

Steering Your Hub through a Storm: Leadership in Times of Crisis

Tips, Tricks & Best Practices Handout



Best Practices for Leading in a Time of Crisis

→ Be Authentic, Model Vulnerability and Create Space for Others to do the Same

Practices such as storytelling and publicly sharing your thoughts, reflections and emotions.

→ Build Community, Foster Emotional Resiliency & Mutual Support

Slow down from outcomes focused work and create space as a group to process collectively. Set up systems for mutual support and fostering connection.

→ Find Your Personal & Collective Strength, Reground in your Purpose & Values

Lean into core collective values (ex: Sunrise Principles), cultural practices (such as singing & storytelling), and history/the power of collective human action to overcome great odds (ex; past movements for social change) to help others find strength and purpose.

→ Take Care Of Yourself (so You Can Take Care of Others)

You will not be able to offer leadership and support others if you are not well yourself. Engage in daily practices to make sure you remain physically and mentally well.

→ You Don't Have To Do It Alone! Ask for help! Seek Advice & Support

Leading in a time of crisis is *hard* and oftentimes leaders put pressure on themselves to have all the answers and carry all the weight. This is a mistake! Ask for help and seek advice from mentors, friends, family, experts and, most importantly, the people you are leading!

→ Overcommunicate & Lean into Transparency

In times of crisis, the future is uncertain. People are often feeling scared, sad and unsure. It's important to overcommunicate in these time periods and ensure people feel secure in their access to information.

→ Be an Active Listener, Foster Inclusive Processes & Proactively Gather Feedback

The people you're leading know best where they're struggling and what will feel most supportive. They probably also have some of the best thinking and ideas about how to respond in this moment of crisis. Make sure you create ample time for listening, and processes that enable for cogeneration of solutions.

→ Slow Down, Take A Moment to Assess, Think Strategically, *then* Act Decisively

In a moment of crisis, you can often feel great urgency to act. Acting too quickly can often lead to less impactful outcomes and unintended consequences. Take a moment to reflect & gather information, so you can then act decisively, grounded in your values, strategy and with intention.

→ Be Flexible, Open & Adaptable. Manage Expectations.

Crises are marked by uncertainty and a lack of clarity about the path forward. Help manage peoples' expectations around certainty/clarity, and foster a culture that leans into flexibility, openness, adaptability and possibility.



→ **Shine Bright! Remain Positive & Hopeful.**

Fear and panic are contagious (and can lead to destructive behavior in times of crisis). Lead from a place of positivity, possibility and hope. This DOES NOT mean sugar-coating the situation or projecting inauthentic positivity. It means grounding people in our collective ability to overcome great hardship, and helping people see that a better world is possible on the other side of the crisis. Help foster hope.

→ **Co-generated Best Practices!**

Here is a [list of best practices](#) generated by the Hub Coordinator Role Network on 3/31

Questions to Ask Yourself when Leading in Time of Crisis:

→ **How am I feeling right now?**

Oftentimes we're so caught up in the newscycle or our Twitter feeds that we forget to actually look inside ourselves and think about what's going on internally. It's hard to lead a group when you're not in touch with your own emotions. So figure out how to process your own emotions whether that's with another person, or writing, reading poetry, going on a solo walk, whatever it might be.

→ **What does the group need?**

Does the group need space and time for processing? Is everyone in a different place and need to have a shared space to discuss that? Do people need to feel connected somehow? If you don't know the answer to this a quick way to find out is by doing a rapid series of 1:1s (can be just 10 min conversations with your top leaders or even short texts to check in!). People will appreciate the personal touch, and you'll get to connect and gain information on where people's emotional states are and what they're needing right now.

Ask questions like: *How are you feeling? How have you been reacting to the news around you? What do you need in this moment?*

→ **How does this crisis affect people with different identities differently?**

Crisis often affects people with different identities (racial, class, gender, etc.) in different ways. Who is disproportionately impacted by this crisis? What does that mean for people in my hub/community? How can we create space to hold this reality and approach crises through a lens of justice, equity and anti-oppression?

→ **What is my intended goal?**

Based on information on what you and your team need in this moment, what is your goal for your next meeting? Is it to provide some space for people to process the world? Is it to connect on a human level? Is it to rethink your strategy for the next few months?

→ **What is an agenda that meets our goals and includes both emotional (heart) & strategic (head) elements?**

What are the key things I should think about when facilitating a group? People need their emotional and strategic needs met. This is true in the midst of a crisis and it's true when there isn't a crisis as well! Structure your agenda to include emotional elements (song, pair shares about emotions, resonance trios, etc.) and strategic elements (what actions can we take that build power in this moment?, how can we best support our community in this moment?)

→ **What ongoing structures can be built for your team that help retain culture, community & communication?**

Maybe you'll have morning check-in calls where you can sing together, share updates, coordination needs and share what support you need from the group today? Maybe you'll set up a whatsapp thread or slack channel as a place for clear, consistent communication. Maybe you'll set up a buddy system for members of your hub where folks check in relationally every day or so.

Template Hub Meeting Agenda:

[[General Sunrise Meeting Agenda Template](#) ← think about how you'd adapt during a time of crisis]

EXAMPLE:

- Opening:
 - Welcoming + sharing a couple prompts for everyone to respond to if the group is small enough
 - Sample prompts:
 - How are you arriving?
 - Share something from your head and something in your heart.
 - OR [diversity welcome](#) tailored to your team's range of emotions and places they are arriving from and what's going on in the world.
- Relational Activity (Heart):
 - Share a vulnerable story and invite others to share with each other in trios with a specific prompt. Share back a few experiences in the big group.
 - Read a news or other article together and process in pairs and as a group .
- Strategy Activity (Head):
 - How can Sunrise best build power and fight for our values in this moment? What actions can we take locally? What actions can we take in unity with other Sunrise Hubs (or other movements for change, nationally).
- Closing:
 - Read a poem (love this [one](#) from Aurora Levins Morales)
 - Share a quote from an inspiring author or speaker
 - Sing via Zoom! You don't have to give up singing if that's a part of your culture!
 - Chants are silly and fun to do on Zoom. Don't be upset if everyone is off timing (they will be!). But if people are feeling energized and connected it can be a great way to finish the meeting.
 - One feeling word go around so everyone can speak something into the group before leaving

Additional Resources:

Below you'll find a variety of resources with thought might be helpful for you around this topic. We'll keep adding to this overtime, so check back soon!

→ [Finding Courage in Anxious Times - George Lakey - Waging Nonviolence](#)

Courageous cultures are created by centering ourselves on our strengths and encouraging members to take chances with the support of the group.

→ [Training for Change](#)

Training for Change is an amazing training and capacity building organization for activists and organizers. They have a plethora of useful resources, modules and frameworks for leading groups through both emotional and strategic processing. For example, here's the "[diversity welcome](#)" that we often use at the beginning of meetings and trainings.

→ [The Center for Nonviolent Communication](#)

The Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC) is a global organization that supports the learning and sharing of Nonviolent Communication (NVC), and helps people peacefully and effectively resolve conflicts in personal, organizational, and political settings. Two resources we recommend in particular are: [An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication](#) & [NVC Conflict Coaching](#)

Do you have resources that you think would be useful for other Hub Coordinators on this topic?

Email brian@sunrisemovement.org and we'll add them in!