

тості / Л. В. Зінченко, О. Г. Романовський // XI Міжнародна науково-практична конференція магістрантів та аспірантів : матеріали конф., 18-21 квітня 2017 р. : у 3 ч. Ч. 3 / ред. Є. І. Сокол ; Нац. техн. ун-т "Харків. політехн. ін-т" [та ін.]. – Харків : НТУ "ХПІ", 2017. – С. 217

5. Шинина Т.В., Митина О.В. Разработка и апробация опросника "Готовность подростков к самостоятельной жизни": оценка и развитие жизненных навыков // Психологическая наука и образование. – 2019. – Т. 24. – №1. – С. 50–68

*Linda Jlassi, Tunisia*

*Nataliia Sereda, Kharkiv, Ukraine*

National Technical University  
"Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute"

### **LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS: HOW PSYCHOLOGY HELPS LEADERS TO COMMUNICATE IN PANDEMIC PERIOD**

Disasters can make or break a leader. In the era of COVID-19, some leaders have risen to the challenge – keeping their communities, employees and students informed, pausing and restarting daily life, and managing the secondary effects of social and economic disruption.

Other leaders, meanwhile, are floundering communicating poorly, not providing trustworthy information and failing to follow through on promises.

Although the pandemic differs from other crises in our lifetime, psychologists' research and expertise, developed in past crises, can still inform our responses, say those who have studied crisis leadership. Overall, their work has shown that leaders who communicate effectively and learn from their mistakes are poised for success. Those who dissemble and vacillate can harm and alienate their constituencies.

*Clear communication*, Perhaps the most essential element of crisis leadership is clear and trustworthy communication. Best practices for crisis communication, established through years of psychological and organizational research, include transparency, honesty and empathy.

Communicating well starts with understanding the questions your audience has, and then talking to experts and reviewing data to answer them accurately. Leaders then need to develop and test messages to ensure they don't confuse people

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, leaders have had to relay a lot of bad news – extensions of stay-at-home orders, large-scale furloughs and layoffs, sickness and death. But leadership scholars agree that even in such dire circum

stances, honesty is the best policy.

Total transparency is essential; Leaders who withhold information essentially shoot themselves in the foot because that breeds mistrust and uncertainty.

Research by *Fischhoff* and Roxane Cohen Silver, PhD, a professor in the department of psychological science at the University of California, Irvine, shows that the public prefers honest answers, even when the news is bad – and that it's tough for leaders who lose trust to gain it back. In this moment, that includes admitting that much about the coronavirus and how it will impact our lives in the coming months remains unknown.

Finally, in communicating data to their followers, leaders should keep in mind that some people have trouble understanding numbers or performing mental math. That doesn't mean leaders should avoid sharing numeric information

Providing numbers corrects misperceptions people are far more likely to overestimate certain risks if you don't give them numbers leaders sharing numeric information should do what they can to reduce the cognitive effort required of their audiences. That means providing only necessary information and doing calculations ahead of time to make data more relevant and digestible. It can also include visual representations of numeric information and structured lists that outline what readers can expect in a longer piece of written communication.

*Readiness is a key*, Though crises are almost by definition unexpected, effective leaders can and should still prepare for them, says *Fischhoff*. "You'll often hear leaders say they didn't have time to respond effectively in an emergency," he says. "But if you didn't have time, you didn't do your job. Your job is to be ready, know your audience and get them clear and accurate information about what's going on."

Public officials and leaders of large organizations should ideally complete training in crisis leadership – which typically teaches leaders to manage emotions, assemble emergency task forces and maximize technology and communication channels. At a minimum other leaders, such as small business owners, should have action plans in place for various potential emergencies, including an economic crisis, major lawsuit or natural disaster.

When a crisis hits, leaders should focus on managing their internal experience first before providing direction to their teams and communities, Leaders should think about themselves as islands of coherence in a sea of chaos your ability to manage yourself in this process to stay grounded and clear in a situation that's totally disorienting is really what will make or break you.

One way to do that is to manage your own attention, including by engaging with media not too little and not too much, too little information will leave leaders uninformed; too much can be overwhelming.

But managing also involves tuning in to your own internal emotional responses and understanding how those responses can influence decision-making, what's happening in your body during a crisis? And how is that influencing the way you make sense of a situation and make decisions about it? If you can't see that consciously, then you've got one arm tied behind your back in terms of your capacity to think clearly about your options. If you're locked in fear, your ability to develop creative solutions is limited.

*Takeaway lessons.* Following a crisis, *Ronald Riggio*, PhD, a professor of leadership and organizational psychology at Claremont McKenna College in California, recommends conducting an after-action review (AAR), a structured debrief pioneered by the U.S. Army that involves analyzing an incident, the response and lessons learned. "When it comes to leadership development, leaders tend to learn more from their mistakes than from their successes," he says.

An AAR should include steps to prevent a future crisis – but also strategies for responding in the inevitable event that one occurs. This focused discussion should take place as soon as possible following a crisis and outline concrete guidelines for preventing or managing similar incidents moving forward, says *Riggio*.

For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and several other organizations conducted AARs following Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Harvey to assess preparedness and response operations, recommending improvements in staffing, housing solutions and other.

*Conclusion.* A crisis can leave leaders and their communities shaken, but it can also present an opportunity for growth. Crises are places where we find our greatness because they push us in ways that, in times of normalcy, we don't get pushed. We find strengths and abilities that are latent inside us. As a leader, this kind of crisis is an opportunity to find your greatness and to activate that in other people around you.

### References:

1. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/leadership-in-a-crisis-responding-to-the-coronavirus-outbreak-and-future-challenges>
2. Available at: <https://doi.apa.org/fulltext/2021-45895-001.html>
3. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/07/leadership-crisis#:~:text=Disasters%20can%20make%20or%20break,of%20social%20and%20economic%20disruption>
4. Available at: <https://trainingindustry.com/blog/leadership/7-things-the-best-leaders-do-in-times-of-crisis/>
5. Available at: <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/how-to-lead-through-a-crisis/>