

LEADerShip at a Glance

CHLNet's "Top Three" Suggested LEADS Readings

Introduction:

The three references contained within this month's Top Three have been chosen for the following reasons. Reference 1 articulates effectively how the context of continual and every increasing rapidity of change in today's environment demands different approaches to leadership. Reference 2 provides a theoretical foundation for new approaches to leadership—complexity and systems leadership—that are traditionally under-utilized in healthcare but are fundamentally important for dealing with the change context described in Reference 1. And Reference 3 outlines practical actions leaders can take to operationalize systems/complexity leadership when dealing with today's change-based challenges.

References:

Chima A, Gutman R. What it takes to lead through an era of exponential change. [Harvard Business Review](#). 2020 Oct 29.

Summary:

The pace of change has picked up. Whereas we used to experience disruptions followed by periods of stability, change now is increasingly perpetual, pervasive, and exponential. To keep pace, leaders need to take a different approach than the "leader as hero" model — the solo, individualistic leader who inspires certainty in a deterministic way forward.

The authors suggest a new approach, which they call Sapiient Leadership, inspired by conversations held at Stanford in the spring of 2020 with Doug McMillon, President and CEO of Walmart; Toby Cosgrove, former CEO of the Cleveland Clinic, heart surgeon, and White House advisor; global social changemakers such as Halla Tómasdóttir, CEO of The B Team, investor, cofounder of Reykjavik University, and runner-up in Iceland's 2016 presidential elections; leading-edge technologists and innovators such as Bret Taylor, president and COO of Salesforce, co-creator of Google Maps and the "Like" button, and board member of Twitter. The essential question posed to these leaders was this: *If leadership is significantly defined by the ability to skillfully navigate 3-D change, what type of leadership is most effective for our emerging future, one defined by perpetual, pervasive, and exponential change? The answers that emerged formed the basis for Sapiient Leadership.*

Belrhiti Z, Giralt AN, Marchal B. Complex leadership in healthcare: a scoping review. [International journal of health policy and management](#). 2018 Dec;7(12):1073.

Summary:

Scholars, academics, practitioners, and policymakers are exploring how to adopt a complexity perspective in health policy and system research. While leadership and complexity has been studied

extensively outside health, the implications of complexity theories for the study of leadership in healthcare have received limited attention.

The authors carried out a scoping review of complex leadership (CL) in healthcare to investigate how CL in healthcare has been defined, theorised and conceptualised and to explore how 'CL' has been applied in healthcare settings.

They found that research papers adopt mostly an explorative or explanatory approach and do not focus on assessing effectiveness of CL approaches. They also found that the majority of researchers seem to adhere to the mathematical complexity perspective.

Their conclusion was that complexity concepts derived from natural sciences may not automatically fit management of health services. However, a few studies showed that complex leaders foster interconnectedness, open communication, relationship building, and non-linear processes, and that this contributes to positive outcomes such as collaborative learning, innovation, perceived team performance, and organisational change.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020). [Systems Leadership Guide for Civil Servants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92424/systems-leadership-guide-for-civil-servants.pdf)

Summary:

This guide from the UK provides advice about how leaders might employ systems thinking leadership methods to healthcare issues. Systems approaches shift the focus towards understanding issues and developing goals that fulfil multiple goals rather than one single goal. This enables solutions to emerge that address the causes of problems rather than treating the symptoms.

The guide answers questions such as:

- What is the long-term effect of systems leadership?
- Where and when can systems approaches have an impact?
- How do you know you are doing it right?

They provide clear and informative answers to these questions, in terms of practical action that a leader can take, and an array of resource links for systems leaders to explore.

Link to LEADS:

LEADS—the acronym for the full title of the framework: *LEADS in a Caring Environment*—is connected to reference 1 in that it was developed to assist leaders in healthcare to cope more effectively with the changes health care is experiencing and also must embrace. Reference 2 provides a theoretical perspective on systems/complexity leadership and its relevance to the health sector; while reference 3 shows the practical application of those constructs to address challenges in health systems. The direct link to LEADS because of its emphasis on complexity approaches to leadership, a key theme of the *Systems Transformation* domain of the framework.