

LEADerShip at a Glance

CHLNet's "Top Three" Suggested LEADS Readings for COVID-19¹

Brandebo, M. F. (2020). Destructive leadership in crisis management. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. Available @ <https://www.emerald.com/insight/0143-7739.htm>

Summary:

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to increased knowledge of destructive leadership in crisis management. Informants involved in crisis management at regional, local and operational levels in Sweden were interviewed. Lessons from this article are relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study identified seven different destructive leadership behaviours: four task-related and three relationship-related. Task-related behaviours were: Over-controlling, not involving others; a lack of decisiveness, avoiding responsibility; being ambiguous; i.e., the leader is unclear in his/her communication and fails to pass information and/or notify others; and being stressed, or losing emotional control. These led to negative consequences for the task/crisis. There are three relationship-related destructive leadership behaviours, i.e., being egocentric, using threats and punishments, and failing to show respect and understanding towards reports. These have negative consequences for subordinates' job satisfaction, well-being and/or sense of meaningfulness. The paper relates the identified behaviours to existing leadership ideals within crisis management and discusses behaviours that appear to be unique for the crisis management context.

The paper highlights the fact that great crisis managers are not always good at managing relationships, which may have negative implications for crisis management in the long term.

LEADS Link: The LEADS framework identifies positive attributes of leadership intended to grow overall organizational capacity to deliver results: especially in a crisis. A review of the negative behaviours identified in this study shows that they are diametrically opposite to the guidance of LEADS; suggesting that selective use of the opposite LEADS capabilities during a crisis will contribute to positive results.

Jain, S. H., Lucey, C., & Crosson, F. J. (2020). The enduring importance of trust in the leadership of health care organizations. *JAMA*, 324(23), 2363-2364.

Summary:

This article pertains to the health care system in the USA, readers will need to relate those findings to a Canadian context.

The authors contend that though the health care industry in the United States once enjoyed a high level of public trust, conflicting messages about the COVID-19 pandemic, ever-rising health care costs, news reports of greed, and other factors have conspired to erode that trust. To ensure that the changes in health care are positive and well-intentioned and to build consensus around its necessity for the purpose

¹ As recommended by Dr. Graham Dickson (CHLNet Senior Research Advisor)

of improving patient health outcomes, health care leaders must prioritize building and maintaining trust as an explicit organizational objective.

At the same time that trust is eroding as a consequence of COVID-19, the organization of health care delivery and financing in the US is experiencing substantial change. Consequently, the decline in trust has the potential to undermine the best aspects of this change and divert it in suboptimal ways.

If health care leaders do not take deliberate efforts to build trust, they will likely be unable to enact reform or even navigate the channels of the status quo.

Link to LEADS: In the LEADS framework trust is implicitly or explicitly foundational to the leadership practice outlined in many Domains. For example, in *Lead Self*, the capability of *Demonstrate character* has implicit in its character traits that contribute to trust; integrity, caring for others, and honesty. In the *Engage Others* domain, trust is foundational to creating healthy organizations and building effective teams. In *Develop Coalitions*, trust is a necessary ingredient in building and sustaining effective inter-organizational relationships. Trust is foundational for productive relationships which are the key to a highly functioning health system.

Zenger, J., and Folkman, J. (2020). Research: Women are better leaders during a crisis. *Harvard Business Review* (December). Available @ [Research: Women Are Better Leaders During a Crisis \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org)

Summary:

The authors, Jack Zenger and Jack Folkman have been studying leadership for many years. This study followed up on their observation that women are often asked to take on leadership roles within organizations that are ‘broken’, or in crisis. They appear to thrive in such situations, as witnessed by women leaders such as Jacinda Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand who led a very successful battle against the COVID-19 virus in that country.

Zenger and Folkman decided to test the hypothesis that women are better leaders during a crisis by looking at 360 data during the first phase of pandemic. They compared those findings with data (over 60,000 leaders) they have gathered over many years. They found that data gathered during the COVID-19 crisis showed that female leaders outperformed male leaders on overall leadership effectiveness ratings; i.e., 57.2% for women versus 51.5% for men. Most interestingly, scores for women leaders’ overall effectiveness actually increased during the COVID period as compared to pre-COVID, outperforming men in both periods.

The authors also provide examples of qualities and traits that women were rated higher than men: e.g., Learning agility; Takes initiative; Inspires and motivates others. These attributes showed the highest differential. Engagement scores for women leaders were also higher.

Zenger and Folkman also describe the leadership attributes that are most valued during the current COVID-19 crisis: agility, employee development, honesty and integrity, and sensitivity to the stress others are going through.

Link to LEADS: If we compare the leadership qualities and attributes that women excel in compared to men, and the list of attributes highly valued during times of crisis, we see a direct correlation between those attributes and the LEADS domains and capabilities. Although LEADS is gender neutral, it appears that more women are more able to put them into practice than are men.