Leading through crisis

Capita Learning insights 2023

Capita

"Permacrisis"

a term that describes 'an extended period of instability and insecurity', has been named Collins Word of the Year 2022. It is one of several words Collins highlights that relate to ongoing crises the UK and the world have faced and continue to face, including political instability, the war in Ukraine, climate change, and the cost-of-living crisis.

Organisations in crisis

Globally, organisations and individuals are facing increasing and multi-faceted forms of crisis. Social, political and economic turmoil seem to be around every corner.

Stress among workforces around the world has reached an all-time high – 44% of employees cited experiencing stress a lot on the day prior to being surveyed.

What forms of crisis are currently taking place and how are they impacting organisations and individuals?

Climate

A McKinsey report highlighted disruptions due to climate change as a major future trend that will shape how organisations function and present a potential barrier to thriving.

Health

The number of NHS patients waiting for tests, surgery and routine treatment in England is at a record high of 5.5 million and could potentially reach 13 million over the next few years.

Cost of living

47% of UK employees are impacted by money worries, yet financial wellbeing is the least common area included in HR strategies and only 11% are actively focusing on it as part of an overall HR and wellbeing strategy.

58%
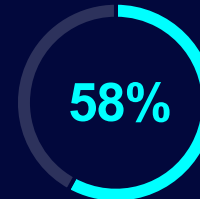
Mental wellbeing

58% experienced poor mental health while working at their current employer. Mental health has also been cited as one of the top two reasons for employees quitting in the Microsoft (2022) Work Trends Index survey.

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Loneliness

A 2021 study found that almost two-thirds of people working from home feel isolated or lonely at least sometimes and 17% do all the time.

Productivity paranoia

85% of leaders say the shift to hybrid work has made it challenging to have confidence that employees are being productive.
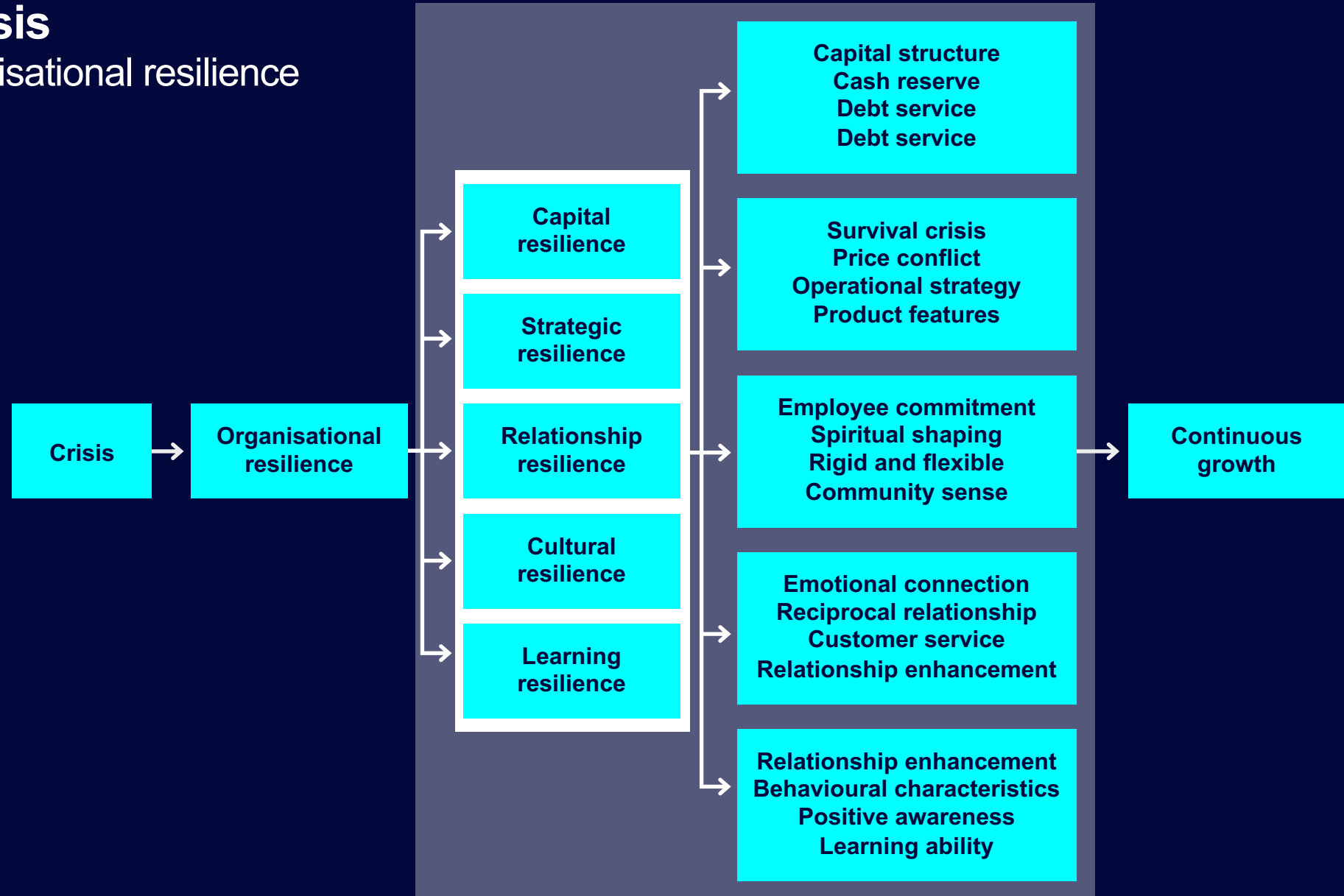
Coping through crisis
Five dimensions of organisational resilience

In an analysis of what makes a resilient organisation, Chen et al. (2021) conducted exploratory case studies (using textual data, such as company materials, media coverage, employee accounts, and annual reports) of six major companies deemed highly resilient, including Microsoft.

They found five dimensions of resilience — *capital*, *strategic*, *relationship*, *cultural*, and *learning* — that allowed these companies to continue growing after a crisis.

For more information see the full research here.

| Crisis | → | Organisational resilience |

Capital resilience
→ **Capital structure**
Cash reserve
Debt service
Debt service

Strategic resilience
→ **Survival crisis**
Price conflict
Operational strategy
Product features

Relationship resilience
→ **Employee commitment**
Spiritual shaping
Rigid and flexible
Community sense

Cultural resilience
→ **Emotional connection**
Reciprocal relationship
Customer service
Relationship enhancement

Learning resilience
→ **Relationship enhancement**
Behavioural characteristics
Positive awareness
Learning ability

→ **Continuous growth**

Leading through crisis
Skills for navigating through conflict and change

So, what skills are required for leaders today, and tomorrow, to manage multi-faceted forms of crisis?

We researched the landscape of skills currently cited as being crucial to leadership and crisis to formulate our view.

It resulted in six primary skills each with four further secondary skills underpinning them.

We believe these skills are vital for experienced and emerging leaders to navigate this continuously uncertain environment with humility and strength.

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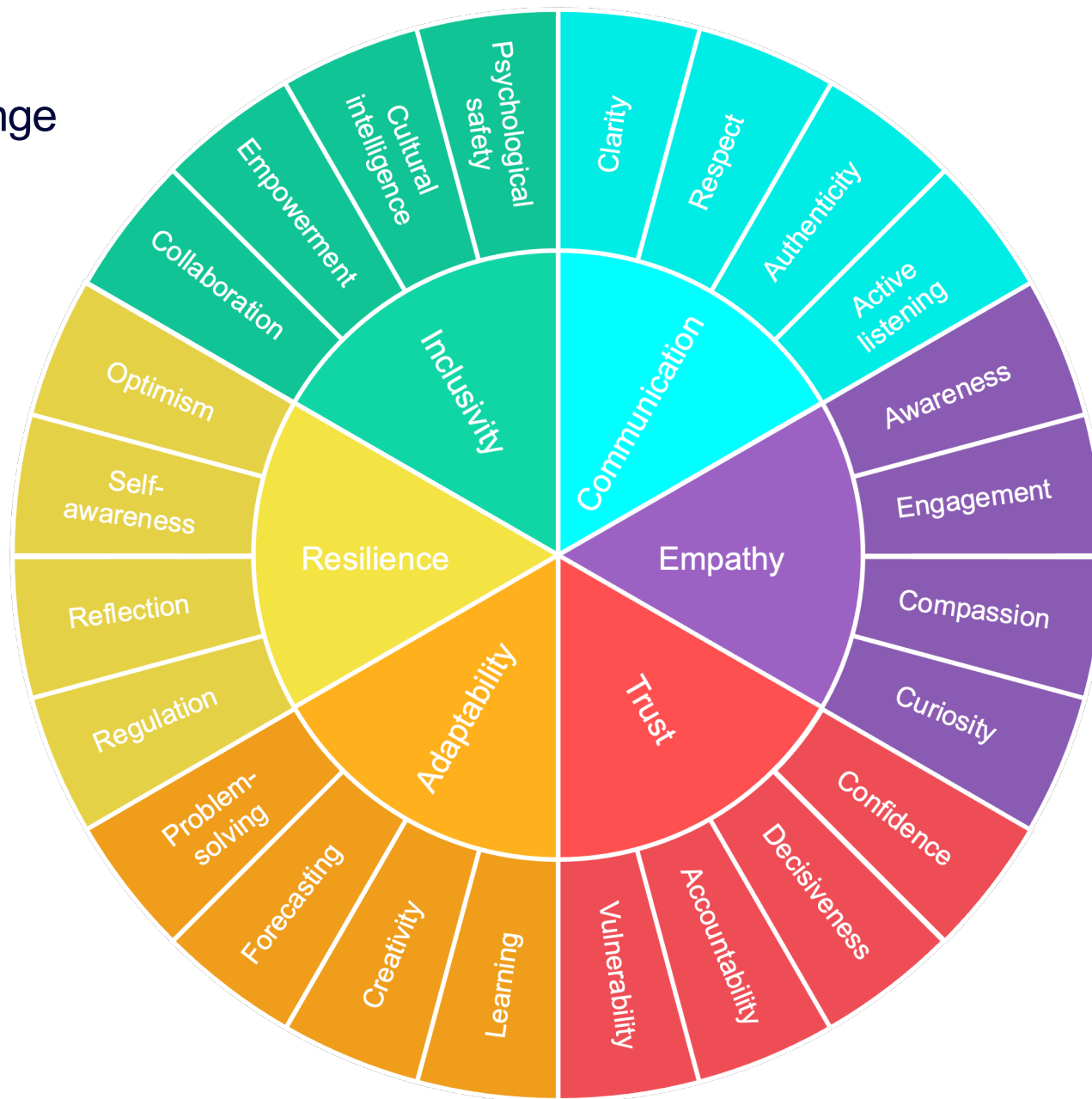
Leading through crisis - expert insights

Trauma, Regeneration and Transformation: Six lessons of leadership through crisis

This emotionally powerful and intimate talk by Capita CEO of Army Recruiting Group, Damian Riley, looks at the six lessons of leadership as told through a narrative of recovery from traumatic injury. Damian's personal yet pragmatic discussion about the challenges he has faced since he was involved in a cycling accident in 2019 is highly thought-provoking and moving. The lessons he has discovered about himself during his ongoing road to recovery can be translated into all of our lives and applied directly by those in leadership positions.

Why do women and people of colour fall off the 'glass cliff'?

The glass cliff refers to the phenomenon whereby women (and members of other minority groups, such as those based on race or disability) are over-represented in leadership positions that are risky and precarious – think UK Prime Minister Teresa May and Brexit. The metaphor evokes a woman who has reached the heights of senior leadership, but nonetheless finds herself teetering on the edge.

The Prepared Leader: Dare to Lead Podcast

A two-part series with Brené Brown, Erika James, Ph.D., and Lynn Perry Wooten, Ph.D., about their new book, The Prepared Leader: Emerge From Any Crisis More Resilient Than Before. They discuss what leaders can do today to prepare for what's next, as they add a fourth "p" to the triple bottom line framework (people, planet, and profit) for measuring a business's performance—and that's "preparedness."

How we can help
Learn. Inspire. Transform.

Today's problems are more complex than ever and navigating crisis looks set to be a permanent feature for leaders and individuals in the years ahead.

The pursuit of continuous learning should be at the forefront of this endeavour – developing leaders who have the skillsets to thrive as we've explored, equipping them to predict, prepare and progress, to drive organisational growth and performance in difficult times.

We recognise that this level of complexity often requires learning across several niche areas as part of one programme – and our expertise and focus on leadership, wellbeing, sustainability and innovation means that we are equipped with a toolkit to support customers through crisis, using inclusive design and engaging experiences.

For more information on how we can help, contact your learning partner.

Some of the topics we can support on

Resilience for wellbeing	**Change agility**
Inclusive leadership	**Emotional intelligence and empathy**
Innovation agility	**Financial wellbeing**
Strategic sustainability	**Leadership transitions**

Thank you