

Strong leaders for stronger teams

Leadership & change agency in education & care



OVERVIEW

Strong Leaders, Stronger Teams is a leadership course designed for educators who want to lead with clarity, compassion and purpose. Rooted in positive psychology, strengths-based practice and needs-based leadership, this course offers a deeply humanistic approach to guiding teams in early childhood education and care. You'll explore what it means to lead through connection rather than control, and how to build a team culture where people feel safe, valued and motivated to grow.

Drawing on contemporary neuroscience and the Phoenix Cups Framework, the course unpacks how adults' needs, stress responses and wellbeing influence leadership styles and team dynamics. Through reflective tasks, case studies, and practical tools, you will learn how to coach and mentor others, navigate change with confidence, and foster a culture grounded in respect, trust and shared purpose.

Whether you're stepping into leadership for the first time or seeking to strengthen your existing practice, this course equips you with actionable strategies that build team cohesion, support wellbeing, and promote behaviour change across your service. You'll leave with clarity in your leadership identity and the confidence to lead teams towards meaningful, sustainable improvement.

WE WILL...

- Explore diverse leadership styles, examining how your strengths, needs and values shape the way you guide and motivate your team.
- Apply strengths-based, solutions-focused and guidance aligned strategies to coaching and mentoring team members through behaviour change.
- Analyse team culture, problem-solving approaches and change management processes through a neuroscience and needs informed lens.
- Engage in shared critical reflection to integrate these leadership strategies into your daily practice and your service's Quality Improvement and vision planning journey.

DELIVERY MODE OFFERINGS:

1. Self-paced online course
2. Full-day face-to-face session (up to 5 hours)
3. Live online webinar
4. After-hours in-service workshops with teams (up to 2.5 hours)

"This course really made me think about how to speak to educators and to have that open discussion of what cups are the educators main cups and how to continuously work to fill those cups."

- Georgia

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PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, participants will possess:

1. A clear understanding of their leadership style and how it influences team motivation, communication and behaviour change.
2. Practical strategies for coaching, mentoring and strengthening educator capability using strengths-based and needs-centered approaches.
3. Confidence in navigating change, addressing challenges and supporting team wellbeing with compassion and clarity.
4. Skills to create and sustain a positive organisational culture grounded in psychological safety, collaboration and reflective practice.
5. The ability to lead through connection, using the Phoenix Cups Framework to understand and meet the needs of their team.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The Phoenix Cups Framework Sandi Phoenix

Understanding the drivers and motivators of human behaviour can revolutionise us as leaders. Applying a needs-based lens that helps leaders understand their own needs and those of their team, creating workplaces where everyone can thrive.

Positive Psychology Martin Seligman & Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Highlights strengths, wellbeing and meaning as foundations for effective leadership, guiding leaders to build flourishing teams rather than manage deficits. Explore how hope, belonging and purpose shape intrinsic motivation and behaviour change.

Values in Action Character Strengths Peterson & Seligman

This framework helps leaders identify their strengths and those of their team, using them to build authentic leadership, enhance communication, and shape positive, strengths-focused team cultures to support self-awareness, empathy and wellbeing across the team.

Self Determination Theory Edward Deci & Richard Ryan

By understanding the universal needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness in themselves and their team, leaders learn to support intrinsic motivation, build trust, reduce resistance to change and create workplace cultures where people feel capable and connected.

KEY LINKS – NATIONAL

Alignment with National Quality Standard

- **QA4** – Staffing Arrangements (Elements 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.2.2): Strengthens collaborative, professional team cultures through reflective, needs-based leadership.
- **QA6** – Collaborative Partnerships (Element 6.1.1): Enhances leaders' ability to model respectful, authentic partnerships with families and communities.
- **QA7** – Governance and Leadership (Elements 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3): Builds leadership capability in continuous improvement, mentoring, and embedding a shared philosophy.

Alignment with EYLF v2.0

Principles:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships: Leaders model relational practice and create team cultures grounded in trust and psychological safety.
- Ongoing learning and reflective practice: Promotes reflective dialogue and inquiry-led leadership.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity: Supports leaders to create teams that value diversity and respond to each educator and child with respect.

Practices:

- Professional collaboration: Strengthens leadership that cultivates teamwork, shared decision-making and authentic communication.
- Reflective practice: Embeds cycles of reflection to improve pedagogy, team culture and leadership identity.

Alignment with MTOP v2.0

Principles:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships: Supports leaders to model relational, trust-based practice and foster psychologically safe team cultures where educators feel valued and supported.
- Equity, inclusion and high expectations: Encourages leaders to recognise diverse strengths, needs and experiences, supporting inclusive, respectful team practices and high expectations for all.
- Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning: Positions leadership as an ongoing process of reflection, inquiry and growth, strengthening decision-making and professional confidence.

Practices:

- Collaboration with children and young people: Strengthens leadership approaches that value voice, agency and relational engagement, shaping team cultures that honour participation and shared decision-making.
- Assessment and evaluation for wellbeing, learning and development: Supports leaders to reflect on team wellbeing, practice and culture, using evidence and dialogue to inform intentional improvement.

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KEY LINKS – NATIONAL CONTINUED

Alignment with Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

- **Standard 1.2:** Know learners and how they learn: Deepens leaders' understanding of how educator needs, strengths and wellbeing influence children's learning environments.
- **Standard 2.3:** Curriculum, assessment and reporting: Strengthens leaders' ability to coach educators in designing meaningful learning sequences.
- **Standard 4.1:** Support student participation: Supports leadership that prioritises inclusive, needs-meeting practice across classrooms and teams.
- **Standard 4.3:** Manage challenging behaviours: Reframes behaviour as an expression of unmet needs and strengthens guidance-based team approaches.
- **Standard 6.3:** Engage with colleagues and improve practice: Builds collaborative learning cultures where reflective dialogue and shared inquiry thrive.
- **Standard 7.4:** Engage with professional teaching networks: Encourages ongoing engagement with the Phoenix Cups Community to enhance reflective practice.

Alignment with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- **Principle 1** – Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture: Leadership ensures decisions centre children's rights, needs and safety.
- **Principle 5** – People working with children are suitable and supported: Promotes mentoring, Reflective supervision and wellbeing support for educators.
- **Principle 7** – Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe: Leadership strengthens educator capability through reflective, needs-focused coaching.
- **Principle 8** – Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for harm: Leaders oversee safe, predictable and responsive environments that reduce risk.



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KEY LINKS – QLD

Alignment with the Kindy Uplift Key Priority Areas

Culturally Safe, Inclusive & Responsive Programs

- Builds leadership capacity to foster inclusive workplaces where cultural identities are respected and celebrated.
- Supports leaders to guide educators in culturally responsive planning and communication.

Social & Emotional Learning

- Supports leaders to build emotionally safe, regulated team cultures that model SEL for children.
- Strengthens capacity to coach educators in co-regulation and relational pedagogy.
- Enhances leadership approaches that prioritise wellbeing and connection.

Equity and Access for All

- Strengthens leadership skills in identifying barriers to equitable participation.
- Supports leaders to build inclusive practices aligned to family and community needs.

Alignment with QKLG

Identity

- Helps leaders foster environments where educator identity is valued, strengthening children's sense of identity.
- Encourages leadership that reflects diverse cultures, strengths and perspectives.

Connectedness

- Supports leaders to strengthen relationships across families, communities and teams.
- Builds team cultures that model belonging, inclusion and shared responsibility.

Wellbeing

- Leadership grounded in wellbeing supports emotionally safe environments for educators and children.
- Strengthens educator confidence and team culture, promoting resilience and calm learning spaces..



KEY LINKS – VIC

School Readiness Funding Menu

Please note this workshop is not on the SRF menu. It can however be utilised under flexible funding provisions. For more information on flexible funding go to the Victorian Department of Education website here:



For more information on the Phoenix Support SRF offerings, including those on the menu as well as flexible funding options, head to our website here:



Alignment with the SRF Priority Areas for use under Flexible Funding Options

Access & Inclusion

- Strengthens leaders' capacity to identify inequities and create more accessible, inclusive team and learning environments.
- Supports reflective leadership that prioritises fairness, belonging and participation.

Communication (Language Development)

- Develops leadership that strengthens team communication, collaboration and shared language.
- Helps leaders coach educators in using attuned, relational communication with children.

Wellbeing (Social & Emotional)

- Builds leadership practices that enhance team wellbeing, directly influencing children's emotional safety.
- Supports leaders to cultivate regulated, reflective and cohesive team cultures.

Alignment with VELDYF

Outcome 2: Community

- Strengthens leadership that builds collaborative, respectful partnerships with families and communities.
- Promotes team cultures that celebrate connection, contribution and shared responsibility.

Outcome 3: Wellbeing

- Helps leaders build team cultures where wellbeing is prioritised, supporting emotionally safe learning environments for children.
- Equips leaders to model co-regulation, resilience and calm leadership.