CHAPTER 4

A MORE COMPASSIONATE MODE OF UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

University leadership is responsible for creating a positive and healthy environment for students and academic staff. As argued by Waddington (2018), university leaders have both a moral and legal obligation to protect all members of their institution from physical and emotional harm. Moreover, university leaders must uphold shared values such as a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and freedom of expression (Dearing and National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997) and foster a culture of collegiality and compassion in higher education. Such shared values not only benefit academic staff but also enhance the quality of teaching for students and the community as a whole (Waddington, 2021).

Unfortunately, university leadership often fails to provide a peaceful working environment for staff members, including academic staff and students (Maratos et al., 2019). Over the past decade, universities have confronted a wide range of challenges and pressures triggered by the dramatic neoliberal shift in modern society (Dinh et al., 2021). Specifically, the higher education landscape has become increasingly competitive, complex, and uncertain, resulting in a crisis in university leadership (Denney, 2020; Maratos et al., 2019; Waddington, 2021). Previous research has indicated that increasing market competition, managerialism, performance measurement, bullying and harassment, excessive workload pressure,

and high levels of hopelessness and dissatisfaction among academic staff have contributed to an increase in the risk of mental health difficulties such as anxiety, depression, burnout and turnover (Bush, 2018; Denney, 2020; Kinman, 2001; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Urbina-Garcia, 2020; Shen & Slater, 2021; Waddington, 2016; Wallmark et al., 2013). Furthermore, it has been observed that poor university leadership often serves as a catalyst for these factors and exacerbates mental health concerns among academic staff (Richards, 2012).

One benefit of a crisis is its potential to provide a fresh perspective and instigate change. Longmuir's (2021) research on educational leadership in the COVID-19 pandemic, published in the *Academy of Management Learning and Education,* observed a shift towards compassionate educational leadership during the crisis. Longmuir conveys hope that compassionate leadership can become the new normal in education, stating, 'Promisingly, these leaders optimistically looked to a post-pandemic future that may build upon the disruptions that originally seemed threatening and dangerous but were made sense of in ways that could open new opportunities for schools' (p. 15). Responding to Longmuir's call for normalising a new compassionate approach to leadership, this chapter aims to provide a framework for leading with compassion in higher education during times of normalcy.

Educational institutions have the potential to become places of compassionate care for all academic members and students (Waddington, 2016, 2021). To further this agenda, we draw on the organisational compassion literature to argue for a more compassionate leadership approach in universities. Organisational compassion, defined as a dynamic interpersonal process that involves noticing, feeling, sensemaking, and taking action to alleviate suffering within an organisation (Dutton et al., 2014; Worline & Dutton, 2017), is a concept that could be integrated into all aspects of university life (Waddington, 2021). By cultivating compassion, leaders can alleviate the current state of suffering in universities. Compassionate leaders play a critical role in facilitating the cultivation of compassion relations within their organisations by serving as role models of compassion, providing resources that promote a culture of compassion, and responding to the suffering of those under their care (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Organisational leadership is a complex and dynamic process (Oruh et al., 2021) that involves planning, coordinating, supporting, and inspiring others to collectively achieve organisational goals (Inman, 2011; Jooste et al., 2018; Simpson et al., 2019, 2020). When it comes to leading with compassion in higher education, it goes beyond individual actions. It requires for leaders to recognise the factors causing suffering in today's higher education systems and structures and implement processes to support the transition towards more compassionate modes of organising, engaging, and working. As such we adopt the viewpoint that leading with compassion in higher education entails leveraging the mechanisms that can drive organisational transformation from being 'anxiety machines' that disregard stress prevention (Morrish, 2019, p. 14) and that negatively impact the physical health, emotional well-being, quality of social relationships, and cognitive performance of academic staff (Denney, 2020, 2021; Waddington, 2016). Leading with compassion in higher education is about reshaping educational institutions as places that foster collaboration, communication, transparency,

and honesty, and emphasise working together instead of solely focusing on competition (Wilkinson & Male, 2023).

To advance the agenda of promoting a more compassionate higher education environment, we propose compassionate leadership model that can guide the allocation of resources to alleviate avoidable suffering while showing kindness towards those experiencing unavoidable types of suffering (Kanov, 2021). Despite its importance, there is a lack of research on compassionate leadership in higher education (Longmuir, 2021). Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to develop an argument for compassionate leadership in higher education, focusing on how it is identified and expressed, as well as what factors facilitate or inhibit its integration into university leadership. The central research question guiding our analysis is: What specific organisational mechanisms can leaders leverage to cultivate compassion in higher education institutions? The chapter is structured as follows: the first section discusses the challenges facing university leadership, followed by the second section, which explores an approach of compassionate leadership in higher education. In the final section, we will propose a model that outlines how leaders can promote compassion in higher education by influencing various organisational mechanisms as leavers that either impede or facilitate compassion relations. Our model contributes new insights to the limited existing literature on compassionate leadership and higher education.

THE IMPACT OF NEOLIBERAL MANAGERIALISM ON HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Universities are some of the oldest institutions in the world, and leadership has historically played an important role in ensuring their survival, through political battles, disputes over religion, pandemics, and various other crises. Universities thus have a long history of resilience and endurance, shaping the future by educating future generations and generating cutting-edge research (Flückiger, 2021). To remain competitive, universities must consistently innovate while staying true to their core values and primary missions of teaching and research. This requires them to reinvent themselves without losing sight of their purpose and to actively engage with the world, anticipating and adapting to changes in order to stay relevant and impactful (Flückiger, 2021). However, the current experience of many universities reveals a departure from the traditional role of university leadership, which has been to support positive environments for knowledge creation, cultural transmission, free thought, and the pursuit of truth (Flückiger, 2021; Waddington, 2021). This departure is mainly due to the challenges posed by neoliberal managerialism.

Challenges of neoliberal managerialism. Higher education is facing tremendous challenges (Chan, 2016) as the landscape shifts to a global atmosphere of competitiveness, complexity, and uncertainty (Denney, 2020; Maratos et al., 2019; Waddington, 2021). Since the 1970s, neoliberalism has taken shape (Radice, 2013; Tight, 2019), leading to constant change and instability in higher education (Denney, 2021; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). This change has been associated with

four shifts in capitalism's political economy, including privatisation, deregulation, financialisation, and globalisation. It was linked to the political rule of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA (Fournier & Grey, 2000; Radice, 2013). As Benatar et al. (2018) point out the neoliberal paradigm has unique negative impacts, notably on growing poverty, and inequality as well as the ongoing commercialisation of social life and components of education systems and values. Radice (2013) argues that neoliberalism has turned into new managerialism in the public sector. In higher education, the term 'new managerialism' refers to public sector institutions adopting private business sector organisational structures, technologies, management practices, and values (Deem, 1998). The result of this neoliberal turn has been the imposition of the private sector values, structures, and procedures on the public sector through a unique combination of hierarchical control and the 'so-called free market' (Radice, 2013, p. 408). A shift is noted from offering cultural, political, business, and professional education to contributing marketable skills and research outputs to the 'Knowledge economy' (Radice, 2013, p. 408). Deem (1998) observes that some of the approaches highlighted by new managerialist scholars include staff rivalry; the marketisation of public sector services, particularly in the context of universities; and the monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness through measurement of outcomes and staff performance, particularly of academic members. Performativity in the management of academic labour is an important aspect of the new managerialism concept. An effect of the detailed measurement of academic members' performance is the transformation of the academic community's collegial culture into a competitive new managerialism culture (Cowen, 1996).

Gender issues. Cultural changes in higher education are particularly challenging for female educators. The underlying systems, structures, procedures, and cultures of higher education institutions tend to be inherently masculine. The combination of masculine higher education institutions with the performativity of neoliberalism has created a toxic environment for academic women's progression to senior leadership roles (Denney, 2021; Richards, 2012). A further effect of stifled female leadership progression is the reinforcing of gender inequality issues in higher education institutions. The detrimental effect of managerialism is by no means limited to women's issues.

Diminished quality of university life. Neoliberal managerialism logic tends to prioritise bureaucratic processes over educational goals (Bush, 2018), resulting in a significant negative impact on academic life (Smith & Ulus, 2020). This has led to growing market competition between universities, viewing students as consumers, frequent performance measurement, an intense situation of persistent bullying and harassment, continuous workload pressure, poor university leadership, and frighteningly high levels of hopelessness and dissatisfaction amongst faculty (Denney, 2020; Kinman, 2001; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Shen & Slater, 2021; Urbina-Garcia, 2020; Waddington, 2016; Wallmark et al., 2013). The risk of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and burnout among academic members has increased as a result of these factors (Morrish, 2019; Shen & Slater, 2021; Urbina-Garcia, 2020), creating a toxic university working environment (Denney, 2020, 2021; Waddington, 2016). This situation not only brings academic

members to experience suffering at work, with diminished cognitive performance, compromised physical and emotional well-being, and a decline in quality of social interactions, but it also suggests the need for a different type of university leadership – one that is attuned to the suffering of academics, staff, and students.

SEEDING COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Current challenges in higher education and the perceived crisis in university leadership have awakened a growing determination to plant seeds of a more compassionate leadership approach. Organisational scholars have identified ten mechanisms that significantly contribute to the cultivation of organisational compassion, with leadership being one of them. In particular, culture, routines, roles, social networks, and stories told are five social architecture factors that compassionate leaders can focus on to enhance organisational compassion capabilities (Dutton et al., 2006, 2014; Worline & Dutton, 2017). We argue that leadership is perhaps the most important organisational compassion mechanism, as leaders significantly influence the extent to which the other mechanisms may be deployed or undermined.

The organisational literature discusses compassion as more than a mere feeling or emotion but rather as a dynamic interpersonal and collective processes (Anstiss et al., 2020; Goetz et al., 2010; Stellar et al., 2017; Strauss et al., 2016; Waddington, 2021; Worline & Dutton, 2017), conceived as having emotional, cognitive, behavioural, social, and organisational aspects. In this literature, compassion is defined as a dynamic interpersonal and even collective process that entails noticing the presence of suffering, feeling the suffering of those affected, sensemaking as to its causes and effects, and taking action to alleviate the distress (Dutton et al., 2014; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Building on this work, Simpson et al.'s (2019, 2020) NEAR mechanisms model of organisational compassion, which integrates practices of Noticing, Empathising, Appraising, and Responding to suffering with facilitative organisational mechanisms, suggests a useful framework for cultivating organisational compassion as a systematic, and consciously managed organisational practice.

In this paper, we draw on this model to further elucidate the role of leadership in the cultivation and promotion of workplace compassion, particularly within the higher education context. Leaders have the resources and the influence to promote compassion and make meaning in the institutions they lead (Dutton et al., 2006; Simpson, 2021; Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017). In times of crisis and challenge, as universities are currently facing, compassionate leaders can play a vital role in alleviating suffering in the institutions they lead (Evans, 2022). They can start the healing process by role modelling compassionate behaviour through their presence, leading processes of sensemaking and providing resources to take action in addressing the distress (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

An important initial step in healing is noticing distress. Compassionate leaders play a crucial role in fostering an environment where academic members can openly discuss their distress. By encouraging a culture of openness and trust,

leaders can empower employees to support one another through compassionate actions either with words, presence, or in providing tangible support, such as making available existing resources or coordinating to generate new resources. Such empowerment leads to the cultivation of a collective capacity for compassion, which is crucial during difficult times. These examples indicate that compassionate leadership involves more than showing personal compassion and caring for a colleague or dependent in need (Dutton et al., 2002; Poorkavoos, 2016).

Effective compassionate leaders in the university context not only embody compassion in their personal leadership style (West, 2019), but who also integrate compassion into organisational processes (Simpson, 2021; Simpson et al., 2023).

Research findings show that cultivating organisational compassion has numerous benefits for both individuals and organisations (Simpson et al., 2020), such as higher levels of positive emotions, employee loyalty, affective commitment within an organisation, and high-quality connection among members of the organisation (Lilius et al., 2008, 2011) as well as a strengthened sense of authenticity (Ko & Choi, 2020). Thus, organisational compassion practices hold much promise for alleviating suffering and addressing high levels of staff burnout, anxiety and turnover (Simpson et al., 2020) in the higher education sector.

Given the ongoing crisis in higher education and the leadership crisis at universities, effective compassionate leaders should be capable of recognising the aspects of the existing higher education system and structures that cause suffering. Adopting novel approaches and promoting compassion practices at a systemic level within university structures can help create a more supportive and inclusive environment. Cultivating legitimacy aspects that combine inclusiveness with rationality and idealism with pragmatism (Simpson et al., 2022), can help leaders sustain a dynamic balance between these seemingly contradictory dimensions to promote the university community's overall resource stability, growth and renewal. In the following sections, we theorise some practical strategies that compassionate leaders can adopt to promote compassion practices at a systemic level by leveraging mechanisms identified in the literature as levers for promoting or inhibiting compassion relations (Dutton et al., 2006).

COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL COMPASSION MECHANISMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Compassionate leadership can leverage specific organisational compassion mechanisms to foster a culture of compassion in higher education. Organisational scholars Dutton et al. (2006) identified ten organisational mechanisms (six classified as social architecture and four classified as compassion competencies) that significantly contribute to the cultivation of organisational compassion. Leadership is one of the mechanisms associated with social architecture along with *organisational culture, routines, roles, social networks,* and *stories told.* Simpson et al. (2020) further expanded on this idea to associate the six mechanisms of social architecture with the compassion subprocesses of noticing, emphasising, and

appraising suffering (NEA). Additionally, they associate four compassion competencies are *speed, scope, customisation,* and *scale,* with the responding (R) compassion subprocess, completing the NEAR process.

We argue that higher education leadership should focus on these mechanisms as levers to systematically embed compassion practices in the higher education context to both prevent avoidable suffering and quickly respond to unavoidable suffering. To illustrate this argument, we propose a model in Fig. 1 that outlines compassionate leadership's influence over these mechanisms to promote compassion in higher education. In the following sections, we describe the mechanisms of social architecture related to NEA and the mechanisms of compassion competencies related to R. We also highlight the role of compassionate leadership in promoting these mechanisms.

Mechanisms of Social Architecture

Compassionate leadership is a critical aspect of enhancing compassion capabilities within universities, aiming to both prevent avoidable suffering and expedite responses to unavoidable suffering among students, staff, and academics. Emphasising its relevance in preventing avoidable suffering (while also addressing unavoidable forms of suffering), compassionate leaders prioritise enhancing five mechanisms of social architecture: culture, routines, roles, social networks, and stories told. Each of these mechanisms can be calibrated to facilitate more effective noticing, empathising, and appraising of suffering within the higher education context. We discuss each of these mechanisms in turn as follows.

Organisational Culture. Culture is an important explanatory organisational concept (Schein, 2010) that refers to the combination of the members' shared patterns of meaning, beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020). It can be observed at three levels: artefacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. Artefacts include visible organisational structures and processes such as an institution's physical environment, the architecture of university buildings, interior design, landscapes, technologies, and uniforms. Espoused values include organisational' strategies, goals, and philosophies such as value statements, code of conduct, mission statements. Basic assumptions are the unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, values, and feelings that underpin an organisation's culture (Schein, 2010). Level one, artefacts, is the most visible. Level two, espoused values, and beliefs are found in published organisational statements on websites, annual reports, policy documents, and training material. Level three, basic assumptions, are the most difficult to observe and define (Schein, 2010).

Compassionate leaders can play a significant role in shaping espoused values and basic assumptions, which are critical aspects of a university's culture that influence compassion competence. When cultures promote the inherent value, capability, and deservingness of all humans, members are more likely to interpret pain generously and engage in compassionate action. Organisational cultures that support compassion competence are characterised by humanistic values such as respect, teamwork, collaboration, inclusiveness, stewardship, dignity, and fairness.
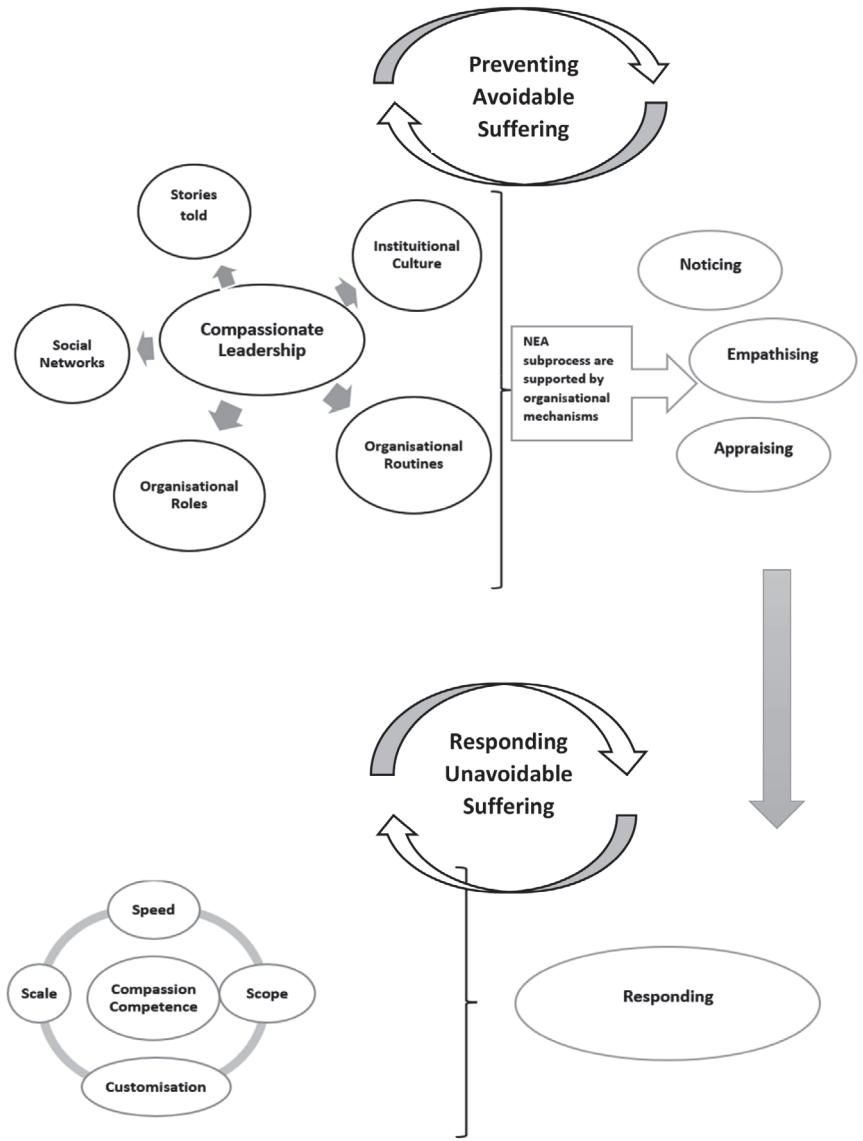
Fig. 1.   Compassionate Leadership and Organisational Compassion
Mechanisms in Higher Education.

To promote a compassionate organisational culture, compassionate leaders should articulate and support values, beliefs, and norms that support human well-being, dignity, respect, and inclusion for all members of the academic community (Worline & Dutton, 2017). As Schein (2010) noted, leadership and culture often

go hand in hand, and compassionate leadership can have a significant impact on developing a compassionate institutional culture. Compassionate leadership can shape the culture of their university through their leadership behaviour and the structures, routines, rules, and norms that they help to implement individually and collectively (Schein, 2010; West, 2021a).

Institutional Routines. Organisational routines are the repetitive patterns of behaviour that leaders and members perform within universities, such as hiring, training, budgeting, decision-making, and performance evaluation (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Feldman & Rafaeli, 2002). As leaders possess both influence and power, they have the authority to legitimise compassion in all aspects of university routines and policies (West, 2021b). Recent organisational compassion scholarship suggests that values of care and compassion can be systemised and included in all elements of these routines through policy and regulation frameworks (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

As an example, Simpson et al. (2019) argue that compassion capabilities of potential candidates can be assessed during the recruitment process through quantitative scales and qualitative semi-structured interviews. Organisational induction and training sessions can also include courses on fostering *NEAR* (Noticing, Empathising, Assessing, Responding) organisational compassion capacity. Additionally, recognition, reward, and promotion criteria may integrate compassion, allowing employees who demonstrate caring behaviours towards faculty colleagues and students to be publicly recognised and promoted into leadership roles. Performance evaluation and review processes may refer to expectations of compassionate behaviour, but it is crucial that compassion is recognised as an ongoing practice rather than a singular incident leading up to the review and promotion process. Integrating compassion into routines establishes it as a default practice that informs behaviour in moments of suffering when compassion is needed most. Otherwise, individuals and organisations may struggle to exhibit genuine compassion during times of crisis (Simpson et al., 2013).

Institutional Roles. Organisational roles refer to the expected patterns of behaviour that are associated with specific positions within an organisation (Katz & Kahn, 1978). These roles are social constructs that identify a person with a particular position inside an organisation. Personal behaviour is influenced by internalised role expectations that are reinforced through social interactions (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017). When roles are designed to include care and compassion as core responsibilities, they can be powerful in generating compassionate support within a university (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Worline and Dutton (2017) distinguish between role-taking and role-making with respect to compassion competence. Role-taking refers to how roles are defined, formally formed, and communicated to new staff members within an organisation. Effective training can facilitate a quick understanding of these roles (Iannotti, 1978; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Simpson et al. (2019) suggest that by integrating concern for staff member well-being and compassion within role descriptions and performance goals, roles can be designed to foster organisational compassion. Compassionate leaders can play an active part in shaping their institutions' strategies (Taylor & Machado, 2006) to design roles to foster organisational

compassion by including the well-being and compassion in role descriptions and performance objectives. This strategy fosters in a sense of responsibility among academic members to take care of and support others as part of their job (Simpson et al., 2020).

On the other hand, role-making refers to how people create their own definitions and expectations for their role in response to social interactions and needs (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) use the term 'job crafting' (p. 180) to describe the process by which employees in the same role can innovate to bring their own personality and values into what they do. Employees create different or new responsibilities that they include in their positions. Furthermore, individuals also change the relationships they have on a regular basis as part of their job (Worline & Dutton, 2017). Job crafting is a creative and improvised process that reflects how employees change their employment locally in ways that develop and sustain a valid definition of what they do and who they are at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Hence, all university employees, including leaders, who may not explicitly have compassion expectations as part of their role descriptions, can choose to view caring for co-workers as an essential part of their job (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020).

Social Networks. Social networks refer to clusters of social relationships formed based on shared professional or personal interests, values, or proximity through working in the same division or on the same projects. These networks provide a platform that showcases patterns of communication between individuals that connect them based on trust and credibility (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Simpson et al., 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Social networks facilitate people's connections to each other through institutions, and in the same way, institutions are connected to each other through people. As such, the social structure that involves people and institutions has a dual dimension. In university, social interactions between individuals form a social structure (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003; Worline & Dutton, 2017) that facilitates the flow of advice and emotions through network links (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Compassionate leaders can promote strong university social networks to form high-quality connections (Dutton et al., 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017). People, including university leaders, who are well integrated into strong social networks are much more likely to notice, empathise, and appraise indicators of suffering among other members in their network (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020). The faster and easier it is to exchange information, the stronger the network becomes. This information regarding suffering is communicated promptly, making coordinated action more feasible and likely (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Stories Told. Organisation's use storytelling to share values, expectations, and purpose, as well as to build a version of the future (Denning, 2005). Employees also tell stories to share knowledge, bond with each other, and build trust and commitment (Al-Hakim & Al-Ardi, 2021). As social constructions, organisations rely on symbols, stories, assumptions, and information that individuals interpret in common ways to maintain individual and collective identity (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Recent research has highlighted the importance of storytelling as a leadership tool, with storytelling skills becoming identified as a vital leadership skill (Denning, 2005). Leaders have the potential to inspire narratives within and outside of their organisations. Leaders' activities, experiences, and achievements provide a wealth of narrative sources from which stories might be created (Gabriel, 2005). Organisations function as meaning systems, where stories of employees exhibiting care in times of crisis serve to enhance the organisation's compassion competency and shape belief in the humanity of their employer and co-workers (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Denning (2005) identifies eight different types of narrative patterns that leaders can utilise: springboard stories (using narratives to inspire action and apply new ideas in the future); identity stories (using narratives to communicate who we are); organisation identity branding, and marketing stories (using narratives to communicate who the organisation is); values stories (using narratives to promote and transmit organisational values); community stories (using narratives to flourish collaboration); understood knowledge stories (using narratives to share knowledge); office politics stories (using narratives to neutralise gossip and rumour); and inspirational and vision stories (using narratives to lead people into the future). Although Denning (2005) has acknowledged eight different varieties of narratives within organisations, three types are most pertinent to developing organisational compassion competencies. Identity stories, organisation identity stories, and values stories form the shared understanding of three fundamental points: the type of workplace to work in, the kind of people they work with in that workplace, as well as the type of person they can be while working in that workplace (Worline & Dutton, 2017). When people hear and share stories of compassion in their workplace, they come to appreciate the university as a more compassionate environment, their colleagues as more compassionate people, and they start to realise they could be compassionate at work.

An empirical case study of a Big Ten University Business School (BTUBS) showed that sharing stories about victims' suffering from a fire that had destroyed the belongings and accommodation of three students increased the compassion competence of faculty and students. Learning about the fire motivated people to put contributions in a donation box that had been set up in the central café. Stories about how much money was raised in a short period of time started to circulate as well. These narratives enhanced people's perceptions of their workplace's compassion, accelerating the development and mobilisation of other resources, and increasing the amount of future donations, enabling the organisation to raise more money more quickly. Additionally, compassionate stories generated other ideas for resources that would be useful, resulting in a broader range of resources that were more customised, including fellow classmates banding together to create binders of course study notes, to replace those that had been lost in the fire.

University stories about compassion create enthusiasm among members for providing care and support. Compassionate leaders can play a key role in recognising, and retelling staff and student compassion episodes in speeches and encourage their inclusion in staff newsletters and other communication. Having discussed

how leaders of educational institutions can shape an institutional culture of care and compassion by influencing the social architecture of the organisations they lead – especially relevant for preventing avoidable suffering during times of normalcy – we next focus on how these leaders can enhance compassion competencies, particularly crucial for responding to unavoidable suffering during times of emergency.

COMPASSION COMPETENCIES

Compassion competencies are a collection of four organisational mechanisms that enable the effective delivery of compassionate responses to alleviate suffering that has already manifest. These are competencies of speed, scale, scope, and customisation.

Speed in Compassion Responding. Speed refers to the timeframe between noticing a co-worker's suffering and providing resources to alleviate it. When compassion responding to alleviate suffering takes minimal time, this indicates speedy compassion organising (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017). A prompt response to suffering is taken as hallmark of genuine care and concern, while a delayed responses may be perceived as bureaucratic and insincere, and therefore are less likely to engender gratitude and commitment from the recipient of compassion (Simpson et al., 2013, 2015).

Empirical evidence from a higher education case study demonstrates how with leadership support and effective systems, available resources, such as processing an emergency loan, setting up donation boxes, and contributions to provide essential needs for the sufferers, can be processed more speedily (Dutton et al., 2006). In contrast, universities without such systems in place may struggle to respond promptly to colleagues and students in need. In compassionate higher education settings, academic members prioritise providing immediate compassionate care and support as a top priority outside of their daily routines.

Scope of Compassion Responding. Scope of compassion response refers to the variety of resources that can be utilised to reduce the suffering of employees (Dutton et al., 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Organisational compassion scholars suggest that a wider the range of available resources corresponds to a broader scope of compassion organising (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020). Resources include not only material goods or money, but also people, time, money, knowledge, or talent, and aspects of relationships such as trust, authority, or complementarity (Feldman, 2004). Compassion responding may involve attention from leaders, empathic listening (Worline & Dutton, 2017), counselling and psychological support, financial aid (Simpson et al., 2019, 2020), compassionate leave, and hybrid working during times of crisis, such as COVID-19. Compassionate leadership interventions can enhance the scope of resources available to address employee suffering in the university workplace context.

Scale of Compassion Response. Scale refers to the volume of each type of resource available within an organisation to alleviate suffering (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006). While a lack of resources may indicate low compassion competence,

having too varied a range of resources that are not tailored to individual needs may also worsen suffering (Worline & Dutton, 2017). Therefore, having greater resources that are not alighted with the suffering of the individual may have a negative impact. Compassionate leadership can bring scale to compassion organising within universities by investing a greater number of resources in addressing the suffering of academic members, students, and professional staff under their care.

Customisation of Compassion Responding. Customisation is the fourth measure of compassion competence (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006). Customisation involves tailoring resources to meet the specific needs of those experiencing suffering (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Worline & Dutton, 2017). To determine the most effective forms of support, it is recommended to discuss available options within organisational policies with the individual. It is also important to regularly check in and evaluate the effectiveness of the support being provided and adjust accordingly as the situation progresses (Simpson et al., 2013, 2019, 2020). Compassionate leaders can embed customisation in compassion provision into a university's routines and policies and regularly assess compassion outcomes (Simpson et al., 2013).

To conclude this section, the compassion mechanisms outlined in this section can be powerful levers for university leaders to cultivate more compassionate institutions in higher education. By being aware of and leveraging these processes, compassionate leaders can systematically integrate compassion to alleviate the suffering of academic members, students, and professional faculty members within the university.

DISCUSSION

The need for compassionate leadership in higher education is clear, particularly considering the current state of higher education institutions (Longmuir, 2021; Waddington, 2018). In the organisational literature, compassion is considered not only as an individual psychological trait but also as organisational processes which leaders can systemically integrate within an organisation's culture, values, routines, roles, social networks, and communication to promote a compassionate workplace (Dutton et al., 2006, 2014; Worline & Dutton, 2017). Leadership plays a significant role in cultivating organisational compassion, as leaders have the authority to influence these organisational compassion mechanisms (Richards, 2012; Simpson et al., 2022).

Developing a compassionate leadership framework that remedies avoidable suffering while showing compassion and care towards those experiencing unavoidable types of suffering (Kanov, 2021) through adequate resource prioritisation is crucial. To date, despite its significance, there has been little research on compassionate leadership in higher education.

This chapter offers insights into the use of organisational compassion mechanisms of social architecture and compassion competencies by compassionate leaders in higher education to implement a more compassionate leadership approach. Compassionate leaders can use the organisational compassion mechanisms of social architecture, which involve establishing a compassionate

institutional culture, developing policy that informs compassionate routines, articulating compassion and care as an expectation of all academics and staff roles, promoting broad social networks where sufferings and concerns are more likely to be noticed and addressed, and collecting and promoting the telling of organisational stories of compassion in newsletters, speeches, and other forums. These are all most applicable to the NEA subprocesses of noticing, empathising, and appraising suffering. Additionally, attention to the compassion competences of speed, scope, scale, and customisation will enable compassionate leaders to systemically integrate compassion capabilities across the higher education institutions they lead, lessening the suffering of academic members, students, and professional staff (Dutton et al., 2002, 2006; Simpson et al., 2019, 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Compassionate leaders could establish a vision and develop a strategic plan using the tools we have discussed, focusing on identifying the elements of the current higher education system and structures that result in suffering as well as areas where novel approaches can be used to encourage a shift towards more compassionate ways of interacting, planning, performing, and prioritising compassionate and humanising goals (Longmuir, 2021). They could accomplish this by drawing on legitimacy aspects that combine inclusiveness with rationality and idealism with pragmatism (Simpson et al., 2022). Compassionate leaders provide legitimacy in determining what is deemed to be true, accurate, and valid in higher education (Worline & Dutton, 2017).

Therefore, we encourage higher education leaders to adopt the compassionate leadership approach and take specific steps to implement these strategies, including the use of the mechanisms and competencies described in this chapter. The evidence and research supporting the effectiveness of compassionate leadership in higher education demonstrate the benefits of this approach, making it a valuable tool for addressing the challenges confronting higher education today.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Although this chapter is grounded in academic research on existing compassionate leadership practices in higher education and other contexts, it remains primarily theoretical as a model. To advance compassionate leadership within higher education, a crucial avenue for future research involves further investigating how compassionate leaders catalyse organisational compassion mechanisms of social architecture and competencies. Exploration of social architecture is particularly relevant in fostering a culture of compassion during normal times to prevent avoidable forms of suffering. Additionally, there is a necessity to study compassion competencies, specifically relevant for responding to unavoidable suffering during emergencies. Future studies should employ comprehensive qualitative methodologies to uncover the strategies and dynamics involved, some of which may operate at an unconscious level. This qualitative research would aim to understand how compassionate leaders shape institutional culture and policies, seeking a comprehensive understanding of compassionate leadership within the unique context of higher education.

It is also important that future research does not neglect the role of developing robust and reliable measures of organisational compassion mechanisms. These could be correlated with measures of student, staff, and faculty well-being, motivation, and overall organisational success. This combined qualitative–quantitative approach would significantly contribute to a nuanced comprehension of compassionate leadership and offer evidence-based insights for fostering compassion in higher education institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

Numerous studies have shed light on the toxic environment that pervades higher education and the detrimental impact on the well-being of both staff and students (Bush, 2018; Denney, 2020; Kinman, 2001; McRoy & Gibbs, 2009; Shen & Slater, 2021; Urbina-Garcia, 2020; Waddington, 2016; Wallmark et al., 2013). Responding to this concern, scholars such as Luckcock (2010), Waddington (2016, 2018), and more recently Longmuir (2021) have advocated for the normalisation of leading with compassion in education. In this chapter, we have sought to contribute to advancing this agenda by proposing a model of organisational mechanisms that leaders can utilise for guiding the prevention and response to suffering within higher education. We envisage this model not as a rigid recipe but as a flexible toolkit. By adapting this model to their unique contexts, higher education leaders can develop a strategic plan to compassionately address issues that undermine the safety, health, and satisfaction of students, academic members, and professional staff. Embracing a compassionate leadership approach in higher education not only alleviates the prevailing toxic environment but also nurtures an environment conducive to holistic well-being, heightened motivation, and superior academic achievements. The time has come to sow the seeds of compassion, fostering an environment where the growth and success of both students and staff can flourish.

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this chapter.

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