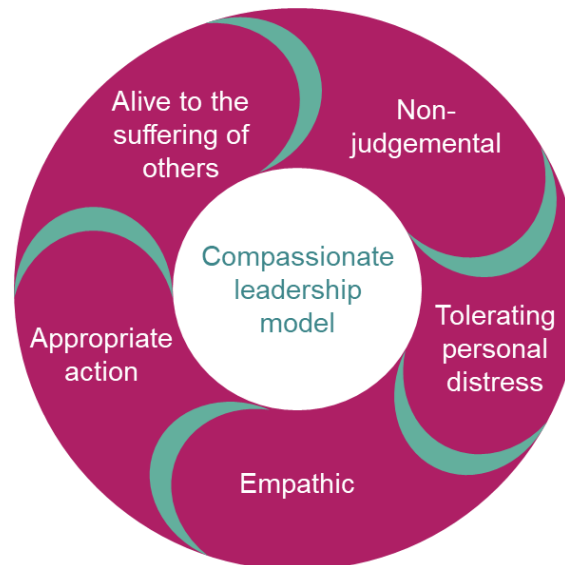


# Introduction to Compassionate Leadership

As we navigate our way through the challenges that the current COVID19 pandemic is causing us to face there is an increasing need for us, as leaders, to act with compassion to support our teams. Compassionate leadership focuses on listening with fascination to those you lead, arriving at a shared (rather than imposed) understanding of the challenges they face, empathising with and caring for them, and then taking action to help or support them.

Being sensitive to the well-being of others and noticing any change in their behaviour is an important attribute. It enables the compassionate leader to notice when others need help. Noticing someone's suffering could be difficult particularly in workplaces where people are busy with their work and preoccupied with their deadlines. It is also common for people to hide their pain from others.



A compassionate leader does not judge people and accepts and validates a person's experience. He or she recognises that the experience of a single individual is part of the larger human experience and it is not a separate event only happening to this person. Judging people in difficulty - or worse condemning them - is one of the obstacles preventing us from understanding their situation and thereby being able to feel their pain.

Feeling empathic towards someone encourages the leader to take action and to do something to help the person. Customising actions depending on the person's personal circumstances is also important. Taking the right action depends on the extent to which we have made efforts to know the person.

Feeling the emotional pain of the person who is suffering is another attribute of a compassionate leader. Empathy involves understanding a person's pain and feeling it as if it were their own.

Hearing about or becoming aware of someone's difficulty may distress a compassionate leader but does not overwhelm them to the extent that it stops them from taking action.