

Key Messages from the Carol Mutch Webinar Series.

Two: Leading through a crisis - The role of a principal

Crisis leader: Framework of attributes

Three sets of factors influencing leaders in crisis contexts

Factors	Explanation
Dispositional	What leaders bring to the event from their background, personal qualities, experiences, values, beliefs, personality traits, skills, areas of expertise and conceptions of leadership.
Relational	The ways in which leaders offer a unifying vision and develop a sense of community within the organisation, engendering loyalty, enabling empowerment, building strong and trusting relationships and fostering collaboration.
Situational	How leaders assess the situation as it unfolds, understanding the context, being aware of different responses (including cultural sensitivities), making timely decisions, adapting to changing needs, making use of resources (both material and personnel), providing direction, responding flexibly, thinking creatively and constantly re-appraising the options.

Self reflection on the areas of the framework

- Relational: Builds on relationships developed before the crisis, how did these help in the crisis?
- Situational: Assess how you managed the 'take command', did you adjust along the way? Was there pre-planning and strategies in place? A good leader will revisit/adapt/regroup. Recall Arden and Bloomfield: they gave contextual information and on occasion, adjusted. Did you bring in experts? Did you check your decisions?
- Dispositional: What are your dispositional strengths? How do you see your leadership disposition?

Use this approach to inform appraisals or leadership development programmes.

- Where are you seeing these attributes in people, regardless of role title, and therefore who could you develop and utilise?
- What things matter in terms of background and experience?
- How do you utilise your values in the running of the school?
- How can you be sure that how you think you appear, is how you appear?
- In what ways is the school vision enacted everyday? How have you built these relationships with a vision which drives the organisation forward?

Examples and learning from Canterbury about leadership through a crisis.

- The importance of holding onto the values you hold and leading with these.
- Care and compassion driving the response.
- Moving from being 'out front' to then working behind the scenes seamlessly – making others look good.

Being prepared ahead of a crisis:

- What preparation have you done?
- Have you examined the risks, engaged with the groups in the community?
- Do people know what to do and is there a good level of trust that they will act?
- The importance of zooming in and out. Big picture (zooming out) and coming in close (zooming in).

Tip from Canterbury: Have a reflective approach. Say 'What learning can we take?'

They built on what they learnt from this reflection:

- Example: Reviewed emergency contacts & developed a better system to contact parents in an emergency. They also invested in relationships in community and families.
- Crisis leadership and crisis management, you will move between these roles.
- Command and control is management (communication, resources etc).
- You must also be a crisis leader, this includes affective qualities, appearing calm and confident. Portray a sense of direction, based on vision and values, show compassion and think through contextual things. These are the skills and attributes of leadership.