

# Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey (DERLS): AN INTRODUCTION



*Thank you for your interest in the Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey!*

Authored by Rachel Wagner, MSW, and Nefertiti B. Poyner, Ed.D., the DERLS is a 23-item, research-informed checklist that helps professionals reflect on behaviors associated with resilient leadership. Organized around four key protective factors, shown below, this tool can provide wonderful insight for leaders around areas of strength and growth opportunities.

- **Relationships**

- Positive relationships in the workplace foster support, teamwork, motivation, compassion and trust. These elements of healthy relationships increase staff's sense of connection, commitment and productivity.

- **Internal Beliefs**

- Staff with positive internal beliefs feel a sense of ownership, share their strengths, think creatively, feel valued, commit to the vision and mission of the organization, and are generally positive and optimistic. These elements of healthy internal beliefs create a thriving work environment where staff feel good and do good work.

- **Initiative**

- Positive initiative in the workplace results in good communication, problem-solving, professional development, growth, new ideas, positive feelings and a sense of support. These elements of healthy initiative ensure that staff are engaged, productive and proactive.

- **Self-Control**

- When positive self-control is fostered in the workplace it results in staff feeling understood, having clear boundaries, being flexible and using healthy coping skills. These elements of healthy self-control ensure that staff are able to cope with their emotions in healthy ways.

Education and social service programs that support children and families provide invaluable services. The quality of services is largely dependent on the skill level, commitment and leadership of the staff. In order to promote high quality services, leaders need resources that promote the well-being and resilience of the entire team, including their staff and themselves. Effective leaders are always open to learning and growing their own skills. We invite you to use the DERLS to reflect on your resilient leadership behaviors, and use the data to inform and strengthen your leadership skills.

**Best wishes on your Resilient Leadership journey!**

# Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey (DERLS)

By Rachel Wagner, MSW, & Nefertiti B. Poyner, Ed.D.

This survey was created to support leaders as they reflect on how to promote the capacity for resilience in staff. Take time to reflect and complete each item on the survey below. There are no right answers! Once you have finished, reflect on your strengths and then start small and plan for one or two things that you feel are important to improve. For more information about resilient leadership and the DERLS, visit our website at [centerforresilientchildren.org](http://centerforresilientchildren.org), and go to *Adults → Resilient Leadership*.

Items	Almost Always	Sometimes	Not Yet
<b>Relationships</b>			
1. I cultivate supportive teamwork.			
2. I challenge staff to do their best.			
3. I work side-by-side with staff as needed.			
4. I encourage staff to show empathy to others.			
5. I foster trust with staff.			
<b>Internal Beliefs</b>			
1. I delegate to encourage staff ownership.			
2. I nurture staff strengths.			
3. I encourage staff creativity.			
4. I demonstrate that I value staff diversity.			
5. I create a common vision and mission with staff.			
6. I model and encourage positivity and optimism.			
<b>Initiative</b>			
1. I model and teach effective communication.			
2. I encourage collaborative problem-solving with staff.			
3. I praise and celebrate staff contributions.			
4. I support staff development and learning.			
5. I am open to new ideas from staff.			
6. I enjoy staff and share positive moments.			
7. I strive for manageable workloads for staff.			
8. I encourage staff to ask for help.			
<b>Self-Control</b>			
1. I validate the feelings of staff.			
2. I establish clear and fair expectations of staff.			
3. I encourage staff to be flexible.			
4. I share healthy coping strategies with staff.			

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# Examples and Reflection

## Devereux Resilient Leadership Survey (DERLS)

Please use the extra space provided to further reflect on examples for each DERLS item.

Relationships	EXAMPLES
1. I cultivate supportive teamwork.	
2. I challenge staff to do their best.	
3. I work side-by-side with staff as needed.	
4. I encourage staff to show empathy to others.	
5. I foster trust with staff.	
Internal Beliefs	EXAMPLES
1. I delegate to encourage staff ownership.	
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Initiative	EXAMPLES
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# Action Plan

Once you have completed the survey, reflect on your strengths and identify some goals. Make a simple plan, with specific action steps, for one or two items that you feel are important to improve. Regularly check in on your progress and then revisit the DERLS.

## Strengths

Highlight some of your almost always responses here. Recognize and celebrate the ways that you are already being a resilient leader.

## Goals

Review your DERLS responses and decide on the one or two goals you would like to set. Your goals can be items under the category of "Sometimes" or "Not Yet" that you would like to strengthen.

## Strategies

Decide on strategies that can help you meet your goals. Feel free to identify strategies from various sources.