

# How to Be a Resilient Leader during COVID-19 ... without burning yourself out



*Conduit Coaching works with leaders in Seniors Care, from independent living through to nursing homes and complex care, in team settings and one-on-one.*

We're committed to sharing leading-edge research that meets the moment, answering your top-of-mind questions and collecting tested tactics to help you work through leadership challenges.

COVID-19 has changed the tenor of those challenges. And unfortunately, responding to this pandemic will be more like a marathon than a sprint. It's not going away anytime soon.

## *We're here to help.*

Our recent thought-leadership teleforums on Resilient Leadership during COVID-19 have focused on Emotional Intelligence—the vital ingredient to being the leader followers need right now.

**Part 1** centered on helping you feel safe and calm, despite the ongoing COVID-19 chaos, so you can do the same for your staff, residents and their families.

**Part 2** went deeper into strategies to support your team, and keep on top of constantly changing situations so the right things get done.

## To boost your own Emotional Intelligence, focus on:

- **Self-Awareness.** Be aware of what's happening inside you (i.e. your emotional state), because emotions, especially negative ones, are contagious, and people are watching how you respond.
- **Social Intelligence.** Read what's happening in your community's environment to keep yourself informed. Then you can better help staff, residents, and their families better experience a sense of safety and calm, despite the crisis.
- **Self-Management. You're human.** It's completely normal if you feel anxious, too. Don't try to push down those "not so pretty" emotions. Instead, expand your skill in dealing with them through diaphragmatic breathing.

## Research-backed strategies for Resilient Leadership:

1. **Be compassionate to yourself.** Self-compassion helps prevent stress, burnout, PTSD, depression and perfectionism. And it's key to being more compassionate toward others.
  - Treat yourself like you would a friend—with care, understanding and warmth.
  - In moments of stress, ask yourself, "What do I need right now that I can give myself?" Maybe it's as simple as drinking some water, doing some deep breathing for 2 minutes, or taking a break. Whatever works.

The more you can hold your experiences during this time with support and kindness, i.e., the more you can have your own back, the stronger and healthier you'll be.

*Emotionally Intelligent leaders act with compassion, stability, trust, and hope and inspiration for the future.*



## Compassionate LEADERSHIP

*Leaders must either invest a reasonable amount of time attending to fears and feelings, or squander an unreasonable amount of time trying to manage ineffective and unproductive behaviour.*

**Brene Brown**, research professor; author of five #1 New York Times bestsellers



**2. What you focus on expands. Focus on the goodness in your life, and you'll create more of it. Believe in post-traumatic growth.**

- **Nurture your optimism.** Know that this crisis, too, shall pass (maybe like a kidney stone, but it shall pass). Notice what you still have power to accomplish (even if it's something small). Celebrate things that are going well.
- Find what's personally meaningful for you as you lead through the adversity of COVID-19.
- Find benefits stemming from the difficulty. Don't ignore the bad. But refuse to ignore the good.

**3. Emotions are sticky. Be a beacon of positive influence.**

- **Positivity is the sum of hundreds of small things.** The *frequency* of positive experiences has a greater impact than the *intensity* of positive experiences. Everyday kindness matters more than grand displays and pronouncements.
- **Communicate** in ways that touch the heads and hearts of staff, residents and families.
- Sincerely **acknowledge** the strengths and personal qualities your staff demonstrate as they work through this crisis (i.e. who they're "being" as they're "doing").
- **Check in with everyone frequently.** Ask: How are you doing? What can I do to support you? Is there anything I can start (or stop) doing that would make this situation easier for you? What's not working for you right now?
- **Remember your role when supporting distressed staff.** You're the boss, not a friend or case worker. Your job isn't to diagnose or treat. Know your organization's policies and what resources are available (such as EAP or community resources, either online or in your area).

Here at Conduit Coaching, we've discovered fantastic resources focused on the Seniors Care experience of COVID-19. We'll continue updating this resource and keep it accessible in our website [COVID-19 Resources](#).



We're continuing the conversation on **How to Be a Resilient Leader during COVID-19 ... without burning yourself out** on June 30 at 12 p.m. EDT/9 a.m. PDT. [Register](#) to join us!

**4. Use the most powerful Resilience Boosters to keep yourself and your staff strong and caring during COVID19.**

- Breathe. Meditate. [Register](#) to join our weekly 15-minute Mindfulness Moments on Tuesdays at 12:05 p.m. EDT/9:05 a.m. PDT.
- Be mindful if you're getting sucked into empathic distress (i.e. taking on the weight of others' suffering). That's a recipe for burnout. Instead, step into compassion—recognize the condition the person is in, hold their pain with love, and consider how you can best support them. Rather than feeling *with* the person, feel *for* them.
- Help your team **look out for each other** and get to know each other as real human beings with lives, thoughts, feelings, experiences. If you're not taking care of each other, you won't be able to take care of residents.



**15 MINUTE MINDFUL MOMENT**  
TUESDAY @ 12:05PM ET / 9:05AM PT



**About the presenter**

Mary Ellen Sanajko is a Certified Coach whose 25+ year career includes supporting **Seniors Care** organizations to build workplace harmony through training and coaching individual leaders and teams, and guiding the acclaimed **Seniors Care Leadership Academy**.

In that time, Mary Ellen and her colleagues at Conduit Coaching have developed quite a track record helping Seniors Care leaders and their teams get the best from themselves and each other . . . while creating a home for residents and workplace for staff that's a source of joy, connection and meaning.

If there's anything I can do to be of service to you or your team during this challenging time . . . feel free to **reach out** to set up a free, 20-minute exploratory conversation.

You might just end up turning **barriers** into **bridges**.