

Summary: Leading self and engaging others in turbulent times – A facilitated discussion

Leadership Forum April 20 2020

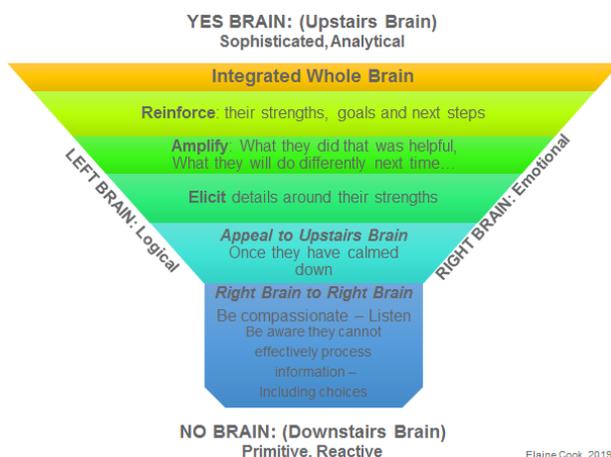
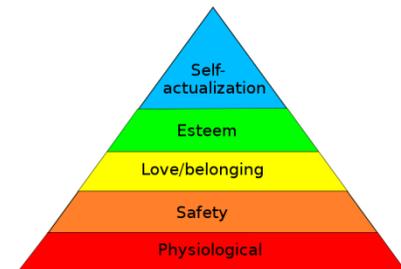
Purpose

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all sharing in a unique experience and acknowledge the opportunity we have to support, guide and learn from each other. Modeled on the leadership community of practice, we engaged the leadership team, physicians, scientists and nurse practitioners in a virtual facilitated discussion aimed at:

1. Strengthening our sense of community and peer support during this difficult time
2. Reinforcing leadership confidence to lead self and engage others during the pandemic
3. Stimulating our imaginations around future possibilities

Background

Maslow's hierarchy of needs tells us that at times when our health and safety are threatened, we focus on survival, physiological needs and safety, as opposed to the higher-level needs of belonging, esteem and self-actualization.



Etaine Cook, 2019

Similarly as we look at the behaviour funnel, the bottom of the funnel is referred to as the downstairs brain – it is primitive and reactive. The right side of the brain (the emotional side) is at the forefront, and there is no ability to appeal to the integrated whole brain which allows logic and reasoning in.

At the beginning of the pandemic we as leaders and our teams were functioning towards the bottom of the pyramid and the funnel. The question is **what is allowing us to move towards a “yes” brain, and how do we sustain and amplify** our ability as leaders to get us through what could be a longer than anticipated journey ahead.

LEADS in a Caring Environment

Holland Bloorview's leadership framework, LEADS, reminds us of the leadership capabilities required to lead ourselves and our teams in turbulent times.

We asked Holland Bloorview leaders: *What is helping you cope with the current situation and what have you learned about yourself?*

- Being proactive as opposed to reactive
- Trying to think ahead and be prepared and organized
- Figuring out how/what to prioritize
- Actively reaching out to other teams for help
- Having an openness to information, and asking and challenging yourself what does that mean for you
- Making a conscious effort to limit how much media to take in
- Finding a balance between being at work and staying at home, while taking into consideration all factors, such as kids, schooling, etc.
- Getting in to a rhythm/pattern
- The structure and routine of coming in to work
- Building situational awareness and observing what's going on, rather than trying to solve every problem. Not to actually make changes but to listen to what different people are saying. Although it may feel as though solving every problem in front of you is the best solution, it may not actually fix anything
- Being energized by the rapid pace of change, and realizing how hard it is for others; being mindful of others who struggle with the pace of change
- Building relationships and value systems in advance pays off. Proactive work is very important



LEAD SELF
Self-motivated leaders...

Are self aware
They are aware of their own assumptions, values, principles, strengths and limitations

Develop themselves
They actively seek opportunities and challenges for personal learning, character building and growth

Manage themselves
They take responsibility for their own performance and health

Demonstrate character
They model qualities such as honesty, integrity, resilience, and confidence

“A leader needs to know his strengths as the carpenter knows his tools, or as the physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths and can call on the right strength at the right time.”

- Donald Clifton, 2003

In what ways have you managed to engage your teams and what difference is it making?

Creating ways to connect:

- Communicating regularly: both work and non-work-related
- Virtual lunches
- Chatting, catching up by phone, email, zoom
- Starting a Facebook group to help engage volunteers. Phoning and emailing those not on Facebook

Taking care of each other:

- Taking care of our mental health as a standing agenda item
- Sharing strategies and coping mechanisms
- Leaders modelling talking about struggles. That developed a feeling of trust, and by the second meeting, people were talking very openly about their feelings
- Starting meetings with non-work related check-ins

Finding ways to have fun:

- Themed meetings (wear blue for autism, bring your favourite mug and tell a story about it)
- Fundraising - crafty creations auctioned
- Sending out good news every morning. <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>
- Celebrating birthdays– everyone videotaped a birthday greeting, which were then all put together along with music. They showed it to her at the beginning of the zoom meeting, and while she was watching it, everyone in their own location grabbed a baked good, put a candle in it. When the video was over, all the candles were lit, and after she made her wish, they all blew out their candles!



ENGAGE OTHERS

Engaging leaders...

Foster development of others
They support and challenge others to achieve professional and personal goals

Contribute to the creation of healthy organizations
They create engaging environments where others have meaningful opportunities to contribute and ensure that resources are available to fulfill their expected responsibilities

Communicate effectively
They listen well and encourage open exchange of information and ideas using appropriate communication media

Build teams
They facilitate environments of collaboration and cooperation to achieve results

And this is what you are most proud of about your teams from the last month:

