APA

# EMERGING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

# Leadership in Times of Uncertainty

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Executive Development Group



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# Today's agenda

- The Experience(s) of Uncertainty
- Leadership Responses to Uncertainty
- Levels of Complexity
- Leadership Effectiveness and Uncertainty
- Leadership:  Crisis Effectiveness

# Objectives

- In this module, participants will learn about:
  - Differences in types of uncertainty
  - Psychological reactions to uncertainty
  - Degrees of uncertainty in systems/groups
  - Leadership effectiveness and uncertainty
  - Leadership in crisis vs uncertainty

# Poll Template

- Question:  What do you do when you don't know what to do?
- Answer choices:
    - A  Ask a friend
    - B  Google
    - C  Look for similar experience
    - D  Read a book
    - E  Find an expert
    - F  Think by yourself
    - G  Other _____

Live viewers: Submit your answer now.  We'll share results in a moment.










RACISM IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS
WHITE COATS for BLACK LIVES
White Coats 4 Black Lives






BLACK
LIVES
IMA
NOT A
CRIMINAL
KNEEL
WITH US
NOT
ON US
I
CANT
BREATHE


BLACK LIVES MATTER

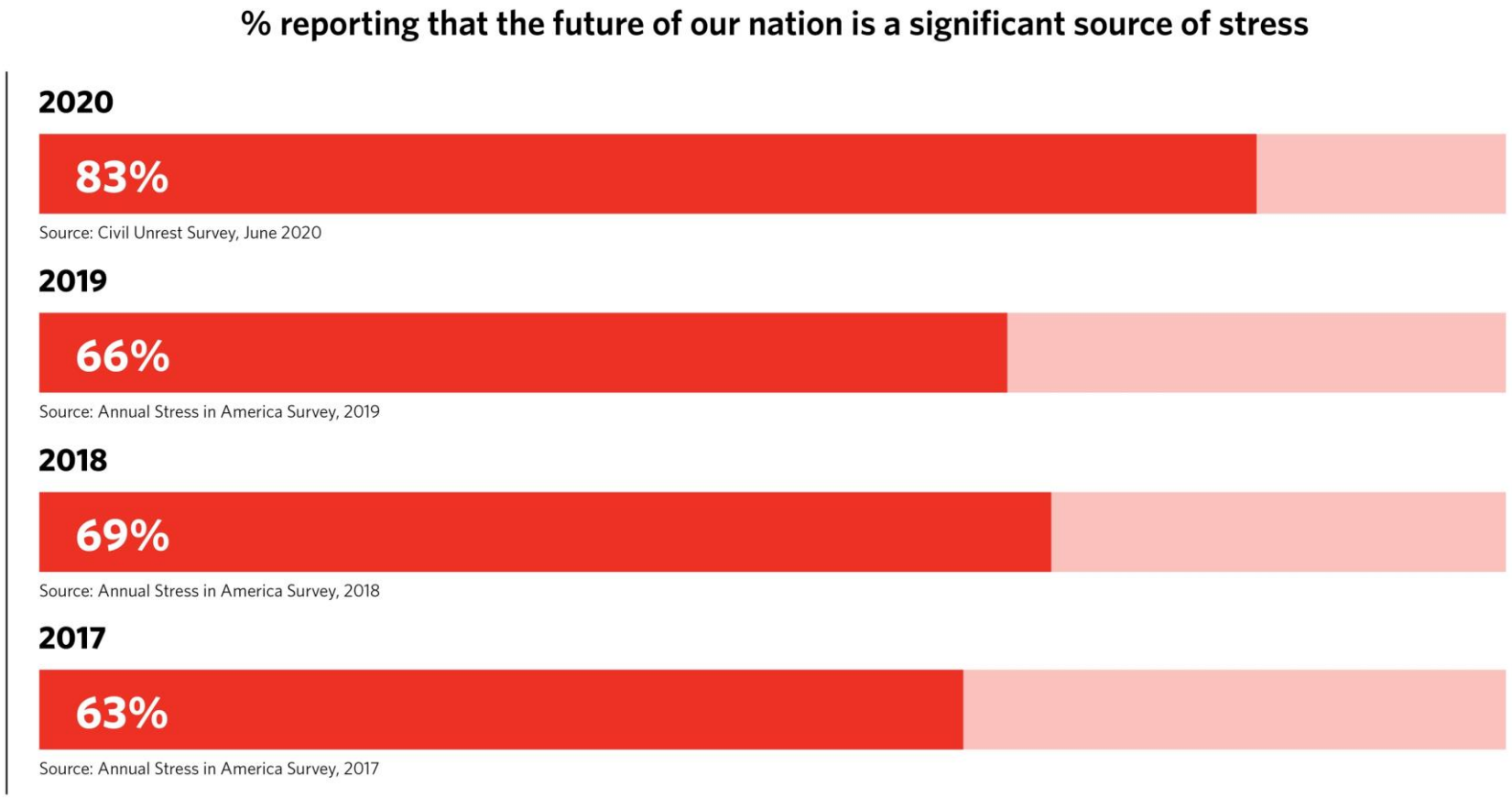



BLACK
LIVES
HAVE
ALWAYS

STRESS IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

# The future of our nation is a significant source of stress

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION






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CLOSED


7 DAYS
DUTCH KILLS
$12 EACH:
MANHATTAN
NEGRONI
VESPER MARTINI
TOURIST SEASON
WHISKEY FIX
TIGER CHILLED COFFE
KOLSCH & GUINNESS
WINE &
LIQUOR TO GO:
DARK &
FROSTY
C.C. ONLY


OPEN
CLOSING
EVERYTHING MUST GO!
ALL STOCK REDUCED!
STORE CLOSING




ATTENTION
PLEASE WEAR A FACE MASK BEFORE ENTERING
THANK YOU


ROCK n ROLL BAR
Double Decker
KARAOKE TONIGHT

# Two Experience(s) of Uncertainty

- Missing “the” answer—no answer
  - Assumes a knowable, correct answer—may be new to you
  - Assumes it exists and can be found
  - Formal education teaches this a lot

- Having too many possibilities
  - Assumes better answer(s) might be possible—maybe no “right” one
  - Introduces true complexity of many problems
  - Presents many directions to pursue
  - Life experiences teach this more

Plenty & Morrissey, 2020; White 2020








GUN VIOLENCE
IS A PUBLIC
HEALTH CRISIS.
APA SUPPORTS
#MARCHFOROURLIVES
GUN VIOLENCE
IS A PUBLIC
HEALTH CRISIS.
APA SUPPORTS
#MARCHFOROURLIVES

# Living in A VUCA World: 2020 COVID -19

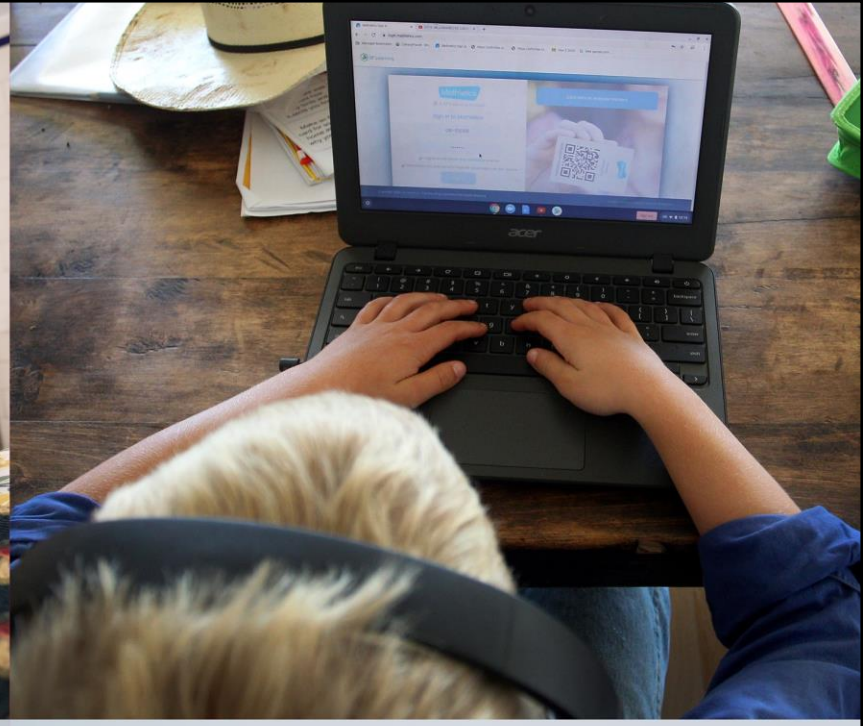
- **V**olatility
- **U**ncertainty
- **C**omplexity
- **A**mbiguity

- **V**ision
- **U**nderstanding/Info
- **C**larity
- **A**gility/Adaptability

Origins: Bennis and Nanus leadership theory; US Army War College following the end of the Cold War.










IMMIGRANTS ARE
#HereToStay



# How Leaders Tend to Respond to Uncertainty

- Defensive—hold on to what we've got
- Disrupting---shift goals and rules
- Exploring---discover the truth
- Imposing---put own future view in place
- Accepting---that's just the way things are

Plenty & Morrissey, 2020

# Uncertainty and Time Orientation

- Oriented to the **Past**—what can be learned from previous experiences or past occurrences; best practices and evidence
- Oriented to the **Present**—living in the moment, here and now; focus on self
- Oriented to the **Future**---focus on possibilities, potential and future achievements; vision, common aspirations, scenario building

Plenty & Morrissey, 2020

# Leadership Style and Uncertainty

- Command and Control
  - Leader knows what to do and how to do it
  - Strives to eliminate uncertainty
- Empowerment
  - Leader knows what to do but can't do it without others
  - Strives to manage uncertainty
- Learning Leader
  - Leader neither knows exactly what to do nor how to do it
  - Strives to embrace uncertainty
  - Collaborative Leadership---relies on diversity of perspective, expertise and life experience; shares power and information; empathizes, listens and relates

Hodgson & White 2001; White, 2020

“I’m sad to report that, in the past few years, ever since uncertainty became our 21st Century companion, leadership has taken a great step backwards to the familiar territory of command and control.”

– Meg Wheatley

# What degree of complexity are we dealing with?

- Simple
- Complicated
- Complex
- Chaotic

Plenty & Morrissey, 2020

# Eight Skills of Learning Leaders: Dealing Effectively with Ambiguity and Uncertainty

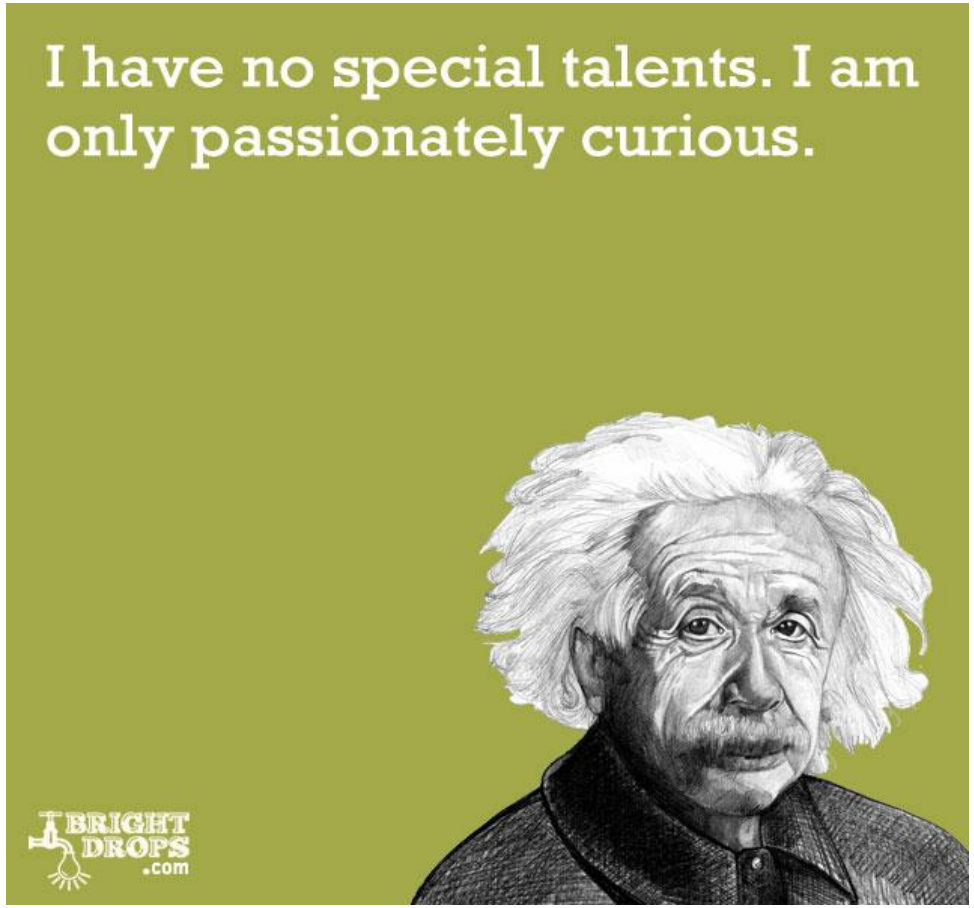
1. Mystery seekers
2. Risk tolerators
3. Future scanner
4. Tenacious Challengers
5. Exciters
6. Flexible Adjustors
7. Simplifiers
8. Focuser

White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; Shullman, 2017; White 2020



# 1. Curious

Attracted to areas that are unknown and to problems that appear to have no obvious solution.




White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

# 2. Risk tolerant

Can make decisions when necessary, despite incomplete information, and will tolerate the risk of failure.

- Perceives there is a risk in the first place
- Courage

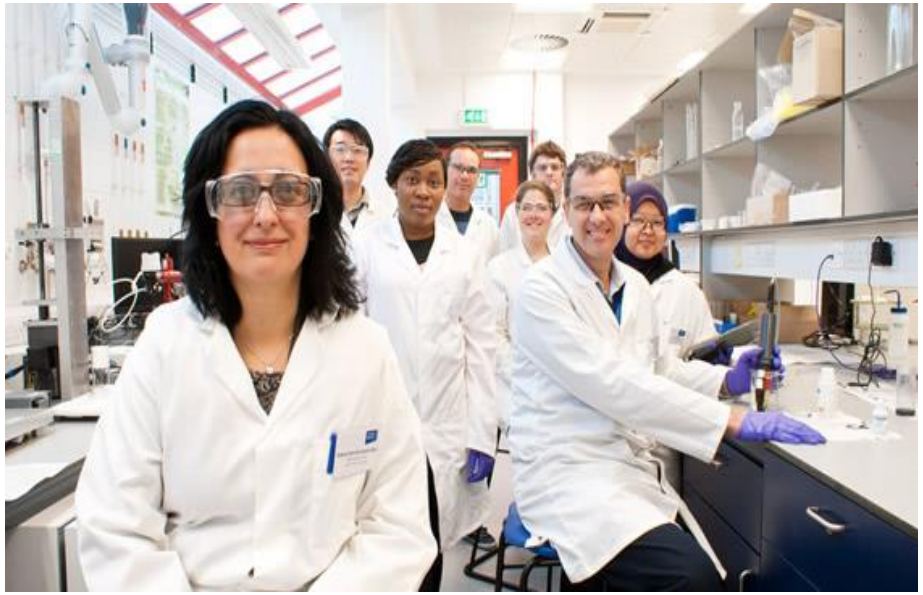



White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

# 3. Future Scanning

Makes links between apparently different or unrelated pieces of information.

- Breadth and Depth
- Long-term and wide scope
- Conceptual intersectionality



White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

# 4. Tenaciously Challenges

- Doggedly pursues difficult and challenging issues and problems.
- Motivated when someone tells them that something can't be done.

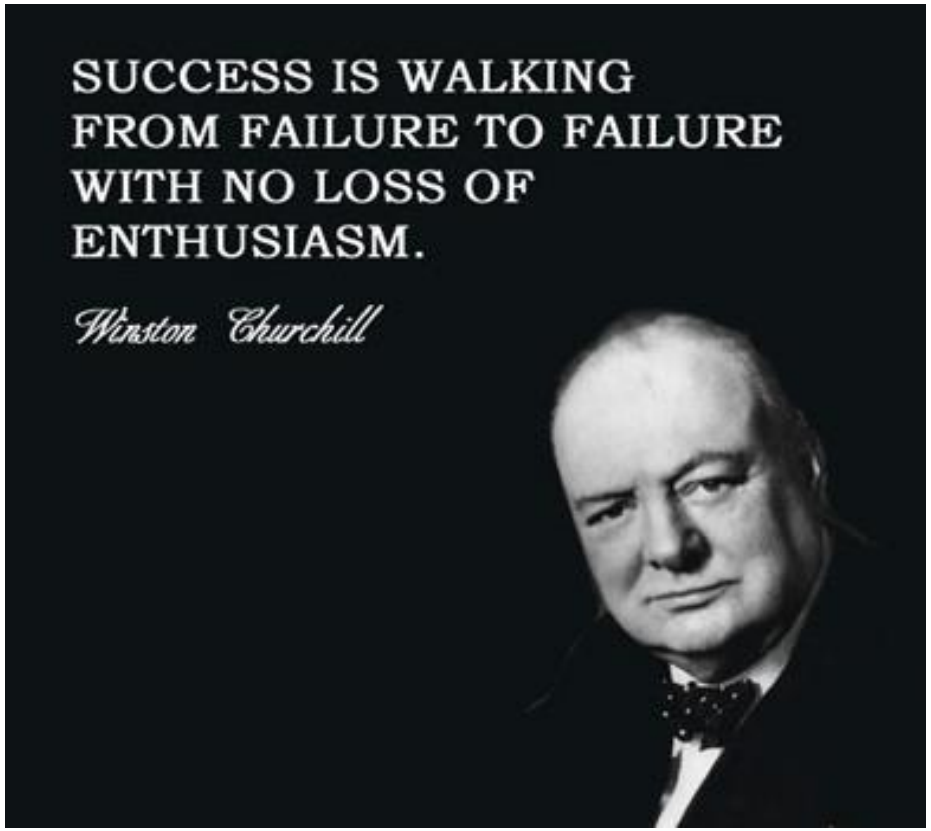


White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

# 5. Excites and Invigorates

**Ability to create excitement in both yourself and others.**

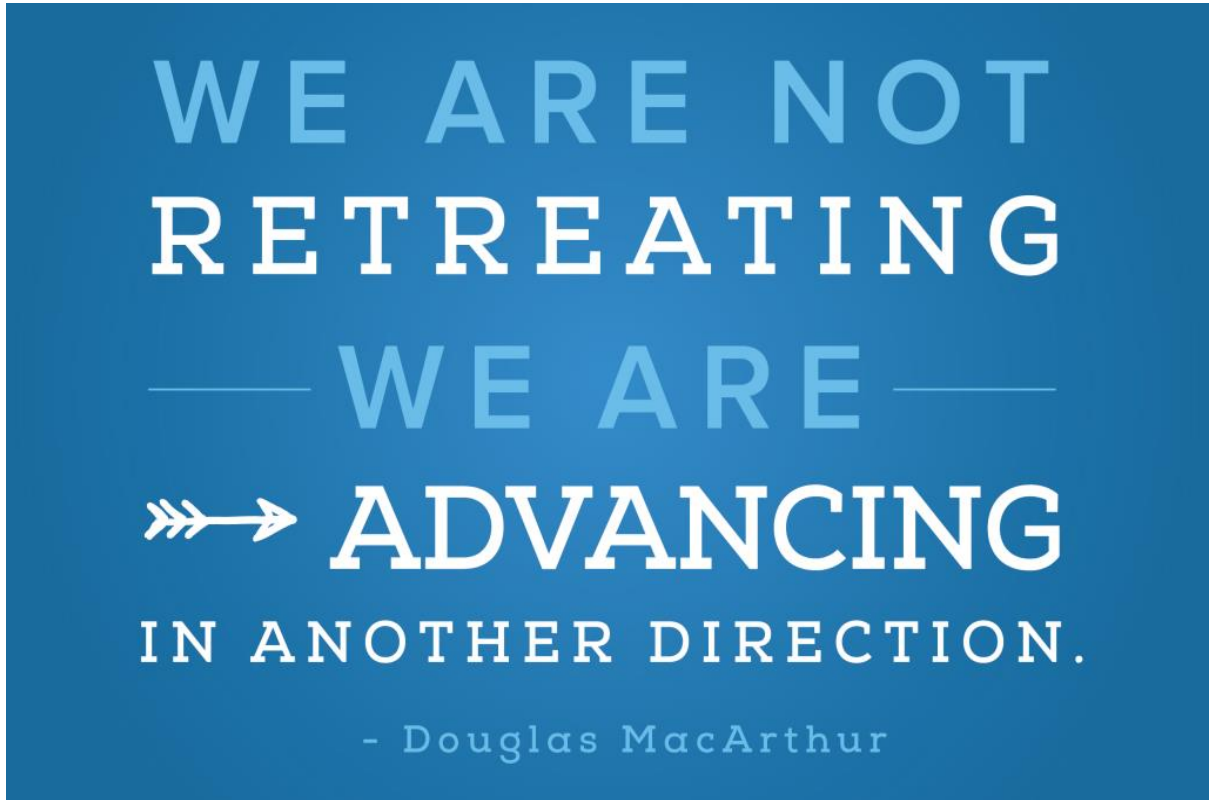
White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020



# 6. Flexibly Adjusts

- Sells others on change by reaching out to others, listening and working with them.

White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020



# 7. Simplifies

Can convey information and ideas in a way that gets to the essence or core of complex and technical knowledge

- Eliminates the fuzziness
- Uses symbols and metaphors
- “Emotional intelligence”



White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

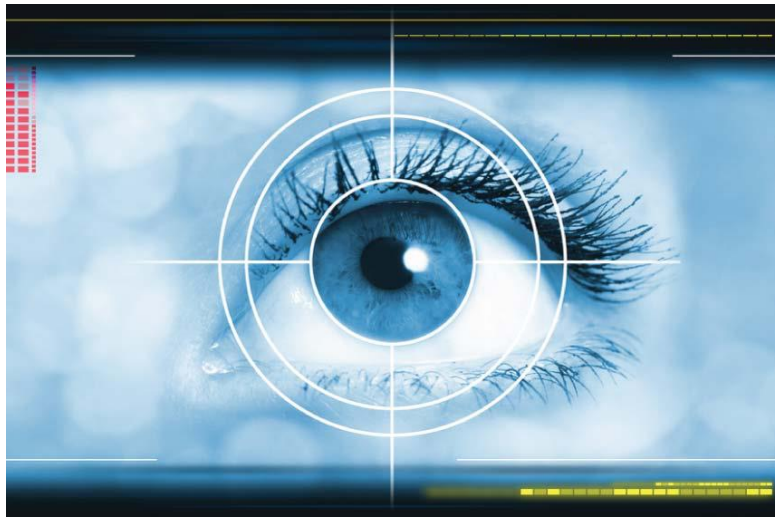
# 8. Focuses

*"Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal."*

– Henry Ford

A clear focus on the future

- Embraces some conflict and learns valuable lessons



White & Hodgson, 2001; White & Shullman, 2010; White 2020

# Poll Template

- Question:  Which of these skills/characteristics is most challenging for you?
- Answer choices:

A  Exciting and invigorating others to carry on
B  Flexibly adapting to the new situation
C  Simplifying communications and messages
D  Future scanning to look for trends

Live viewers: Submit your answer now.  We'll share results in a moment.

# Leadership During the COVID-19 Crisis

Steady, calm, and consistent

Realistically optimistic and comfortable with uncertainty

Authentic, transparent, honest

Mindful of one's own short-comings in addition to acknowledging one's own strengths

Demonstrate genuine caring and understanding

# Specific Actions for Leaders during Crisis

**Put your values up front and stay focused on things that are bigger than you are:**

- Mission
- Values
- Diversity
- Inclusion

1

**Use plain, inclusive talk:**

- Don't use a lot of jargon
- Talk to people directly, be clear

2

**Demonstrate you can hear bad news and cope with reality.**

3

**Be open to learning:**

- Be curious
- Seek diverse perspectives around you (keep diverse people around you)

4

**Stay focused on the critical few:**

- It is not possible to respond to all issues that arise simultaneously during a crisis

5

**Utilize psychology to make a positive impact on critical societal issues.**

**Elevate the public's understanding of, regard for, and use of psychology.**

**Prepare the discipline and profession of psychology for the future.**

**Strengthen APA's standing as an authoritative voice for psychology.**



# Psychology has significant impact

**DISCRIMINATION IS BAD FOR BUSINESS, HEALTH, AND FAMILIES.**

It's not just common sense.
It's psychological science.
Pass the **Equality Act** now.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION SERVICES, INC.

#EqualityAct
ON.APA.ORG/EQUALITY



npr

**Treating Teen Depression Might Improve Mental Health Of Parents, Too**

August 12, 2018

USA TODAY

**Depression in adolescents and young adults is rising: Are phones and social media to blame?**

December 18, 2018

The Washington Post

**Shutdown leads to continuing psychological issues for federal employees**

August 12, 2018

teenVOGUE

**Gillette's Ad on Toxic Masculinity Made Men Mad And That's the Problem**

January 25, 2019



# What is most important in Crisis Leadership?



DEMONSTRATE EMPATHY



COMMUNICATE CLEARLY



BE REALISTIC AND OPTIMISTIC

“Without courage we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.”

- Maya Angelou

# Resources and References


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# Practice Today's Lessons: What do you most need to learn?

- Identify a situation in which you are experiencing a great deal of uncertainty. Describe your experience of uncertainty, your analysis of the complexity of the situation, your steps moving forward and how you will address the ongoing uncertainty. How would you adapt your learning to leading a team of colleagues with a similar uncertainty experience? What does this tell you about your leadership tendencies? About working with diverse people and perspectives? Strengths? Areas for growth?

# Questions & Answers

We will answer a handful of questions today. Some additional questions will be responded to in the Academy's Facebook learning community.

# Stay Tuned

Next session: November 18, 2020 at noon ET/10am MT

Title: Building, Engaging and Supporting Your Team During Times of Uncertainty

Faculty: Helen L. Coons, PhD, ABPP