



Training for Regenerative Leadership

Module 5

Personal Leadership Competences in Complexity

Developed by BGE Corse | 2026

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5. Personal Leadership Competences in Complexity

Developing individual leadership mindset and competences in times of uncertainty, diversity, and change.

by BGE Corse

5.1 Introduction

Topics and Key Concepts

This module focuses on how individuals can improve their personal leadership mindset and competences in situations shaped by uncertainty, diversity, rapid change, and complexity. It presents leadership not only as a formal management role, but as a personal and professional capacity that helps people understand themselves, respond constructively to challenges, work effectively with others, and make responsible decisions in dynamic environments.

Topic of the Module:

This module focuses on how individuals can develop a personal leadership mindset and the competences needed to deal effectively with complexity, uncertainty, diversity, and change. Today's working and social environments are rarely stable or predictable. People are increasingly expected to deal with change, collaborate with diverse groups, make decisions with incomplete information, and remain resilient under pressure. In this context, personal leadership becomes essential. It helps individuals better understand themselves, manage their reactions, communicate effectively, and act with purpose even when there is no clear path forward.

The module highlights that leadership is not only about authority or formal responsibility, but also about how people respond to challenges, make decisions, and relate to others in difficult or unclear situations. It is based on the idea that in rapidly changing environments, familiar routines and previous assumptions are not always enough. People therefore need to strengthen self-awareness, adaptability, resilience, reflective practice, and the ability to work constructively across differences. The module is relevant because professional life increasingly requires people to stay open, flexible, and responsible, even under pressure and without full certainty. Through guided reflection and practical exercises, participants are invited to explore their own patterns of thinking and behaviour and to develop leadership approaches that are more conscious, inclusive, and responsive to complexity.

Key Concepts:

- **Personal Leadership:** Personal leadership refers to the ability to guide oneself with awareness, responsibility, and intention. It includes managing one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and decisions in ways that support effective action and constructive relationships with others.
- **Complexity:** Complexity refers to situations where different factors are connected, change quickly, and do not have one simple solution. It requires flexible thinking and continuous adjustment.
- **Uncertainty:** Uncertainty refers to the absence of full clarity or predictability about a situation or its outcomes. It challenges individuals to act and decide without having all the information.

- **Unlearning:** Unlearning means questioning and letting go of assumptions, habits, or ways of thinking that may no longer be useful in new or changing situations.
- **Adaptability:** Adaptability is the ability to adjust one's thinking, behaviour, and strategies in response to new conditions, challenges, or unexpected change.
- **Resilience:** Resilience is the ability to cope with setbacks, pressure, and uncertainty, and to recover constructively from difficulties.
- **Self-Awareness:** Self-awareness means understanding one's own values, emotions, strengths, limitations, and behavioural patterns. It is an important basis for conscious leadership.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Emotional regulation refers to the ability to recognise and manage emotions in a balanced and constructive way, especially in stressful situations.
- **Diversity:** Diversity refers to the presence of different identities, backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. Leadership in diverse environments requires openness, respect, and the ability to work across differences.
- **Inclusive Leadership:** Inclusive leadership means creating conditions in which different people feel respected, heard, and able to contribute meaningfully.
- **Reflective Practice:** Reflective practice is the process of looking back at one's own experiences, reactions, and decisions in order to learn and improve future action.
- **Decision-Making in Ambiguity:** Decision-making in ambiguity means making thoughtful and responsible choices even when situations are unclear, changing, or lacking complete information.

Overall Goals and Learning Objectives

The overall goals of this module are to support participants' personal leadership mindset and help them respond more effectively to complexity, uncertainty, diversity, and change. It aims to support participants in developing greater self-awareness, adaptability, resilience, and reflective capacity, while also improving their ability to communicate and collaborate constructively with others. Furthermore, the module aims to encourage more conscious, inclusive, and responsible leadership practices that participants can apply in their everyday professional lives.

Upon completing this module, participants will be able to:

Knowledge

- Describe the concept of personal leadership and explain why it is important in complex and changing environments.
- Identify key concepts such as complexity, uncertainty, adaptability, resilience, self-awareness, and inclusive leadership.
- Explain how personal attitudes, emotions, and assumptions can influence behaviour and decision-making.
- Recognise the importance of reflection, inclusion, and adaptability in leadership practice.

Skills

- Identify their own reactions, strengths, and limits in challenging situations.
- Describe how uncertainty, change, or diversity can affect decisions and behaviour.
- Use at least one strategy to manage emotions in stressful situations.

- Adapt their approach when facing change, pressure, or incomplete information.
- Practice reflection to improve future actions and decisions.
- Apply simple inclusive behaviours such as active listening, openness to other perspectives, and respectful communication.

Attitudes

- Demonstrate openness when engaging with change, feedback, and different perspectives.
- Show willingness to reflect on their own assumptions, reactions, and habits.
- Appreciate the importance of continuous self-development in leadership.
- Act with responsibility, resilience, and respect for others in complex and diverse situations.

Resources

Peshkam, A. (2026, February 13). To lead through uncertainty, unlearn your assumptions. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2026/02/to-lead-through-uncertainty-unlearn-your-assumptions>

Frankfurt School Blog. (2025, October 17). Leadership in an age of complexity. <https://blog.frankfurt-school.de/leadership-in-the-age-of-complexity/>

Holmberg, R., Larsson, M., & Bäckström, M. (2016). Developing leadership skills and resilience in turbulent times. *Journal of Management Development*, 35(2), 154–169. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-09-2014-0093>

5.2 Activities

Activity 1: Icebreaker - What Leadership Means to Me

Learning Objectives:

- Participants engage with the module topic from the beginning of the session.
- Participants reflect on their first associations with leadership in times of uncertainty, change, and complexity.
- Participants recognise that leadership can be understood in different ways depending on personal experience and perspective.
- Participants begin to connect their own ideas and experiences to the themes of the module.

Procedure and methods:

Procedure	Group format	Materials	Time
Facilitator introduces the activity and explains that participants are invited to use their mobile phones to find an image, quote, or single word that represents leadership in times of uncertainty, change, or complexity. The facilitator encourages them not to overthink the task and to choose the first option that feels meaningful to them.	Plenary session	N/A	2 minutes
Participants search individually or reflect on something they already know and select one image, quote, or word.	Individual work	N/A	3 minutes
Participants briefly introduce themselves in pairs and share what they chose, explaining why it connects to leadership for them.	Pair work	Selected image, quote, or word	5 minutes
Facilitator invites a few participants to share their example in plenary and closes the activity by highlighting recurring themes such as change, resilience, responsibility, communication, or adaptability.	Plenary session	Optional flipchart or whiteboard	2 minutes



Activity 2: Under Pressure

Learning Objectives:

- Identify personal reactions, strengths, and limits in challenging situations.
- Reflect on how emotions, assumptions, and habits influence behaviour under pressure.
- Recognise patterns in personal decision-making in situations of uncertainty or change.
- Build self-awareness as a basis for personal leadership.

Procedure and methods:

Procedure	Group format	Materials	Time
Facilitator introduces the activity by referring to the idea of being “under pressure” as a familiar experience in professional life and invites participants to reflect on a recent situation in which they had to respond to pressure, uncertainty, change, or conflict in a professional or group context.	Plenary session	None	2 minutes
Participants complete an individual reflection worksheet with guiding questions about the situation, their first reaction, their response, and what they learned from it.	Individual work	Self-Check Sheet	10 minutes
Participants discuss their reflections in pairs, sharing only what they feel comfortable sharing. They are encouraged to listen actively and notice similarities or differences in how people respond under pressure.	Pair work	Completed Self-Check Sheets	8 minutes
Facilitator closes with a short plenary debrief by inviting participants to share selected observations from the activity. Possible follow-up questions include: What did you notice about your own reaction under pressure? What helps you stay calm or focused in difficult situations? What makes decision-making harder when you feel pressure or uncertainty? Did you notice any patterns in how you usually respond? What is one thing you would like to do differently in a future situation? The facilitator then links the discussion to self-awareness, emotional regulation, and personal leadership in complex situations.	Plenary session	None	10 minutes



SELF-CHECK SHEET

Think of a recent situation in which you had to deal with pressure, uncertainty, change, or conflict. This can be from your work or another group setting.

This situation involved mainly:

- ☐ pressure
- ☐ uncertainty
- ☐ change
- ☐ conflict
- ☐ misunderstanding
- ☐ responsibility

In that moment, I mostly felt:

- ☐ calm
- ☐ stressed
- ☐ unsure
- ☐ frustrated
- ☐ overwhelmed
- ☐ focused
- ☐ responsible

The situation

What happened?

.....

What made this situation challenging?

.....

My first reaction

What was my first reaction or impulse?

.....

How did I feel in that moment?

.....

My response

What worked well?

.....

What was difficult for me?

.....

What does this situation show me about how I respond under pressure and would I like to do similarly or differently next time?

.....



Activity 3: Respond in the Moment

Learning Objectives:

- Recognise that people may respond differently to the same leadership situation.
- Explore how pressure, uncertainty, and responsibility can influence decision-making.
- Compare different leadership responses in challenging situations.
- Practice explaining and justifying a decision in a group setting.
- Build awareness of the strengths and limits of different approaches.

Procedure and methods:

Procedure	Group format	Materials	Time
Facilitator explains the activity clearly. Participants are told that they will hear several short leadership scenarios. 4 corners of the room represent prepared response options, while one additional space represents the “improvise” option. Participants should move to the corner or space that best matches what they would do first in each situation. The facilitator makes clear that there is no single correct answer and that the goal is to explore different reactions and leadership styles.	Plenary session	Response corner signs	3 minutes
Facilitator presents the first scenario and reads it aloud clearly. Participants move to the response corner or improvise space that best reflects their first reaction. Each scenario also includes a “Need more context?” section containing optional additional information. This information should not be provided automatically. If participants feel that they need more information before deciding, they may request further context. The facilitator then reveals or reads the additional information and allows participants to reconsider or confirm their initial choice. The additional context is intended to introduce further complexity rather than suggest a correct response. In each round, participants briefly exchange with others in the same group why they chose that response. One or	Individual movement, small group work, plenary session	Scenario cards	3-4 minutes per scenario



two groups then share their reasoning with the full group. Facilitator repeats the process with additional selected scenarios (not every scenario needs to be discussed) depending on the available time and the needs of the group. Scenarios can be read aloud, shown on a slide, or displayed on cards. For each scenario used, participants move to the response corner or improvise space that best matches what they would do first. They briefly discuss their choice with others in the same group, and selected groups then share their reasoning in plenary. As the activity continues, participants are encouraged to notice whether they often choose similar responses or whether their choices change depending on the situation.			
Facilitator closes the activity with a short debrief. Possible follow-up questions include: Did you notice a pattern in your choices? Did your response change depending on the situation? Did additional information influence or change any of your decisions? Which options felt most natural to you, and which felt more difficult? What does that show about your leadership instincts under pressure or uncertainty? The facilitator links the discussion back to self-awareness, decision-making, adaptability, and personal leadership in complex situations.	Plenary session	Optional flipchart or whiteboard	15 minutes



ASK FIRST

Understand the situation before reacting.



ADDRESS IT DIRECTLY

Name the problem clearly and deal with it
immediately.



TAKE CONTROL

Step in quickly, make a decision, and give direction.



PAUSE AND REVISIT

Create space and come back to it later.



IMPROVISE

Choose your own response or combine
approaches.



MISSED DEADLINE

A team member misses an important deadline, and the rest of the team is affected.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

This is the first time this team member has missed an important deadline. They did not communicate the delay in advance, and another colleague now needs the missing work to complete their own task. The final deadline is approaching, but there is still limited time to adjust the work plan.

What would you do first?



TENSE MEETING

Two team members strongly disagree during a meeting, and the atmosphere becomes tense.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

Both team members have relevant experience and raise valid concerns, but they are beginning to interrupt each other and speak more personally. Other participants have stopped contributing. The group still needs to make progress during the meeting.

What would you do first?



LAST-MINUTE CHANGE

You receive important changes to a task shortly before the deadline, but the team is already stressed.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

The changes come from an important stakeholder. Some appear essential, while others may be preferences rather than strict requirements. Most of the work is already complete, and making every change may place the deadline at risk.

What would you do first?



QUIET VOICE

A quieter team member has a good idea, but others keep speaking over them.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

The team member has already tried to explain the idea twice but was interrupted. Their suggestion could help address the issue, although it has not yet been explored. The meeting is moving quickly, and several people want to contribute.

What would you do first?



UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

Your team is confused because instructions from leadership are unclear.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

Team members have interpreted the instructions differently, and the written information does not resolve the confusion. Work needs to continue soon, but the person who provided the instructions may not be immediately available.

What would you do first?



EMOTIONAL REACTION

A colleague reacts emotionally to feedback you have given.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

The feedback concerned an important aspect of the colleague's work and was intended to support improvement. The colleague says that they feel misunderstood and becomes visibly upset. Other pressures may also be affecting their reaction.

What would you do first?



NEW TEAM MEMBER

A new team member seems unsure, quiet, and disconnected during the first week.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

The onboarding process has been shorter and less structured than planned. The new team member completes assigned tasks but rarely asks questions or joins informal conversations. It is unclear whether they need more support, more time or simply prefer a quieter working style.

What would you do first?



NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION

A decision needs to be made quickly, but you do not have all the information yet.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

Some additional information could be gathered quickly, but a complete picture will not be available before the deadline. Delaying the decision may also have consequences, and the impact of the options is not fully predictable.

What would you do first?



DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

Two colleagues both believe their task should be the team's top priority.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

Both tasks have important deadlines and affect other people's work. The team currently has enough capacity to focus fully on only one task. Both colleagues have reasonable arguments, but no clear prioritisation criteria have been agreed.

What would you do first?



RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

A planned change is met with resistance from part of the team.

NEED MORE CONTEXT?

The change has already been approved and will be introduced within the next few weeks. Some team members support it, while others are concerned about workload, insufficient training and the impact on established ways of working.

What would you do first?



Activity 4: Closing Reflection

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize the key insights and lessons from the module.
- Identify concrete actions they can take personally in their mindset, behaviour, or daily work.
- Recognize opportunities to initiate or contribute to changes at team or organisational level.

Procedure and methods:

Procedure	Group format	Materials	Time
The trainer hands out the Closing Reflection worksheet and explains it to the participants. Participants reflect individually on the module and complete the worksheet, focusing on the following questions: What was my most important insight today about my personal leadership? What is one thing I want to do differently when facing pressure, uncertainty, or change? What can help me apply this in my daily professional practice?	Individual work	Worksheet: Reflection	10 minutes

REFLECTION



Name:

Module:

- **Key Takeaways**

What are the main insights or lessons you gained from this module?

- **Immediate Personal Actions**

Which concrete changes can you start making in your own behaviour, mindset or way of working within your organisation?

- **Structural or Long-Term Actions**

Which changes could you initiate or contribute to in your team, department or organisation over time to create lasting impact?

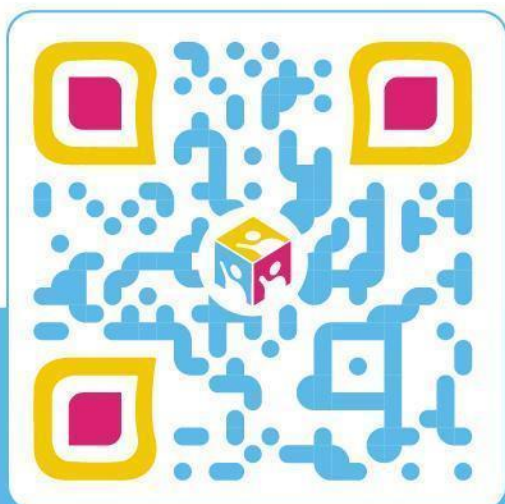


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