

**The 13th Developing Leadership Capacity Conference (DLCC)**

**11–12 July 2023**

**Henley Business School, Henley-upon-Thames, UK**

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Theme:**

**Creating leadership capacity for healthy organisations:  
Taking places of leadership into account**

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On its **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary** the **Henley Centre for Leadership** (HCL) is proud to host the 13<sup>th</sup> Developing Leadership Capacity Conference (DLCC) on its beautiful campus at Greenlands. HCL honours and advances Henley Business School's strong heritage and reputation as a pioneer in the thinking and practice of leadership and its development. We are a community of scholars and leaders striving to tackle challenging leadership issues, transform leadership and create positive change in organisations, communities and society. We are committed to enhancing the study and practice of leadership by developing leaders, engaging in knowledge exchange and co-creating future-focused strategies. For DLCC 2023 we are turning our focus on **healthy organisations**.

Millions of people across the globe suffer from work-related illness. In the UK, for example, work-related stress, anxiety or depression are the number one and steadily rising cause of work-related sickness (822,000 cases per year; Health and Safety Executive, 2022). This trend started well before the COVID-19 pandemic and has been exacerbated since. Some are warning that the UK will soon be entering a mental health pandemic (Lovett & Javed, 2022). If not tackled, mental health might become one of the 'grand challenges' – a set of globally complex challenges identified by the United Nations (2015; see also George et al, 2016; Patel et al, 2018).

The move to new ways and places of working (e.g., hybrid working, increased use of technology that blurs boundaries between work and home and contributes to longer working hours) has the potential to accelerate this further. **Organisations are pressed to become healthier workplaces**, protecting the physical health of employees and supporting positive mental health and wellbeing that enables healthy and sustainable performance by employees and leaders alike (Kets de Vries & Rook, 2022).

Enabling healthy places, processes and environments to work in is not only a responsible and human-centric approach to leadership (Vogel et al, 2019), it also has financial implications. The World Health Organisation (2022) estimates that depression and anxiety cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity. This 13th Developing Leadership Capacity Conference (2023) therefore seeks to discuss and progress research that focuses on **creating leadership capacity for organisations that are healthy for individuals and beyond, taking the places of leadership into account**.

Unpacking how leading, leadership development and education can tackle these multi-level health challenges requires us to take **all places and environments of working and leading into consideration** – workplaces and organisations, cities and communities, countries and societies, temporary and stable, virtual and imagined, digitally simulated and real (Sutherland et al, 2022). The questions that arise for leadership and leadership development are thus multi-faceted, looking beyond creating healthy individual, team or organisational performance to answering such questions as: What is healthy leader(ship) development? What makes the physical and virtual spaces in which we lead and work healthy? What elements of leadership capacity can enable healthy conditions in those spaces? Are the impacts on communities and environments healthy?

**Detailing what health means** also gives us pointers as to where leadership comes into play. The World Health Organisation (2010: 6) defines a mentally healthy workplace as 'one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace [...] based on identified needs'. These needs include health and safety in the physical and the psychosocial work environment, personal health resources, and organisational participation in the community to improve the health of workers and other members of the community.

Connecting places of leadership and the multi-faceted nature of health, we see concrete questions around how leadership development creates leadership capacity that can enable healthier employees, managers, teams, organisations and beyond.

Submissions to this conference are encouraged to answer, but are not limited to, the following questions:

1. As most knowledge-intensive organisations are moving towards hybrid working, we need to understand better how tangible contexts, such as the physical environment, help leadership development processes and other outcomes at work. What are the distinct impacts of such contexts? What are the health indicators of combined workplaces (e.g., Surma et al, 2021)?

2. With an ever more hybrid and dispersed workforce, how can leaders use technology to support their own welfare and productivity, and that of others? How can they avoid technostress (Korzynski et al, 2021)?
3. Organisations are concerned that managers are able to notice signals that employees and peers are overworked (Hellwig et al, 2017). How can managers fulfil this with a hybrid or remote workforce – one not regularly seen face to face, without a screen in between?
4. The majority of wellbeing and health research focuses on employees. What kind of framework might be used to unpack the dimensions of health for managers and leadership development professionals? Does increased seniority and accountability support or hinder healthy and energised performance and leadership? Is a health focus really needed in building leadership capacity?
5. Organisations provide a large array of wellbeing support in the form of resources and specific wellbeing interventions that often fail (Rook, Adarves-Yorno & O'Brien, 2020). What are the strategic leadership considerations that create a holistic approach to employee wellbeing? How can collective leadership development, instead of or in addition to individual development, support healthy workplaces over the long term?
6. In a time of digital disruption, political and economic unrest, and environmental instability, how can leaders balance highly demanding, short-term work bursts with the challenges of long-term health requirements?
7. How can leadership development within the organisation have positive spill-over effects, where organisational members employ developed leadership capacity in other social spheres, such as families or community work (Hammond, Clapp-Smith & Palanski, 2017)?
8. Leadership development can be an emotionally demanding process. It can present as a stressful episode on top of existing multi-layered demands, challenging the individual's confidence (Vogel et al, 2021). Can leadership development cause detrimental health outcomes for the individual throughout their learning journey, such as undue stress? What does healthy leadership development look like?
9. Organisations have moved from corporate social responsibility to environmental, social and governance to diversity, equity and inclusion. How can leadership development theory and practice create purpose-rich leadership development practices that address society's grand challenges (such as health crises or climate change) that threaten healthy environments (Banks et al, 2016; Vogel et al, 2021)?

## SUBMISSIONS

This conference is for **academics and practitioners** who are interested in **creating leadership capacity for healthy organisations**. Our purpose is to create a meaningful dialogue between academics and practitioners by creating space for debate in the following three formats. However, participation in the conference is also possible without a submission.

1. **Leadership Learning and Development (LLD) Research and Theory:** Submissions to this stream should make contributions towards research and/or theory in leadership learning, development and education. In this stream, we would like to particularly encourage early career researchers and PhD students to submit their work.
2. **LLD Practical Workshops:** Submissions to this stream should be practically orientated and should be small workshops that explore innovative and creative techniques and tools used in leadership learning, development and education. Space and resources will be provided for explorations, so requirements, such as room size and time, should be made clear in the abstract/summary submitted.
3. **LLD Case Studies:** This submission stream is dedicated to those wishing to describe and explore examples of innovative and creative leadership learning, development and education.

While we encourage submissions linked to the conference theme, we also welcome work on any theme linked to research on leadership and allied fields.

Submissions to the conference should be in the form of a 750-word (excluding references) abstract and should be forwarded to the conference organisers from 1 January to 31 March 2023 at [c.rook@henley.ac.uk](mailto:c.rook@henley.ac.uk). The conference committee will consider abstracts after the deadline, and decisions are communicated within two weeks.

All submissions should include the following details on the cover page:

- Title
- Name of author(s)
- Organisation affiliation/position(s)
- Address
- Email address
- Topic area and stream
- Word count (excluding references)

All submissions should consist of:

- an abstract of 750 words
- a Word or PDF file

We will also offer a research incubator workshop, where participants can present early research ideas and get feedback on the idea, suggestions for relevant related work and possible journals from senior faculty.

## KEY CONFERENCE INFORMATION

### Conference Venue:

Henley Business School, Greenlands, UK

### Conference Registration Fee:

- Early bird rate (including conference dinner) until 14 April 2023 – £325 per person
- Standard registration (including conference dinner) from 15 April 2023 – £375 per person
- Student fee (subject to availability) – £245 per person

### Conference Contact:

Please refer all initial queries regarding the conference and your abstract submission to Dr Caroline Rook, [c.rook@henley.ac.uk](mailto:c.rook@henley.ac.uk)

## KEYNOTE AND PANEL SPEAKERS

DLCC 2023 bring together in key notes and panel discussions some of the top academics and practitioners in their field who share and discuss their work and leadership challenges. See the conference website for more details.

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