



**Ontario Institute for Education Leadership**  
**L'Institut de leadership en éducation de l'Ontario**

*Ontario Leaders Collaborating for Student Achievement, Equity and Well-being*  
*La collaboration des leaders en Ontario assure la réussite, l'équité et le bien-être des élèves.*

**STRENGTHENING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL  
PERSONAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES (PLRs)**

**Reflective Manual for Self-Discovery  
For School Leaders**

**Module One:  
Psychological PLRs**

Optimism

Self-Efficacy

Resilience

Proactivity

## A REFLECTION FOR LEADERS

Optimism and hope refer to a belief – perhaps wish would be a better term or even motive – that in future good events and associated positive feelings will outweigh or be more likely than bad events and associated negative feelings.

Peterson and Seligman, 2004

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This Reflective Manual is a resource that is designed to support leaders in strengthening their Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs). It can be used by individuals on their own to facilitate personal reflection and help identify areas for growth. Working through the activities with the involvement of others such as colleagues, a facilitator or a mentor/coach will greatly enhance the learning.

**This is an open-ended professional learning resource that is enriched by what participants bring to the learning experience. With this in mind, participants are encouraged to draw on and apply their lived experiences and diverse backgrounds to help ensure that the learning is culturally relevant and responsive.**

It is recommended that this reflective manual be used with the PowerPoint presentations 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 which are posted on the Personal Leadership Resources section of the [IEL website](#).

There are several activities within this document that reference *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators* and the *Onward Workbook: Daily Activities to Cultivate your Emotional Resilience and Thrive* by Elena Aguilar. These are publications that educators find helpful in deepening their learning and development. Links to alternative resources that can be used instead of these publications are provided throughout the series.

KEY LEARNINGS

**ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK (OLF)**

The OLF was launched by the IEL in 2007.

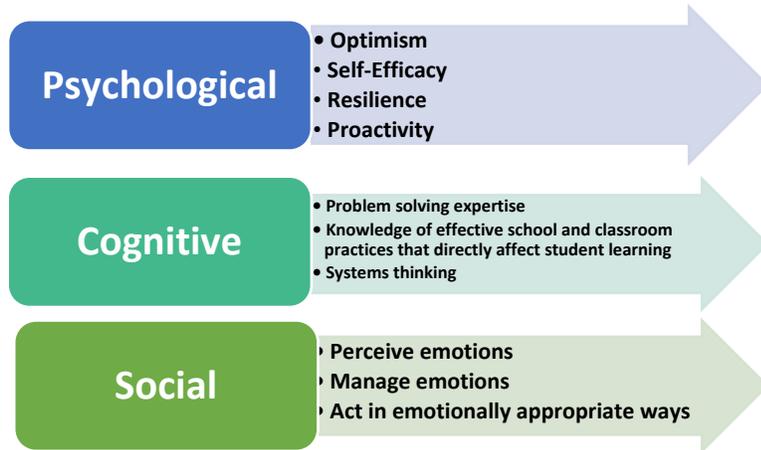
The OLF has several distinct purposes:

1. facilitate a shared vision of leadership in schools and districts;
2. promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school or system leader;
3. identify the practices, actions and traits or personal characteristics that describe effective leadership;
4. guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders;
5. identify the characteristics of highly performing schools and systems - K-12 School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) and District Effectiveness Framework (DEF)
6. aid in the recruitment, development, selection and retention of school and system leaders

[The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012 - with a Discussion of the Research Foundations](#)

**PART A: WHAT ARE PERSONAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES (PLRs)?**

At the foundation of the five domains of the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) are the Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs). The PLRs are research-based traits or qualities, which effective leaders possess. There are three categories: psychological, cognitive and social. Within each category there are several PLRs, which leaders can strengthen through focused/targeted learning and development.



**What are the Psychological (PLRs)?**

Optimism (I can do this)	Resilience (I will find a way when things get tough)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• habitually expecting positive results from our efforts</li> <li>• recognizing where we have, and do not have, opportunities for direct influence and control</li> <li>• taking positive risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being able to recover from, or adjust easily to, change or misfortune</li> <li>• being able to thrive in challenging circumstances</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Self-efficacy (I know I have the skills to do this!)	Proactivity (I will do this, now!)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• believing in our own ability to perform a task or achieve a goal</li> <li>• as a result of positive self-efficacy, taking responsible risks, expending substantial effort, and persisting in the face of initial failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being able to stimulate and effectively manage change on a large scale under complex circumstances</li> <li>• showing initiative and perseverance in bringing about meaningful change</li> </ul>

[Ontario Leadership Framework \(OLF\)](#) A School and System Leader’s Guide to Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework into Action, page 24.

## EXPLORING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL PLRS

### Self-Assessment from the Ontario Institute for Education Leadership

1. Click on [Self-Assessment Tools](#).
2. Create a login and password.
3. Choose the relevant self-assessment tool.
4. Complete the section of the self-assessment tool on the Psychological PLRs.
5. Save your data and complete the reflection below.

### Follow-Up Reflection

Which Psychological PLR is your strongest? What evidence did you gather?

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Which Psychological PLR would you like to develop? Why?

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*I know God won't give me anything I can't handle. I just wish he didn't trust me so much.*

St. Teresa of Calcutta

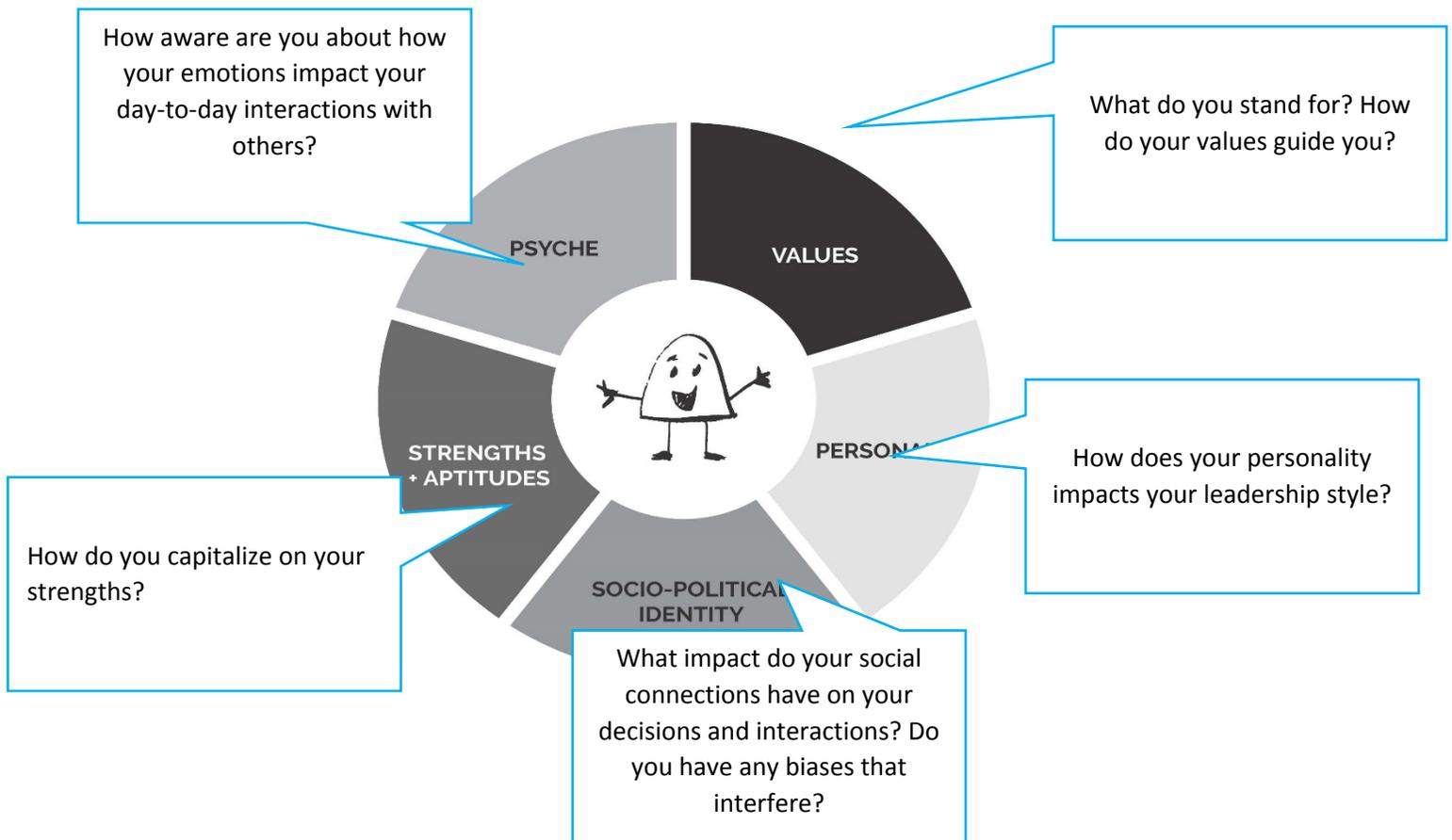
## KNOW YOURSELF

According to the Ideas into Action publication #8 [Exploring the “Psychological” Personal Leadership Resources Optimism, Self-Efficacy, Resilience & Proactivity](#) one of the strategies that applies to all four Psychological PLRs (optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, proactivity) is to “know oneself” (p.23).

*It is only with a heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.*

*Antoine DeSaint-Exupery*

### ELEMENTS OF SELF



Free downloadable tool from <http://www.onwardthebook.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Elements-of-Self.pdf>

**KNOWING YOURSELF:** The following activities (Core Values, Personality Type, Signature Strengths) will deepen your knowledge of several aspects of self. You may choose to refer to chapter one of *Onward* by Elena Aguilar and complete the activities in the *Onward Workbook*.

## CORE VALUES

View Core Values YouTube with Steve Kerr,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXEezjp-Df8>.

Complete the following activity from the *Onward Workbook: Core Values* (pp. 25-27) or complete this exercise below, which is also available as a downloadable tool from <http://www.onwardthebook.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Core-Values.pdf>

**IDENTIFYING CORE VALUES** These values apply to work and personal life. This is not an exhaustive list – you’re welcome to add your own. *Downloadable tool available from* <http://www.onwardthebook.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Core-Values.pdf>

### Process:

1. Circle your top ten values.
2. Narrow those down to five.
3. Narrow the five down to three.

Acceptance	Achievement	Adventure	Affection	Altruism	Ambition
Appreciation	Arts	Authenticity	Authority	Autonomy	Balance
Beauty	Belonging	Caring	Celebration	Challenge	Choice
Collaboration	Commitment	Community	Communication	Compassion	Connection
Contribution	Cooperation	Creativity	Democracy	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Equality	Equity	Excellence	Excitement	Expertise	Fame
Fairness	Faith	Family	Flexibility	Focus	Forgiveness
Freedom	Friendship	Fun	Goals	Gratitude	Growth
Happiness	Health	Helping Others		High Expectations	
Honesty	Hope	Humility	Humor	Imagination	Independence
Influence	Initiative	Integrity	Intuition	Interdependence	
Justice	Kindness	Knowledge	Leadership	Loyalty	Making a Difference
Meaningful Work		Mindfulness	Nature	Nurturing	Order
Passion	Personal Growth		Peace	Perseverance	Personal
Development	Pleasure	Positive Attitude		Pride	Productivity
Recognition	Reflection	Religion	Respect	Responsibility	Results
Risk Taking	Romance	Self-Expression	Self-Respect	Service	Sharing
Solitude	Spirituality	Success	Support	Team Work	Time
Tolerance	Togetherness	Tradition	Travel	Trust	Truth
Unity	Variety				

Consider sharing this tool with your staff. How can this knowledge improve your school?

## What is your Personality Type?

Complete the MBTI online at <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test> or read Onward, pp. 25-28 and complete the activity in the Onward Workbook *Myers-Briggs Personality Types, Parts 1&2* (pp. 17-22).

### Personality Type Descriptors

ISTP – Virtuoso	ESTP – Entrepreneur	ISFP – Adventurer	ESFP – Entertainer
INFP – Mediator	ENFP – Campaigner	INTP – Logician	ENTP – Debater
ISTJ – Logistician	ESTJ – Executive	ISFJ – Defender	ESFJ – Consult
INFJ – Advocate	ENFJ – Protagonist	INTJ – Architect	ENTJ – Commander

<https://www.16personalities.com/personality-types>

What is your personality acronym and descriptor?

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For further explanation on your personality type, visit:

<https://www.16personalities.com/personality-types>. View this video on the MBTI and leadership: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33YpaP7Eosc>.

Explain how some of the characteristics of your personality type impact you as a leader.

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## Signature Strengths

Complete the Signature Strengths Survey <http://www.viacharacter.org> or read Onward, pp. 32-34 and complete the activity in the Onward Workbook: *Signature Strengths* (p. 52).

What are your three main strengths?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

As a leader, how do you demonstrate your three main strengths?

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## STRATEGIES TO HELP SUPPORT EACH OF YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL PLRS

Leaders develop natural strategies to help navigate their daily challenges. The strategies listed below express lived experiences and are provided to help strengthen your Psychological PLRs. They complement the evidence-based strategies listed in *Ideas into Action*, [Exploring the Psychological Personal Leadership Resources: Optimism, Self-Efficacy, Resilience & Proactivity](#). These will be useful as you develop your personal growth plan.

### Optimism

**Look for the Good in Others and Praise it** – When we consciously seek to find the good in others, it places us in a space of empathy and compassion. If we are actively looking for the positive in others, it shifts our perspective and helps us maintain optimism. When we apply praise with authenticity, we build trust.

**Savour, absorb, and really pay attention to the good things you notice** - “Be open. Give yourself permission and time to experience the richness of the present moment. Develop ‘mindful awareness’ by tuning into and appreciating your direct sensory experiences.” ~ Fredrickson, 2009

**Keep a Gratitude Journal** – One way to shift to a more optimistic view of life is to list all the things for which we are grateful. Some people like to use this as an end of day review, aiding them in relaxing before sleep. Others like to use it to start their day, creating a positive reminder for the goodness that is in their lives.

### Self-Efficacy

**Leverage your Strengths** – To improve your belief in your abilities, take on activities that help boost your understanding of your skill-set. For example, if you are a great motivator, apply your ability to inspire others into encouraging completion of a small task that can be built upon to bring about lasting change.

**Take Appropriate Risks** – When venturing into new territory, allow yourself to be vulnerable. For example, you might consider sharing that you are trying something new with your staff, or exploring one of your weaker strengths with a mentor. If you

are not much of a risk taker, start slowly by surrounding yourself with your biggest supporters.

**If at first you don't succeed, try, try again** – This adage about trying again when we fail is an important component of developing self-efficacy. However, this takes courage and a willingness to ask for support. It is important to realize that we are not alone and need others.

## Resilience

**Actively Pursue Self-Improvement** – The better you know yourself, the better you will be able to access your gifts and strengths when things get tough. Ask close friends/colleagues to help you identify your strengths. Take a course, whether it is for professional development or personal interest. Read. Get to know people.

**Develop a Self-Care Plan** – What do you do to help you become the best version of yourself? Think of yourself holistically - physical, mental, socio-emotional, and spiritual. Develop a plan to ensure you have good nutrition, adequate rest, copious amounts of water, and daily exercise to support your physical body. To support your mental and socio-emotional health, make connections with others – build your community, reframe any self-limiting thoughts, and learn how to express your emotions in an appropriate manner. For spiritual health, connect with your personal experiences of meditation, exploring nature or other spiritual practices. If you take good care of yourself, it is much easier to recover from or adjust to difficult situations.

**Celebrate the Small Victories** – To thrive in challenging circumstances, we need to celebrate the small steps we take along the way. Not every outcome will end in our favour. However, the skills we gain and the lessons we learn are priceless opportunities for our growth.

## Proactivity

**Develop a Growth Mindset** – According to Dweck (2015), hard work and dedication are key to help us develop our most basic abilities. Through using these key components, we build trust in our capacity to stimulate and manage large scale change. As we take risks, succeed/fail, and learn from our experiences, we create a stronger belief in our aptitude to grow and change.

**Set SMART (Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Realistic/Relevant-Time-based) Goals** – When we set measurable goals, we tend to achieve them with more precision. This strategy is especially effective for helping us manage complex circumstances. SMART Goals are easy to shift as new information becomes available. They are essential to create meaningful change.

**Be Solution-Oriented** – As leaders, problems constantly arise. When we are solution-oriented, as opposed to problem oriented, we create a proactive mindset. We focus on positive outcomes and use backwards design principles to reach optimum resolutions.

## CONNECTING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PLRs TO KNOWING YOURSELF

The purpose of this activity is to help you gather tools and strategies to strengthen your Psychological PLRs.

1. Review the Psychological PLRs section of the [IEL Self-Assessment tool](#)
2. Update your data if necessary
3. Refer to your personal reflections on values, strengths, and personalities. Choose an area of focus for your growth in each area. See example below
4. Choose a tool that will assist you in addressing your concern.
5. Refer to *Ideas into Action*, Exploring the Psychological Personal Leadership Resources: Optimism, Self-Efficacy, Resilience & Proactivity, the information in the Reflective Manual, completed activities in the Onward Workbook, and personal experience.
6. In completing the template provided below, consider working with a partner, a coach or mentor to help foster continued growth in these areas.

### EXAMPLE:

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE		VALUES	STRENGTHS	PERSONALITY
<b>Optimism</b> • habitually expecting positive results from our efforts • recognizing where we have, and do not have, opportunities for direct influence and control • taking positive risks	FOCUS	One of my values is that I want to make a difference.	One of my main strengths is teamwork.	The strongest aspect of my MBTI was feeling.
	CONCERN	At times, I worry I can never do enough. This leads me to feelings of burnout.	I like working in teams, but my personality is so strong, I take over when I should let others lead.	At times I feel too deeply. This can lead me to lose my sense of perspective.
	TOOL	My plan is to use the ABCDE Strategy (Adversity, Beliefs, Consequences, Disputation, Energization found in <i>Ideas into Action</i> - p.13) to push through tough times and find optimism.	I need to follow the strategy “Look to the good in others and praise it.” This will help me recognize the gifts in others and let them develop their strengths.	Use mindfulness techniques like meditation or conscious breathing to separate myself from the situation and regain my optimism.

## Tools and Strategies to Strengthen your Psychological PLRs

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE		VALUES	STRENGTHS	PERSONALITY
<b>Optimism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• habitually expecting positive results from our efforts</li> <li>• recognizing where we have, and do not have, opportunities for direct influence and control</li> <li>• taking positive risks</li> </ul>	FOCUS			
	CONCERN			
	TOOL			
<b>Self-efficacy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• believing in our own ability to perform a task or achieve a goal</li> <li>• as a result of positive self-efficacy, taking responsible risks, expending substantial effort, and persisting in the face of initial failure</li> </ul>	FOCUS			
	CONCERN			
	TOOL			

## Strengthening Your Psychological PLRs

LEADERSHIP RESOURCE		VALUES	STRENGTHS	PERSONALITY
<b>Resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being able to recover from, or adjust easily to, change or misfortune</li> <li>• being able to thrive in challenging circumstances</li> </ul>	FOCUS			
	CONCERN			
	TOOL			
<b>Proactivity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being able to stimulate and effectively manage change on a large scale under complex circumstances</li> <li>• showing initiative and perseverance in bringing about meaningful change</li> </ul>	FOCUS			
	CONCERN			
	TOOL			