# Transcript

**Leading Others**

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KATE MORRIS: Welcome, everyone. Kate Morris here from Bastow. I'm delighted to have you join us for the first in our series of webinars around Leading In Challenging Times. If you could just pop your name and school, where you're joining us from, in the chat, that would be fantastic. Thank you.

Thanks, Adam. Adam is one of our principal moderators today and joins us from Lowanna College. Thanks for being with us, Adam, and Nicole Edwardes from Sunshine Special Developmental School. It's fantastic to have two of our principals working with us, with Ben Palmer from Genos International, who are the lead providers of emotional intelligence tools and feedback and ways of learning and being across the globe. So thanks for joining us today, Ben, working with Bastow and the Department of Education around the Leading in Challenging Times webinar series.

Great to see the diversity of schools and roles and teams joining us today from all across the State. We're helped today in this work with Maria Oddo from Sunbury Downs Secondary, past principal; Irene Illiadis, past principal from Hume Central Secondary College, and Peter Hough, past principal from Carrington Primary School.

We're going to kick off today with our webinar. I'm joining you from Bastow. My name is Kate Morris and we're delighted to launch the first in a series of webinars around Leading in Challenging Times. Our panel with us today is Adam Hogan from Lowanna College ‑ welcome, Adam ‑ and Nicole Edwardes from Sunshine Special Developmental School.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we're meeting today, the many lands on which we're meeting today, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. And on that note, I'd like to hand over to David Howes, the Deputy Secretary of Schools and Regional Services, to provide a welcome.

DR BEN PALMER: Don't forget to take yourself off mute, David.

DAVID HOWES: End of a long day, Ben, thank you. Thank you, Kate. Thank you, everybody, for joining us this afternoon at what feels like it has been a very long week, fitting the theme of challenging times. Can I also acknowledge that we meet on many different lands across Victoria. They're all the lands of traditional owners, and pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging, particularly as this is Reconciliation Week and gives us all cause to renew our own personal commitment to the journey of reconciliation.

I also want to start by paying tribute to a dear friend and colleague, Deb Locco, who was tragically killed on Sunday. She was a colleague to many who will be in this seminar today. I acknowledge the deep loss that many people and the grief that many people are experiencing this week and we send our deepest sympathy and condolences to her family, her children, and to her very close colleagues, for whom this is a really difficult time. A number of people have observed that if Deb was here, she'd be telling us to focus on the students, to focus on supporting staff and to get on with it, and so it's good to have this opportunity to hear from people who know better than anyone how to support us together in dealing with this challenge of leading through challenging times, and that feels like an understatement.

So, Ben, thank you to Genos International. Kate, thank you to Bastow for pulling this together so quickly. The feedback from previous seminars has been very positive and I do think it's critically important that we invest this relatively short amount of time but very important time in developing a better understanding for ourselves about how we manage ourselves because that cliche is so true: if we can't manage ourselves, we're not going to be able to lead and support others. So I really appreciate people making the effort at, as I said, what feels like getting to the end of a long week and a difficult week. I really appreciate people making the time. I'm sure the investment of your time is going to be worth it because of the quality of the people who are leading this session. So thank you and I look forward to participating in some of it and hearing how it goes.

So, Ben, thanks again and we look forward to you sharing your knowledge and your expertise with us. So I'll hand over to you.

DR BEN PALMER: Thank you, David. That's great. It's great to be here. I do a shoutout to anyone from St Helena Secondary College, where I used to go to school in Melbourne. If there's anyone from St Helena, welcome to you.

I would just like to quickly bring in Nicole and get Nicole to introduce herself to the group and Adam, so you get familiar with their voices. Nicole, would you like to just say a quick hello to everybody.

NICOLE EDWARDES: Hi, everyone, and thank you, Ben. I'm Nicole Edwardes, the principal at Sunshine Special Developmental School, and I feel very privileged to be spending the next hour with you. So welcome.

DR BEN PALMER: Thank you. Adam?

ADAM HOGAN: Hi, everyone. Adam Hogan at Lowanna College in Gippsland. Likewise, as with Nicole, I'm very glad to be here this afternoon.

DR BEN PALMER: And it really is great to have you. So thank you both for being here and thank you to all our team at Bastow who will also be moderating and watching the chat box and watching the great contributions that you have made and will make throughout the session.

As we come out of COVID‑19, we're going to experience a whole range of new challenges and we're going to see a whole range of new opportunities, and indeed we've put this webinar series together to help us think about how we might be able to lean into those challenges and seize those opportunities that are in front of us. We've got our webinar today where we're really going to focus on building calm and confidence but we've also got our second webinar, on 11th of June, Leading Learning and Re‑Establishing School Community, and our third webinar on the 18th of June, Leading Self. So if you like today, we'd really like to encourage you to come to the full series and we'd really like you to encourage others that you know who are leading schools to come into the series as well.

So if you want to follow along, I'm on page number 3 in the workbook that was sent out, and the workbook's really there to bring the content to life. The objective for this session: how can we help you lean in and facilitate confidence and calmness and build on this great momentum in the education State of Victoria. So that's our objective for this session. How are we going to get there? If you want to facilitate calm and confidence, obviously we've got to be calm and confident ourselves. Our own emotions are very contagious to school leaders, so we're going to start by really looking at some tools and techniques for projecting our own calm and confidence as we carry ourselves with others.

We're then going to turn to a particular model that's more about deliberately and intentionally facilitating calmness and confidence in others through again leadership behaviours and, along the way, I'm going to be drawing in Nicole and drawing in Adam to share their perspectives. We're going to be running some polls and we're going to participate in some activities to help bring out your contributions. We really want to encourage you to contribute in the chat box. A lot of times people mention apps. People mention books. People mention other resources and websites. And we are recording the session. We won't record the chat box, or we won't make the recording of the chat box publicly available, but we will look at it at the end and, from it, we'll create new resources for you that we will send you; like, for example, a recommended reading list that comes out from everybody's contributions. So be ready, have the keyboard near, have pen and paper, and we really want to encourage you to contribute as much as you can.

So there are three experiences that you might have today and there are three approaches that you can take with the material. The first experience you might have is some of this information might be a bit new to you. It might not be something you've considered for a while or something you've considered at all. Where it is, we'd really like to encourage you to think about how you could implement it in your leadership and in your school.

For some of the other content, it might actually be really familiar. It might be stuff you've covered before. It might be already things that you've used in your leadership. Where that is the case, what we'd like to do is really encourage you to think about how you can finesse and enhance your demonstration of these tools and techniques that we're going to cover. And if you think and feel, "Wow, actually, I'm really experienced with this sort of stuff", what we'd like you to think about, as we give the theory and we give the science behind some of the tools and techniques, is how you can better coach or mentor others in your school who might not have that level of experience that you have. Indeed, we want to encourage you to share the workbook and to share the recording out as you see fit at your school to help facilitate and enhance confidence and calmness and to help really build on that momentum. So we hope you have one or all or some of these experiences as we go through.

So what's the rationale behind this objective? Why focus on creating calm and confidence? It's probably pretty obvious but let's have a quick look at it and really ground ourselves in this objective before we get into it. Anyone who's been through major change before will know that there are transition phases, as you go in and come out of big change projects, and they can be the trickiest times. Indeed, transition phases are where we experience the widest range or continuums, if you like, of different thinking, feeling and behaviour. So let's just have a look at what some of those spectrums might be right now.

I'm going to talk from the context of parents. I have three children in primary school of my own at the moment. I'm then going to draw in Nicole and ask her to reflect on some of the things she's seeing as it pertains to staff, and Adam's going to bring in the student perspective for us.

So from a parent perspective, a lot of parents, as you're probably feeling and witnessing, are feeling a sense of relief and a sense of enthusiasm about getting their kids back to school. But a lot of parents are also experiencing a lot of anxiety and concern, and here we get that sort of breadth of different emotions, if you like, that are coming along. Those might be concerns or anxiety about their preschool‑aged children or, indeed, their children in years 11 and 12, or any children throughout the year levels for that matter. It really struck me this week, as I was returning my kids to school, that I noticed preschool kids with separation anxiety for the second time this year and the effort that was made to help calm that concern down and to help alleviate some of the anxiety and concerns that were coming with that.

This kind of feeling tends to generate a spectrum of different thinking, from how can we help ‑ and we can see our P&C committee very active at our school at the moment ‑ but it can also bring difficulties with remaining level‑headed and exercising good judgment, and indeed at the beginning of the week around our school, if you had have seen the traffic jams and some of the feisty exchanges between parents that were associated with it, you would have seen that sort of come to life, if you like.

So from a behaviour point of view, we're getting a lot of engagement from parents but we're also getting disengagement and withdrawal, particularly when those concerns are around finances. We know that 600,000 Australians have lost their jobs over the last few months. And we're seeing a lot of reactive behaviour. So that's my reflection from a parent perspective that helps frame our objective for this session.

Nicole, I'd like to bring you in to give us a little bit of a sense of the different sort of things we're experiencing from staff.

NICOLE EDWARDES: Thanks, Ben. Firstly, I'd just like to say how incredibly proud I am of my whole community, particularly the staff. There's been an overwhelming sense of excitement in returning, and motivation: how can we apply the new ways of learning and teaching that we've been doing remotely into our practice back at school? We've seen some changes in behaviour and a lot of solution‑focused thinking, which I think has been wonderful, but also some apprehension and staff that are quite cautious, and that comes from the questions around: what does teaching and learning look like for students with complex needs when we have to maintain physical distancing and implementing quite different protocols?

DR BEN PALMER: Thank you. Good reflection. Adam, what are we seeing from students?

ADAM HOGAN: Ben, we've had our year 11s and 12s return over the course of this week and lots of different mixed emotions from different students, I guess, as we would see across the population. Some of them are studying really hard. Some of them are very excited to be back. We've got little pockets of nervousness and then there's some uncertainty around how the year's going to pan out for them. On the other hand, we've got our 7s to 10s still at home, and I think they're tired, they're a bit over it, they're keen to get back. So we're working with them with the consolidation week next week to try to modify some of the programs, and I think that's the key ‑ just being really in tune with how your people are feeling and observing those behaviours to get an insight.

DR BEN PALMER: Thank you. They're good insights. As we hear from both Nicole and Adam, we've got that real range of different perspectives, different thinking, different behaviour and different feelings that are going on, and that's our Why frame for projecting calm and confidence and building on that momentum.

So, without any further ado, let's look at how we can project calm and confidence in the way we carry ourselves. Obviously, one of the big things we can do is invest in our own wellbeing, and if you want to follow along with me, I'm on page number 5 in the workbook now.

We've done a webinar on the 'echinacea' of this, if you like, and what I mean by that is the general things that we can do to help ensure that we've got wellbeing, whether it's creating and putting in place good boundaries around our sleep, how much we work, our diet, getting a bit of exercise in, those sorts of things. If you haven't seen that webinar, it's still available on the Bastow website and we've got the URL in the workbook that you can go to. That webinar has been watched by over 30,000 teaching staff across the eastern seaboard, and indeed the video, the recording of it, has been downloaded over 10,000 times. I share that with you just to give you a sense of the thirst, if you like, amongst people for investing in their wellbeing at the moment, and that's a really important starting place.

But how do we go above and beyond that? How do we look further into this area? Of course there's a wide body of literature and there are a number of different organisations that we can think of that use techniques to project calmness and confidence in their everyday work, and I'm going to draw on airlines, I'm going to share with you techniques that police and emergency services use, and we're going to have a quick look at some of the techniques that actors and professional sports people use to project calmness and confidence.

So let's start with our airlines, and in a moment I'll ask Nicole to reflect on some of the things of these that resonate with her and to share with us some of the things that she uses. But airlines help staff project calmness and confidence through tone and pace of voice. They help through pace of movement. You'll very rarely see cabin crew running through a cabin, very deliberately. You'll see them help staff through their body language and signals. If you've ever sat in the exit row in Qantas, you'll know just how much they command your attention when they give the briefing about what it means to be sitting in those special seats, and that's all about not only giving a sense of safety but their confidence too in what they're doing, and in that they use scripts. Indeed, great examples of the positive impact these techniques can have on passengers can be found in their stories, and YouTube's full of incidents and documentaries like the one on QF32, the 2010 incident where an engine blew up on an A380. Nicole, what resonates with you here? What are some of the techniques that you've been using?

NICOLE EDWARDES: Thanks, Ben. Well, the biggest one out of the list that you've provided is really pace of movement. I think as a leader, we need to be really critically aware of the fact that we are visible and people look to us to create that calmness, and the way that we move around the school is really important. I'll give a quick example. On the first day back with all students and staff, we had two students at the same time have epileptic seizures in the yard. So the way that I moved to that incident was swift but certainly didn't create chaos, and that was really important. The other thing for me is around having protocols and process because I think that just indicates to staff that we're clear; we've put some thought and planning into things.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. Thanks for sharing. I'm going to bring Adam in on the next one. So let's turn to police. What are some of the things police do? And as you're listening, I really want to encourage you to use the workbook, capture down things in the table there that work for you on page 5. So police and emergency services use a lot of what we've just covered but they add to it, if you like, a lot of planning ‑ planning around different scenarios but also planning around specific people as well. If you've got a particularly difficult parent or a student or staff member, that would be the analogy there. They also do a lot of debriefing. For two reasons. One is to help people in emergency services cope with, if you like, the exposure that you get through trauma events but also to help with the continuous cycle of improvement. They do a lot of debriefing to really just help sharpen up their approach in what they do in emergency situations, and you can see here the planning that was going in on New Year's Eve this year with Victoria Police, a photo of them down in Flinders Street there.

They also use a lot of grounding techniques. If you've ever been pulled over by a highway patrol person for speeding, they'll do a few things in the car before they get out to come and walk up and talk to you through the window because they don't want to come to you with all that adrenalin from hitting the gas pedal and speeding up. They really do a couple of centring techniques so that they come to you in a nice, calm and confident way to talk with you about whatever the issue is they've pulled you over for.

Adam, I'd really like to hear from you around these police examples.

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, Ben, this one really resonates partly from a previous career but the planning in particular. plan thoroughly, plan early was a real tenet for us going through this stage, and probably like a lot of schools, we planned things that we didn't end up using in some cases but we would much rather be overprepared than underprepared.

I'm reminded of something someone shared with me a while back around the notion of workload for teachers. It's almost the unsolvable problem in schools that's always there, but the feedback was that it's not necessarily the volume of work that people have but it's the forewarning they have leading into that work. So the earlier we can give people notice, the more comfortable people will be.

The scenario planning in particular was a key one for us as well because people's anxieties rise when they get stuck in that space of: what if; what if this happens and what if I don't cope? So we worked through those scenarios. We did lots of Webex videos, so "What happens if a student bombs in? It's OK. We've got a plan. We've got a structure and everyone's on the same page as to what's going to happen." It really helped to calm people.

DR BEN PALMER: Fantastic. And even if you don't use those plans at the end of the day, because something very different from what you were expecting was going to happen, the planning itself can still create that confidence. So thank you for sharing, Adam. That's great. And thank you to people who are contributing in the chat box too. We really, really appreciate it.

So, finally, let's have a look at our actors and our professional sports people and think about the sorts of things they do with their coaches to help project calmness and confidence and remain calm and confident in those pressure moments. I don't know about you but my tennis game suffers from that moment where you know you're going to win and it's all too easy and, nah, it doesn't happen because of the excitement that can come with that. But the techniques that are used quite often in sport are lots of visualisation. You'll never see someone who's playing golf, for example, just walk up and hit the ball. There's sort of plenty of practice and visualisation that goes on with that happening. Lots of self‑talk. Lots of meditation and breath work. These are grounding techniques, if you like. And lots of rituals and routines. And anyone who has watched elite tennis players ‑ by way of example, Nadal, Ash Barty ‑ you'll see those routines as they go to serve, as they walk out on court, as they go and sit down. There's a lot of things like that that go on. I'm going to ask Nicole in a moment for her reflection on some of these. But up on screen I've got a picture of Ash Barty having a coffee, and that's one of her rituals. She loves to have a coffee in the morning, post a picture to Instagram as a way of connecting with her fan base but also as a way of getting her in the mode for the day. Nicole?

NICOLE EDWARDES: Well, I also start my day, Ben, with a large coffee from the local cafe. That's part of my morning routine. I do have a ritual and a routine in the morning and the afternoon for myself to allow myself to start the day feeling confident and calm. This is critically important for our staff too because we need to have those familiar, consistent strategies and structures in place where they feel they can be heard and have a voice.

I also have a light box in my office and I put little messages really to myself but to the community, and the current message is: breathe, smile, repeat. The staff can see that, and when I walk in the morning, it's the first thing I see and it's in my mind when I'm faced with a challenge or just need that little reminder for myself.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, that's excellent. Great example. Visualisation can be just thinking about it or it can be those posters or those little things that we put up around the walls to remind ourselves. And I was thinking about my own little rituals and routines. When I get up in the morning, I like to set an intention for the day. I like to think about something I'm grateful for and I like to think about a strength that I'm going to try to use, and that's my little routine for getting myself into the right sort of psychological frame, if you like, for the day. It's fantastic and we can see the chat box there, Alanna says, I love that "breathe, smile, repeat". Thank you very much.

OK. So to summarise, if you like, how do we project calmness and confidence? It's through our planning, around scenarios and people; it's through our rehearsal and practising; it's through our preparation, things like our breath talk, self‑talk and visualisation; it's through the use of our body tools, whether it be the tone of our voice, our facial expressions, our body language. We can use a lot with our hands. I have learnt over the years never to point and to use the open hands as a way of bringing people's thoughts and perspectives to you. Routines and rituals and our general wellbeing strategies.

What I'd like to do now is just run a little poll and ask you: which of these do you currently use, and from the conversation, which of these do you think you could adopt or use more intentionally or more often? So here I go. I'm just going to launch the first poll and I'll ask my moderators just to give me a thumbs up to make sure that it's come up at the other end. Thank you very much. OK. So you should see a poll come up and it asks which of these do you currently use, and you can see what I've got up on screen there and then there's a second question there asking which of these could you adopt or use more of? So we've got a nice poll there. So when you're ready, I'd really like to encourage you to provide your perspective and give us some answers in this poll. Thanks, everyone. (Pause). It's great to see those votes coming through.

One of the things that you can get out of these webinars is this kind of instant research and reflection. You can't get it anywhere else. This is the sort of information you won't find on the internet. You'll only find it by coming to something like this. So thank you to everyone who's voting. We're up over 50% now, which is great. If you have voted, take a guess: which one do you think's going to come out as the one people are most using at the moment and which one do you think will come out as the one people think they could adopt or use more of as we go through?

OK. Well, we're really almost there. A couple more seconds and then I'll end the poll and I'll publish the result. It's great to see over 120 of us here who have joined us today ‑ 128 ‑ and we're at the 90% mark in terms of poll completion. So thank you very much to everyone who's voted. I'm going to end the poll there. I hope you've all taken a guess. Here's the result. So here's the result on our first question. I'd just ask our moderators again: has the poll result come up at your end? Can you see it? Excellent. OK, Nicole, any surprises for you? Would you like to give us an overview of the first question and then I'll ask Adam to give us an overview of the second.

NICOLE EDWARDES: Sure. No surprises here, and Adam talked very succinctly about this just before: planning around scenarios and people. So that's come out as the top response and is certainly critical in the work that we do.

DR BEN PALMER: Excellent. We've got a nice, even distribution across the poll for that first question too, but it also shows us perhaps where some of our opportunities are. Our opportunities to finesse a little could be around our rehearsal and our practice; it could be a little bit around the use of body tools, by way of example ‑ our tone of voice, facial expressions, body language. Adam, I'd like to bring you in to reflect on the second question, looking at things people might be able to adopt or use more of?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, so we can certainly see rehearsing and preparation standing out there as a couple slightly higher. Body language in there as well, and that links to some of the comments in the chat. There were some great comments from Serena and Riley around smiling and using really open body language as students and parents come into the school. I think what we don't say says more than what we do sometimes.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. OK. Well, thank you, everybody, for voting. Now let's go on to looking at a model for facilitating calmness and confidence in others, and if you'd like to follow along, I'm going to be on page number 7 in the workbook for this. Indeed, what I'd like to introduce you to is a model called CARE. CARE is an acronym for clarity, autonomy, relatedness and equity. As you can see on the page in your workbook, clarity really creates confidence through trust; autonomy through efficacy. Relatedness creates calmness through connection. We're very social beings and we need to feel that sense of belonging and connection with each other. When we do, a lot of great things happen, but one of those is feeling calm. And equity. Equity really creates calmness through fairness.

So let's have a little bit of a look now at these more specifically. I'd love to engage you in a great activity around these. If you could flip over to page number 8 in the workbook, what I'd like you to do is not rip through it and complete it. I'd like you to stay with us. What we're going to do first is we're going to go over each of the acronyms and the behaviours that you can see in that table on page 8. After we've gone over them and explained them a little, I'm going to invite you to flag two behaviours for that particular competency that are particularly important to be mindful of and demonstrating at your school, and I'd like you to flag those in the OS, or Our School, column. Then I'm going to run a poll where I'm going to get you to input what you put in and I'm going to show you the average from across the State. We've got people from all over the State joining us, so you'll be able to also see what's important in your school and what seems to be important across the sector. There might be alignment. There could be some differences there. I know leadership is relentlessly contextual.

So let's go to our first one. As I was saying, clarity creates confidence through trust. So let's have a look at some of the behaviours that we can demonstrate as leaders to create clarity, and as I go through these, I'm going to ask Nicole to reflect on some of these and bring them to life for us in terms of her particular context in school. So very obvious: be consistent in what we say and do. I think the trick with this one is we all like to think that we're consistent in what we say and do, and we are sometimes, but there are times when we let ourselves down a little bit on this as well. And if you think about finesse, these might be the kind of items to finesse on, just to be that little be more mindful and intentional of being consistent.

Being open and sharing how you're thinking and feeling and inviting others to do so. Sometimes we think that we should always just be projecting calm and confidence, and if that's not real for us, we want to actually go the other way and share some of our vulnerabilities because that encourages others to do the same too. And sometimes when we're not feeling calm and confident but we're projecting calm and confident, people pick up on that and they make assumptions. I don't know about you but the first time I rode a horse, I didn't need to whisper in its ear that I was nervous and anxious about being up on its back. It detected it and it started acting accordingly, and that's a great metaphor to think about in terms of your own emotional state as well. Just like the horse, we're very in tune with each other emotionally.

Clearly defined priorities, expectations, responsibilities and time frames. Regularly communicate through dialogue on process and milestones, and engage in sense‑making activities to co‑create understanding. Whenever we've got an event that goes off, often we've got many different personalities and many different views and it's really important to respect those views but also to help create a shared and common understanding of what's going on as well.

So in a moment I'm going to run the poll. In the meantime, flag which of these really seem to resonate with you and I'll ask Nicole to come in and share with us a couple of these that are particularly important for her at her school. Thanks, Nicole.

NICOLE EDWARDES: Thanks, Ben. The two that resonate with me, particularly leading through a pandemic and change, is number 5, engaging in sense‑making activities to co‑create shared understandings, and that's been really important with implementing the guidance from the Department and making sure that staff feel that they understand what that means and what the implications are for them through that. The second one for me is also about regularly communicating on progress and milestones, which is particularly important this week with all of our students and staff returning. Just shouting out and updating staff daily in my afternoon bulletin around what's worked well, how we're progressing with all the things that we're implementing and what we can really celebrate.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes. Fantastic. I find number 5 works well with number 3 too, to create clarity around expectations and priorities but then also sense‑make around those as well. So thank you for sharing.

We've got our second poll up and it's running. I'm going to bring Adam in in a little bit just to reflect on the poll in a moment, but share with us which of these two behaviours are particularly important for your context. Over 50% of us have voted so far, which is great to see. At the end of this I'll launch the result and that will give us the State view, if you like, the across‑the‑State view, on what seems to be important around clarity. So thank you very much to everyone who's voted. If you have voted, share with us a thought or perspective in the chat box or take a guess which one of these do you think is going to come out as the most important. Are they going to be the ones you chose or do you think they might be somewhat different?

So we'll just give the voting a little bit more time to come in. We're up over 80%, Adam. We're almost there. I'm going to bring you in in a moment and I'll launch the result. OK. Alright. Well, I'll end the poll there and I'll share the results with you. Here they are. Any surprises there, Adam?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, that's really interesting with clearly defined priorities standing out there at number 3. I think when people have a strong sense of what's expected of them, it helps create that sense of calm, which is what this is all about. Being consistent there as well. The second one also strikes me a little bit because that was one that I thought would be lowest, the one that I've got to be mindful of: being vulnerable from time to time.

DR BEN PALMER: Excellent. That's what I like about these polls. They show us what's important but they also perhaps start suggesting to us the opportunities that we have to really step in and create more clarity because the ones that are probably really important are the ones we're also probably doing and doing well. So it's about bringing in a few of these in our leadership. Thank you for sharing. And thank you to everyone who's voted as well. So if you haven't, jot down in the book a couple that came out strong. It was that third one there and the first one as well came out quite strong. Thanks, everyone.

Alright. Let's go to our next one: autonomy. I love this photo of the little boy about to do up his shoes. It reminds me of my 6‑year‑old and when I was trying to teach her to do up her shoes. She's fiercely independent and needed great amounts of autonomy around that particular task. Autonomy creates confidence through efficacy, and we all know about that subject in education. Let's have a look at some of the more specific behaviours of it. So we're looking at that next section in the workbook on page 8. What can we do? Here I'm going to draw Adam in in a moment, but things like giving people more than usual time and space to do their work, giving people more‑than‑usual choice and control over their work, if you can. Involving others in decisions that affect their work. Building protocols ‑ we heard Nicole talk a little bit about this ‑ that facilitate empowerment. It might be around giving feedback, voicing opinions, working from strengths, and there could be others there that come to mind for you. And, of course, using Open to Learning conversations and intellectual humility. I like Open to Learning as a method not only for having performance conversations but for generally how we carry ourselves; that seek first to understand kind of mindset and come at things with that intellectual curiosity and that learning mindset, "What can I learn from this situation before I dive into it too much?".

Adam, any here that are particularly important for you in your context?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes. I think the ones that stick out most for me are number one and number 3, giving people time and space and involving them in decisions. I'll have to concur and give a shoutout to Open to Learning. I think every school leader should do that. It is a brilliant piece of learning. But if I come to number 3 in particular, involving others in decision making, I think that's more important at this time than ever when people are feeling anxious about certain things relating to their health and their wellbeing. So for us, when it came to working out office spaces and physical distancing of staff ‑ a really important piece ‑ I thought a much stronger approach, rather than myself going into all of our different offices saying, "Too many in here; you need to move", to give the team guiding principles in line with the operation guidelines and get them to work through, and if they need help, we're there. But we've had some really positive feedback that staff have felt empowered to work through those decisions themselves.

DR BEN PALMER: Excellent. And we can see some of that coming through the chat box. Ben mentions the Open To Learning conversations and Rachelle is mentioning empowering teachers to have agency and how effective and important that is. Thank you, Adam, too.

Alright. Let's run our poll on this one. Let me just bring our next poll up. OK. Here it comes. Let us know which of these are particularly important for you in your context. Hopefully the poll's coming up for you now and you can lean in and vote. Yes. Fantastic. I can see those votes coming in. This is great to see. Thank you to everyone who's doing that and thanks for some of the comments that are coming through. I can note that Nicole's made a comment about Brené Brown, and indeed we're going to have a look at some of her specific work in a little moment. But while we're waiting, if you could run the poll for us and let us know which of these two are particularly important for you. If you have voted, take that moment, take a guess: which do you think are going to come out as particularly important across the State to everyone? Alright. I can see a lot of those votes are coming in. There's still a couple trickling in so we'll wait just one more second. And, Nicole, I'm going to bring you in in a moment for a reflection on the poll. Let us know whether you've got any surprises there, what you think are perhaps the important ones and the opportunities that are coming. OK. So I'll end the poll there and share the results. Here they are. Nicole?

NICOLE EDWARDES: Well, we have a couple that have come out quite high. One is involve others in decisions that affect their work and the second one is about building protocols that facilitate empowerment. I think they were two things that came out strongly in Adam's discussion as well.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. And there we see too our opportunities perhaps a little bit to lean into some of those other things but to be really cognisant. Autonomy does come, doesn't it, from involving people in decisions that affect their work and it's a really great thing to be mindful of in terms of creating that trust and that calmness and confidence.

ADAM HOGAN: And the choice and control is a really interesting one there, being so low, because I grapple with this one a bit. In order to have college‑wide consistency, you can't have the extreme of choice but, on the other hand, if you have no choice, people don't feel empowered, and we often think about the tied and the loose: what's the framework and then what's the staff choice in the middle there? You know, you've got part of a PLC but you pick the inquiry. You've got to have a PDP goal but you pick the elements of it. And I think there's opportunity to reflect on that through this pandemic as well, how we can bring in small pieces of choice for staff whilst having consistency across the school.

DR BEN PALMER: Absolutely, and I think too that with autonomy, it's about bringing situational leadership to it, knowing those who like a lot of autonomy and knowing those who actually like a lot of hand‑holding and really coming at it in that way, and being cognisant of it. But with our why frame, just coming back to concern and stress ‑ some people I know are feeling pushed to the brink; I think that was the headline of one of the articles that came out lately ‑ that does slow us down and we need to just give that little bit more space and that little bit more time to work things through when we know that that can be the emotional environment, if you like.

Relatedness ‑ and here I have a photo of Jacinda Ardern who perhaps is a real leader of our time and particularly in terms of how she connects and how she empathises with people. Indeed, relatedness is one of those things that creates calmness through connection, through knowing that your leader's got your back and is with you in the environment that we're all going through. So I wanted to lean into Brené Brown's work a little bit here and you can see the URL. Indeed, I put a little bit on this on page number 8 in the workbook if you want to follow along, but that is a great little four‑, five‑minute video on the power of empathy, how it connects, and how sympathy disconnects. And Brené talks about, rightly, empathy being something like this. It's feeling with someone, and she contrasts it quite nicely with sympathy and its related cousin, which is really around feeling for someone, and it sounds like, "Oh, gee, that's a bad thing, isn't it", sympathy disconnects. Empathy connects. Sympathy creates that lack of calmness, if you like. Empathy can create that calmness.

So I mentioned sympathy comes out often in words and I thought it might be useful just to reflect on some of the words and phrases that we can all use to transfer our intention of empathy unintentionally into sympathy. I'm going to share some of the ones I use and have to catch myself with. I'm going to bring in Adam and Nicole for some of theirs. So some of the ones I watch out for that I use a bit are: "Well, at least", "Look on the bright side", "Of course, the lesson in all this is", and "You must be anxious about this, are you anxious?". That's not actually one of mine but one that my partner, Georgia, shared with me in the design of this webinar. Adam, what are some of the words and phrases that you need to be careful of that you can find yourself sometimes saying that doesn't have the right impact, if you like?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, Ben, I think those first two resonate with me. They put a smile on my face, the "Well, at least" and "Look on the bright side". I saw in the chat we've got some colleagues across Gippsland. They'll know I'm the ultimate optimist, always looking forward and not dwelling too much on the past, but there's a key in there that you have to be really mindful that doing that can skip past the important piece of acknowledging how a person's feeling at a point in time, and I often bring myself to two questions: do my staff feel heard and do they feel understood, and genuinely feel that.

DR BEN PALMER: Excellent. Thanks for sharing. Nicole?

NICOLE EDWARDES: I think, like Adam, I'm also very optimistic and I move through things fairly quickly, particularly I adapt to change well, but we have to differentiate our leadership and understand that our communities don't always do that. I try to avoid all of these sentence starters but what I've actually found myself saying on a number of occasions through the pandemic is "At least we're safe and well".

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, OK. Absolutely. It can work for those who are feeling the same way and it can make someone who's not quite there be a little bit left wondering perhaps. Thank you for sharing.

So in your workbooks, what I'd like to encourage you to do is think about those sentence stems that you might use sometimes. There are, of course, words and phrases for empathy as well but empathy is something we do more than it is something we say. So these next things, the behaviours of relatedness, really are our sentence stems metaphorically for empathy. Of course, if you want to come back to the workbook on page number 8, where you can see these behaviours and go through them with me, I'd like you to flag a couple that you think are particularly important for your context. The first one is being present and visible. Very important and something that really connects. Connecting intentionally at an emotions level, so using our tone of voice and our facial expressions, our body language, to help us really just connect with people at an emotional level. Using purpose, humour and vulnerability to foster relatedness. I'm so glad that Adam and Nicole were willing to share some of the things in that last sentence stem exercise by way of example. Using gestures and symbols to signify our understanding and our empathy, and, indeed, that's why that photo of Jacinda was there because that's indeed what she's doing as she goes down to be with the people with the Christchurch massacre. And using open questions and mindful listening. What I think this really does is help still our own thoughts and our own judgments that inevitably go off when we're hearing someone explaining their situation and context to us, and it helps us really just demonstrate mindful listening, which is so important for listening.

So which of these did you flag as really important for you? I'm going to bring up the next poll and, as I do, I'm going to ask Nicole to reflect on some of these that she finds important for her connecting with people. So the poll is up and, Nicole, while it's going, would you like to share and reflect with us?

NICOLE EDWARDES: Sure, and I've been watching some of Warwick's contributions to the chat room and certainly there are some consistent themes coming there that resonate with me around vulnerability. So number 3, using purpose, humour and vulnerability, is important to me as a leader and goes hand in hand really with the open questions and mindful listening. I often will talk about having around‑the‑campfire conversations, so making sure that you're getting to know your community and your staff at a level where they feel connected and you can be able to then have those empathic conversations with them and really they feel that they're heard.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. That's good. All of these are important but they need to go in combination with each other, and I thank everyone who is voting. I'll talk a little bit while we wait for the poll to finish and then I'll bring Adam in. They're really important to combine. Let's take being present and visible on its own. It's not enough. This is one of the things that really got in the way for Scott Morrison in the bushfires after the Hawaii holiday. He did come out and was present and visible but he wasn't really connecting very well, and we saw that, something Ardern has done perhaps just that little bit better, and I don't mean to throw Scott under the bus. We'll bring up other examples of him where he's done well but this is obviously an area where we could have seen a little bit more shine for him on empathy.

Well, Adam, I'm going to end the poll result there. We've got a lot of votes that have come through and I'm going to share them with you. Hopefully they've come up on screen for you. Would you like to share and just reflect a little bit on the poll result for us here?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, again that's very interesting to see the one at the bottom there. Number 5, using open questions and mindful listening, has come out on top. I guess that's, as you were saying, at the higher level of engagement, so you can physically just be present and turn up but it's not necessarily enough. So specifically asking questions and being mindful is obviously something that resonates with people.

For me, the one in the middle there was one that stood out a lot, the idea of using tone of voice, facial expressions and body language. I think people read them ahead of your words, and if there's a mismatch between the two, they'll take your body language and tone. So a really important part too.

DR BEN PALMER: One of those ones to try and be nice and consistent with, and we can see Nadine said, "Body language, tone of voice is so important. This is something really tricky". Yes, it is tricky, particularly as we've been working virtually. Absolutely, Nadine, and thank you for that contribution that you've made.

Well, let's go to our final one: equity. And equity, as I was saying before, really creates calmness through fairness. I've got a little link there that you can go and look at. It's an article by Geoff Masters, the CEO of ACER, on equity in education. Let's have look at the behaviours and then I'm going to bring Adam in to reflect, and as we're go through these, again I'm encouraging you to choose a couple that are particularly important for your context.

So we really need to lean into this, don't we, as school leaders and be thinking about where inequity exists and taking actions where possible, and we've done that as we transitioned to learning from home absolutely. We need to communicate our thought process behind making one decision over another. We're often faced with difficult challenges and we have to take a decision and it's really important to communicate that thought process behind it. We need to act with transparency and explain the rationale behind our decisions as much as we can. We need to ensure equity exists in negotiated outcomes, and this is where our sense‑making comes back in because whenever there's some sort of negotiation or some sort of actions that come out of a meeting, of course, again you've got different perspectives, different people, and it's really important to create that sense of equity through sense‑making and through co‑creating, understanding around this topic and what it really means. Adam, would you like to share with us, and while you do, I'm going to bring up our final poll for the night on this subject.

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, thanks, Ben. Number 2 and 3 really stand out for me here, more so than the others. I think the importance of having a really clear rationale for why decisions are made ‑ I think of Simon Sinek and the Start With Why, and some of my immediate leaders say to me sometimes, "Oh, you're so patient" but I just think it's critical that people have an understanding of where things come from. It reminds me of the quote that has been around for a while ‑ Viviane Robinson uses it: "Your job is not to be liked; your job is to be respected" and the challenge with that is that sometimes you'll make decisions people like, sometimes they won't, sometimes it will be 50/50, and the best way I think to navigate that is to have a really clear rationale and give people a sense that a range of views have been heard, that decisions are student‑centred, and people can then more comfortably move on with it.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. Fantastic. And we've got the polls that are coming in. I can see so far that over 60% of us have voted, which is great, and again if you have voted, try and take a guess. I'm sure Nicole's starting to think about what might be coming up as the most important items here. Of course, they're all important but what's particularly important? What stands out for you? In a moment I'll end the poll but I will just give people ‑ we're up at 70% at the moment. It's great to see you viewing the questions, giving some thoughts.

While we're waiting, maybe we could do a couple of little reflections from the chat box. Active listening is so important, Nadine says. "What's the difference between 2 and 3?". OK. Great question. I think the difference is generally making sure you're transparent with the rationale behind decisions. Sometimes they might not be your decisions, but as much as you can being open with them. And with number two, I think the little differentiation I see here, Kim, is where you've really got into one of those grey areas, where there's no real right answer, but some answer has had to come, some sort of decision has to be made, and you've made that decision. Some people might not agree with it but where you can explain your rationale behind that decision, that helps people feel that sense of fairness and that sense of equity that might come with it. Adam, are you going to contribute something on that?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes. It just reminded me of in the explicit teaching phase of the Gradual Release Model, which some schools might be familiar with, we often talk about the idea of 'think aloud', teachers thinking aloud their thinking so that students can see it. And I find myself doing it in leadership often, sometimes subconsciously, but it's that articulation of the thought process that you went through that gives people an insight into your thinking.

DR BEN PALMER: Absolutely. Fantastic. Thank you. Well, I'm going to share the poll result now and I'll bring Nicole in just to reflect on some of the things that have come out. One of them is very strong here, Nicole. Don't forget to take yourself off mute.

NICOLE EDWARDES: There is definitely one that's standing out, and that is acting with transparency and explaining the rationale behind decisions, and I think from my perspective, I communicate at all opportunities, and I think this current situation has made us think really creatively about how we are acting with transparency, given that we're not all in one place. What does that look like? And really having that situational awareness by being open and honest and transparent, then staff I think get a greater sense that creates trust and I think it is really, really important. So I'm not surprised to see that coming out at the top of the poll.

DR BEN PALMER: Excellent. And it's an important one because in times like this, where we're under a lot of stress and pressure ourselves, we can forget to think out loud or we can hold on to things more because we're not as confident in our own decisions as sometimes we might be. So that's really great to see that one come out. And we can see some opportunities that exist here as well.

Alright. Well, in summary ‑ and if you would like to follow along, I'd really like to bring you now to the very last page of the workbook where you can see the session reflection and action plan. In summary, we've really explored the why frame, and the why frame being that there's a real range of different emotions, different thinking and different behaviour that we're going to be experiencing that no doubt you are seeing and experiencing in the last week or so. We've looked at techniques for projecting calm and confidence and this notion that we need to be calm and confident ourselves because our own emotions are contagious, and we are under a lot of pressure as school leaders at the moment. We need to lead with care and think about creating confidence and calmness through others through clarity, through autonomy, relatedness and fairness.

So in a moment I'm going to put on a song and, as I put on the song, I'd like you to think about what are you taking away, and once you've captured a few things in your workbook, let us know in the chat box what's come to you. Is it something new that you're going to implement? Is it something you're familiar with that you can see the opportunity to really finesse and enhance within yourself? Is it something you're quite experienced with that you might go and coach or mentor others around? So let us know in the chat box. Nicole, what's something you're taking away from this session?

NICOLE EDWARDES: Thanks, Ben. I'm going to take away the absolute focus I think on giving people more control and choice over their work in terms of the autonomy. I think now that we're back at school and the guidance has been implemented, what does that now look like? How do you translate that into action and giving people that flexibility and that autonomy with what that looks like.

DR BEN PALMER: Thanks. Fantastic to hear. And, Adam, have you got any final words, something that you're taking away from the session this evening?

ADAM HOGAN: Yes, I actually like the CARE model in its entirety and the simplicity of the acronym that gives you the ability to think through things. I often think of leadership as the verb, not the noun. You don't get to a point where you just accomplish leadership. It's a daily process of reflection and asking yourself: "What does this context and situation require from me? What do my people need from me in this certain situation?" and that's just a really nice acronym to lay across those questions.

DR BEN PALMER: Yes, absolutely. So carry on the dialogue at your school. If you like the CARE model, put it up places, hand it to people and think about leading with care.

Kate, I'm going to hand over to you to do some final words and then, after that, I'm going to put on a song and really invite you to let us know what you're taking away in the chat box. Thanks, Kate.

KATE MORRIS: Thank you, Ben. An incredibly powerful session. I'm loving micro learning ‑ an hour with an expert, and with practitioners from school, who are really able to share in incredibly powerful way about their work and how it relates to models and ways of being and how we can better communicate with our staff and with our students and with our families and create the conditions in our schools.

So I'd really like to point you to the couple of sessions we've got coming up. One that I'm really, really interested in is around Leading Learning and Re‑Establishing Our School Community. The whole vibrancy of our school and how we will make that work as we transition and navigate new territory, the new territory that we're in at the moment. Kerrie Dowsley will be with us from St Albans Secondary College and Tamina Taylor from Yinnar Primary School. And then Leading Self will follow, with David Sutton from Maryborough Education Centre and Natalie Grieve from Mount Waverley North Primary School, all representing the diversity of our system. It's been fantastic to have you in the room, Zoom room, with us today and we've really loved your comments and I'm really looking forward to your final reflections on what you're going to take away from today. Thanks Nicole. Thank you, Adam. And back to you, Ben.

DR BEN PALMER: Thanks, Kate. So I'm going to play the song now. It's Eva Cassidy and her rendition of 'Time After Time'. Let us know in the chat box what you've taken away from the session and how you've found it today, and then once you have, just sit back and take a couple of minutes for yourself. Let the song take you somewhere. Thank you very much, everyone, for coming. We hope you've found it enjoyable. We hope you found it informative and interesting.

(Music plays)

DR BEN PALMER: OK. Thanks, everyone. Thanks so much for coming. Have a great weekend and a great week and hopefully we'll see you on June 11. Thanks.