

Rapid-Cycle Adaptive Leadership

In the [second episode](#) of our three-episode series, “What It Means to Be a School Leader,” Dr. Linda Henderson-Smith, a licensed counselor and a consultant for trauma-informed, resilience-oriented care with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, explains how school leaders can use a strategy called Rapid-Cycle Adaptive Leadership to turn challenges into opportunities.



LISTEN NOW

Learning Outcomes

- » Define Rapid-Cycle Adaptive Leadership.
- » Understand characteristics that make an adaptive leader successful in a school setting.
- » Discuss ways to involve staff in conversations as a part of the adaptive leadership model.

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Creating and maintaining healing relationships through trust and communication are the easiest ways to create a different culture within your school.
- ✓ A technical problem is one that’s relatively easy to identify and solve. An adaptive problem is one that requires a change in values, beliefs, roles, or relationships.
- ✓ Rapid-Cycle Adaptive Leadership emphasizes collaboration in developing a quick but methodical plan to address adaptive challenges as they are faced by a school community.
- ✓ Components of Adaptive Leadership are: emotional intelligence, organizational justice, personal and professional integrity, and an emphasis on development.
- ✓ Adaptive Leaders must be able to see the big picture and give direction but also get “on the floor” and do work alongside their team.
- ✓ Leaders must be able to regulate their own emotions in order to manage the school’s distress, encourage teamwork, handle communication, and find a balance between advocating for their beliefs and inquiring about the beliefs of others.
- ✓ Creating a “holding environment” for staff can be done by creating a safe space and a structure for problem-solving. Leaders must be willing to allow for some discomfort during difficult discussion and dialogue to encourage growth.

Additional Resources

[How to Create a Positive School Climate](#) - An article highlighting different methods for creating the intended classroom climate.

[National School Climate Center](#) - A collection of resources, including tools to evaluate the current school climate as well as set goals for the future.

Questions for Discussion

- » What kind of adaptive challenges has your school faced? What was successful and what was not?
- » How might Rapid-Change Adaptive Leadership benefit the school community? What might be some barriers to success?
- » What kinds of staff involvement and engagement are necessary to make Rapid-Change Adaptive Leadership successful in your context?

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