



Deep Leadership- Looking after those who look after everyone else

Marius Frank, Director for E-Learning and Youth Justice at Achievement for All, draws from his own personal experiences as the Headteacher of a challenging learning community when developing AfA's latest programme: it is designed exclusively by leaders, for leaders, with advice and guidance, strategies and approaches to secure the wellbeing of *everyone*, in the here and now as well as in the years of societal recovery that will no doubt follow.



Seven Ofsted or HMI Inspections in nine years; a Lead Inspector stating categorically that if standards do not improve within six months he will place the school in special measures; Local Authority Leadership clearly signalling you personally that if you cannot do it, they will find someone who can. And, like the fate of two-thirds of LA secondary schools in our area, there was always the possibility of being “academised”.

And yet we were not academised; nor were we ever placed in a category (other than

gloriously “satisfactory”). We raised our standards and our rates of progress to the extent that we were “off the radar”, and the full buckets of effective practice carried by every member of staff and in particular my truly brilliant leadership team could be rightly and properly acknowledged and praised.

But there was pressure: relentless, minute-by-minute, day-upon-day, term-upon-term and year-upon-year. We dug deep and survived...

I see and feel clear parallels to the situation that faces our current cohort of school leaders, across the globe, since March and beyond.

" There are no precedents, no ring-binders, no blueprints to help school leaders through the current maelstrom that is COVID19."

Prof Alma Harris, Swansea University



As Prof Alma Harris from Swansea University recently wrote¹:

“A new leadership order has emerged which has no leadership standards, no preparation or development programmes, no inspection framework, no KPIs, no benchmarks. There are no precedents, no ring-binders, no blueprints to help school leaders through the current maelstrom that is COVID19.

*In such disruptive times, school leaders cannot emulate the leadership practices they witnessed or enjoyed in a period of stability, continuity, and relative calm. **Leading in disruptive times means being able to navigate a different course, to create new pathways through the disruption.***

School leaders on this journey are defined by their determination, their hope, and their unshakable belief that whatever happens, whatever the cost, whatever the scale of the challenge, they will continue to do everything in their power to safeguard the learning of all young people.”

The same could be said of public service leaders across the Local Authority sector too, who, like education leaders, have to square the circle between reactive government policy decisions and the realities of service delivery within budgetary constraints.

And even as society returns to a “new normal”, the legacy, the trauma, of Covid-19 will be with us during many years of re-building. **Achievement for All offers Deep Leadership to create a new pathway through the disruption, and the aftermath.**



Deep Leadership
Putting wellbeing at the heart of your organisation



<https://afaeducation.org/coaching-programmes/deep-leadership/deep-leadership/>

Deep Leadership is unique in that it explores the social and emotional aspects of leadership in extreme circumstances: supporting not only the growth of individual leaders in terms of personal resilience and stress-management, but also helping leaders to put wellbeing at the very heart of their teams, their organisations and their professional networks and communities.

This programme takes lessons from leadership in dangerous and hostile conditions and applies them to the stark realities that leaders are facing today due to the COVID-19 crisis. There are invaluable, profound lessons to be learned that will help you through the storm, drawn not only from leadership in extreme circumstances but

¹ Alma Harris & Michelle Jones (2020) COVID 19 – school leadership in disruptive times, School Leadership & Management, 40:4, 243-247, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1811479>



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also from the latest research in neuroscience, trauma-informed practice, therapeutic approaches and emotion coaching.

However, all of this is driven by a key principle of survival: **put your oxygen mask on first before you help others.**

“...Place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping small children or others who may need your assistance.”



The programme begins and ends with you, the leader. We encourage you to tell your personal story through the crisis, using the established framework of trauma narratives. It aims to validate your feelings and emotions: it is OK to feel anxiety, anger and worry. If you cannot validate your own feelings, you will struggle to support others.

You will find the relationship with your assigned Coach from Achievement for All liberating and invaluable: a critical friend disconnected from the command structures you work within, empathetic and understanding, at all times strengths-based and solution-focussed.

It has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to help conceive and develop this programme. Please get in touch with me personally if you would like to learn more.

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