Developing **Compassionate Leaders: Evidence, Impact** and **Organisational Benefits**

Creating Compassion WITH Dr. Amanda Super

Leadership under pressure

Leaders and managers are operating in increasingly demanding environments characterised by **high workloads**, **constant change**, **digital overload** and **growing expectations**. When leaders are under pressure, the impact extends beyond the individual. It can influence **team performance**, **employee wellbeing**, **engagement**, **retention** and **organisational culture**. Supporting leaders to navigate these challenges effectively has become an increasingly important organisational priority.

71% of leaders report **increased stress** since stepping into their current leadership role.[1]

69% of employees say their manager impacts their **mental health** as much as their spouse or partner.[2]

32% lower productivity is experienced by teams with **ineffective managers**.[3]

One in three employees have left a job because of **poor management**.[4]

43% of organisations report a **lack of line manager skills** and **confidence** as a significant organisational challenge.[5]

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The impact of Compassionate Leadership

Self-compassion provides an important foundation for compassionate leadership. Developing self-compassion can help leaders and managers strengthen their **wellbeing**, **resilience** and **leadership effectiveness**. These capabilities help leaders **navigate pressure**, **build stronger relationships**, **support their teams** and **respond more effectively** to change in today's workplace.

Research shows **self-compassion** is associated with **improved wellbeing** and **lower levels of stress**, **emotional exhaustion** and **burnout**.[6]

Research suggests that **self-compassion** plays an important role in how **leaders support themselves and others** in the workplace. In turn, **compassionate leadership** can influence **organisational culture**, **employee experience** and **workplace performance**.

Leadership is recognised as an **important influence** on **organisational culture**[7] and creating a **compassionate culture at work** is linked with **lower levels of absenteeism** and **improved job satisfaction**, **retention** and both **individual** and **team performance**.[8]

Leaders who practice compassion create **supportive**, **collaborative** and **inclusive** workplaces where people feel **valued**, **connected** and **engaged**.[9]

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Assessing the effectiveness of the Compassionate Leadership Coaching Programme

An evaluation was conducted to assess the impact and effectiveness of the **Compassionate Leadership Coaching Programme**.

This Programme consists of:

Six small group live online **coaching sessions** over a six month period with an expert in the field of **occupational psychology** and **compassionate leadership development**.

Five online **training webinars** providing a full grounding in the theory and practice of **self-compassion** and **compassionate leadership** including tasks and reflection exercises to embed personal practice.

Action planning and a focus on bringing self-compassion and compassionate leadership to **work**, **team** and **organisation**.

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173 senior leaders from a range of UK based organisations took part in the evaluation study between 2020 and 2023.

Using **valid and reliable psychometric measures**, each individual was assessed on:

Self-Compassion **Mental Wellbeing**

prior to the start of the Programme and after the fourth coaching session. All individuals also completed a quantitative and qualitative evaluation questionnaire.

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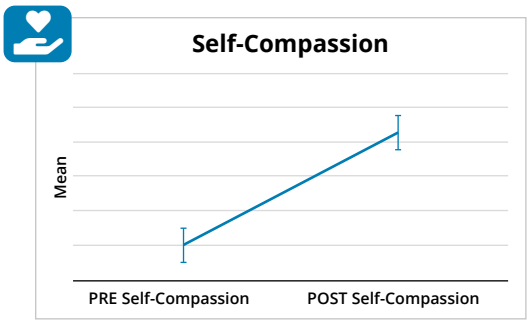
Programme Impact

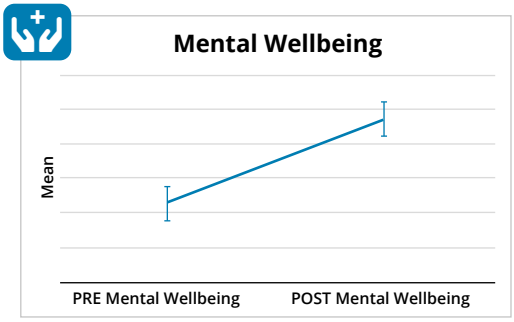
The programme helped me support my team more effectively, build stronger relationships and improve team performance.

The evaluation found significant improvements in participants' **self-compassion** and **mental wellbeing**, alongside high levels of **satisfaction** and **recommendation**.

Results showed:

- The programme **significantly increased** participants' scores on all the sub-scales as well as the overall scores on the **Self-Compassion Scale** ($p<0.001$) and the **Mental Wellbeing Scale** ($p<0.001$).
- **The Compassionate Leadership Coaching Programme** displayed an overall **large effect size** (d=0.98) on self-compassion and mental wellbeing.





- **The Evaluation Questionnaire** showed participants reported the **highest satisfaction ratings** for group coaching sessions (95%), webinar content (89%), programme materials (79%), programme process (94%) and application to their role and workplace (80%).
- **98% of participants** would **recommend the Compassionate Leadership Coaching Programme** to colleagues and other leaders and managers.

Highly Commended by the Association for Business Psychology for Excellence in Leadership Development.

I am more confident and effective as a leader now, particularly when navigating uncertainty, change and competing demands.

1. DDI (2025) *Global Leadership Forecast.*
2. The Workforce Institute at UKG & Workplace Intelligence (2023) *Mental Health at Work: Managers and Money.*
3. McKinsey & Company (2024) *The State of Organizations*.
4. Chartered Management Institute (2023) *CMI/YouGov Survey of 4,500 UK Managers and Workers*.
5. CIPD (2025) *Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey.*
6. MacBeth, A. and Gumley, A. (2012). Exploring Compassion: A Meta-Analysis of the Association Between Self-Compassion and Psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 32(6), pp. 545–552.
7. Schein, E. (2010) *Organizational Culture and Leadership (Vol 2)*. John Wiley & Sons.
8. Harvard Business Review (2023) *Leading with Compassion has Research-Backed Benefits.*
9. Ramachandran, S., Balasubramanian, S., James, W.F. and Al Masaeid, T. (2023) Whither compassionate leadership? A systematic review. *Management Review Quarterly*, pp.1-85.