



LEAD!LOA
LEADERSHIP &
ORGANIZING
IN ACTION

Leading Through Organizational Change: Organizational Change Management 7.23.26

Training Reference Field Guide

Tools for Effective Teams & Skillful Conversations

A practical companion guide to the full training and handouts. Use this guide during change conversations, team meetings, coaching discussions, and planning efforts.

Modified & adapted for this workshop by Risa Hayes, CPC
Program Specialist Telligen
LEAD! LOA Team Leader
Care Coordination Subject Matter Expert (SME), Midwest QIN-QIO

Creating Conditions for Effective Teams & Coalitions

Shared Structure

Key Concepts

- Teams are critical to organizing, in part because they deepen relationships that help us commit to action.
- Effective teams require shared purpose, interdependent roles, and explicit norms.
- The snowflake or interdependent leadership model is defined by mutual accountability and commitment, a sustainable number of relationships, clearly defined roles, and capacity for exponential growth.
- Interdependent leadership is an organizational structure that embodies leadership as that which enables others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty.
- The “ladder of engagement” can help us effectively and gradually guide a supporter into becoming a leader.

“Without trust we don’t truly collaborate; we merely coordinate or, at best, cooperate. It is trust that transforms a group of people into a team.”

~Stephen M.R. Covey

Interdependent Leadership

Why organize in teams?

Leadership enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to accomplish shared goals and/or make the change they want.

But first, why organize in teams? First and foremost, we are social creatures and working in teams is more fun than working alone! Teammates offer support and mentorship to one another, which play a key role in leadership development. People who feel supported and who enjoy what they're doing are more likely to keep doing it. Next, by working in teams, we can meet higher goals by tapping into the diverse range of resources (including skills and knowledge) multiple people bring. And most importantly, by working in teams, we develop relationships with fellow teammates that facilitate and deepen our commitment to taking action.

Why do teams matter?

The most effective leaders have always created teams to work with them and to lead with them. Teams offer a structural model that fosters interdependent leadership, where individuals can work towards goals together, with each person taking equal leadership on part of the team's activity. At their best, teams recognize and put to productive use the unique talents of the individuals who make up the team.

Effective team structures build strategic capacity—the ability to strategize creatively together in ways that produce more vibrant, engaging strategy than any individual could create alone. At every level, the people on the teams have a clear mission with clear goals and the ability to strategize creatively together about how to carry out their mission and meet their goals.

Interdependent teams provide a foundation from which an organization can expand its reach. Once a team is formed, members can create systems to foster a rhythm of regular meetings, clear decision making, and visible accountability, all increasing the organization's effectiveness. An organization of 500 people is not accomplished by one person alone. It is built by finding people willing and able to commit to building it, including the relationships and the solid team structure that form its foundation.

What is the structure of leadership?

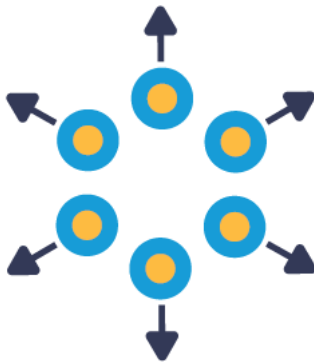
Leadership is taking responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty. The strength of an organization grows out of its commitment to develop leadership .

Sometimes we think leadership is about being the person that everyone goes to:



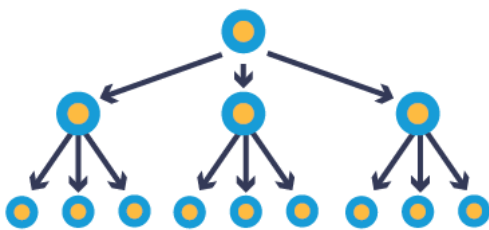
How does it feel to be the dot in the middle of all those arrows? How does it feel to be one of the arrows that can't even get through? And what happens if the "dot" in the middle should disappear?

Sometimes we think we don't need leadership at all because "we're all leaders," but that looks like this:

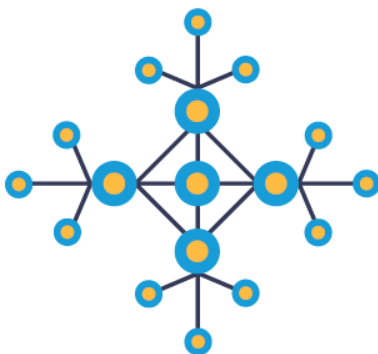


Who's responsible for coordinating everyone? And who's responsible for focusing on the good of the whole, not just one particular part? With whom does the "buck stop"?

Sometimes we use hierarchy to make it clear "who is in charge" and who "just has to get it done, whether you agree or not."



How is power distributed in this model? How do people develop as leaders? What effect does this structure have on agency, hope, and creativity?



Another model for practicing leadership is this "snowflake model." Leaders develop other leaders who, in turn, develop other leaders, all the way "down." Although you may be the "dot" in the middle, your success depends on developing the leadership of others.

Interdependent Leadership or ‘The Snowflake Model’

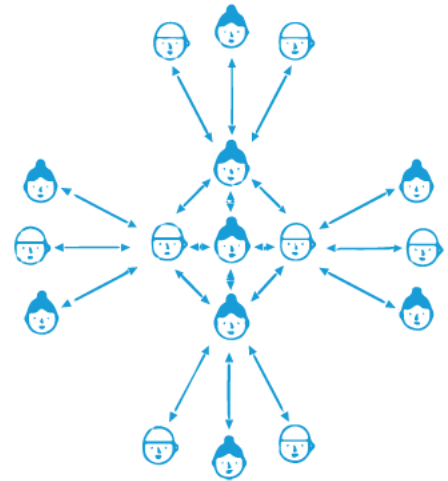
The Snowflake/Interdependent Leadership Model: A distributed approach to leadership

We define leadership as accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty, and the organizational model that best embodies this understanding of leadership is what we call the “snowflake model.”

First, in the snowflake model, leadership is distributed. No one person or group of people holds all the power; responsibility is shared in a sustainable, or better yet, regenerative, way and structure aims to create mutual accountability. The snowflake is made up of interconnected teams working together to further common goals.

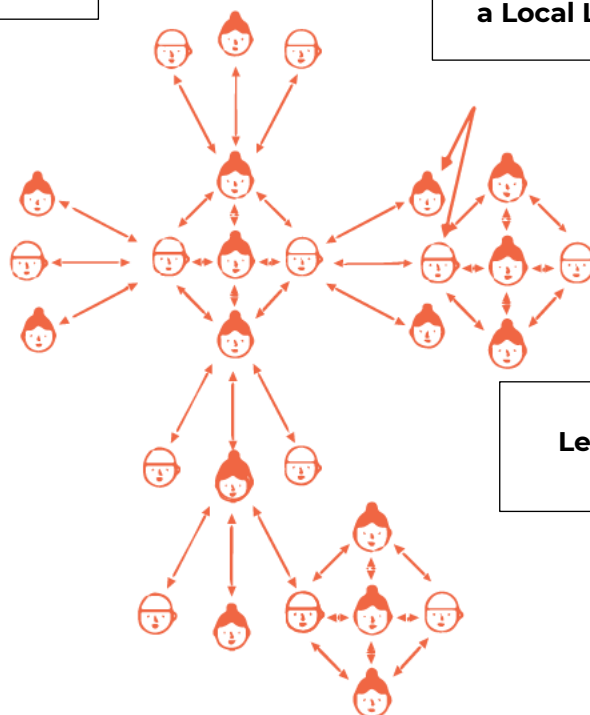
Second, the snowflake model is based above all on enabling others. A movement’s strength stems from its capacity and commitment to develop leadership and in the snowflake model, everyone is responsible for identifying, recruiting, and developing leaders. Leaders develop other leaders who, in turn, develop other leaders, and so on.

Interconnected teams: This model is defined by its distribution of leadership and by its commitment to leadership development. Relationships are the glue that holds the snowflake together, and these relationships support the interconnected teams that make up the snowflake.



Core Leadership Team

Each person in this snowflake could be part of a Local Leadership Team



Local Leadership Teams

So why don't people always work in teams?

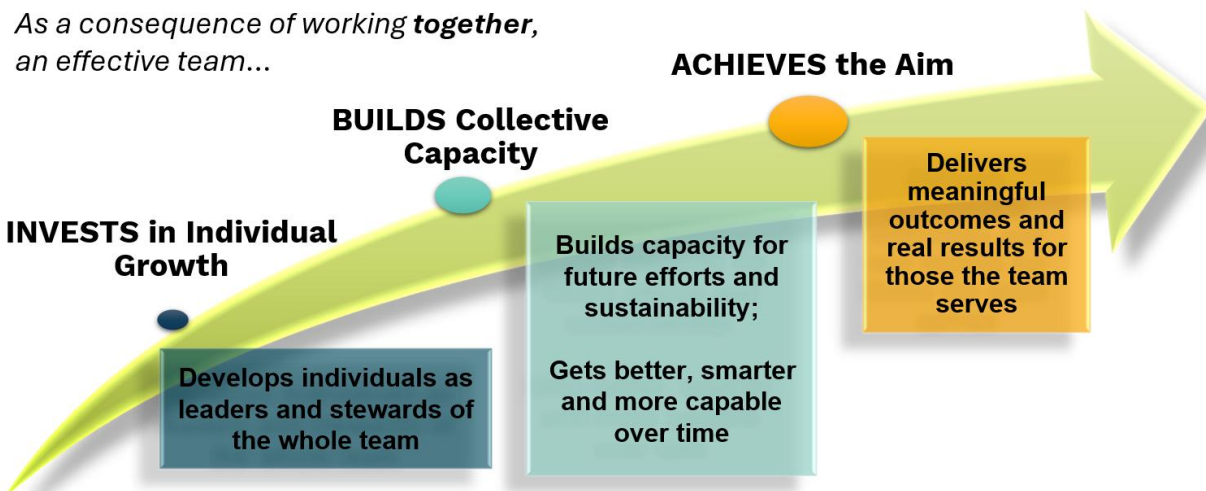
Effective teams who come together around a common goal or aim accomplish much more than a group of people working individually. This is particularly true when multiple skill sets are needed. We have all experienced teams that did not work well together. Teams may experience unresolved conflict, members fall into cliques, work doesn't get done, or all the work may fall on one person. The challenge is to create conditions for our teams that are more likely to lead to successful collaboration and action. When groups of people come together, conflict is always present. Effective teams are structured in ways that channel that conflict in productive ways, allowing the team to achieve its goals for the people they serve.

Three Measures of Effective Teams

1. **RESULTS (or output):** The team successfully completes its work and meets its goals.
2. **CAPACITY:** Over time, the team learns how to work together productively. This can mean developing effective leadership and increasing the capability of teammates to take action and meet goals.
3. **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** All individuals on the team learn new skills, gain knowledge, and grow as a result of their participation in the team.

Measuring Team Effectiveness

*As a consequence of working **together**,
an effective team...*



Four Essential Conditions for Team Effectiveness

Dr. Ruth Wageman and her team studied teams from all sectors (public, private, for-profit, non-profit, government, and health care) for over thirty years and identified the top four conditions for effective teams. These four conditions (listed below) apply in business, community, and healthcare settings:

1. **The team is bounded, stable and interdependent:**
 - **Bounded:** You can name all the people on the team. It's not a different group of people every time you meet.
 - **Stable:** Membership of the team stays constant long enough that the team learns to work together better over time; each member is fully committed to being on the team and commits consistent time and effort to it.

- **Interdependent:** Like a sports team or an airplane crew, the contribution that each person makes to the team is critical to the success of the whole. Team members have a vital interest in each other's success and look for ways to offer support.
- 2. **The team has a compelling purpose.** Each team member is clear on what the team was created to do (purpose), who the team is serving (clients, customers, patients, etc.) and what kinds of activities the team will take on. They understand the work they do, the work is challenging, it matters, and they know why it matters. Team members are able to communicate the purpose of their work for themselves and others.
- 3. **The team creates clear, interdependent roles.** Each team member must have his or her own responsibility - his or her own "chunk" of the work on which the success of the team depends. No one is carrying out their work in isolation or in secret. An effective team will have members with different backgrounds, experiences, and opinions. The team values this diversity to ensure that everyone is bringing their best to the work.
- 4. **The team has explicit norms.** Explicit norms are clear expectations for how the team will work together. Norms include how they will manage meetings, communicate effectively, make decisions, and fulfill commitments. Most importantly, they set clear expectations for how they will address norm violations, so resentment doesn't build up and/or norms don't fall by the wayside.

TEAM ACTIVITY: Team Diagnostic Checklist

TIME: 20-60 minutes with discussion

GOALS:

- Honestly assess the condition of your team or coalition according to the essential conditions for effective teams.
- Consider where your team excels and where the team can improve.
- Think about how you contribute to creating the conditions for an effective, interdependent team and what actions you can take to make it better.

Further reading:

- Freeman, Jo. 1970. ["The Tyranny of Structurelessness."](#) Berkeley Journal of Sociology. 1-8.
- Ruth Wageman, et al., Senior Leadership Teams. [Chapter 1, "The Fall of the Heroic CEO and the Rise of the Leadership Team", \(1-26\); Chapter 9, "What It Takes to Make Them Great", \(pp. 207-218\).](#)
- Deborah Ancona, Henrik Bresman & Katrin Kaeufer, "The Comparative Advantage of X-Teams", MIT Sloan Management Review, Vol. 43 No.3, Spring 2002 (pp. 33- 39).
- Richard L. Moreland, "The Formation of Small Groups", Group Processes, edited by Kendrick, C. (1987), (pp.80-105).

Reflect on the condition of your team using the “grades” below for each key element:

F **D** **C** **B** **A**

Scream Team **Low motivation, No clear sense of purpose, unclear roles, no established norms** **Gaps in trust or effectiveness** **Could improve in certain areas** **Dream Team**

Compelling Purpose	F	D/C/B	A	Overall Grade:
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	How might we Improve?
There is truly a shared purpose that is clear to all members.				
The work has serious consequences [for health and healthcare/ for the community/ for the department or the organization] – team members know that their work matters, and their success makes a difference.				
The work is challenging and engaging and requires committed effort from all members.				
Capabilities, Resources, Skills	F	D/C/B	A	Overall Grade:
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	How might we Improve?
Members understand themselves as an important part of the team, not just a representative of their own position or department.				
The team, collectively, has a high level of collaborative skills (good listening, empathy, humor, integrity).				
Members have the ability to think about the overall system, not just their own place within the system.				
The team is comprised of people who have a diverse set of skills, resources and perspectives.				
Team leaders and members have skills to encourage and coach each other to build both individual and collective capacity.				
The team has a clear and stable boundary: it's clear who is on the team – it's not a random group at each meeting – and people stay long enough to learn to work together.				

Enabling Team Structures	(F)	(D/C/B)	(A)	Overall Grade:
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	How might we Improve?
Team members explicitly understand how decisions will be made. Decision-making processes are transparent.				
The team has clear expectations and norms for how they will respect and empower each other during their work together.				
The team has talked about how violations of the norms will be acknowledged and addressed respectfully, without shaming.				
Individual team members are learning, team capacity is growing over time and the work is making a difference beyond the team.				
Team members have clear roles, not just job descriptions, but clearly understood roles for how they contribute to the success of the team.				
Individuals know their own role and where their role interacts with others. Members support each other while still “staying in their own lane.”				
The team communicates effectively. Team members are able to recognize and resolve conflict.				
The organization’s structures and systems enable and facilitate rather than undermine teamwork and interdependent leadership.				

Use the table below to make notes about what your team does well for each category.
 (Compelling Purpose; Capabilities, Resources, Skills; and Enabling Team Structures)

What does your team do well? or what do you see other teams doing well?	What would you like to change?	What can you do to make things better?
Compelling Purpose		
Capabilities, Resources, Skills		
Enabling Team Structures		
General		

Worksheet for Later Teamwork

Developing Shared Purpose, Team Norms, Explicit Roles

Shared Purpose & Organizing Statement

You can use this worksheet to reflect on the teams you are currently working with in the CCTP effort. Use the work you've done in other sections of the book and workshop to arrive at your answers.

1. In the first column, based on the work you did on common interests and values in the relationship session, write down the **unique purpose of your team**.
2. In the second column, write down **whom your team serves**: Who is your constituency? With whom would it focus its effort? What are the people like and what are their interests? What will engage them? *Note: for the purposes of this training, assume that you all are naming and bringing together all of your various constituencies.*
3. In the third column, write down the kinds of activities that your team could engage in to fulfill its purpose? What is the **unique work that your team will do**? *Again, here you can imagine how learning this process together can make you more effective at achieving the larger goal?*

MY TEAM IS: _____

Our team's shared purpose is to:	The constituency we serve is (briefly describe your constituency's characteristics):	We will achieve our shared purpose by (list the specific activities that your team would undertake):

After brainstorming answers to all three questions, take a few moments to write a sentence that you think best describes your team's purpose, its constituency and its activities. Draw on all three columns.

Example of a shared purpose sentence:

We share the purpose of creating a community-based care transitions program for older adults in the Detroit community that enables greater patient self-management, reliable transfer of information to all providers involved in a patient's care and effective care coordination. Our program will result in a 20% reduction in 30-day readmissions by 2015.

Our team's shared purpose is to:

Example Team Norms/Expectations

Review the sample team ground rules below. Add, subtract, or modify to create norms for your team. Use the empty worksheet that follows to write down your team's norms once you have decided. Be sure to include group norms on each theme below and how you will self-correct if the norm is broken. (If you don't self-correct, the new norm will be breaking the ground rules.)

Discussion and Decision-Making: How we will discuss options and reach decisions as a team to ensure vigorous input and debate?	
Always Do - Engage in open, honest debate - Ask great questions - Balance advocacy with inquiry	Never Do - Engage in personal attacks - Fail to listen to what others say - Jump to conclusions
Meeting Management: How will we manage meetings to respect each other's time?	
Always Do - Start on time; stay on time - Be fully present throughout the meeting	Never Do - Come to meetings unprepared - Answer cell phones or do email
Accountability: How will we delegate responsibilities for actions and activities? How will we follow through on commitments?	
Always Do - Clarify understanding - Provide follow-up on action items - Ask for/offer support when there is a need - Weekly check-in	Never Do - Assume you have agreement - Assume tasks are getting done - Commit to a task that you know you won't do
How will we "self-correct" if norms are not followed?	
Are there other norms or expectations that you want to add that may not fall into one of the above-mentioned categories?	

Team Norms/Expectations Worksheet

Discussion and Decision-making: How will we discuss options and reach decisions as a team to ensure vigorous input and debate?	
Always Do	Never Do
Meeting Management: How will we manage meetings to respect each other's time?	
Always Do	Never Do
Accountability: How will we delegate responsibilities for actions and activities? How will we follow through on commitments?	
Always Do	Never Do
How will you "self-correct" if norms are not followed?	

Understanding Team Roles: Discuss what roles are needed in your team. Discuss how the roles will create an interdependent leadership team. Discuss previous experiences that enable you to play your role; identify how the team can support you in playing your role.

Examples of Team Roles (during small group sessions/team meetings):

Role	Responsibilities	You would be good for this role if you ...	You would probably not be good for this role if you ...
Convener	• Create agendas and facilitate interdependent meetings • Coordinate meeting times and locations • Coordinate and support team members in delegated responsibilities • Coordinate logistics (or delegate them) for meetings	• Can stay focused on the outcome • Listen attentively to others and summarize well • Can identify people's talents and help others contribute their greatest talent to the team • Can delegate and share leadership in real time	• Try to do everything yourself • Try to direct others without listening to their interests • Get distracted easily • Are shy and reluctant to speak up • Are too equivocal and have difficulty helping the team move through conflict toward a decision when necessary
Timekeeper	• Steward your most valuable resource: time! • Work with Convener to keep group moving forward • Lead team in scheduling next steps and timelines with concrete deadlines • Hold team accountable to timelines set together	• Have a timekeeping device • Keep a calendar and stick to it • Understand how to structure activities in sequence to build toward an outcome • Are willing to hold everyone accountable to time and deadlines in order to build momentum	• Never look at your watch • Think that the last calendar or day planner you bought was in 2002 • Always procrastinate • Are not willing to remind others of deadlines or hold others accountable to deadlines that they have participated in setting and have agreed to meet
Notetaker	• Take notes at meetings to share with others • Disseminates notes to team members within agreed upon timeframe • Captures scribes' notes as part of team meeting notes	• Can synthesize discussions with clarity • Can take responsibility for getting the notes to others quickly • Can keep track of multiple things at once	• Have trouble summarizing others' thoughts • Have trouble multi-tasking
Scribe	• Takes notes for the group on large post-it paper to provide visual representation and mapping of team's work together • Clarifies ideas where there is confusion • Accurately captures others' contributions to teamwork	• Has legible handwriting • Is skilled at drawing visual images and lists of ideas in an organized and clear manner • Is versatile with colored markers • Excellent listener, picks up on detail and nuance	• Is hesitant or off-base in summarizing others' thoughts • Has illegible handwriting • Is unable contribute to the group discussion while scribing • Asserts his/her own thoughts for others' contributions
Team Lead	• Pays attention to the emotional temperature of the team • Celebrates good vibes and checks-in when tension arises • Facilitates transparent conversation around tensions and follows up with team members.	• Sees tensions as opportunities to strengthen team's work together • Comfortable with the team norms and discussing difficult topics • Asks for help from other team members so doesn't become the policeman of the group	• Avoids conflict • Makes an issue too vague or veiled so that it loses meaning and transparency • Is afraid of or is too rigid about holding people accountable

Tools for Skillful Conversations

Goals for this Section:

- To introduce the concepts of psychological safety and trauma-informed approaches
- To understand skillful communication best practices, such as Nonviolent Communication (NVC), also called Compassionate Communication
- To practice skillful conversations

*“The real frontier of modernity is not artificial intelligence;
it’s emotional and social intelligence.”*

- Timothy R. Clark

What is Psychological Safety and Why is it Important?

The concept of psychological safety first appeared in organizational science more than fifty years ago [Schein and Bennis \(1965\)](#), and empirical research around this topic has been increasing exponentially ([Frazier et al., 2017](#)). Currently a quick Google Scholar search results in over 5 million results. The global COVID-19 pandemic brought this concept into the mainstream. Organizational researchers have identified psychological safety as a crucial factor in our understanding of individual voice, teamwork, and team and/or organizational learning (Edmondson, 2014). Dr. Amy Edmondson, one of the foremost researchers in this field, coined the term team psychological safety (TPS), which she defines as a shared belief wherein team members can feel safe to take risks, express ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes and near-misses ([Edmondson, 2018](#)). Several empirical studies have shown that psychological safety plays a critical role in learning behavior in organizations ([Newman et al., 2017](#)). Psychological safety also contributes to a culture of accountability – which, in healthcare, is absolutely necessary if we are truly going to improve patient safety, eliminate medical error, achieve high reliability organizations, and build patient-centered healthcare systems. Let's take a closer look at psychological safety in order to better understand how we can impact it both individually and in teams and organizations.

Psychological safety is “a condition in which one feels (a) included, (b) safe to learn, (c) safe to contribute, and (d) safe to challenge the status quo, without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized or punished in some way” ([Clark, 2019](#)). Timothy R. Clark speaks of this in terms of four stages or quadrants of psychological safety.

Four Quadrants of Psychological Safety*

	What it Means	How Leaders Can Apply
INCLUSION SAFETY	Members feel safe to belong to the team	• Give people space to talk • Be curious • Acknowledge and respect boundaries
LEARNER SAFETY	Members can ask questions and learn	• Value honesty • Meet people where they are (don't assume familiarity) • Identify and share what was learned
CONTRIBUTOR SAFETY	Members feel safe to contribute ideas and skills	• Ask permission before giving feedback • Foster equal participation • Encourage open dialogue
CHALLENGER SAFETY	Members can question ideas and suggest meaningful change	• Ask for pluses and deltas (good and bad) • Invite dissent and alternative perspectives • Show gratitude for the opportunity to learn

*Adapted from the work of Timothy R. Clark

“Today, more and more workers are worried about making ends meet, dealing with chronic stress, and struggling to balance the demands of work and personal lives. The toll on their mental health is growing.”

- Vivek H. Murthy, M.D., MBA, 19th Surgeon General of the United States

Trauma and Trauma-Informed Approaches

In addition to everyday stressors, we all have stories and events that we carry with us. A growing body of research is showing that many of us are impacted by trauma. In fact, we are finding that trauma is common and pervasive.

- [70% of U.S. adults](#) have [experienced](#) at least one traumatic event (Benject, et al, 2016).
- 76% of full-time U.S.-based employees [reported](#) at least one symptom of a mental health condition in 2021 (Mind Share Partners 2021 Mental Health at Work Report).
- [46% of U.S. children](#) have [experienced](#) at least one event by age 18 and more than 20% have experienced at least two (NCSL, 2022)

First, let's define trauma. [SAMHSA describes individual trauma](#) as “an event or circumstance resulting in physical, emotional and/or life-threatening harm.” The [Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center](#), adds that, “[trauma] results from exposure to an incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being.”

Support, and even demand, for trauma-informed approaches, policies, and practices is growing across many sectors including healthcare, education, law enforcement, and the workplace. Trauma-informed approaches are not the same as counseling or therapy and are distinct from trauma services. These approaches are based on evidence and best practices from [NEAR](#) (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences ([ACEs](#)), and Resilience research) science. Implementation of trauma-informed approaches will vary depending on industry and context, but it always begins with understanding that trauma affects people's worldview, relationships, and how they see themselves.

For the purposes of this workshop, we are not expecting anyone to become an expert in psychological safety or trauma-informed care, but rather to recognize how these concepts can impact how we relate to one another and why it's more important than ever to learn and practice evidence-based, skillful communication.

What is a 'Skillful Conversation' and Why is it Important?

To quote author Judith Hanson Lasater, “what we say matters,” as does how we say it. One of the most recognized, practiced, and effective methods of skillful conversation is ‘Nonviolent Communication’ (NVC), also sometimes referred to as compassionate communication. NVC was developed by clinical psychologist, Marshall Rosenberg, in the 1970s, based on the principles of nonviolence (echoing Gandhi's philosophy of human interaction without harm), and aimed at improving communication and increasing empathy. In his studies of the factors that impact human compassion, Dr. Rosenberg was “struck by the crucial role of language and our use of words.” It was from these realizations that he identified this specific approach to communicating that fosters connection with ourselves and each other and “allows compassion to flourish.” After many years of successfully employing and teaching NVC to individuals, Dr. Rosenberg began using nonviolent communication in international conflict resolution and peace negotiations all over the world.

Nonviolent communication is both simple and powerful, based on the idea that “once people hear one another, it will be much easier to talk about a solution which satisfies all parties' fundamental needs.” Practicing NVC trains us to observe precisely, specify conditions or behaviors that impact us, and identify and articulate what we need. The NVC approach replaces old patterns of communication, such as defending ourselves, withdrawing, accusing or verbally attacking. Instead, we focus on what we are observing, feeling, and needing rather than on “diagnosing and judging”.

Nonviolent communication calls on our empathy, sincerity, and respect in order to “facilitate good relationships between the diverse human beings that we are.” (Rosenberg 2003)

“How can we extinguish a fire if we don’t first cut off the fuel that ignites the inferno?” ~Arun Gandhi

The Process of NVC

Although NVC is not a set formula, there is a process with two parts and four important components. You can adapt the order and style to the situation.

When _____, I feel _____
Observations **Emotions**
 because I need _____.
Needs
 Would you be able to _____?
Request

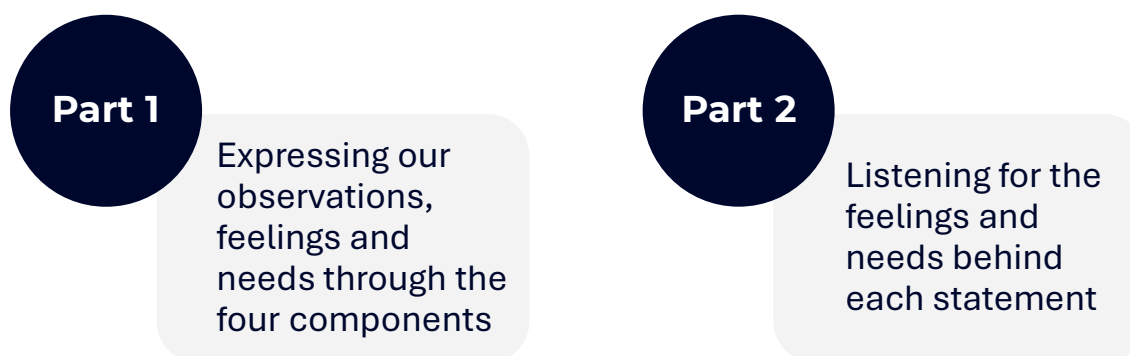
The Four Components of Nonviolent Communication:

Component	Process
Observations	Observe what is happening. Focus on neutral statements about the facts of what others are saying or doing that we either like or don't like, without judgment, evaluation, or analysis. Examples: ▪ "When you raise your voice..." ▪ "When you said you'd do it, and you didn't..." ▪ "The last few times I made a suggestion, you didn't acknowledge me..." ▪ "When I hear you addressing me like that..."
Feelings	State how we feel when we observe what is happening: are we hurt, scared, amused, irritated, etc. Examples: ▪ "When you raise your voice, I feel anxious because I sense anger and I fear it will escalate... " ▪ "When you said you'd do it and you didn't, I felt disappointed ..." ▪ "The last few times I made a suggestion, you didn't acknowledge me, and I felt ignored and invisible ..." ▪ "When I hear you addressing me like that, I feel agitated ..."
Needs	State what needs we have that are connected to the feelings we identified. Examples: ▪ "When you raise your voice, I feel anxious because I sense anger and I fear it will escalate, and I need to know that I am safe." ▪ "When you said you'd do it and you didn't, I felt disappointed because I need to be able to rely on your word." ▪ "The last few times I made a suggestion, you didn't acknowledge me, and I felt ignored and invisible, and I need to know that I am seen, heard, and can contribute here." ▪ "When I hear you addressing me like that, I feel agitated because I need cooperation and a peaceful resolution of our differences."
Requests	Make a specific request that addresses what we would like to see happen. Examples: ▪ "When you raise your voice, I feel anxious because I sense anger and I fear it will escalate, and I need to know that I am safe. I would prefer if would not raise your voice at me – would you be willing to work on that?"

Component	Process
	▪ “When you said you’d do it and you didn’t, I felt disappointed because I need to be able to rely on your word. My request is that you either follow through on what you said you would do or let me know honestly that you won’t be able to do it or don’t want to. Would you be willing to do that?” ▪ “The last few times I made a suggestion, you didn’t acknowledge me, and I felt ignored and invisible, and I need to know that I am seen and heard, and can contribute here. Would you be willing to acknowledge when I make a suggestion so I know that you’ve heard me – even if you don’t agree with the suggestion?” ▪ “When I hear you addressing me like that, I feel agitated because I need cooperation and a peaceful resolution of our differences. Are you willing to tell me what you are feeling and needing right now instead of what you think I am?”

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg’s *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

Two Parts of Nonviolent Communication



Communication that blocks compassion and alienates us from each other:

Statements/Communication that Alienate	Examples
Moralistic Judgments that imply wrongness or badness. Blame, insults, put-downs, labels, criticism, comparisons, and diagnoses are all forms of judgment.	“The problem with you is...” “You’re selfish.” “She’s lazy.” “That’s inappropriate.”
Making Comparisons	“I don’t do it that way, why would you.” “I’ve never known anyone else to take issue with this.” “Most other people would have ...”
Denial of Responsibility for one’s actions, feelings, or needs	“You made/me me feel...” “I had/have to ...” “I had no choice”
Communicating Desires as Demands	“You/he/she/they must learn a lesson.” “You/he/she/they deserves to be punished.”

Adapted from Marshall Rosenberg’s, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

Nonviolent communication is a powerful tool for managing conflicts, finding solutions, and developing more satisfying relationships with yourself and others. As we focus on the four components when we are initiating conversation, and listen for feelings and needs from others, we can establish a flow of communication that allows compassion and empathy to emerge. Practicing NVC in the workplace and professional relationships not only improves communication, but provides tools for conflict resolution, positive culture, stronger relationships, increased engagement, innovation and creativity, personal growth, transformational leadership, and a positive

organizational reputation. NVC can help foster a culture of empathy, active listening, and cultural sensitivity.

We can use nonviolent communication in any situation, regardless of whether the people with whom we are communicating have knowledge of NVC. If we follow the principles of NVC and stay motivated to give and receive (speak and listen) compassionately, others will eventually join us in the process. This may not happen quickly, and we may need to give it a few tries, but this process does work with practice. It does take practice, but you'll be amazed at how quickly you'll progress and how your conversations can transform.

References & Further Reading

Amy C. Edmondson and Zhike Lei. [Psychological Safety: The History, Renaissance, and Future of an Interpersonal Construct](#). Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior 2014 1:1, 23-43

Kim S, Lee H, Connerton TP. [How Psychological Safety Affects Team Performance: Mediating Role of Efficacy and Learning Behavior](#). Front Psychol. 2020 Jul 24;11:1581. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01581. PMID: 32793037; PMCID: PMC7393970.

Benjet C, Bromet E, Karam EG, Kessler RC, McLaughlin KA, Ruscio AM, Shahly V, Stein DJ, Petukhova M, Hill E, Alonso J, Atwoli L, Bunting B, Bruffaerts R, Caldas-de-Almeida JM, de Girolamo G, Florescu S, Gureje O, Huang Y, Lepine JP, Kawakami N, Kovess-Masfety V, Medina-Mora ME, Navarro-Mateu F, Piazza M, Posada-Villa J, Scott KM, Shalev A, Slade T, ten Have M, Torres Y, Viana MC, Zarkov Z, Koenen KC. [The epidemiology of traumatic event exposure worldwide: results from the World Mental Health Survey Consortium](#). Psychol Med. 2016 Jan;46(2):327-43. doi: 10.1017/S0033291715001981. Epub 2015 Oct 29. PMID: 26511595; PMCID: PMC4869975.

[Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center](#)

[SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

Rosenberg, M.B. (2003). Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life

Lasater, JH, Lasater, I (2009). What We Say Matters: Practicing Nonviolent Communication

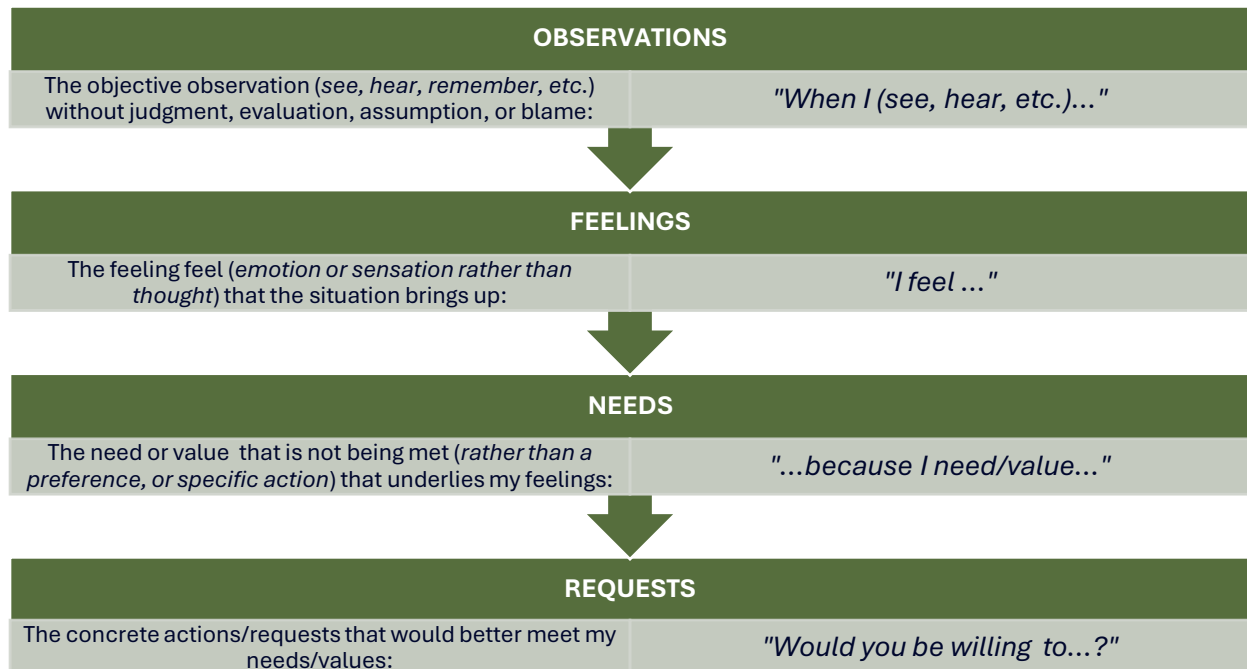
PRACTICE ACTIVITY: Nonviolent Communication

GOALS:

- Practice using nonviolent communication (NVC) structure to have a skillful conversation
- Practice identifying feelings and needs using the Feelings Wheel and Needs Wheel on the following pages

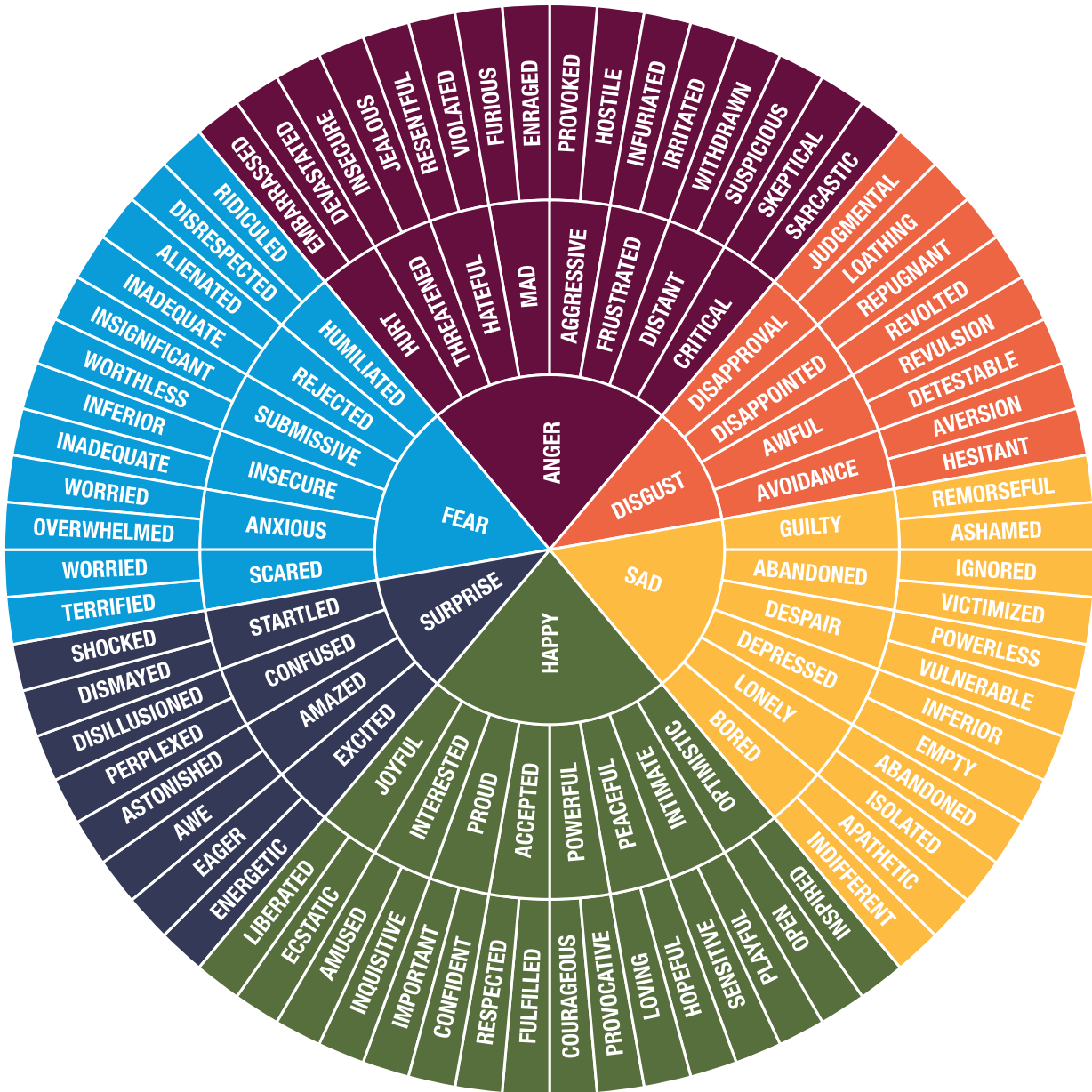
AGENDA

1.	Find a practice partner	
2.	Practice initiating an NVC conversation with your partner • Use the steps outlined below and the Feelings Wheel and Needs Wheel on the following pages to identify your emotions and basic needs related to the emotion	~10 min
3.	Switch roles with your partner and practice the opposite role you had in the first round, i.e. if you were the 'initiator' during the first round, you'll be the 'invitee' during this round and vice versa.	~10 min
4.	Give each other feedback and coaching	



Resource: Feelings Wheel

Use this wheel to help you identify your emotions/feelings related to the situation/observation.



Resource: Needs Wheel

Use this wheel to help you identify your needs or values that may be underlying the feelings brought up by the situation.

