CRISIS IS A POWERFUL TEACHER:
Resilient Leadership during a Global Health Pandemic

Abstract

This article describes a university administrator's leadership experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing upon a blend of authentic and servant leadership frameworks, the author argues that in times of crisis, a leader must focus on "self" and "other" related competencies in order to cultivate a sense of resilience. The author explores and reflects critically upon her short term and long term responses to the pandemic as a leader and discusses implications for helping future leaders build a sense of resilience.

Introduction

It was a brisk and cold March morning in Michigan. On the surface, this was a typical workday for me. As I was driving to campus, though, I was quite deep in thought. I had been talking to a friend on the phone and realizing that it was just a matter of time before we had confirmed COVID-19 cases in our state. I did not have any morning meetings and suddenly found myself making a detour to a local store where I bought a cart full of disinfectant wipes to take into the office.

When I got to work, our dean and I spent much of the day brainstorming different potential crisis scenarios and how they might impact our unit and university. We started to develop an initial environmental precautions plan for our unit as we awaited further direction from central administration. We also visited each office suite together, distributed disinfectant wipes and Center for Disease Control (CDC) posters, and discussed health risk reduction procedures. We then tried our best to move forward with our work that day

but did so with some anxiety and angst. Just one week later, the situation with COVID-19 in Michigan changed dramatically: our entire unit was working from home. Nine months later, the pandemic continues to create profoundly challenging circumstances for our unit, university, and higher education in general.

Advocating for a Blended Crisis Leadership Approach

Leaders from all over the globe are contending with the disruptions associated with crises, which validates the undeniable fact that leadership and crisis are intricately intertwined (Prewitt & Weil, 2014). Based on my professional experiences juggling two challenging leadership roles (as associate dean and interim Social Work department chairperson) during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic, I advocate for a crisis leadership approach that reflects a blend of authentic and servant leadership perspectives. This theoretical framework (see Figure 1) is rooted in personal self-care and deep empathy and is consistent

with research that has supported these two forms of leadership as separate and distinct, yet interrelated constructs (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Kiersch & Peters, 2017).

Authentic Leadership. An authentic leadership framework focuses on self-awareness, an emphasis on the true self, and a foundation in moral leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). George and Sims (2007) advance the notion that authentic leaders lead with their hearts and endeavor to be true to their values and beliefs. There are four commonly recognized factors pertaining to authentic leadership: self-awareness, self-regulation, balanced processing, relational transparency (Diddams & Chang, 2012). Supporters of authentic leadership argue that it is particularly critical to have authentic leaders in place when the organizational environment is complex and unpredictable. Furthermore, they emphasize that leaders who abide by authentic leadership principles are optimally positioned to take morally correct action during times of crisis, as they support positive psychological capacities and an ethical climate (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Creating personal development opportunities for aspiring leaders to engage in risk taking, vulnerability, and self-reflection is one way that the development of an authentic leadership perspective can be encouraged (Albert & Vadla, 2009; Billsbury & North-Samardzic, 2016).

Servant Leadership. A servant leadership framework focuses on a conscious choice to serve others and develop colleagues to their fullest potential. Sipe and Frick (2009) cite Robert Greenleaf's definition of a servant leader as a "person of character who puts people first. He or is she is a skilled communicator, a compassionate collaborator who has foresight, is a systems thinker, and leads with moral authority." (p. 2) This form of leadership reflects a sense of organizational stewardship which is oriented towards supporting and benefiting the community at large. It is not centered on a leader's inherent competency, but his or her keen desire to support others to
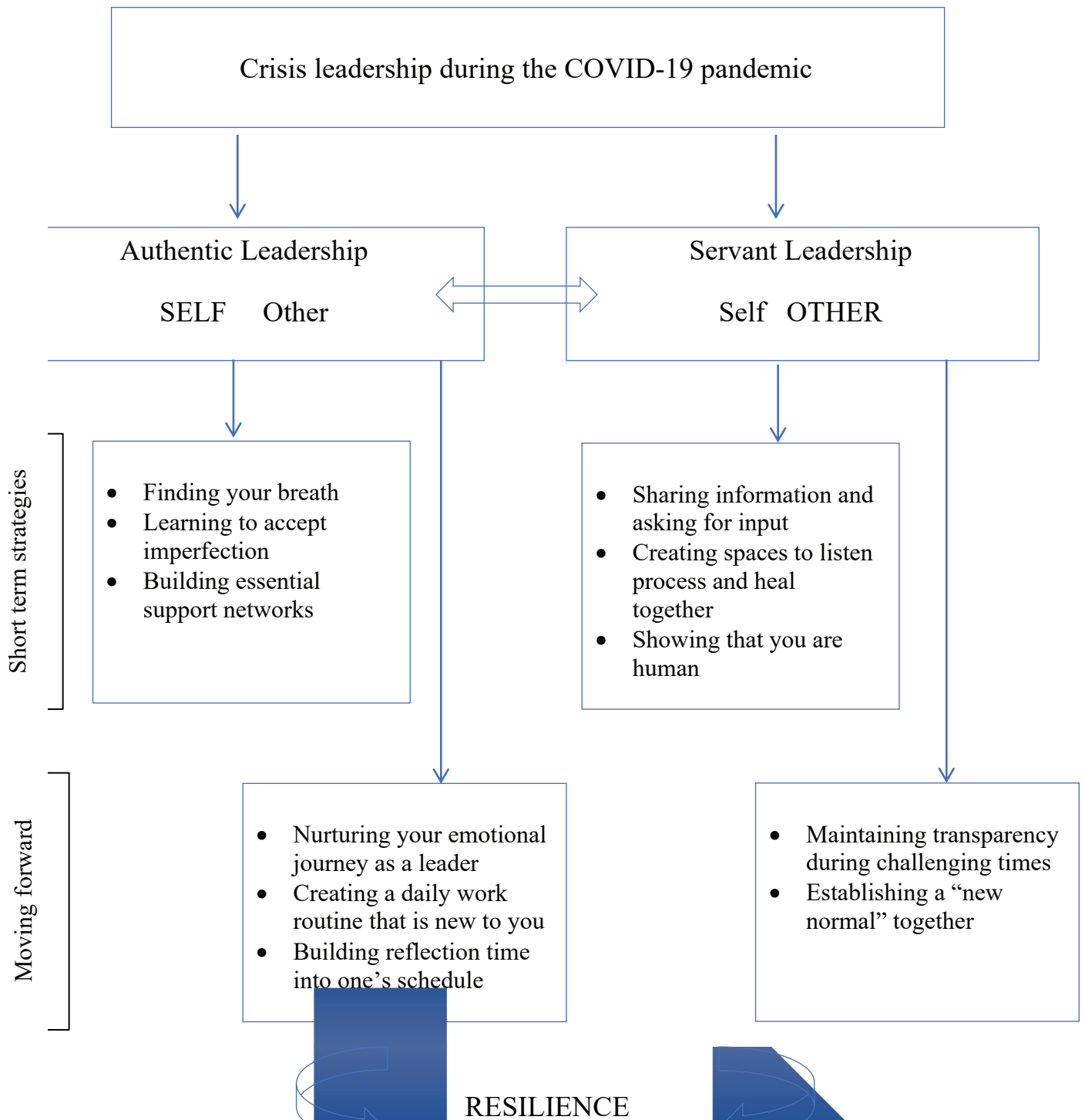
achieve their potential. It is primarily focused on adopting a professional mindset as opposed to being dependent on a role or authority (Crippen & Willows, 2019).

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework For Crisis Leadership During The COVID-19 Pandemic

| | Crisis leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic |

Authentic Leadership

SELF   Other

Servant Leadership

Self   OTHER

Short term strategies

- Finding your breath
- Learning to accept imperfection
- Building essential support networks

- Sharing information and asking for input
- Creating spaces to listen process and heal together
- Showing that you are human

Moving forward

- Nurturing your emotional journey as a leader
- Creating a daily work routine that is new to you
- Building reflection time into one's schedule

- Maintaining transparency during challenging times
- Establishing a "new normal" together

RESILIENCE

As detailed in Figure 1, I believe that a leader must focus on short term and future strategies ("moving forward") related to "self" and "other" related competencies in order to cultivate a sense of resilience. This process involves drawing upon aspects of authentic leadership, which I argue are more "self" focused, while simultaneously drawing upon aspects of servant leadership that are more "other" focused. Both authentic and servant leadership address elements of both "self" and "other" but with varying levels of emphasis, which is illustrated by the capitalization or lack of capitalization of both words under each leadership approach. Developing a sense of resilience involves confronting discomfort, challenges, and disruption related to one's sense of self as a leader as well as one's relationships and interactions with others. The American Psychological Association defines resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors." ("Building your Resilience", 2/1/2020).

Leaders who are resilient typically exhibit a firm commitment to reality which helps them face their fears and work realistically towards their goals. They have a clear sense of purpose and meaning as their values serve as a fundamental anchor during challenging times (Sanaghan, 2016). Organizations benefit from a sense of resilience as well. Resilience allows them to be more adaptive and to view challenges from an opportunistic rather than deficit perspective. It strengthens their ability to prevail over challenges in the future (Barasa et al,, 2018). Lastly, resilient organizations nurture creativity and inventiveness amongst their colleagues by creating a workplace environment that allows time and resources for the development of new ideas. Hence, for the above-mentioned reasons and more, cultivating a sense of resilience as a leader and as an organization is fruitful.

Existing Literature about Crisis Leadership during the COVID-19 Pandemic

A review of the existing literature about crisis leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals that scholars from a variety of academic disciplines have researched and written about various aspects of crisis leadership during the pandemic. As Gigiliotti (2020) so aptly states, it is critical to treat this moment as a "laboratory for leadership development" (p. 14). Stoller (2020) discusses the need to be proactive and anticipate events such as a pandemic with contingency plans. Fernandez and Shaw (2020) underscore the need for clear and frequent communication with various stakeholders, before a crisis hits as well as when a crisis is well underway. They and others (Altamarino & Rios-Collazo, 2020; Dirani et al,, 2020) also emphasize the necessity of embracing a team based approach to crisis through building a shared sense of community, belonging and trust. Allocating leadership tasks to a broad network of individuals (as opposed to having the onus fall on those in formal leadership roles) can have a positive impact on the quality of decision making during a crisis.

In past and current research, emotional intelligence has also commonly been cited as an essential factor in effective leadership during a crisis situation (Liepold et al., 2013; Watkins et al., 2017). Within the context of the current pandemic, Altamarino and Rios-Collazo (2020) take a student-centered approach to a crisis in higher education while focusing on issues of student retention and enrollment. Some students do not have access to computers or internet connections to complete their academic work. Some are also struggling with psychological challenges due to the pandemic. Leaders at their institution have provided students with access to facilities and appropriate services (such as counseling and health and wellness webinars) to ensure that these challenges do not become insurmountable obstacles for them.

In the sections to follow, I explore and reflect critically upon my own short term and longer-term

responses to the pandemic, as a leader, both from the perspective of self and other. I also discuss implications for helping future leaders build a sense of resilience.

How to Focus on Self in the Short Term

Finding Your Breath. The pandemic has presented leaders with an ever-changing situation that they are trying to make sense of at the same time as their colleagues. Leaders are experiencing feelings of uncertainty and fear regarding the future as well, and yet they are being asked to provide answers and direction. During the first few months after our unit's operations went virtual, I received emails and phone calls from colleagues at all times of the day and night. I found myself chairing Zoom meetings with colleagues who wore sad and anxious expressions on their faces. They were worried about their own health and that of their loved ones. They were concerned about how they were going to juggle personal and professional boundaries with their children at home with them. There were still existing deadlines and plans that had to be addressed regardless of the extreme stress brought upon by the circumstances.

As a leader, one not only has to learn how to manage others but must also learn to manage oneself. At the beginning of the pandemic, I, as a fellow human being with complex thoughts and emotions, was just as stressed out as my colleagues, probably in ways that I did not even fully realize. I found myself needing to become more critically conscious of the factors that I could control, and also, remind my colleagues about areas of their professional lives that they could control as well. I have learned that when tending to complex emotions, one must begin with oneself. Carving out time to breathe is essential during trying times. One must connect with all senses and ground oneself emotionally and physically. This might involve starting each day with a short walk in which one mindfully sets personal and professional intentions. It could involve setting short stretching breaks between meetings or engaging in comfort rituals (such as drinking herbal tea) to stay hydrated and self soothe. After a challenging virtual work week, I sometimes find it difficult to unwind on Saturday mornings. For several weeks, I have found myself identifying a non-work activity, such as baking bread, to engage in at the start of my weekend. Maintaining a sense of flexibility and a willingness to adapt is essential in novel circumstances, but self-care must remain at the center.

Learning to Accept Imperfection. As a leader, one must strive to be authentic and make mistakes without fear of ridicule and reprimand. Accepting one's imperfections is an essential step in allowing oneself to be vulnerable. Dealing with vulnerability can help a leader maintain a sense of truthfulness and transparency when he or she honestly does not have answers for others (Meyer, et al., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has been ever evolving and overwhelming with new details for all to consider. I have always taken pride in being a perfectionist about details who had, up until the pandemic, been able to successfully multi-task in order to meet different colleagues' needs and interests simultaneously; however, leading during the pandemic has involved having to make bold decisions, often while relying on ambiguous, unstable, or conflicting information. The outcomes of such decision making range from being adequate to less than perfect. I have learned a valuable lesson about myself through this experience: Perfectionists often have a tendency to micromanage their work. Micromanagers do not necessarily make great leaders as they need to learn to relinquish tasks that others (perhaps more matched for the task) deserve the opportunity to do. Furthermore, faculty and staff should have an honest say in decisions that pertain to them, to the extent that this is realistically possible. This helps build a sense of ownership which is important when the overall morale and psychological wellbeing of others has been compromised by a crisis. It also helps leaders develop a deeper sense of empathy, as they must listen carefully to their colleagues in order to

observe the situation from their viewpoints.

When our unit began to operate virtually, our dean and I took some time to draft communication for students, faculty, staff, and community partners. We also worked on a plan that attempted to flesh out the role of staff in an online context. There were some key issues that we were not sure how to address. How would our staff, for instance, manage student traffic virtually? It was obvious that our academic advisors could counsel students via phone, email, and video technology, but what about the administrative assistants who typically answered the main phone lines and talked to students face to face? Instead of attempting to figure out a solution on our own, we pulled the staff together for a socially distanced impromptu meeting. During this meeting, we posed the challenges that we were trying to address and one by one, our staff came up with a variety of different methods to keep students engaged with the department while we were online. This interaction highlights the importance of drawing upon various individuals' areas of professional expertise when making decisions as a leader. This is particularly important with our staff, who sometimes feel that the administration is putting their needs on the back burner in comparison to students and faculty. It is also important to capitalize on accomplishments, big or small, when you, as a group, feel that you have ventured successfully into new territory. Small successes matter during difficult times.

Building Essential Support Networks. Sanaghan (2016) talks about the need for leaders to identify authentic allies who can provide feedback and support to leaders during trying times. I cannot emphasize enough the need to build essential support networks during a time of acute crisis. Leadership can bring with it a sense of isolation. One might feel as if one is alone in enduring the burden of responsibility, establishing time sensitive guidelines, and attempting to maintain a sense of steady balance between the instructions from central administration and the actual situation on the ground. Professionally,

I have found that working even more closely with our dean is necessary. During our transition to a virtual environment, we started and ended each workday of meetings together. It was incredibly helpful to start the day establishing our daily goals together while ending the day with the ability to debrief and brainstorm next steps. I have also found that keeping in regular contact with other colleagues in leadership roles has helped because many of us are facing similar, unfamiliar challenges and we can help each other navigate new situations more effectively. On a personal level, I am also thankful for the opportunity to vent to close friends who I consider my "truth tellers" (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2002), who are able to offer a much needed outside perspective during an otherwise stressful situation.

How to Focus on Others in the Short Term

Sharing Information and Asking for Input. With so much uncertainty and stress during a pandemic, leaders need to be timely, clear and understandable in their communication. A delay in conveying important details to one's colleagues can cause the spread of factually inaccurate information which, in turn, can have an unfavorable impact on productivity and morale. In the midst of a crisis, leaders must be mindful to uphold a tone that is not too negative but also not too optimistic. Open acknowledgement of the discomfort brought upon by a crisis is essential. Speaking from one's heart and also acknowledging one's own emotions during difficult times can go a long way in terms of establishing stronger working relationships with one's colleagues. Leaders should also invite feedback from their colleagues. Transitions into unchartered territory are likely to be smoother when individuals feel that they can weigh in on the professional contexts in which they are operating. Asking for others' perspectives is critical in order to enhance one's interpretations of the situation (Huber & Lewis, 2010) and build a sense of empathy.

Creating Spaces to Listen, Process, and Heal Together. Leaders, along with their faculty, staff, and students, are being impacted in different ways by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that there has been a communal need for processing and healing as a result of this global health crisis. Our experiences during the pandemic have reiterated the notion that we all gain from having a sense of belonging. Together we are more resilient. Leaders need to be visible and present as well as actively work towards creating a sense of psychological safety amongst their constituents. At the start of the pandemic, our dean and I decided to hold a weekly social hour on Zoom to allow our faculty and staff to connect on a human level. It functioned as a much-needed space for sharing fears and uncertainties, developing a sense of camaraderie, and supporting those colleagues who lived alone and craved regular but safe social interaction. It also helped us forge closer personal bonds to our colleagues in order to develop a deeper sense of empathy for our colleagues' unique circumstances. Being able to envision the "new normal" in concrete terms with one another and move forward together with a shared sense of purpose helped alleviate some stress and anxiety for all.

Showing That You Are Human. As a leader and mother of a young child, I have always strived to maintain boundaries between my personal and professional life. I have found this to be a helpful coping mechanism to give each of these areas the focus and attention that they deserve. The onset of the pandemic has no longer allowed me to keep my personal and professional worlds separate. I have taken the approach of speaking openly about the challenges involved in this transition when interacting with my colleagues. With many of our colleagues in similar situations, I feel that it has created a level of personal identification and comfort that has allowed us to connect on a human level. They are able to identify with me as a person and feel the sense of

reassurance that they are not alone. It also provides a helpful context when our daughter suddenly appears in the background during an online meeting, or if I need to take a quick break to tend to her needs during online schooling. Understandably, one might have boundaries that need to be respected. If revealing information of a personal nature is outside of one's comfort zone, there are ways that a leader can interact in "more human" ways such as expressing genuine care and concern when colleagues talk about their own personal circumstances. This approach may help individuals feel supported and understood during a trying time. Demonstrating empathy is an important foundation for building trust.

How to Focus on Self as One Moves Forward

Nurturing Your Emotional Journey as a Leader. As the pandemic continues indefinitely, maintaining healthy emotional hygiene as a leader is absolutely essential. Showing gratitude and exhibiting kindness towards others helps create a more positive emotional affect that might also have a reassuring impact on others. It might also inadvertently strengthen one's ability to model compassion for self. As a leader during a pandemic, much of one's focus is centered on supporting others' needs and interests. If one does not continue to take care of oneself, however, one could find oneself in a vicious cycle of personal sacrifice that can be detrimental. In the earlier months of the pandemic, I found that I had to actively draw boundaries with some of my colleagues. I wanted to be helpful and accessible but often received messages in the evening when I needed to unwind and spend time with my family. After juggling a few walks with my daughter and dog while simultaneously taking work calls and texts, I decided that I was not doing proper justice to either; I was actually causing myself unnecessary stress. As stated in Hatami et al.'s (2020) "The Toughest Leadership Test", "Don't ignore your body. You are invincible until you are not. Take a cue from those safety videos on airplanes: put the

oxygen mask on yourself before you put it on the person next to you." (Retrieved August 25, 2020, from https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/leadership/the-toughest-leadership-test) These are true and powerful words about the importance of self-care and nurturing one's emotional journey as a leader.

Creating a Daily Work Routine that is True To You. As a leader during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have learned that more than ever, it is necessary to establish a daily work routine that accounts for the complexity of one's life while working virtually from home. A commitment to an established routine can help one maintain a more balanced life while accepting the uncertainty that might come from ever-evolving circumstances. I have found that it is important to take some time to set intentions at the start of each workday. I get up early and take my dog for a walk. I give myself some time to think through my goals for the day so I can start the day feeling more relaxed and focused. In some ways, the disruption caused by the pandemic has functioned as a more prominent threat to our emotional health than the virus itself. This is why trying to adhere to a sense of routine is so critical in order to experience some sense of predictability.

Likewise, scheduling an actual ending to the workday is just as essential. In the beginning of the pandemic, I found it easy to keep working at my computer long after my meetings were over. There was no office closure or drive home to signal the formal end of the workday. A lack of formal ending to one's workday can blur the boundaries between home and work in ways that are not productive and can easily lead to exhaustion or burnout. Over time, I have learned to put my laptop computer away, out of sight, to physically mark the end of the workday. Resting and recharging is essential for ongoing productivity. Modeling this behavior consistently is also important for one's colleagues to witness as they should be encouraged to do the same. For those working from home with school aged children,

I emphasize the need to adjust expectations in order to create a daily routine that is more realistic to navigate. I understand firsthand how challenging it can be, and how preserving a spirit of self-care and empathy towards others amidst newfound stresses is so necessary.

Building Reflection Time into One's Schedule. Leaders should make it a regular practice to engage in reflective learning (Castelli, 2016). Reflective learning allows one to understand what is important and focus on how one might do things differently. It might also lead to an increased sense of self awareness, putting oneself in a better position to understand how the things that happen in our lives affect our view of the world, ourselves, and others. One should understand how to relate to circumstances in order to be able to lead through those circumstances. Despite the hectic pace of work during the pandemic, one must establish the value of settling down for a moment, taking a breath, and taking time to reflect on how things are going professionally in one's workplace environment. This intentional reflection can occur at a time that makes most sense for one's work schedule. These small breaks can positively impact one's behaviors, thoughts and feelings and also foster a sense of resilience.

How to Focus on Others as One Moves Forward

Maintaining Transparency during Challenging Times. Unfortunately, the onset of the pandemic has not only exacerbated existing challenges at higher education institutions but has also created new ones. Given the uncertain trajectory of this global health crisis, it is challenging to predict what the future holds. I work in a small academic unit which had already been impacted by enrollment challenges even prior to the pandemic. Teacher education enrollment across the state and nation had already been in decline for the last several years and due to budgetary constraints,

we do not have a dedicated staff member who can focus on recruitment and marketing. The pandemic is certainly not going to help this situation improve. As many leaders have, we have had to take careful inventory of our unit's expenditures, reassess priorities, and make necessary adjustments.

Budgetary decisions during the pandemic have sometimes felt like they have had to be made at lightning speed. In cases where particular personnel or programs have been impacted, the communication related to these decisions has also had to occur in a swift manner. Fear and uncertainty about the future is a major preoccupation for all. As Chan (2019) suggests, some leaders might decide to deliberately sugarcoat feedback to their colleagues in order to downplay problems. I strongly disagree with this approach. Maintaining a false semblance of transparency is far more damaging than sharing the actual truth about dire circumstances that might impact individuals' lives. In some cases, leaders might, consciously or unconsciously, convey an ambiguous message which serves little to no purpose in helping the situation. If the change that is about to be made could be considered a major modification or setback, it needs to be clearly conveyed to all relevant parties without leaving room for misinterpretation. There needs to be a clear focus on the decision and a concrete explanation for why it is happening. Colleagues deserve to know things as they are. This communication should occur in an empathetic and compassionate manner especially given the fragility of the circumstances.

There are, of course, decisions that are made that are beyond one's control. In such cases, leaders might experience the stress that might come with becoming a common scapegoat. Reaching out to trusted colleagues who can function as a safe sounding board during such challenging times is helpful. When emotions are running high, what people might come to think about their leaders could be biased and untrue. This response is sometimes difficult to accept; hence the reason why ongoing systems of support are necessary for one's psychological well-being.

Establishing a "New Normal" Together. When I started my current leadership role, I never imagined that Zoom meetings with children and pets in the background would even be a remote possibility, let alone, reality. No one knew what to expect during a pandemic crisis, but we do know one thing now for sure: it is highly unlikely that we will return to the "normal" we once knew any time soon. To move forward and thrive in a "new normal", one must commit to personal growth and be willing to embrace change and uncertainty. In short, one must prepare to embrace a new type of leadership to lead successfully in this evolving landscape. Conventional, "tried and true" approaches to leadership are unlikely to be effective in the post-COVID 19 era. Trial and error is our new normal, while our sense of resilience will guide us in our new learning process. The survival of an organization during crisis is dependent on the resilience of its members, as well as its leadership (Teo et al., 2017).

My unit and university are primarily operating virtually for the foreseeable future. As the fall semester is underway, we will start developing a more concrete sense of what the next year holds for us. In the meantime, we will need to actively seek ways to learn, grow, and develop, both as individuals and as an organization. The challenges brought forth by the pandemic have created a critical opportunity for us to collectively enhance our resilience together. We will work together to get past these "crucible moments" (Bell, 2019) and focus on embracing complexity. We cannot change the impact of this pandemic but we can change our response. Accepting the situation is the only path to letting go and moving forward in a constructive manner. As Gigliotti (2020) states, "Let us not waste this crisis. A rubber band stretched is designed to return to its original form, but we can be different and do better. As we are being pulled and stretched in this season, may we 'return' having learned valuable lessons and having grown into something better." (p. 15)

Implications for Leadership Education

In conclusion, how can future leaders focus on developing resilience during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic? I believe that leadership education now, more than ever, needs to concentrate on ways that future leaders can develop and maintain ongoing emotional self-care. Learning how to develop a variety of productive coping strategies for managing challenging situations can help minimize stress and burnout in professions that involve emotional labor (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In order to engage in self-care, however, one must first understand and know oneself. Self-aware leaders cultivate knowledge of their strengths and how to capitalize upon them in their work. They are also acutely aware of their weaknesses. They know when it is fruitful to surround themselves with colleagues who have diverse perspectives and can help them develop a fresh approach to an issue and empathy towards others. They also know where to focus their personal improvement efforts.

Being a leader involves extensive interaction with other individuals in a variety of professional capacities. Because of this "other" focus, one must know how to effectively engage in emotional self-regulation. Research consistently shows that self-regulation is necessary for reliable emotional well-being (du Plessis et al., 2015). It leads to more effective and satisfying relationships with others, which is helpful since resilience is a developmental process that is contingent upon strong interpersonal relations. Developing heightened awareness of others and working together to tap into existing interpersonal networks to enable organizational healing after a traumatic event can be particularly useful for leaders (Teo et al., 2017).

Future leaders should also be encouraged to develop a sense of cognitive flexibility. A flexible outlook is an essential component of any crisis situation. One must know to react appropriately in situations that cannot be changed, be able to draw upon a variety of coping mechanisms and resources, and find opportunities for growth in otherwise stressful circumstances.

One must be taught to accept that making mistakes and taking risks during a crisis situation is inevitable, and that learning to accept failures is an important stepping stone for professional growth and advancement.

How do resilient leaders foster resilient organizations? Future leaders should learn to embrace a distributive model of leadership so to take pressure off themselves to be the "expert" at all times. Being aware of one's personal limitations as well as one's colleagues' areas of strength can help one learn how to develop effective interdependent groups or committees within a workplace setting. Creating a strong collaborative atmosphere can help an organization develop a shared vision of challenges faced and solutions to overcome those challenges.

Implications for Research

This article shares a firsthand account of a leader's reflections and experiences while drawing upon a combination of authentic and servant leadership frameworks during the COVID-19 pandemic. While valuable insights can be gleaned from one individual's professional experiences, empirical research that applies different theoretical approaches to crisis leadership in a pandemic context is needed in order to validate the conclusions drawn in this article. There might be instances in which of either or both approaches explored might not be the most effective or relevant approach depending on the particular crisis circumstances. For example, if an individual was refusing to wear a mask or socially distance in a university setting, a more authoritarian approach to leadership might be needed in order address the potential health risks which could be posed by this individual's actions and behavior.

In addition to examining this framework across the experiences of multiple individuals, empirical research that probes deeper into the implications for leadership identity in a crisis context would provide helpful information for higher education

institutions. In particular, how do specific junctures or transitions that leaders encounter during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic influence their overall sense of self and efficacy as a leader? How might one's institutional context support or hinder the development of one's professional identity as a leader? Future research studies that involve individuals in a variety of different institutional contexts might provide more insight into the diverse array of challenges faced by leaders. The results of such studies might help university presidents and provosts at higher education institutions think more deeply about professional development opportunities that could help support leaders facing such challenges.

The unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic has created incredible learning, research, and professional development opportunities for leaders in our nation and in the world at large. We do not have control over the future direction of this crisis, but we do have control over how we react. Cultivating a sense of resilience during this unprecedented period of change and challenge involves careful reflection upon oneself and one's impact on others. Knowing who we are, as leaders, and continuing to work towards our best professional selves will enable us to endure many more crises in the future.

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