



Tips for Using *Ideas Into Action #8: Exploring the Psychological Leadership Resources* to Strengthen Leadership Practice

1. Find out what's in this resource and then focus on what you want to learn first.

Refer to the "WHAT'S INSIDE" column on page 2 which lists four main parts:

- **Part A** – The 'Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs)' section highlights the importance of the three categories of PLRs – cognitive, social, and psychological – in the effective enactment of the leadership practices of the [Ontario Leadership Framework \(OLF\)](#).
- **Part B** – 'Digging Deeper' offers a sampling of research to provide an evidence base for the four psychological PLRs – optimism, self-efficacy, resilience and proactivity.
- **Part C** – suggests 'ten proven strategies' that include one or more approaches for developing and strengthening our psychological PLRs.
- **Part D** – provides an annotated list of relevant resources for further reading.

2. Become familiar with the evidence base and then apply the strategies to real-life leadership scenarios.

One way to learn about the approaches suggested in the ten strategies is to try them out by applying them to actual leadership situations. Page two of this tip sheet offers ten possible approaches. Work on your own and/or find a partner or two to collaborate on the application.

Scenario One:

The newly appointed principal of an urban secondary school knows the former principal used a department level budget development process which created tensions among the department heads. This principal, who is known to be a strong instructional leader, admits that the site-based administrator aspects of the job will be challenging and is seeking advice from her school superintendent about giving up control of the budget development process.

Scenario Two: A principal of a mid-sized elementary school studies the school's performance in literacy and mathematics with a view to using the recently appointed Math coach to the best advantage. The principal notes that the students in one teacher's class regularly show weaker performance in Math than others and finds her unreceptive to feedback. The principal is thinking about assigning the coach to work with this teacher.

Exploring the Psychological PLRs

Purpose: Gain an understanding of evidence-based perspectives of the psychological PLRs by applying strategies to leadership in real-life contexts

Process:

- Read the scenario.
- Identify the problem.
- Decide who is involved and what their roles are.
- Try out one or more of the approaches listed on page 2 with the goal of finding possible solutions to the problem.
- Assess the outcome(s).
- Reflect on how the psychological PLRs can contribute to a positive outcome and what you learned.

3. Write Your Own Scenario:

- What's an event or issue you're facing right now? Why is it a problem?
- Who else is involved and how? What are their roles?
- What are the circumstances that led to the problem?

Try these approaches to test their effectiveness in using your psychological PLRs to bring about a possible solution to the problems in the scenarios.

1. **Regulate Optimism and Pessimism:** How would using the A-B-C-D-E approach to adjust your explanatory style result in a better outcome for this scenario? Page 13.
2. **Cultivate Self- and Collective Efficacy:** Which of the four influencers of efficacy beliefs will help improve the situation? Pages 14 to 15
3. **Choose Resilience:** Consider how boosting resilience – your own and that of those involved – be part of the solution? Page 18
4. **Grow Proactivity:** Take time to “listen” to the language used – yours and that of those involved – in coming to an agreement about next steps to addressing the issue at hand. Record what you recall with the goal of revising it in future as needed. Page 20 to 21
5. **Know Oneself:** Take one of the self-assessment surveys and then reflect on the findings. Consider their implications for reaching a solution in the scenarios. Page 25.
6. **Develop Healthy, Effective Habits:** How does Duhigg's framework for changing habits apply to each person involved in the scenario? Page 27 to 29
7. **Succeed at Self-control:** Try McGonigal's five-minute meditation exercise as a strategy for preparing to deal with the problem? Page 31.
8. **Capitalize on Small Wins:** What are two or three possible small wins that you can apply to the situation? Pages 32 to 34
9. **Embrace the Happiness Advantage:** What relevance does Achor's happiness advantage have for the scenario? Pages 34 to 36
10. **Build a Culture of Confidence:** Think beyond the individual scenario and suggest how Kanter's prescription for organizations to deliver confidence can be applied to prevent similar scenarios from arising. Page 37.