

**Managing Crisis through Resilient Leadership**  
**COVID-19 Resource Packet**  
**Issued April 2, 2020**

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Health centers are serving on the frontline, providing critical health care services in communities dealing with the coronavirus and COVID-19. During challenging and stressful times, it is normal for leaders to feel off balance. This attachment contains **six steps** designed to access and be a Resilient Leader during turbulent times:

1. **Balance before action;**
2. **Hold space;**
3. **Elicit feedback;**
4. **Keep/create structure;**
5. **Over communicate; and,**
6. **Be flexibly directive.**

Each of the following pages describes how to utilize two of the six Resilient Leadership skills during times of crisis and culminates in the final key elements of communication and direction. Choose what resonates with you.

The document can be printed or electronically communicated to emphasize any one of the steps that are relevant to you and your health center teams. If you line up all three pages together, they combine to make one poster of all six Resilient Leadership skills.

We hope this tool provides concise and meaningful concepts to support you as you navigate the challenges ahead.

**Acknowledgement:** NACHC would like to thank and recognize Nick Szubiak, MSW, LCSW of NSI Strategies ([www.nsistrategies.com](http://www.nsistrategies.com)) as the author of this resource.



***Additional COVID-19 information and resources can be found at:***

HRSA COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/emergency-response/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions.html>

NACHC's Coronavirus webpage - information, event postings and resources for health centers  
<http://www.nachc.org/coronavirus/> or email [preparedness@nachc.org](mailto:preparedness@nachc.org)

*For inquiries about this document, contact [trainings@nachc.org](mailto:trainings@nachc.org)*

# Managing Crisis Through Resilient Leadership

Health centers are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response and in the midst of preparing to help support your communities. During times of turbulence, it is normal for a leader to feel off balance and stress can undermine our ability to lead at the most crucial times. Using the steps below, **you can generate the capacity to lead with Resiliency.**



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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
Community Health Centers

# Managing Crisis Through Resilient Leadership

1. Balance before action

2. Hold space

3. Elicit feedback, thoughts & ideas

4. Keep structure, create structure

5. Over communicate

6. Be flexibly directive

Each of these steps build on the last to generate capacity to lead with Resiliency.

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Being resilient is the **opposite** of staying calm. If you could stay calm you would! Telling or being told to do this by others/self is not helpful.

Instead, use your awareness to check in. What are you thinking, feeling, experiencing? Determine if you are dysregulated and select an action that brings you closer to balance.



This action of first "not acting" puts the creativity, problem solving and abstract thinking part of the brain back online. Don't move on without it!

## 1. Balance before action



You don't need to have all or the best answers. It's okay for employees to experience anxiety, fear, and rigidity. It's not your job as a leader to fix or take these feelings away. Spoiler alert - you can't control that stuff anyway and leaders often fall into this trap.

This is a **commitment** by you to give your teams space that is a harbor that allows team members to get regulated and enter more balanced states of emotional congruency.

**It's a commitment because it takes strength and guts!**



In letting go of perceived control we empower our teams. What you did in step one for yourself is now what you are doing for your teams. Go for it!

## 2. Hold space



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Resilient Leaders plan meetings and/or create spaces for feedback and information sharing.

As a leader you don't have to implement or use any of the ideas or suggestions!

This resilient process is what helps regulate teams, form connections, and tap into employee creativity



Resilient Leaders allow this process to flow through them using their energy to filter and utilize the helpful material in while letting the unhelpful pass.

**And the entire team experiences being heard.**

**3. Elicit feedback, thoughts, and ideas from your teams**



In times of crisis Resilient Leaders are deliberate – **be the structure.**

They do not run into offices, jump out of meetings, or break conversations to answer their phone.

These behaviors exacerbate anxiety and stress – your team does as you do. Be the model for what you want to see. They will reflect it back.

Seeing things you don't like? Look in.

By keeping your meetings as scheduled, honoring existing structures, being punctual, and keeping your own behavior predictable **you help create a comfortable environment.**



**4. Keep structure, create structure**



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It takes Eight times eight different ways to get change to stick. In crisis your teams are dysregulated. Their learning brains are off line. Resilient Leaders aren't frustrated when their directives are not followed.



They see and model teaching and learning opportunities to re-enforce their message and unify the team to flow in the direction they have plotted.

**5. Over communicate**



Your teams will need direction. Resilient Leaders own it.

Sometimes you don't have enough information to make the right call. Resilient Leaders make the best call they can because their teams need direction and structure.

Your employees are adaptable and creative and will figure things out, but not if they don't know

You can change course; you can modify direction as you get new information. You can be direct about the course of action and flexible that this is not "for-ever."

Resilient Leaders do not put the burden on the employee to make the call.



**6. Be flexibly directive**