

Resilient Leadership

Elevate the performance of your leaders by shifting them from surviving to thriving.

Support your leaders to move beyond the daily demands and lead with greater focus, influence and success.

A short guide for Victorian Healthcare Directors



“I defined resilience as the ability to overcome adversity, but I’ve come to learn it’s more about the ability to grow through the challenge.”

Brene Brown

Researcher, author, and professor at the University of Houston



Leading Complex, Integrated Teams

Healthcare Directors across Victoria face a critical challenge: *How do we move our leaders from a state of constant survival to one of sustainable influence?*

Clinical leaders are working harder than ever, navigating a persistent complexity with limited resources. They are no longer just managing responsibilities; they are absorbing the full strain of the system which is causing fatigue. This strain is evidenced by the fact that 19% of Victorian Public Healthcare employees now experience high to severe stress (Victorian Public Sector Commission [VPSC], 2024). This fatigue is compounded by a decline in manager engagement (Maritsa et al., 2022), flatter structures, and the rapid promotion of less-experienced clinicians into pivotal roles. While these promotions offer vital growth, they risk overwhelming emerging leaders who are still developing the capability to sustain their teams, and their own wellbeing, against unrelenting operational demands (Maritsa et al., 2022). Ultimately, this level of chronic stress is not only detrimental to the leader's own health, but increases the likelihood of mistakes—with research linking healthcare burnout to a significant decline in patient safety and a measurable increase in adverse events—requiring costly correction and relational repair (Department of Health [DH], 2024; Tan et al., 2025).

In this environment, relying on technical or clinical expertise is no longer viable. The key to mitigating these risks lies in the Relational Mastery of leadership. Evidence from the *Human Resource Management Journal* (2025) indicates that it is not necessarily the elimination of demand, but the presence of relational resources—specifically leadership support, autonomy, and feedback—that allows healthcare workers to buffer high emotional demands and experience the highest levels of thriving (Kunzelmann et al., 2025).

The shift from technical expertise to relational mastery is not an option; it is a strategic imperative. As Daniel Goleman argues, technical expertise alone is insufficient to navigate today's complexity (Goleman, 2004). Relational leadership challenges leaders to focus intentionally on the quality of their interactions, thereby building the trust that facilitates alignment, connection, and enhances performance (Gallup, 2023). This approach is particularly vital for onboarding newer staff and integrating the casual workforce, who often lack the established relational ties necessary to buffer high emotional demands (Kunzelmann et al., 2025).

Leaders play a pivotal role in nurturing resilient and thriving workforces; they are the foundation of employee engagement and the primary influence on staff retention (Maritsa et al., 2022). In a landscape defined by fierce competition for talent, the increasing pressures collectively reinforce the urgent need to invest in and develop leadership capability (VPSC, 2022).

Resilient Leadership is the strategic solution to this challenge. It provides the framework for accessing untapped potential, positively influencing your teams and organisations, and contributing to the patient experience. It is the solution to move your leaders beyond crisis management—shifting them from *Surviving to Thriving*—and empowering them to lead with greater focus, influence, and strategic impact.

The Survival Trap: Why Technical Expertise is no longer enough

1. Leading remote and integrated teams

Hybrid and remote work environments have fundamentally shifted how we maintain relationships, accountability, and leader effectiveness. The loss of physical proximity creates significant blind spots, lacking the visual cues to gauge workforce pressure or workloads in real-time: *“I don’t know what their daily challenges are”*; *“I’m not sure I’m providing enough support”*; *“I worry about what is being missed.”*

2. The pressure of patient demand and system flow

Increasing patient volume and acuity means we are often treating symptoms rather than providing holistic care. Leaders are constantly juggling the tension between meeting targets for access and flow while supporting clinicians to provide safe patient care. *“I feel a sense of helplessness—a feeling that despite managing every lever available, they are still not doing enough”*.

3. Service capacity and complexity

Responding to rising demand is a daily pressure, intensified by populations with increasingly complex clinical and diverse cultural needs. Leaders must navigate the constant friction between providing safe patient care and the systemic pressure for throughput: *“The demand is relentless; the complexity of our population means standard processes are no longer enough to ensure equitable and timely access.”*

4. Leaders are younger

The post-pandemic loss of experienced clinicians and leaders has led to the fast-tracking of less-experienced clinicians into pivotal leadership roles. With expectations remaining high, these emerging leaders often rely on underdeveloped practices, increasing their personal risk of burnout: *“I am worried about failing and not being 'good enough' as a leader.”*

5. Leading change

The "how and where" of service delivery is evolving, particularly for those leading community-based and remote workforces. Without traditional 'in-person' spaces to connect, leaders feel the weight of isolation and the loss of informal peer support: *“Friday night drinks are a thing of the past”*; *“Without regular opportunities to connect, I worry about catching people who are struggling before they reach a point of risk.”*

If these are the issues keeping you awake at night, you don’t have to go it alone.

Resilient Leadership supports you and your leaders to grow into successful, relational leaders.

The Weight of Expectation: Navigating self-doubt to thriving

1. The Stigma of Failure

I don't want to be seen as failing or a failure. The team was successful but they now seem to be struggling.

2. I'm unlikeable

The decisions I make seem out-of-favour now whereas once my decisions were accepted and sought.

3. Letting the team down

What use to work, no longer works and I am afraid I'm letting the team down.

4. Not meeting expectations

The manager was one of my most reliable staff and now I'm questioning if they want the role at all.

5. Being misunderstood

I worry about saying the wrong thing or giving the wrong information that risks the relationship and trust.

You're not alone; these are fears experienced by healthcare Directors that can feel burdensome.

Resilient Leadership lifts that burden by developing leaders capacity and resilience.

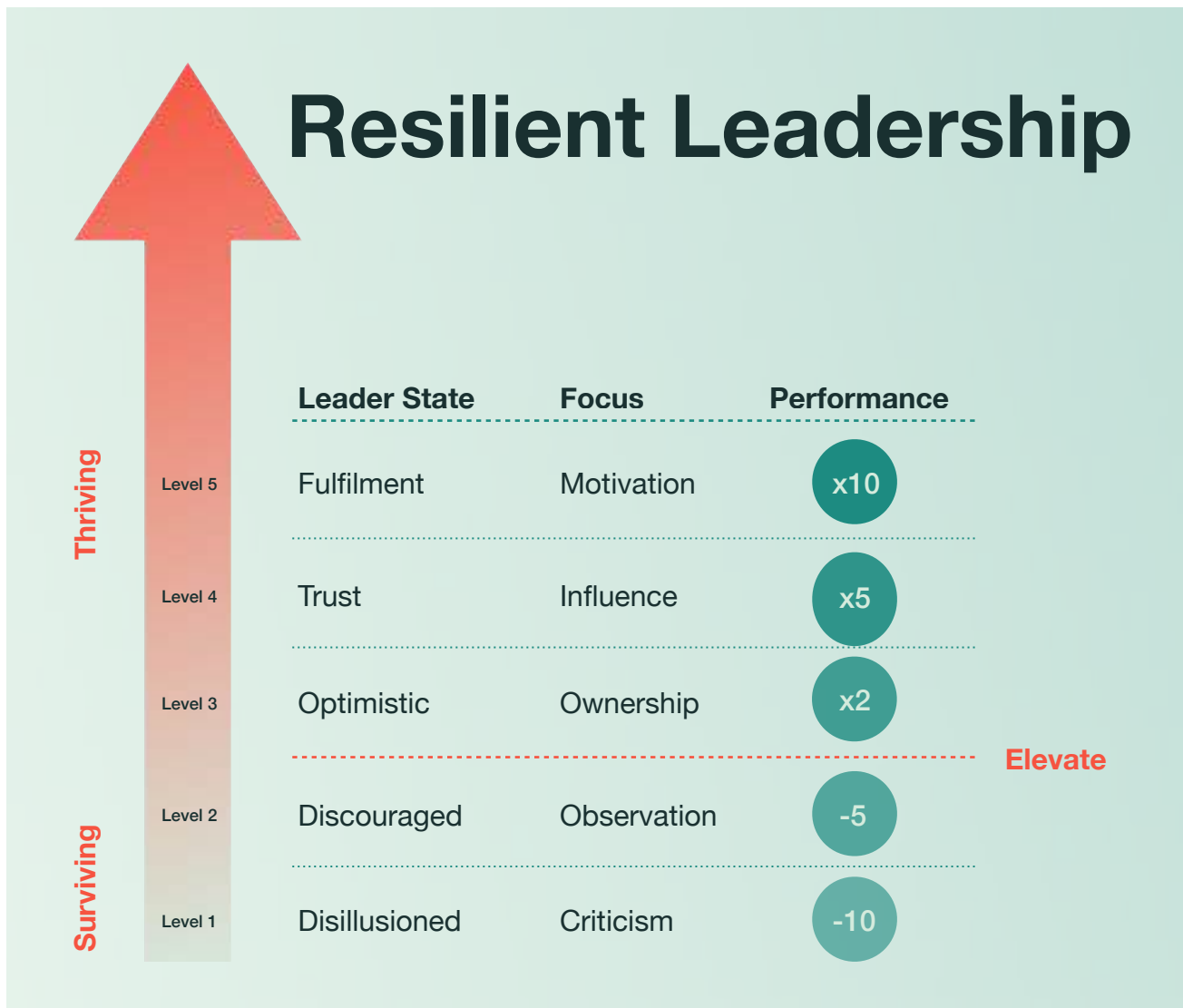
Surviving to Thriving

Thriving leaders lead with ease and confidence whilst fostering a culture in which people are trusted, valued and have a sense of belonging; building connections and trust is at the heart of team and organisational success.

This shift in focus is essential.

Fulfilled teams don't just perform; they are motivated by shared purpose and impact.

Why it matters when Resilient Leadership is missing



Level 1

Leaders focus on criticising; they are vocal about why things won't work, resulting in friction, and they are languishing (Be Well Co. 2025)

Level 2

Leaders focus on observing; they are on the sidelines like a rudderless ship, drifting without clear direction or perceived support.

Level 3

Leaders focus on ownership; they are solution-oriented, anchoring their work to a shared purpose that is greater than themselves.

Level 4

Leaders focus on influencing; they intentionally create the conditions where people can thrive within a culture anchored in trust.

Level 5

Leaders focus on motivating; they achieve a strategic balance where purpose, trust, and alignment create self-sustaining impact.

Unlocking Capacity: Shifting focus from Clinical Brilliance to Relational Mastery



The challenges and fears experienced by Clinical Leaders and Directors are often mistaken for burnout, incompetence or operational deficiencies. Yet, these are merely symptoms of a deeper, systemic issue, an erosion of leadership capacity rooted in self-limiting beliefs.

This is what's truly happening:

- **Self-doubt:** Questioning their own capacity and resilience, asking ‘Am I really cut out for leadership?’
- **Expert Trap:** Relying on clinical skills failing to recognise the relational leadership that is required.
- **Hero Leader Trap:** Thinking they need to have all the answers, impacting collaboration, autonomy and shared responsibility.
- **The isolation drift:** When under pressure, defaulting to working alone and operating on auto-pilot, diminishing influence.
- **The capacity constraint:** Doing it all themselves, seeing delegation as a “burden” for others rather than an opportunity for growth.
- **Burning the midnight oil:** Sacrificing personal wellbeing and working unsustainable hours, eroding resilience for long-term impact.

Recognising these real issues is the first step. It shifts the focus from managing mere symptoms to intentionally building capability. By addressing these internal constraints, we can effectively support your leaders' growth and accelerate their strategic impact within the organisation.

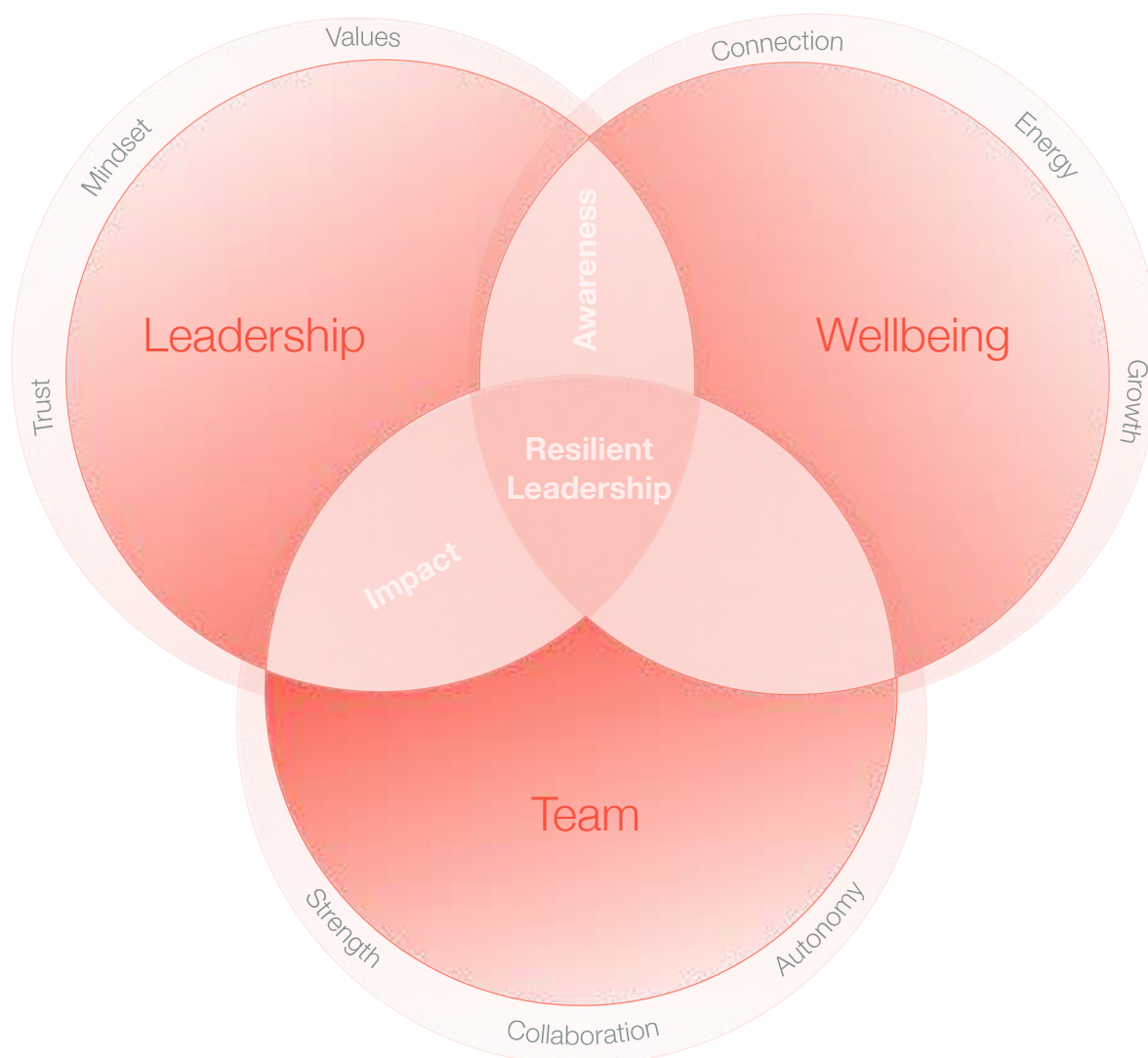
Resilient Leadership



Resilient Leadership enables individuals to maximise their own potential, leverage the strengths and collective wisdom of their teams, and foster the collaborative culture that drives sustainable success.

The capacity to lead and influence is dependent on a person's self awareness, how they impact others and how others impact them.

The three domains

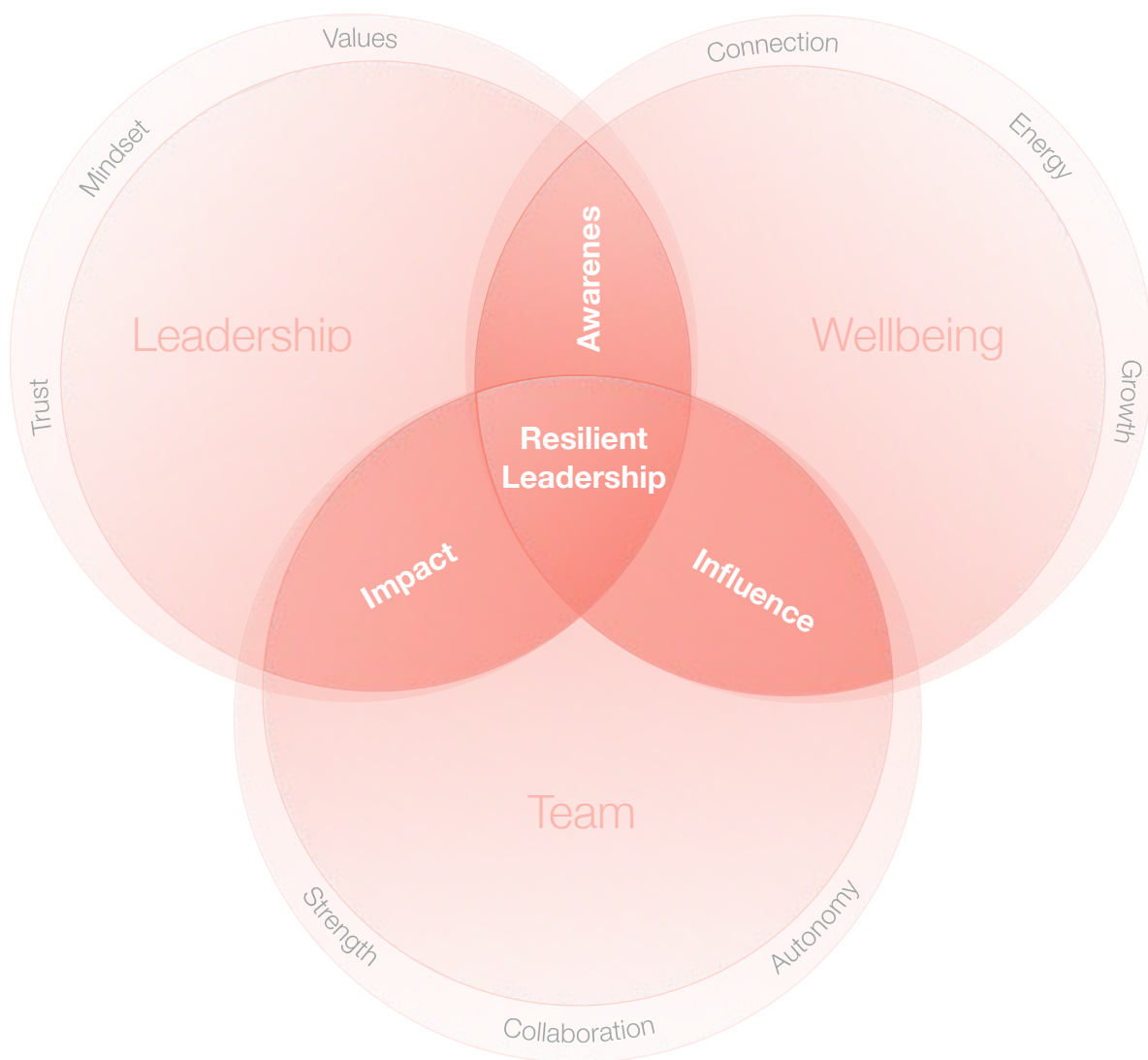


Leadership: By leading with care and consistency, leaders build the foundations of trust necessary to navigate complexity with greater clarity. This approach, grounded in shared values and a growth mindset, provides psychological safety and a shared purpose.

Wellbeing: Cultivates an environment where people feel seen and valued through meaningful connection; fosters a space for reflection and learning from experiences that enables ongoing development. By intentionally focusing on these needs, leaders help the team stay energised and restored by shared values and purpose.

Team: Maximises impact by bringing out the best in the team by leveraging complementary skills and strengths to achieve shared goals. By fostering collaboration and autonomy, the team supports one another to overcome challenges collectively.


The three intersections



Awareness: The intersection of Leadership and Wellbeing is foundational to relational mastery. It is the self-knowledge of one's values and mindset that empowers leaders to intentionally build and maintain trust.

Influence: The intersection of Wellbeing and Team is the cultivation of networks and connections. This enables leaders to invest energy in what truly matters: developing people and maximising the collective capability of the team.

Impact: The intersection of Team and Leadership is the measurable outcome of intentionally leveraging the diverse strengths and collective wisdom within the team, driving high performance and shared success.



*“When we are no longer able to
change a situation, we are challenged
to change ourselves.”*

Viktor E. Frankl
Man's Search for Meaning



The Resilient Leadership Opportunity



The journey from a technical expert to a people leader is often challenging. You have likely appointed highly capable individuals based on their deep technical expertise, and now you are committed to supporting them in the critical transition to the next level of leadership.

This next phase requires shifting from doing the work to truly leading, influencing, and enabling others.

To clarify your strategic path and best support your team, ask yourself these three critical questions:

- What crucial leadership capabilities are your leaders currently avoiding or neglecting that are essential for their success?
- Given the demands of their role, how sustainable is the resilience of your leaders?
- Are your leaders maximising their influence and building an engaged, high-performing team culture, or are they still relying on technical skills alone?

If the answers to these questions are making you curious about the resilience of your leaders, let's chat further about how the Resilient Leadership program can support your vision.

About Therese



I believe the heart of healthcare is its people, but I also know how easily those people can be depleted by the demands of their work.

With over 20 years in Leadership and Organisational Development across healthcare and non-profits, I have spent my career understanding what makes organisations tick—and what causes them to stumble.

I developed **Resilient Leadership** because I saw too many brilliant leaders caught in a cycle of "surviving" rather than thriving. I understand your unique pressures: the relentless juggle of clinical, supervisory, and operational demands.

My "sweet spot" lies at the intersection of leadership, wellbeing, and team dynamics. I help leaders move beyond putting out "spot fires" to lead with genuine, lasting impact through practical ways to build deep trust, leverage complementary strengths, and cultivate an environment where people feel seen and belong.

The most effective leaders are proactive, not reactive. If you're ready to move from surviving to thriving, let's connect.

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We care but you're responsible.

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A dirt path winds through a dense forest of tall, slender trees. The path is bordered by a rustic wooden fence. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and dirt. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting. The text "Your wellbeing. Their wellbeing. Our wellbeing." is overlaid in the center of the image.

Your wellbeing. Their wellbeing. *Our* wellbeing.