

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

# Leading With Empathy Programme

The Most Underrated Leadership Competency

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839



मनस् – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

## Programme Overview

This programme explores empathy as a vital leadership competency that drives positive business outcomes, drawing insights from research like Google's Project Oxygen. Participants will learn to cultivate empathy for stronger team performance and employee well-being.

### Learning Objectives

- ✓ Understand the multifaceted nature of empathy in a leadership context and distinguish it from sympathy or pity, recognizing its impact on team dynamics and productivity.
- ✓ Develop active and empathetic listening techniques to truly understand team members' perspectives and concerns, fostering trust and open communication.
- ✓ Learn to balance genuine empathy with necessary accountability, ensuring that support for employees does not compromise performance standards or business goals.
- ✓ Acquire practical strategies for supporting employees navigating personal challenges, creating a supportive work environment that promotes resilience and retention.
- ✓ Explore methods for cultivating a team culture of psychological safety where individuals feel secure to express ideas, concerns, and mistakes without fear of negative repercussions.
- ✓ Apply learned empathy skills to foster stronger relationships, improve decision-making, and ultimately enhance overall organizational effectiveness and employee engagement.

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for senior leaders, managers, and team leads who are committed to developing their leadership capabilities and fostering a more supportive and effective work environment.

## Programme Content

### 1. What Empathy Is and Is Not in Leadership

This section clarifies the essence of empathy in leadership, differentiating it from mere sympathy or politeness. We will explore how genuine empathy involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others, which can significantly boost team morale and collaboration. Evidence suggests that leaders who demonstrate empathy are perceived as more effective and trustworthy. This session will provide practical examples of empathic leadership behaviours and how they positively influence workplace interactions and outcomes.

 **Activity: Small group discussion: Share an example of when you observed or experienced effective empathy from a leader.**

### 2. Empathic Listening Skills

Effective listening is the cornerstone of empathy. This module focuses on developing deep listening skills, moving beyond simply hearing words to understanding the underlying emotions and perspectives. We will cover techniques such as paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, and non-verbal communication cues that signal attentive listening. Practicing these skills helps build stronger rapport with team members, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters an environment where employees feel truly heard and valued.

 **Activity: Paired listening exercise: Practice active listening techniques with a partner.**

### 3. Empathy Without Losing Accountability

A common concern is that empathy might lead to a softening of expectations or a reluctance to address performance issues. This section addresses this by demonstrating how to integrate empathy with accountability. We will explore frameworks for delivering constructive feedback compassionately while maintaining clear performance standards. The goal is to support employees in their growth and development without compromising organizational objectives, ensuring a balanced approach to leadership.

 **Activity: Case study analysis: Discuss scenarios requiring both empathy and accountability.**

#### 4. Supporting Employees Through Personal Difficulties

Life outside of work inevitably impacts employees. This session provides guidance on how leaders can offer appropriate support to team members facing personal challenges, such as illness, family issues, or significant life changes. We will discuss the boundaries of a leader's role and how to direct employees to available resources, such as employee assistance programs, while fostering a caring and understanding workplace culture. This approach enhances loyalty and reduces stress-related performance dips.

 **Activity: Role-playing: Practice offering support in sensitive situations.**

#### 5. Building Team Cultures of Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is crucial for innovation, learning, and high performance. This section focuses on creating an environment where team members feel safe to take risks, voice opinions, admit mistakes, and ask for help without fear of embarrassment or punishment. We will explore leadership behaviours that foster this safety, such as encouraging diverse viewpoints and responding constructively to errors. A psychologically safe team is more engaged, collaborative, and resilient.

 **Activity: Group brainstorm: Identify actions to enhance psychological safety in your team.**

#### 6. Integrating Empathy for Enhanced Leadership Effectiveness

This concluding section synthesizes the programme's learnings, emphasizing how consistent application of empathy transforms leadership effectiveness. We will discuss how empathic leaders inspire greater loyalty, improve team cohesion, and drive better problem-solving and decision-making. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their personal leadership style and commit to integrating these practices into their daily interactions for sustained positive impact.

 **Activity: Personal reflection and commitment: Draft an action plan for integrating empathy.**

## Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Conduct a leadership survey on current empathy levels.	HR/Manager	Week 1	Utilize a validated questionnaire to gauge existing perceptions of leadership empathy.
Organize follow-up coaching sessions for leaders.	HR	Month 1	Offer one-on-one or small group coaching to reinforce learning and address specific challenges.
Integrate empathy into performance review criteria.	Manager	Week 2	Add specific competencies related to empathetic leadership and communication in the appraisal process.
Share case studies of empathic leadership success.	HR	Month 1	Disseminate internal or external examples through company newsletters or town halls.
Establish peer feedback mechanisms for empathy.	HR/Manager	Month 2	Implement a system where team members can provide constructive feedback on empathic behaviours.
Allocate budget for ongoing leadership development in soft skills.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Secure funding for continued training and resources focused on emotional intelligence and leadership competencies.

## About Manas



### Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Founder & Consulting Psychologist | Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist | PhD | 18+ Years

Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma brings 18+ years of applied psychology to corporate wellness. She has worked with SBI, educational institutions, and corporate teams across India. Her evidence-based approach combines CBT, mindfulness, and culturally contextualised psychology for measurable outcomes. She is the creator of the Performance FOMO Index™ and the High-Functioning Distress Framework™.

### Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

A MSME-registered organisation dedicated to evidence-based mental wellness.

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839

Ready to Partner With Us?



Website

[manas365.com](https://manas365.com)



Corporate Enquiries

[manu@manas365.com](mailto:manu@manas365.com)



WhatsApp

[+91 99818 13224](https://wa.me/919981813224)



Book a Meeting

[manas365.com/book-session](https://manas365.com/book-session)

**Disclaimer:** This document has been prepared by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma – Founder & Consulting Psychologist (Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist, PhD, 18+ years), Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling (UDYAM-MP-10-0120839). Content is for programme overview and educational purposes only. Nothing herein constitutes legal advice regarding POSH Act compliance – organisations should consult qualified legal counsel for specific legal guidance. For clinical or psychological support, please reach out to the Manas Team for personalised guidance, or consult a qualified Psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional. © 2026 Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling. All rights reserved. Confidential – prepared specifically for the named organisation. For queries: [manu@manas365.com](mailto:manu@manas365.com) | +91 99818 13224