassion and Collective Leadership for Culture of High-Quality Care, by Michael West.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-60998-6>
9. Harvard Business Review: Handling difficult conversations
<https://hbr.org/2015/01/how-to-handle-difficult-conversations-at-work>
10. Amy Gallo writes for Harvard Business Review on how to manage a toxic employee.
<https://hbr.org/2016/10/how-to-manage-a-toxic-employee>
11. The US Society for Human Resource Management provide resources for dealing with difficult people.
<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0217/pages/how-do-you-deal-with-difficult-people.aspx>
12. A call for compassionate performance management and a best practice guide from the Fair Ombudsman of the Australian Government.
<https://www.hrreview.co.uk/analysis/analysis-wellbeing/murray-furlong-call-compassionate-performance-management/95838>

Videos

A video from the Oxford Mindfulness Centre featuring Christina Feldman leading a meditation on rediscovering compassion. Christina Feldman is a leading teacher in the insight meditation community, offering retreats internationally. She is a contributing faculty member in several postgraduate mindfulness programs, including the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom and Radboud University in the Netherlands.

(7 minutes 41 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnKVJaEL6Ec>

A video of Paul Gilbert drawing on his research and others' to provide a powerful, compelling and comprehensive overview of the evolution of compassion and its role in our happiness. He explores the science of compassion and how we can put this into practice to create happier lives - for ourselves and others around us. This talk was filmed at an Action for Happiness event in London on 18 April 2017.

(1 hour 17 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2skAMl8c-4>

A wide range of inspiring videos from the Compassionate Mind Foundation.

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources/videos>

Thoughts about compassion accompanied with quotations from Chögyam Trungpa, Karen Armstrong, Christina Feldman, Pema Chödrön, Albert Schweitzer and Rachel Joy Scott. (3 minutes 35 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5qpoFTC5C50>

A short video outlining the key components of compassionate leadership.

(16 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORXthT32vcY>

A King's Fund webinar on compassionate leadership with Don Berwick, Institute for Healthcare Improvement, USA; Prerana Issar, NHS Chief People Officer; Sam Allen, CEO of Sussex Partnership NHS Trust, a mental health and learning disability organisation; chaired by Michael West. (1 hour)

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/compassionate-inclusive-leadership-event>

The King's Fund: The core value of compassion and centrality of compassionate leadership in health and social care. (7 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrPmMwg9X8s>

A more extended discussion of the role of compassionate leadership, teamworking and reflection in health and social care. (1 hour)

<https://vimeo.com/manage/502557741/general>

A brief explanation of the importance of compassionate and collective leadership from Michael West at The King's Fund. (7 minutes 10 secs)

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/michael-west-leadership>

Three steps to having difficult but necessary conversations – a TEDx video featuring Adar Cohen, a conflict resolution expert. (15 minutes 45 secs)

<https://ideas.ted.com/3-steps-to-having-difficult-but-necessaryconversations/>

Compassion in politics: Podcast with Michael West discussing the pandemic and recovery from it with a new approach to leadership. (18 minutes 26 secs)

<https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/show/compinpolitics/id/14152574>