National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING

NCWWI Leadership Academy

COACHING GUIDE

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SECTION 1:

Introduction to the Leadership Academy Coaching Guide

Background

Welcome to the Leadership Academy Coaching Guide. The Leadership Academy seeks to develop leadership skills for sustainable systems change to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. Funded by the Children's Bureau, and part of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), the Leadership Academy builds workforce capacity through leadership development of child welfare supervisors and managers across the country who work in public/private child welfare systems and private agencies that provide services traditionally provided by state child welfare agencies. The Leadership Academy consists of online and in-person learning experiences and the Coaching Program explain here.

The Leadership Academy Coaching Program facilitates leadership development designed to help supervisors and managers develop, improve, and sustain a change project focused on workforce development. Change projects focus on program-, organization-, or community-focused interventions benefitting children and families. The coaching program supports change project implementation and consists of three coaching phases: Readiness Coaching, Leadership Academy Coaching, and Post-Academy Coaching.

The coaching program comes from a developmental lens, with an emphasis on coaching the whole person.

In an effort to improve the Leadership Academy Coaching Program, NCWWI evaluates its impact on Leadership Academy participants' perceived ability to improve their transfer of learning and develop their leadership skills. The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM) evaluation (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2013) found that managers who received coaching and communicated with LAMM peers reported significantly higher competency gains and were more likely to implement their change initiative when compared to managers without

coaching or peer support. Additionally, results of a study that included 63 child welfare managers from eight jurisdictions who participated in LAMM from 2014-2018 indicated that one year after receiving coaching, mangers reported more regular engagement in the identified leadership behaviors, particularly related to leading change (Grenier & Rienks, 2019).

It is evident from experience and participant feedback from previous Leadership Academies that coaching is critical for the program to be effective. Supervisors and managers need coaching support as they apply the skills in the workplace they learn during training.

What is Coaching?

Butler Institute for Families (2020) defines coaching as "an ongoing, client-driven process centered on solution-oriented interactions designed to increase awareness, build capacity, and achieve desired growth." Leadership Academy Coaching uses a developmental approach and is a structured process in which a coach uses specific strategies to help leaders become more skilled, effective, and better able to implement sustained change through self-awareness, assessment, and practice.

Sir John Whitmore (2017) describes coaching as unlocking a person's potential to help maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn, rather than teaching them. Effective coaching provides a "holding environment" that helps foster reflective capacity and growth in participants as they focus on the attitudes, values, and beliefs that drive behaviors. Individuals who attend to their own growth, development, and centering are, in turn, more able to guide organizations to meet new challenges in child welfare.

The Leadership Development Coach supports Leadership Academy participants throughout their training experience. The Leadership Academy content is one resource a coach uses to facilitate transfer of learning to the participant's work setting. Leadership Development Coaches also focus on raising awareness around thoughts, assumptions, values, beliefs, and emotions that drive actions and behavior. Coaches facilitate and guide coaching conversations to:

- Develop and reinforce leadership skills and competencies;
- Assist with leadership development goal-setting strategies;
- Encourage participants to practice adaptive leadership behaviors; and
- Incorporate reflective practice to address complex organizational challenges.

Why Coaching?

Successful implementation of effective child welfare interventions requires behavior change. Training is the typical intervention to create the behavior change but is not sufficient to effect

these changes. Training and coaching so that people feel more effective in their jobs has been found to lead to better retention. Research also finds that staff who possess and integrate new knowledge, potentially through training and coaching, are the most likely to feel effective and satisfied (Altman & Cohen, 2016; Theeboom et al., 2016).

Training is an important competency driver but even effective training does not stand alone. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) identifies coaching as a key driver of successful change implementation. Most new skills can be introduced in training but must be practiced and mastered on the job, and that's where coaching comes in. Evidence has documented the impact of training on transfer of learning when coupled with coaching. According to the NIRN (2020):

- **Newly learned behaviors are crude.** Training is designed to introduce learners to a set of new skills. Coaching is designed to help learners unpack the nuances of those new skills and apply them effectively to various situations.
- **Newly learned behaviors are fragile.** When practice shifts are made, they can affect whole systems that may react unfavorably. Coaching supports the learner in sifting through this "noise" to identify effective change mechanisms within the service population and the system itself.
- **Newly learned behaviors are incomplete.** As good as trainings are, there are limitations in the applicability of those early skills because of time and environment. Coaching reinforces learning when learners apply new skills in "real-life" situations and deepens learners' understanding of the elements required for sustained change.

Coaching has emerged as a leading tool in unlocking a worker's potential and supporting them in their continued professional development. The Leadership Academy approach to professional development includes training and coaching, which aim to support participants in:

Moving from new learner to master practitioner. The Leadership Academy introduces supervisors and managers to essential components of leadership knowledge and skills. While participants practice the skills during training, their newly learned behaviors may feel awkward and forced, similar to a person learning to play tennis who struggles to put the pieces together into a complex activity called "playing tennis." Coaching helps participants deepen their knowledge and sharpen their skills in real settings until their new leadership skills become a natural part of their behavior.

Shoring up skills in the face of pressures. Effective and ongoing coaching supports the participant through the early stages of leading change while the participant is becoming more skilled—and more confident.

Linking learning and skills to the participant's context. The online modules and classroom trainings offer activities and exercises to help each participant practice how the learning may be applied in the workplace. Coaching the whole person (the "being" and the "doing"), means exploring not only what actions need to be taken to link learning, but also what being or adaptive aspects need to be explored. A coaching relationship can help the participant recognize the attitudes, values, and beliefs they bring to the task and help the participant translate and apply knowledge and skills from training to the day-to-day reality of their work.

About This Guide

The intent of this Leadership Academy Coaching Guide is to describe the elements of a successful and effective Leadership Academy Coaching Program. Section 1 of the guide introduces the purpose, definition, and rationale of coaching. The second section, Coaching Essentials, includes the desired background knowledge, skills, behaviors, and techniques of an effective coach. The third section explains coaching during the readiness phase of coaching and includes developing the coaching agreement, structure of coaching sessions, and how to coach to the 360° assessment. The fourth section explains coaching when participants are going through the Leadership Academy and includes specific ideas for coaching to the competencies and modules within the Academy. Section 5 offers information to guide coaching during the Post-Academy phase so that participants transfer their learning and implement their change projects. Various resources including forms and tools are in Section 6. Finally, the appendix contains case scenarios illustrating real coaching experiences so the coach can get a sense of the coaching process. References are also provided in the last section for further learning.

Summary

The Leadership Academy Coaching Program is designed to coach the "whole" person so participants can get the most out of the Leadership Academy and become more effective leaders. The coach will encourage, support, and guide Leadership Academy participants to exercise leadership skills in a safe and nurturing environment. The Leadership Development Coach will assist the learner with the integration and application of the necessary skills required to advance positive systems change.

SECTION 2:

Coaching Essentials

Effective coaches are equipped with the right knowledge and skills to ask the right questions. This section explores the essential skills a coach must have.

Effective Leadership Development Coaches should possess:

- Background knowledge of child welfare and Leadership Academy curriculum content and concepts;
- Attributes and skills that enable them to engage Leadership Academy participants in the three phases of Leadership Academy Coaching;
- The ability to help participants apply newly learned leadership behaviors to their working environment and change projects; and
- Capacity to provide emotional and practical support and professional resources for participants' change efforts.

Getting Ready to be a Coach

The Leadership Academy Coaching process follows the executive coaching model (Peterson, 2011) and is:

One-on-one. While there can be Leadership Academy group coaching opportunities, this guide focuses on one-on-one coaching activities.

Relationship-based. Leadership Academy Coaching is based on trust, reciprocity, and rapport and leads to a coach-participant relationship through which change occurs.

Methodology-based. As shown in this coaching guide, Leadership Academy Coaching draws on specific actions, tools, and techniques as part of a structured coaching process.

Scheduled in multiple sessions over time. Coaching over time allows for implementation of action steps and accountability for follow-through. Post-Academy Coaching with Leadership Academy participants will typically occur for an hour once a month for five to six months.

Development-oriented for both organizational and individual benefit. The goal of Leadership Academy Coaching is for the participant to be able to transfer learning back to the organization and apply leadership skills to the implementation of a change project. Each

participant's change project is part of the organization's plan for systems change, so when coaching is successful, the organization and participant benefit.

Customized to the person. Guided by an overall coaching approach, the Leadership Development Coach chooses among a variety of tools and techniques to meet the participant's specific coaching needs at any given time.

Intended to facilitate the participant's self-directed learning. This aspect of executive coaching is a fundamental principle of the Leadership Academy Coaching approach. Coaches are facilitative rather than directive; they help to increase awareness and evoke transformation. A universal coaching maxim is all people are creative, resourceful, and whole.

Principles and Behaviors of Effective Leadership Academy Coaching

The following principles of effective coaching can foster the development of trust, compassion, stability, and hope in the coaching relationship and underpin the Leadership Academy Coaching Program. The specific behaviors that follow each principle support and guide coaching.

Effective coaching is driven by the person being coached. Self-directed change lasts longer and is often superior to change designed by others. Leadership Academy Coaching:

- Models deep respect for each participant's own experiences and development.
- Helps individuals see their own assumptions and blind spots so they can choose how to respond to situations.
- Helps participants recognize they have the expertise and resources to solve many of their own challenges.
- Models and supports regenerating practices such as self-care, reflection, and centering.
- Produces a trusting relationship through which meaningful and lasting reflection, learning, and change can occur.
- Supports self-efficacy and self-determination.

Effective coaching facilitates the growth and leadership development of the Leadership Academy participant. Leadership Academy Coaching:

- Creates a partnership for learning and change.
- Integrates participants' leadership development with real experiences.
- Encourages participants to take risks and experiment with bold ideas and strategies designed to meet the whitewater challenges intrinsic to child welfare.
- Provides participants time to deepen new knowledge and apply their learning to the work.

- Provides participants the chance to "get on the balcony" to see possibilities for change from multiple perspectives.
- Provides a space for reflection that, in and of itself, is beneficial to participants' learning and development.

Effective Leadership Academy Coaching supports the development, implementation, and sustainability of change projects to serve children, families, and communities. Leadership Academy Coaching:

- Focuses on proven implementation principles and strategies that promote sustainability of change.
- Promotes adaptability and responsiveness in participants so they can navigate the whitewater of change and guide an effective and sustainable change project forward within the reactive and often crisis-driven context of child welfare.
- Promotes consideration and inclusion of diverse perspectives, ideas, and people to inform successful change implementation.
- Helps participants identify ways they can move to action after diverse voices are heard.
- Enables participants to focus on a change project and leadership tasks in service of the greater mission of improving overall system response to children, youth, and families.

Effective Leadership Academy Coaching facilitates participants' application of leadership principles and competencies. Leadership Academy Coaching:

- Helps participants apply the NCWWI Leadership Model to leadership challenges.
- Supports participants in a unique and valuable way to practice and employ adaptive strategies for leading change, leading in context, leading people, and leading for results.
- Provides a safe and trusting "holding environment" where the political realities of the day-to-day work can be set aside, allowing for experimentation and risk-taking that is often necessary for competent leaders.
- Represents an opportunity for participants to most freely and without censorship express thoughts and feelings about themselves, the organization, and the larger community.
- Helps participants identify and apply leadership competencies to real-life situations in their work experience.

Knowledge and Experience

To provide effective coaching in the unique and complex environment of child welfare and support the transfer of learning from the Leadership Academy, Leadership Development Coaches should possess:

- Child welfare or social service workforce development experience
- Child welfare or social service management experience
- Leadership Academy curriculum content knowledge, including:
  - NCWWI Leadership Model
  - NCWWI Implementation Phases
  - Racial Equity, Inclusivity, and Biases
  - Adaptive Leadership
  - Strengths-Based Leadership
  - Daring Leadership
  - Transformational Leadership

Skills

Foundational Coaching Skills

Leadership Development Coaches must possess and demonstrate a range of coaching skills. In the context of coaching child welfare leadership, coaches must be able to:

- **Meet ethical standards of coaching**:
  - Design an alliance and be transparent when developing and implementing a coaching agreement.
  - Accurately represent scope and limits of own expertise.
  - Know and take responsibility for dealing with own biases.
  - Maintain confidentiality.
  - Offer content and context knowledge that is more facilitative and less directive.
  - Reinforce the leadership competencies identified in the Leadership Academy.
  - Link participant experiences and skills to outcomes for children, youth, families, and communities.
  - Provide evidence-based and evidence-informed practice resources relevant to participant's change project.
  - Engage in difficult conversations regarding racial equity and inclusivity.
  - Use Leadership Academy, NCWWI, Child Welfare Information Gateway, and other resources to add subject-matter expertise when appropriate.
- **Provide professional development support**:
  - Assist participants in identifying professional development goals utilizing 360° assessment feedback, strengths assessment, values clarification, etc.
  - Assist participants in using leadership skills while distributing responsibility and empowering others.
  - Support self-reflection and cultural humility.

  - Combine focus on change project attainment with goals for professional and organizational growth.
- **Manage progress and share accountability**:
  - Attend to what is important for the participant.
  - Hold participant responsible for developing and implementing an action plan.
  - Follow up on coaching discussions and action plan to track participant progress.
  - Model accountability and responsibility by keeping commitments made during coaching process.

The coach's ability to be fully conscious and create a relationship with the participant requires a coaching style that is open, flexible, and confident. To support participant learning and development, coaches:

- **Stay curious:** Curiosity is having a genuine spirit of learning and a willingness to discover new things. Genuine curiosity is an authentic, nonjudgmental interest in whatever is going on for a participant. When curiosity is present, new and increased awareness is possible.
- **Provoke deeper thinking:** By provoking deeper thinking, coaches create and strengthen bonds and form meaningful connections to new learning. Some might call this developing insight. To provoke deeper thinking, we shift perspective, look outside of what is shared or demonstrated, and imagine a new way of being or doing.
- **Withhold judgment:** It is imperative that coaches never let their judgments enter any part of the coaching relationship. The participant is the expert. In coaching, it's always about what the participant wants to explore, not what the coach thinks or feels should be explored. And, the participant ultimately determines what specific actions they will take in addressing their specific issues, not the coach. The coach can ask for permission to share an insight or experience that might help the participant in that exploration process, but again, the coach's judgment should never enter any part of the conversation.
- **Believe in the client:** A participant who feels their coach has confidence in them is more likely to open up and connect with their coach. Ultimately, the participant is the one in charge of the decisions and direction. Having someone believe in their ability to make the right decisions can have a major impact on the participant's level of engagement in the coaching relationship.
- **Ask great questions:** Questions are the coach's most powerful tools. The information obtained is directly related to the strength and poignancy of the questions asked. A skillfully worded question can remove barriers and deepen or clarify the level of understanding within the coaching partnership. Asking great questions moves

individuals and organizations toward their desired goals.

- **Dance in the moment:** A coach is dancing in the moment when they are completely present with the participant, holding the participant's agenda, accessing their (the coach's) intuition, and letting the participant lead the interaction.
- **Listen deeply:** Effective coaching relies on listening intently and actively to what the participant is willing to share in an environment that is conducive to the exploration of possibilities and solutions to what may be holding the participant back from achieving their goals.

The ability of the coach to expand and enhance their personal skills and attributes is critical to the coaching relationship. The Coaching Self-Evaluation Checklist: Coaches Personal Log is in Section 6 of this guide and is useful for facilitating self-reflection and setting personal goals for coaching practice development.

Developing the Coaching Agreement

The coaching agreement is part of each phase of coaching. The coaching agreement also includes a summary of the change project and leadership development goals.

The coaching agreement applies across all three phases of coaching: Readiness, Leadership Academy Coaching, and Post-Academy Coaching. The coach will work with the participant on leadership development and the development, implementation, and sustainability of the change project in all three phases. As the participant progresses, the intent of the coaching shifts from preparing for best use of Leadership Academy training to the application of Leadership Academy training in the workplace. A sample of a Coaching Agreement is in Section 6 of this guide.

A Leadership Development Coach and participant determine parameters, principles, logistics, and assumptions about the coaching process prior to making an agreement to work together. Consider the following when developing the coaching agreement.

Establishing the relationship:

Explore the qualities of the relationship by:

- Recognizing that it is partnership.
- Emphasizing the collaborative nature.
- Committing to a productive, creative and useful time together.
- Agreeing to take risks.

Determining the number and frequency of coaching sessions:

- One session per month: Readiness Coaching for three months, Leadership Academy Coaching for five months, and Post-Academy Coaching for five-six months,
- Potential availability of other coaching sessions when you want an additional check in.

Establishing methods for contacting each other and scheduling sessions:

- Use email, phone, text, or videoconferencing (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams).
- Schedule one session at a time or multiple sessions at a time, set a day and time of the month, etc.

Maintaining confidentiality:

- Agree that conversations are confidential.
- Agree that no information will be shared without the participant's permission. (Depending on expectations of the organization, the coach may have a reporting requirement to the training department for tracking purposes, e.g., that coaching sessions are taking place).

Creating a general agenda:

Describe the agenda based on the phases of coaching: Readiness coaching is more prescriptive because of required pre-work assignments with a focus on preparing the participant for the Academy. Leadership Academy coaching shifts the focus to include preparation and application to the workplace for each training module along with assessment and awareness of leadership strengths and opportunities for growth, and Post-Academy Coaching focuses on application of learning to the workplace and leadership development.

Documenting components:

To facilitate continuity from one coaching session to the next, coaches are encouraged to take notes for personal use; a sample of Leadership Academy Coaching Notes is in Section 6 of this guide. Keeping notes can also help with evaluating sessions.

There will be a period of reflection at the end of each of the coaching sessions when the coach and participant discuss what worked and what improvements may be needed related to:

- **Relationship**: How is the coach doing in their ability to provide a supportive and comfortable climate for the conversations?
- **Process**: What does the participant think of the coaching process in relation to their goals?
- **Results**: How does the participant think the coaching is going in terms of getting closer

to their goals for the coaching experience?

A sample of the Coaching Session Evaluation is in Section 6 of this guide.

Sample questions a coach might use throughout all phases of coaching include:

Questions that elicit the participant's coaching goal(s):

- What do you want to accomplish through this coaching relationship?
- What will be different when you've reached this goal?
- How can we measure our progress?
- At the end of our coaching work, what change do you want to have made?
- How can we state your objective so it depends only on what you do and not on the choices or actions of others?
- Now take that and state it in one short sentence: What do you want to accomplish?
- How do you see your personal goals and your goals for your change project intertwining in our process?

Sample questions for getting to results:

- How will we know things are moving forward as you hoped?
- When we check in at the beginning of each session, what do you think I could ask you to learn about results?
- When we end each session, how would you like to set goals for action items during the time between sessions?

Sample statements about feedback:

- As a coach, I need your input so I know what I am doing right and where I can be more effective.
- As a program, we also need your feedback on what is and what would be helpful to participants in the Leadership Academy training.
- I want you to feel free to give me feedback on what works for you and what I could do differently, so that I can be more helpful.

In developing the agreement, the Leadership Development Coach emphasizes that the coaching content will be determined by the participant, reflecting the fundamental coaching principle of self-directed learning referenced earlier.

Using Questions in the Coaching Process

Leadership Development Coaches use powerful questions to elicit problem-solving and critical thinking from participants. The coach employs reflective questioning and exploration to help the participant integrate the principles and competencies of the Leadership Academy into their skill sets and change project implementation.

The sample questions in this guide are built around the NCWWI Leadership Model. Because the model is familiar to participants from the Academy training, the questions will also be familiar to participants and more likely to promote the application of leadership skills to the workplace and the implementation of change projects.

The types of questions a Leadership Development Coach asks will depend on the purpose of the coaching moment and include the types of questions below that are commonly used in a coaching conversation.

Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions seek descriptions, ideas, and opinions. Open-ended questions:

- Cannot be answered with a "yes," "no," name, or number.
- Are designed to expand the coach's understanding and include questions that help the coach understand the initiative, organization, community, and leader.
- Expand the participant's understanding of key learning points.
- Are answered in ways that convey the participant's perspective, strengths, and analysis.

Solution-Defining Questions

Solution-defining questions are also open ended but are specifically designed to help participants focus on what they want and may seek to identify situations in the participant's life when they were able to resolve an issue successfully. The point of this type of question is to replicate good results. Two opposite-sounding coaching queries that, when combined, get at a solution:

- Think of a time when you were able to get a group at your organization to try something new.
- Think of a time when organization leadership asked people to try something new, but it didn't work.

Exception-Finding Questions

Exception-finding questions are useful when the participant begins to describe a dynamic about

which they have little optimism. For example, a participant may be coping with a leadership team that rushes to action before considering alternatives or may be trying to motivate an experienced and possibly entrenched supervisory group. The coach may try to unearth some potential strategies around a seemingly "dead end" approach through seeking exceptions:

- Think of a time when the leadership group did something around policy implementation that surprised you. What was it, and how might it help you think through this situation?
- Think of a time when the supervisory group got energized about a new opportunity, resource, or practice. What was it, and what happened?

Questions Based on Past Successes

Building on past successes keeps adaptation moving forward. Adaptive leadership means adapting previously successful approaches to current context to advance the effectiveness and viability of the organization (Heifetz et al., 2009). Past successes anchor coaching in organizational and participant strengths. Examples of questions about past successes include:

- What was the biggest change you have seen in child welfare practice within your organization, and how did the organization make that change happen?
- Think of a time when you and your organization collaborated well with families and communities. What was that effort, and how did the collaboration get going? What were the important factors that brought people together?
- Think of what your stakeholders would say is similar about this initiative and past initiatives. What would they say were successful features of other initiatives, and how can you use that information to further this one?

Scaling Questions

Scaling questions invite people to rate or score their current reality. The real value of the scaling question, however, is the follow-up questions, which promote success. Scaling questions may be particularly useful when participants feel stuck or discouraged. Examples include:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "extremely," how confident are you that this project/initiative will continue to go forward in your organization? What would it take to move that number up and increase your confidence?
- Choosing among "not at all," "somewhat," and "extremely," how committed is your workforce to making this project/initiative work? What do you think they would need from you to improve their rating?

Coping Questions

Coping questions get at past strategies for success in a slightly different way. They are questions designed to build upon the inner resources of the person or the organization that have proved adaptive in the past. For example, most child welfare organizations have experienced years of cutbacks, years when new administrations resulted in a decrease in public advocacy for children and families, and years when economic hardship and political factors put programs in jeopardy. Finding out how individuals and organizations coped or survived can help the participant tailor their approach to the current situation. Examples include:

- (Organizationally) How has your organization coped in times of cutbacks before? Are there any strategies you could bring forward to ensure that your initiative survives?
- (Personally) Thinking about other times when you had a new administration or a change in leadership, what did you personally do to join the new team and promote or continue projects? How did others cope?

Future Vision or Miracle Questions

Future vision or miracle questions remind people of the end goal that is driving the project/initiative, as well as position the participant to look forward to reaching that goal. They focus on ultimate achievement:

- Let's imagine that you are done with this project/initiative, that this is now the "way we do things around here" in your organization/community. What does this look like? How would you know?

Or, the question can be focused on a specific timeframe that helps the participant identify the next steps in a foreseeable future:

- Six months from now, let's imagine things are right on track and implementation is going smoothly. What are some of the ways you would know, and what are some of the things that would be different?

Working back from a miracle, whether long- or mid-term, helps the participant identify what would need to change and, by extension, prioritize and identify some helpful steps to attain the desired state.

Coaching Evaluation Plan

Evaluating the Coaching Program helps to understand its effectiveness in helping participants transfer their learning from the Academy training to the workplace and in using their leadership skills in implementing change projects. Program feedback provides the data necessary to

continuously improve the Leadership Academy Coaching process and its outcomes.

The formal evaluation conducted by the Butler Institute assesses components of coaching and elicits information from participants and coaches to enhance the effectiveness of Leadership Academy Coaching–not to evaluate the participants' work. These surveys help evaluate whether coaching helps Leadership Academy participants apply their knowledge and skills from training to their change projects and to their leadership behaviors at work. Leadership Development Coaches will complete a survey of how effective the Virtual Coaching Program was in preparing them as a coach.

Coaches can use informal methods to evaluate how coaching is proceeding at the conclusion of each coaching session. Use the Coaching Session Evaluation with participants to reflect on the session. Leadership Development Coaches can evaluate themselves using the Coaching Self Evaluation Checklist. As an ongoing process, self-evaluation tracks coaches' development and identifies the relevant skills they use in the Leadership Academy Coaching process.

Continued Learning

There are numerous online courses and microlearnings available on http://courses.ncwwi.org/ that can increase retention of concepts taught during training and provide practical ways of applying new behaviors and practice in the workplace. Coaches should be knowledgeable about what's available so they can refer participants to a helpful course during coaching or even take those courses themselves.

Summary

Coaches must develop their own knowledge and skills so they can provide the best possible experience for Leadership Academy participants. Effective questions are at the heart of the coaching process. Questions are most effective when they arise out of genuine curiosity and are individualized. While this coaching guide contains examples of useful questions, questions will be most helpful when they are generated through dialogue and appreciation of the participant's context and reality. These are the kinds of questions that spark insight and reflection and thus guide participant success.

SECTION 3:

Readiness Coaching

The coaching process starts with Readiness Coaching. This phase includes developing a coaching agreement, setting the context for subsequent coaching, preparing and processing the 360° assessment, and guiding participants in preparing for the Leadership Academy.

Readiness Coaching Activities

Readiness Coaching is a more prescriptive than a typical coaching process as the coach must communicate many activities and tasks related to the Leadership Academy. This also encourages engagement as the coach and participant get to know each other.

Method

Coaching can happen through telephone, videoconferencing, or in-person interactions and email communication. Determine the preferred method, though also be open to changing it from session to session.

Frequency

Leadership Development Coaches will conduct three Readiness Coaching sessions approximately once per month before the Leadership Academy begins to prepare them for that learning experience.

Change Projects

Participants identify a change project that aligns with the NCWWI Workforce Excellence Initiative, or is aligned with current program priorities and is part of their job, from their own leadership position in the program. Each participant begins preparing for the development of leadership skills by submitting their change project description to their coach. At the same time, Leadership Development Coaches use the change project worksheet to help participants

prepare for the Academy training.

Careful review of change projects supports participants in the readiness process and ensures the change project is ready for Academy training activities. These change project reviews also inform the initial coaching conversation. For example, one participant may be coached on ways to develop a more local focus aligned with a broader agency initiative while another may be encouraged to consider their role in implementation of a larger agency workforce initiative.

Readiness Coaching Sessions

Each of the three Readiness Coaching sessions will cover specific activities. Checklists for each session provide Leadership Development Coaches with guidance and structure that support the objectives and purpose of each Readiness Coaching session.

The first step is to initiate contact by emailing the participant:

- Tell participant you'll be their coach and introduce yourself.
- Confirm participant received their welcome letter and any special instructions provided by the training department.
- Choose date/time of coaching sessions(s). Consider scheduling all three Readiness Coaching sessions.

First Readiness Coaching Session

Objectives for this session:

- Share excitement about Academy!
- Develop the coaching agreement.
- Ensure participant understands the training process and is clear about expectations of pre-work.
- Ensure participant understands the evaluation and 360° Feedback process.
- Ensure participant feels related to, known, and respected as an adult learner.

Checklist for Session 1

Welcome and congratulations!

- ☐ Discuss coaching process and develop coaching agreement.
- ☐ Confirm items completed, answer any participant questions/concerns, and make sure participant understands the following must be completed before training:
  - Registration on MyNCWWI
  - Leadership Academy Pre-Training Survey and the 360° Feedback (for talking points,

please see Coaching to the 360° section). Participants should have received an email from Butler Institute about the 360° process.
  - Pre-work assignment: Foundation Modules. Using reflection questions as a guide, let participant share insights and answer questions.
- ☐ Consider the leadership quadrants, four leadership styles (adaptive, strengths-based, transformative, and daring), and Workforce Development Framework brief. Try these questions to engage participant:
  - As a leader what do you feel you do well and what are the areas that seem more difficult?
  - How are the leadership principles of the NCWWI Leadership Framework alive and active in your region/program?
  - Of the four leadership quadrants of the NCWWI Leadership Framework (Leading Change, Leading in Context, Leading People, and Leading for Results), which one is most challenging for you?
  - What was of most interest to you in learning about the Workforce Development Framework (WDF) phases of implementation, workforce components, etc.?
  - What kind of leader do you want to be?
- ☐ Discuss next pre-work assignment, the Change Project Worksheet.
  - Inform participant they will be working on a change project throughout the Leadership Academy that aligns with the agency's Workforce Excellence Initiative.
  - Let participant know that the change project does not need to be completely designed; that's what the training is for.
- ☐ Close by explaining that this will be a lot of work but well worth it! They'll learn valuable leadership skills and gain the tools necessary to lead a successful change project.

Second Readiness Coaching Session

Objectives

- Review pre-work assignment, Change Project Worksheet
- Continue building coaching relationship – provide guidance, feedback and encouragement, and model coaching they might do for others

Checklist for Session 2

- ☐ Go over pre-work assignment: Change Project Worksheet.
  - Let participant share any insights they may have gotten and/or answer questions.
  - Complete any unfinished sections. If the participant hasn't completed the pre-work, do some coaching/trouble shooting with them so they understand this work must be

completed before training.
- Discuss the difference between technical and adaptive challenges, and then explore technical and adaptive challenges of their change project.
- Compliment them on or acknowledge an aspect of their change project.

☐ Discuss the next pre-work assignment, Strengths Assessment.
- Confirm that participant has received information from the trainer to access the assessment.

☐ Acknowledge the challenge of taking the time to complete the pre-work and attend the training and that this says a great deal about their commitment.

Third Readiness Coaching Session

Objectives

- Review the Strengths Assessment results and 360° Feedback report
- Continue the coaching relationship that will provide guidance, feedback, and encouragement throughout the training and model coaching they might do for others

Checklist for Session 3

☐ Inform participants they will be prompted to complete demographics prior to beginning Module 1 of the Leadership Academy.

☐ Review and discuss Strengths Assessment results and 360° Feedback report.
- Using the 360° Feedback Guidance for Coaches in this section, ensure participants understand the feedback, process their feelings about the feedback, and consider areas for development.
- Make sure the participant understands how to read the Strengths Assessment.
- Discuss how it can be used to strengthen their leadership skills.

☐ Ask them about particular goals they want to achieve by attending the training.

☐ Answer any remaining questions.

Coaching to the 360° Assessment

About the 360° Assessment

The purpose of a 360° assessment is to provide leaders with information on their workplace performance through self-reflection and feedback from supervisors, colleagues, and staff who work closely with them. The use of 360° assessments has become quite popular in the private sector as a way to help leaders understand their areas of strength and opportunity for growth.

Research generally supports the use of 360° assessments. In fact, it has been referred to as one of the most important contributions to management practice in recent years and one of the most effective ways to improve managers' self-awareness of strengths and challenges (Richardson, 2010; Thach, 2002). Evidence also suggests that institutional support for post-feedback development (such as coaching) is important for performance improvement (Drew, 2009; Richardson, 2010).

The stressful and ever-changing work of child welfare, in particular, requires skilled and adaptable leaders. Formal preparation and feedback related to that role is rare. When participants in the first round of NCWWI's Leadership Academies indicated they particularly liked activities that helped them gain insight into their own leadership styles, NCWWI evaluators developed a 360° assessment designed to:

1) Allow managers to reflect on their leadership behaviors along the dimensions that would be addressed in training;
2) Enhance participants' leadership development by highlighting areas they could focus on improving as they progressed through the training; and
3) Move evaluation efforts beyond reliance on self-report measures of leadership knowledge and skills to gathering objective data from others, allowing for a more rigorous program evaluation.

The 360° behaviors identified in the assessment are based on the NCWWI Leadership Competency Framework and reflect the core competencies necessary to be a successful child welfare leader. In a study that included 63 child welfare managers from eight states who participated in NCWWI's Leadership Academy for Middle Managers, one year after receiving the feedback, coaching, and training, managers reported more regular engagement in the identified leadership behaviors, particularly related to leading change (Grenier & Rienks, 2019).

> "I liked seeing how my concepts and other people's concepts matched or didn't match. . . . In a lot of the areas, I was pretty close in my self-assessment versus what other people were saying. I did tend to score myself a little lower in some of the areas than other people did, but that's probably normal. There were a couple of spots where I thought I was doing a little bit better but [reporters] had scored [me] a little lower. While you could be offended by it, I thought it was interesting because feedback like that can only help you grow, because if that's what other people perceive, then it's something I need to look at. And there were things I thought I didn't do as well where the other peoples' perceptions were the opposite, so those made me feel better, so you know, it was interesting."

Coaching helps participants understand the 360° Feedback and develop a learning plan that capitalizes on strengths and targets areas for improvement. When there is discord between a participant's self-rating and reporters' ratings, a key feature of coaching is to help them reflect on why they may be showing up differently than they thought without internalizing it.

Communicating About the 360° Assessment

During the first Readiness Coaching session, confirm participant received an email from the Butler Institute and completed the 360°assessment. If they have not received an email from the Butler Institute, please contact the Leadership Development Specialist working with your site and explain to the participant the reason for doing 360° assessments and the process. Be sure to convey the following information about the 360° assessment:

- The 360° assessment is for the participants' personal use and will illuminate their leadership style, strengths, and weaknesses and will be used to guide their leadership development.
- The participant will rate themselves on leadership competencies and will select up to nine raters (one supervisor, four peers, and four direct reports) to do the same. The results of the assessment (self-rating compared to all other raters combined) are then presented to the participant in a subsequent coaching session to help them understand areas of strength and weakness and to develop a learning plan that will be utilized while going through the training, as well as in post-training coaching sessions.
- Emphasize that only the coach and participant will see the results and that these assessments are one of the best approaches to gaining perspective on workplace behaviors. It will **not be shared** with the participant's agency or supervisor.

Coaches should make sure that when contacted, the participant will:

- Respond to an email from Butler staff requesting them to identify reporters and provide email addresses for them
- Complete the Qualtrics 360° survey

Keep in mind It is critical for both the individual being evaluated and those doing the evaluation to understand why the assessment is being conducted and what will be done with the information. Specifically, ***raters*** (also called "reporters") need to understand that it is not a forum for personal attacks, and they should be encouraged to be honest but fair and as objective as possible and to use behaviorally specific constructive feedback. They also need to be assured that they will not suffer negative consequences (such as job loss or negative sanctions) for having provided the feedback. The Butler Institute will do its utmost to make this clear to raters in their contact with them through email and the instructions on the survey. Coaches need to make this clear to participants as well.

360° Feedback Coaching Session

Coaches will review reports with participants in a telephone or video coaching session during the last Readiness Coaching session prior to the beginning of the Leadership Academy module/classroom training.

Sharing the Report

Butler evaluators will send reports to coaches through a secure platform such as Office 365. Coaches will then forward reports to participants three-to-five days prior to their final Readiness Coaching session. Unless previous agreements have been made, Butler will not share reports with others at the agency.

If the coach or participant's manager has concerns about the report, they should contact their site's Leadership Development Specialist.

Prior to delving into the report, the coach should begin the conversation by asking "What kind of leader do you want to be?" to capture the participant's vision and aspirations. Then the coach should transition the conversation into understanding the feedback and processing feelings about the feedback.

This coaching session centers on:

1. Understanding feedback
    - How to interpret the mean scores by domain as well as at the item-level. Keep in mind that the rating scale gauges behavioral frequency where 1 = *Almost Never*, 2 = *Sometimes*, 3 = *About Half the Time*, 4 = *Usually*, 5 = *Almost Always*. Note that standard deviations less than 1.0 on domains indicate some amount of difference in how people responded (some gave higher ratings while others gave lower ratings).
    - Highest-lowest tables: Note there may be other items with similarly high or low scores that don't appear in the "top" 3 but are equally important.
    - Gap analysis: This can be particularly helpful

Keep in mind Research has shown the most positive effect on performance when the feedback focuses on task-related criteria where paths to improvement are clear (versus a focus on the individual's personality or character traits). Several studies have noted that most 360° assessment participants received no surprising or "new" information about themselves. They reported that they were already aware of their shortcomings or that the 360° assessment provided only positive affirmations. When feedback was provided about *known* shortcomings, those leaders often felt even more compelled to improve at the realization that others also noticed the shortcoming.

to focus on if gaps are large (less than 1.0) as these discrepancies may be very meaningful. Positive gaps should be considered "hidden strengths" while negative gaps may represent "blind spots."

2. Processing participants' feelings about the feedback
   - Remind participant that it's OK to get 1s and 2s and that those may be opportunities to grow and develop.
   - It is not helpful to try to figure out who gave what scores and comments.

3. Creating a Leadership Development Plan

   - Guide the participant in selecting one to three development actions and one strength to focus on while going through the training.
   - Provide guidance to participants about which parts of the training will be most relevant to their action items.
   - Help them think through what improvement in that area will look like (goalposts) and what indicators of success might look like.
   - Be sure to follow up with participants in future coaching sessions about how their action steps are going to address their leadership challenges. You may want to encourage participants to share the 360° Feedback or their action plan with their managers who could also provide support around implementing participants' development plans.

Keep in mind In addition to the utility of 360° assessments in helping participants create a development plan, the literature indicates that it is important to follow up with participants to check in on how their development plan is going and to debrief further if needed.

4. Encourage the participant to begin reflecting on areas for growth. Participants will develop a Leadership Development Plan as part of their work in completing the online module, Fundamentals of Leadership. Check back with participant about their development plan during your first Leadership Academy Coaching session.

Summary

Readiness Coaching establishes the coaching relationship and prepares participants to fully participate in the Leadership Academy. Once the readiness sessions conclude, the Leadership Academy commences and so begins the Leadership Academy Coaching.

SECTION 4:

Leadership Academy Coaching

Introduction to Leadership Academy Coaching

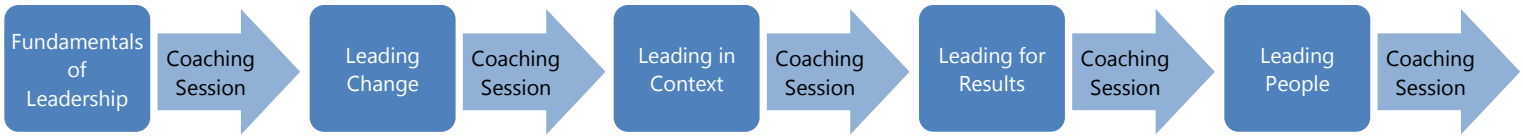
Leadership Academy Coaching supports the transfer of leadership competencies from the Academy training to the work setting. Further, it facilitates the successful implementation of sustainable change.

Method

Leadership Academy Coaching can take place by telephone, videoconferencing, or in-person interactions and email communication.

Frequency

Leadership Development Coaches will conduct five Leadership Academy coaching sessions, one for each module of the Leadership Academy. The sessions occur after the participant has reviewed each online module but before they attend the related classroom session.

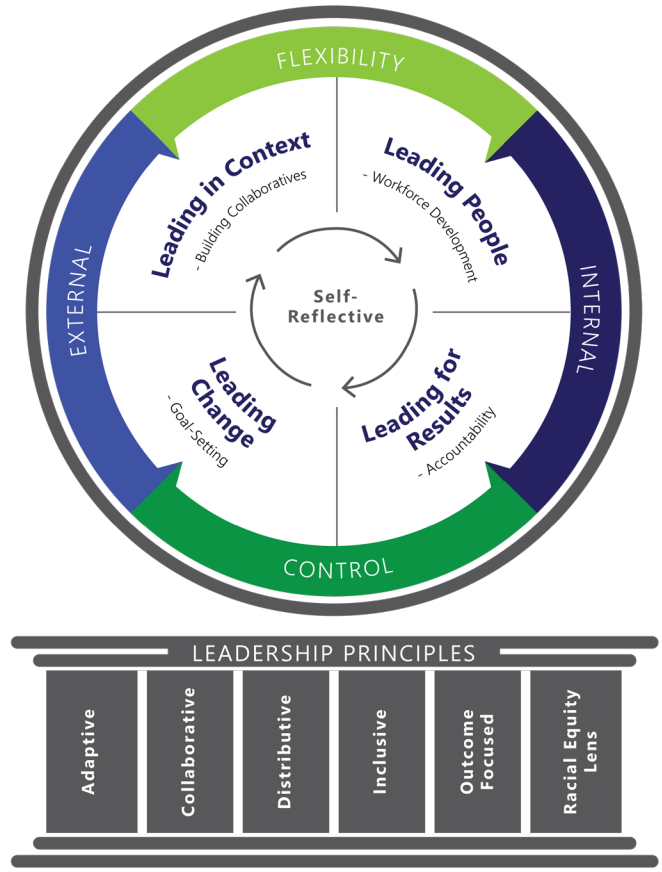


This will ensure participants have time to reflect on the online module and prepare for classroom learning as well as debrief and reflect on the classroom experience from the previous module.

Leadership Academy Domains and Associated Questions

Each NCWWI Leadership Model quadrant contains specific related competencies and a set of Fundamental competencies lay the foundation for the model. The Leadership Academy's goal through the training, coaching, and completion of participant change projects is to improve participant's knowledge and skills related to each of the competencies. The sections below offer coaches a wide range of questions related to each of the quadrants, or domains, within the participant's leadership role, as well as the leadership principles that comprise the Leadership Academy curriculum. Coaches will find a definition of fundamental leadership competencies and a definition of each domain and principle along with related questions to stimulate dialogue about leadership development and change project implementation below.

NCWWI Leadership Model Framework



Questions Related to Fundamental Leadership Skills of the Leadership Model

Fundamental Competencies

Fundamental competencies are foundational for success in each of the domains and focus on individual qualities contributing to a leader's success.

Competency	Questions
Personal Leadership Has a sense of presence and self-assurance; recognizes how their emotions and moods affect the organization and	- What do your strengths and motivations look like in action? - How are your strengths and motivations helping you advance the mission of your organization and the vision of the change project?

adapts accordingly; sets a personal example of what they expect from others; readily shares credit and provides opportunities for the recognition of others' work.	- Thinking about your strengths and motivations, what do you want to do more and/or less of? - How has your worldview impacted your decisions and behaviors?
Communication Communicates effectively in a variety of ways, including oral and written mechanisms; listens carefully to input and feedback; probes for new ideas and invites responses; creates open channels of communication; keeps others well informed; encourages others to express contrary views.	- How can the adaptive behavior of "getting on the balcony" enhance your listening and communication with staff? - What is your preferred manner of communication? How might you improve channels of communication to keep others more informed? - What are ways you can invite others to express their perspective? What would be involved in creating a safe environment for differing perspectives? What does carefully listening to differing perspectives or feedback look like in action?
Equity Demonstrates use of an equity lens as a child welfare leader by improving organizational policies, practices, and procedures that create and sustain fairness, equity, and a diverse, inclusive organization.	- How do current policies or practices contribute to disparity in outcomes? - If a visitor walked into your office, what would they see? - What does a diverse, inclusive organization mean to you? What does it mean to your staff? What does it mean to your clients? - How does the change project create and sustain equity and inclusiveness within your program or organization?
Vision Takes an aspirational and long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; has a personal vision and contributes to realizing the organization's vision; acts as a catalyst for organizational change; influences others to translate vision into action.	- How have your values shaped your personal vision? - How does vision help you lead with hope?

Integrity/Honesty Behaves in an honest, fair, and ethical manner; shows consistency in words and actions; models high ethical standards.	- What does it mean to you to "model high ethical standards?" - When have your ethics required you to be brave?

Leading Change

This domain involves the ability to effect strategic change, both within and outside the organization; meet organizational goals and realize the organization's mission and vision; and lead implementation efforts in a continuously changing environment by adjusting accordingly. These questions will encourage participants to explore these skills of leading change.

Competency	Questions
Strategic Thinking Formulates objectives and priorities; implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization in a global environment; capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.	- Based on what you just described, what do you think the best next step should be? - What are some specific next steps that your leadership, workgroup, or staff could take to further implementation? - How might current policies or trends affect this project?
Building Consensus Endeavors to reach agreement about the need and approach for change; solicits input from a variety of stakeholders; listens attentively and responds to concerns; compromises as appropriate to move forward.	- What have you thought about in terms of getting key stakeholders to share in ownership of this project? - How could you include new voices to expand the current thinking on this project?
Implementing Understands and utilizes staged and phased implementation; describes the	- Thinking about the political context in which you work, are there people or implementation drivers you need to engage in order to move forward? - Looking back at the information from the Leadership

implementation drivers and personal supports (internal and external) needed to promote sustainable change; continuously assesses progress and adjusts as needed.	Academy related to drivers or adaptive leadership principles, what are the important next tasks needed to advance this project? How might a phased approach and continuous assessment impact adaptive challenges you might face? - What are the gaps between the vision for this project and the current reality? How can you close this gap?
Creativity and Innovation Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes.	- What are some of the most "out of the box" ideas you have had and heard related to your project? How might those ideas be put into practice? - Who are some of the creative people in your organization and community to whom you turn when you need a problem solved? How can they help you think of new solutions?
Flexibility Possesses an openness to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.	- What are some practices or beliefs about practice that you are being asked to give up to make this change? - How have you been able to adjust your plan based on emerging realities and unintended consequences?

Leading in Context

This domain involves the ability to assess, understand, and manage the internal and external environments in order to build collaborations among organizational divisions, federal agencies, state and local governments, tribal organizations, and non-profit and private sector organizations to achieve common goals.

Competency	Questions
Partnering Develops diverse and inclusive networks and builds alliances; collaborates across	- How might family voice be included in your project? - Who are some community members with a lot at stake as your project moves forward? What are your thoughts about engaging them in the process now?

boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.	- What community partners could help with resources that you believe could enhance the implementation of this project? - Who are the greatest partners within your organization and how can their strengths be deployed for implementation?
Thinking Politically Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization; perceives organizational and political realities and acts accordingly.	- What community partners and stakeholders can move this project forward with appropriate federal agencies, state and local governments, and tribal organizations? - Who are the advocates who seem to have their voices heard? What is their role in your work on this project?
Managing Conflict Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions; anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations; manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.	- How will you bring forward dissenting voices to explore all aspects of the project and its implementation? - What steps will you take to prevent counter-productive confrontations?
Influencing/ Negotiating Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.	- What are some of the "what's in it for me?" elements of your project that you can use to influence the involvement of others? - Which other agencies or tribes will you need to persuade to accomplish the goals of this project? - Which businesses or groups outside of child welfare may also be trying to influence or reach the same people that you are? Can you negotiate an agreement with them to join with you on this project to further both goals? - Who is your organization competing with for time, attention, and/or resources? Can you influence others to join together on this project to maximize influence and resources?

Leading for Results

This domain involves meeting organizational goals and service expectations by being able to make decisions that produce high-quality results. Decisions must be informed by data, with leaders applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.

Competency	Questions
Using Data Understands data in a variety of formats; employs data visualization techniques; proactively reviews and addresses racial equity data; uses data to inform decision-making and communicate ideas and results.	- What are some ways you are collecting and analyzing data to inform strategies that consider diversity in how clients and/or staff might be impacted by this project? - What is the story behind the data? - How has your information technology team helped with measurement of the project's impact? - What systems are in place to measure the important links between the agency practice and outcomes for children and families?
Accountability Holds self and others accountable for high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results; maintains focus on outcomes; determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work; accepts responsibility for mistakes; complies with established control systems and rules.	- How have you used your logic model to implement the change project and hold yourself and your team accountable for results? - How are you measuring the results you think you see? Are those results compatible with your objectives?
Planning and Organizing Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resources requirements; determines necessary sequence of activities needed to achieve goals; handles multiple demands and competing priorities; sets high	- What are some of the evidence-based/informed practices you have considered? - Looking at the drivers for implementation, how are you assessing the ability of the agency's infrastructure to support implementation of the change project?

performance expectations for team members; sets clear performance expectations and objectives; holds others accountable for achieving results; successfully finds resources, training, tools, etc., to support staff needs.	
Problem Solving Identifies and analyzes problems; weighs relevancy and accuracy of information; generates and evaluates alternative solutions; makes recommendations.	- What are ways to engage others in solution-finding? - How are diverse perspectives informing your analysis and evaluation?

Leading People

The focus of this domain is on leading people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to the process of leading people is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and promotes satisfaction.

Competency	Questions
Team Building Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust; facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.	- How have you created a shared vision to engage and build the involvement of team members in the project? - Which team relationships do you need to strengthen for implementation and sustainability? - How will different entities and functions within the organization interact to ensure the organization is learning from working together?
Developing Others Develops others' ability to perform and contribute to the organization by	- What professional development opportunities are available to others related to your project? - What are the attributes and skills of people who would contribute to the implementation and sustainability of

providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods; gives timely, specific feedback and helpful coaching; adapts approach to each individual; ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded; acts to address performance problems.	your project? - How will you use the idea of "champions" and coaching within the organization to implement your project?
Resilience Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent even in the face of adversity; stays calm and clear-headed under high stress or during a crisis; recovers quickly from setbacks.	- What has helped you lead during high stress or a time of crisis? - What is different about the needs of staff during high stress or times of crisis? - Are some staff more resilient during high stress or times of crisis? What can you learn from them? - How might intentionality around trust, compassion, stability, and hope build resiliency?
Influencing Culture/Climate Promotes a positive organizational climate and culture so all staff feel supported and valued; encourages individual well-being and collective civility to improve job satisfaction.	- As you purposefully promote a positive and inclusive office culture, what will be different? What will staff be saying or doing? What will you be saying or doing? - In what ways have you conveyed value and support to staff?
Cultural Responsiveness Respects and relates well to people from varied backgrounds; open to understanding diverse worldviews; sees diversity as an opportunity to learn about cultural groups while appreciating the complexity of individual differences; challenges bias and intolerance; seeks ongoing learning on cultural issues.	- What culturally-responsive features are in your project? - How will you use different worldviews to influence the development and implementation of the project? - How will the project contribute to an agency environment in which cultural and other differences are appreciated?

Questions to Explore the Leadership Competency Framework Principles

Six leadership principles form the foundation upon which leaders rely to inform their actions. The principles are infused in the leadership domains and competencies. The following questions will spur thinking and actions that may assist the participant in exploring and applying new perspectives and actions.

Leadership Principle: Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) is the ability of a leader to adapt to and lead change so organizations can thrive. Adaptation requires organizations to build upon what has worked in the past while being willing to give up practices that no longer work and adopt promising new practices. Adaptive leadership behaviors and related coaching questions include:

1. **Challenges own and other people's habits, beliefs, and values:**

   Challenges self:

   - What are some of the practices and beliefs you hold most dear, and how might this project push you to challenge them?
   - What assumptions and beliefs of yours could hold you back in leading this project?
   - Where do you get support while working through your own internal conflicts or debates about the new project?

   Challenges others:

   - How do you think you can invite your (workgroup, organization, leaders) to question their own habits, beliefs, or values to adapt to today's opportunities and challenges?
   - What might people be afraid of losing during this implementation process and the change it represents?
   - What are some of the beliefs you think might block adoption of this new project? How could you elicit information and dialogue about that?

2. **Emphasizes a strategic/innovative mindset:**
   - When you think about organizational change, what has worked best in the past with your organization and workforce?
   - What would motivate your stakeholders to support this project?
   - What practices do you think the organization would be most willing to change first?

3. **Works with differences:**
   - What could you do to create an environment where different perspectives are

welcomed and heard?
- What different viewpoints that you've heard will help you move forward?
- How can you use your role to enhance productive sharing of different but legitimate perspectives?

4. **Orchestrates positive conflict:**
   - What important debates will you need to facilitate so change moves forward?
   - How will you keep the key stakeholders engaged through the difficult conversations about resolving different perspectives when they are so passionate about their points of view?
   - What has worked to bring the group to a point of honest dialogue in the past?

5. **Inspires others to challenge decision-making processes:**
   - How has your organization made decisions in the past? What has worked well?
   - What are the power differentials and how will you acknowledge and work with those in order to facilitate "hearing all voices"?
   - What are some of the assumptions about the "way things are" that you would like to ask people to question?

6. **Navigates changeable environments:**
   - How have things changed since we last talked?
   - What has surprised you since we last talked, and how did you respond?
   - What are some of the "moving parts" impacting your work you want us to keep in mind during coaching?

Leadership Principle: Collaborative Leadership

Collaborative leadership skills emphasize community engagement and create a mandate for community ownership of the child welfare challenge. The collaborative approach means working in new ways with community partners, building new partnerships, and creating community readiness to support the ongoing needs of families after the change project is completed. Building relationships, partnerships, and collaborative work outside the agency can be linked to the following behaviors and is promoted with the following questions:

1. **Creates opportunities for collaboration outside the agency:**
   - How can you collaborate with those outside the agency to advance your goals?
   - With whom do you already collaborate? Can these collaborations be expanded related to your project?

- Which advocates outside of your agency can help you advance this process?
- How is diversity reflected in those with whom you are choosing to collaborate?
- How can you share information and pool resources with the community?
- What are some necessary resources the community can help provide?
- Who has information that you want and need to help advance your cause?

2. **Focuses on common purposes:**
   - What are some common goals that you and other community partners share that are related to your change project?
   - Whose interests are also going to be met by successful implementation? Are these people at the table?

3. **Stresses process rather than product:**
   - Thinking back to the conversation at the Leadership Academy and the discussion around power over, power for, and power with, is there anyone you are exercising power "for" right now who might be more involved if you changed that relationship to "power with"?
   - What elements of your implementation process have the most potential to positively impact organizational functioning? How can you build on them?

4. **Has an action orientation:**
   - What will it take to move your change project forward?
   - What will it take to get your organization to move ahead with this plan?
   - Where do you think the change project will most likely get stuck? What will you do when that happens?

Leadership Principle: Distributive Leadership

Distributive leadership (Spillane, 2020) is not equivalent to the role of one person, but rather grows out of the interactions of different people with different functions in an organization.

Leadership, using the distributive model, is encouraged and enacted at all organizational levels. The following competencies and questions can help participants consider ways to distribute leadership across the internal and external stakeholders related to a change project or leading change:

1. **Distributes decision-making and leadership responsibilities:**
   - What are the decisions and leadership opportunities available at each level in your

organization during the change project implementation?
- What are some empowering practices you and your implementation team can use to increase ownership of the change project process and results in the organization and community?

2. **Manages human, cultural, social, and economic capital:**
   - Considering strengths and motivations, what are the best roles for people on your team to play?
   - How is diversity reflected in your team?
   - How can you use your strengths to maximize your resources?

3. **Encourages purposeful action:**
   - What is your step-by-step plan for moving forward with implementation of your change project?
   - How can you work within the organizational and political timeframe and still protect the need to be thoughtful and plan-ful?
   - What are the aspects of this change that require the most thought? Who is paying attention to these factors?

4. **Promotes collective rather than individual action:**
   - Who else should you include as part of your action team?
   - What are the benefits of including others at this point?
   - What group actions will move things forward?

Leadership Principle: Inclusive Leadership

Leaders have a role in increasing the diversity of their workforce and in making the environment more inclusive. Inclusive workplaces have higher engagement, performance, and profits, but the reality is that many people still feel unable to bring their true selves to work (Brown, 2019). Diversity doesn't just happen and diversity won't last without inclusion.

Inclusive leadership actively involves all stakeholders in the design and oversight of change. Coaching can promote inclusive practices at all organizational levels by reminding leaders to think not only about who is "not in the room" or "at the table," but to make room for all voices to be heard to move an innovation forward–being in the room is only the first step. Bourke & Dillon (2016), describe six traits of inclusive leaders with corresponding questions for achieving them:

1. **Commits to diversity and inclusion:**
   - How do you communicate the value and importance of inclusion to your staff?
   - How do you demonstrate equity and respect to all your staff?
   - How do you go about understanding the uniqueness of each team member?
   - What actions can you take to ensure each team member feels connected to the group/organization?
   - In what ways can you adapt your work practices to meet the needs of others?

2. **Courage to speak up and challenge the status quo:**
   - What are the personal limitations that might get in the way of you speaking up and challenging the status quo?
   - How might you seek the contributions of others to overcome personal limitations?
   - In what ways might you hold others accountable for non-inclusive behaviors?

3. **Cognizant of personal and organizational blind spots and employs self-regulation to ensure equity:**
   - How will you ensure your personal biases do not influence the coaching relationship?
   - In what way do you provide those affected by decisions with clear explanations of the processes applied?
   - What steps are you taking (e.g., reading, attending workshops, participating in discussion groups, etc.) to work on addressing your own biases?

4. **Expresses curiosity and has an open mindset and a desire to understand how others view and experience the world:**
   - How do you seek the diverse perspectives of others in ideation and decision-making?
   - In what ways do you demonstrate the ability to see things from others' viewpoints?
   - In what ways do you demonstrate and encourage divergent thinking?

5. **Exhibits cultural intelligence:**
   - What can you do to experience culturally diverse environments?
   - What do you need to feel more confident leading cross-cultural teams?
   - In what ways might you need to change your leadership style when a cross-cultural encounter requires it?

6. **Engages in collaboration to create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups:**
   - How do you give your team members the freedom to handle difficult situations?
   - How do you empower team members to make decisions about issues that impact

their work?
- How do you ensure team members respect each other and there are no out-groups within the team?
- What can you do to anticipate and take appropriate action to address team conflict?

Leadership Principle: Outcome-Focused Leadership

To determine the best implementation and sustainability strategies, leaders must always keep their focus on desired outcomes and results for children, youth, families, and communities. The following outcome-focused behaviors and questions for leading change include:

1. **Applies technical knowledge:**
   - What assets do you have in terms of knowledge, skills, and experiences that would help the team solve technical and practical challenges?
   - What is your role in terms of getting to desired outcomes?
   - What is the organization's technical ability to achieve the results you want?

2. **Analyzes problems:**
   - Where are the gaps between current performance and what you want to see in implementation?
     - Knowledge to practice gap
     - Vision to reality gap
     - Fidelity gap
   - What data will help you identify potential barriers, challenges, or gaps?
   - How can you use multiple perspectives to analyze problems that impact results?

3. **Uses data to inform decisions:**
   - What data drive the decisions you will make?
   - Do your current data challenge your deeply held beliefs and values and those within your organization and the community?
   - How will you find the right data to help you with the decision before you?
   - What are the indicators that help you focus on outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being?
   - How do staff connect their work to these critical outcomes for children and families?
   - How will you attend to the data on critical outcomes while the organization is in a period of transition?
   - Which critical outcomes are you seeking to improve through your change project, and how will you track these outcomes?

4. **Stresses results rather than processes:**
   - What are the results that matter in your project?
   - How will you move people past processes to focus on results?
   - What results might move people to let go of favorite but ineffective practices?

Leadership Principle: Racial Equity Lens

Racial equity is achieved when race no longer determines outcomes in policies, practices, programs, and organizational culture. This is a principle that is applied across all leadership domains. Behaviors and questions for leading with a racial equity lens include:

1. **Focuses on improving organizational policies, practices, and procedures that create and sustain fairness, equity, and a diverse, inclusive organization:**
   - As a result of your change project, how will policy, practice, or procedure impact clients, staff, or other stakeholders of specific racial groups?
   - How has engagement of staff with diverse perspectives shaped your change project?

2. **Builds alliances and develops diverse and inclusive networks and collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals:**
   - What voices are represented with those with whom you are collaborating?
   - In what ways have you fostered inclusivity in building relationships?

3. **Proactively reviews and addresses racial equity data:**
   - In what ways has racial equity data informed strategies for your change project?
   - Do your current data challenge your deeply held beliefs and values and those within your organization and the community?

4. **Open to understanding diverse worldviews, challenges bias and intolerance, and seeks ongoing learning on cultural issues:**
   - How will your change project contribute to a more positive, inclusive environment?
   - In what ways do you support and encourage people to work collaboratively to achieve the goals of the project?
   - How will you know people feel safe to share and participate in the work of the project?
   - How are you challenging bias and intolerance?
   - What ongoing learning on bias, intolerance, and cultural issues do you engage in?

Leadership Academy Online Learning Activities

During the Leadership Academy, participants will engage in various online learning activities in-between each module. Consider reviewing these activities with participants. To help facilitate learner-driven discussion, start by asking:

- What resonated?
- What was new?
- What did you find yourself thinking about the next day?
- What gave you pause?

Module 1 – Leadership Fundamentals Online Learning Activities

- Daring Leadership Assessment
- Self-Reflection Worksheet
- Personal Vision Statement
- Self-Care Quiz, Leadership Development Plan

Module 2 – Leading Change Online Learning Activities

- Change Project Worksheet Draft
- Applying a Racial Equity Lens to a Change Project

Module 3 – Leading in Context Online Learning Activities

- How Do Power Differentials Impact Work and Change Project
- Ideas to Reduce Impact

Module 4 – Leading for Results Online Learning Activities

- Organizational Culture of Results
- Collect data related to Change Project

Module 5 – Leading People Online Learning Activities

- Action Plan
- Prepare for presentation of Change Project for classroom

Summary

Leadership Academy Coaching focuses on the knowledge and skills participants are learning through the online and classroom experiences. Once the Leadership Academy concludes, the next phase of coaching begins: Post-Academy Coaching.

SECTION 5:

Post-Academy Coaching

Post-Academy Coaching

Post-Academy Coaching continues to support the transfer of leadership competencies from Academy training to the work setting. Further, it facilitates sustainable change via implementation of an individual change project.

Post-Academy Coaching Sessions

Post-Academy Coaching sessions are less prescriptive than those in other coaching phases and are driven by the needs of participants who set the agenda for the session. The coach follows the lead of the participant as they apply learning in the workplace.

To support the transfer of learning:

- Consider going through each of the Academy training competencies and checking on how participants are applying the knowledge and skills they learned to their jobs.
- Discuss how the participant is applying the Leadership Competency Framework (LCF) competencies to their leadership roles. Ask questions such as:
    - Which LCF competencies are your strongest?
    - Which LCF competencies do you need to strengthen?
    - How are the LCF competencies facilitating the development of your change project?
- Check in with participant about their leadership development plan.
- Discuss change project implementation status, celebrate successes, and trouble-shoot areas for improvement.
- Learn how participant is applying the leadership principles on a daily basis. For example:
    - How are you engaging in adaptive leadership?
    - What are you doing to apply a racial equity lens?
    - How has your learning about bias and intolerance impacted you as a leader?
    - How are you distributing leadership principles?

Forms and Tools for Post-Academy Coaching

Post-Academy Coaching calls continue to be guided by the Coaching Agreement. Modify the agreement as necessary for this coaching phase.

Other tools to use during this phase include:

- Leadership Academy Coaching Notes to record what happened during the coaching session.
- Coaching Session Evaluation to use with participants to reflect on the session.
- Coaching Self-Evaluation Checklist for coaches to evaluate themselves.
- Additional Online Learning Modules
- NCWWI Resource Library

Summary

During the Post-Academy Coaching phase, participants use coaching in a variety of ways: as a means of transferring learning from the Academy to the field, a built-in time for reflection, a sounding board, a time to plan and initiate rather than simply putting out fires, and a time to reinforce their leadership skills. Participants focused not only on leading change through the implementation of a change project but on developing awareness about the use of self as a leader. As the coaching relationship comes to an end, participants identify the beneficial ways they've used coaching. Coaches support the participant's creation of a plan that will further the integration of awareness and learning beyond Post-Academy Coaching as participants continue their leadership journey.

SECTION 6:

Resources

The Leadership Academy Coaching Guide is designed to provide Leadership Development Coaches with additional resources to support the coaching experience. This section contains resources to help guide the coaching process.

- Coaching Self-Evaluation Checklist: Coach's Personal Log
- Coaching Agreement
- Leadership Academy Coaching Notes
- Coaching Session Evaluation

Coaching Self-Evaluation Checklist: Coach's Personal Log

This log is adapted from the coaching self-evaluation tool in *Coaching People: Expert Solutions to Everyday Challenges* (McManus, 2006). The coach uses this tool to guide self-reflection and set personal goals for development and focus in their coaching practice. Not all the skills and competencies listed will come into play in each coaching session, but using the full list helps the coach track their progress.

In this coaching session, how did I:	**Rating and Comments** (rating 1-10 with 1 = I did not demonstrate this very well and 10 = I demonstrated this very well)
☐ Create possibility by combining goal attainment, value achievement, and sustainability with new possibilities?	
☐ Provide both support and autonomy?	
☐ Work with the participant to set high yet attainable goals?	
☐ Use transparency to build a trusting relationship?	
☐ Respond and adjust to participant input about what would be useful in the coaching relationship?	
☐ Truly allow the coaching process to be self-directed?	
☐ Use strategic questions to help the participant link vision, intention, actions, and learning for desired results?	
☐ Follow up on previously set action plans?	

☐ Ask powerful questions to build reflection and self-awareness?	
☐ Seek clarity by checking assumptions and using active-listening techniques?	
☐ Promote self-efficacy through identification of strengths and solutions depicted during this coaching session?	
☐ Help the participant generate, ask, and sometimes answer questions to advance thinking and progress?	
☐ Give specific feedback linked to process and outcomes?	
☐ Use my coaching role to support and deepen cultural awareness and humility?	
☐ Listen fully, putting all my attention on the participant?	
☐ Model flexibility and openness in my coaching approach and style?	
☐ Prepare for coaching in advance?	
☐ Support self-care and regenerative activities to help the participant "stay alive" in the work?	
☐ End the session with reflection and creation of an action plan?	

Coaching Agreement

Coach:	Participant:	Date:

Change Project Summary:

Leadership Development Goals:

Coaching Parameters and Agreement: (Note any specific individualization and agreed upon processes.)

Goal for the Coaching Process: Identify the participant's goals.

Results: Identify desired results and measures related to coaching.

Feedback Process: Note any comments or ideas about the feedback process.

Leadership Academy Coaching Notes

Coach:	Participant:	Date:

Change Project:

Professional Leadership Development Plan Goals:

Action steps from the last meeting and work accomplished:

Participant goals for this session?

Adaptive challenges that emerged:

Action steps for next meeting:

Other observations or impressions about the session:

Coaching Session Evaluation

The following evaluation model captures three important elements of good coaching: relationship, process, and results. This template is based on *Coaching People: Expert Solutions to Everyday Challenges* (Mcmanus, 2006) and adapted to fit the Leadership Academy Coaching Program goals.

Relationship: The ability for coach and participant to build trust and have honest, open, supportive dialogue.

Process: The specific structure of the coaching dialogue, including check ins and reflection, updates, discussion, action planning, and preparing for self-care.

Results: The perceived results of coaching, which could include new ideas and approaches, new personal and professional goals, and/or accomplishments linked to coaching.

It is important to note that, as a mutual process, coaching and the success of each session rest on both coach and participant being present and working together. The discussion should include mutual reflection and feedback by both parties.

	What Worked?	What Could be Improved?
Relationship		
Process		
Results		
Other Reflections		

Appendix:

1. Coaching Case Studies
2. References

Coaching Case Studies

To support the sharpening of coaching skills, this guide contains coaching case studies intended to support Leadership Development Coaches in developing and enhancing coaching competencies through real-life examples.

Background

Previous participants of the NCWWI Leadership Academy are leaders in different types of child welfare systems, each with unique challenges. We selected several case studies to illustrate the coaching process.

In each of these case studies, the challenges faced by managers and supervisors in implementing change required they apply and integrate the training to help with leadership challenges in all four of the Leadership Model domains: Leading Change, Leading in Context, Leading People, and Leading for Results as well as self-reflection about fundamental competencies.

Coaching Case Study 1: Leading Change through Leading for Results

Ximena is the manager of child protective services for a county office that includes a city with a liberal reputation for its diversity, education, and respect for the health of the environment. Ximena attended the NCWWI Leadership Academy and her change initiative focused on implementing permanency roundtables. An original pilot site, Ximena's office, under her leadership, was instrumental not only in testing the model but in spreading its practice statewide. Ximena came to the Leadership Academy thinking about how to jumpstart her office's focus on family engagement and improving outcomes for children and families. Ximena was relatively new to her leadership role and was eager for her own professional development particularly in supervising former peers with whom she had competed for her position. Ximena was eager to learn effective leadership approaches for changing her agency's practices not just comply with a process.

Framing the Coaching Work Together

Ximena's stated challenge was her sense that she had not yet fully "owned" her role. While she felt confident in executing tasks, Ximena was less confident in her ability to deal with the more subtle and complex challenges of leading the office in implementation of new practices. This required that she hold the supervisory staff accountable for the implementation outcome and move them into a unified management team. The way in which Ximena wanted to grow and

develop her leadership voice and her team centered primarily on culture change and effective and timely practice.

The coach's role was to help Ximena push herself to try strategies that would be challenging such as having candid and crucial conversations with agency leaders who had authority over her; peers from other departments; and, most centrally, supervisors on her own leadership team who were the link to practice. Ximena wanted to use coaching to give herself assignments and to hold herself accountable to follow through on tasks and approaches that she found intimidating.

The permanency roundtable initiative was a good opening to work with Ximena on leading change. Other supportive resources included the presence of a top school of social work, as well as a community of progressive views, and a culture that supports human services. Her agency is clearly engaged in social work practice and holds a culture that values this identity. The staff and the community are consistently responsive and view engagement as central to the work of child welfare. They are committed to safety as well as preserving and building lifelong connections, family identity, and engaging the community. Ximena embraces this approach and identity as well.

Ximena was an avid learner during the Leadership Academy and continued this approach in coaching. She absorbed information with interest, particularly related to the importance and use of assessing all the drivers for performance and change. She particularly wanted to find a way to align the agency's data systems and management team strengths as assets in leading for results. One of the most striking aspects of the coaching work Ximena did was challenging herself to lead in a more forthright manner and challenging herself and her management team to realign the system and change themselves to be increasingly more effective at leading for results.

This view of change leadership was new for Ximena:

> *"The biggest take-away from [the Leadership Academy] for me was the appreciation of the complexity of change and implementation. Although I had worked in my county for decades, I never had a clue that implementation of a practice innovation was so complex: I used to think, 'We've been given a directive, so we will make it happen.' When it doesn't happen, the blame begins: Central Office didn't roll this out right; it's not a good idea, etc. But now I break it down into all of the components of the change and implementation and recognize all of the adaptive elements that need continuous attention and ongoing adjustment to maintain the forward momentum."*

In addition to her change initiative and the larger issue of performance based on results, Ximena was dealing with changes in her leadership role. Specifically, Ximena wanted to develop

confidence and the necessary skills to provide leadership in the office, agency, and community. Between her awareness of her personal goals and her goal that the agency more fully embrace achieving timely permanency, Ximena was anxious to get started and make a difference, "Learning about leadership and management at the Leadership Academy was a real turning point for me. I left the training feeling like a leader and ready to own my position as CPS Manager."

During the Leadership Academy and afterwards when Ximena returned home, she realized that she was not using data in her work with her staff and that, in fact, the state and the county struggled to use data at all. She wondered if she was looking at the right data and reports and whether she could distill meaningful information from those reports in an organization where it was the culture to dismiss the use of data and numbers as antithetical to "real social work."

For example, Ximena and her team looked at data regarding timely initial assessments. Ximena asked the data analyst to generate reports that gave her the information she needed to manage performance for the office. Her own review of the data led to the discovery that the delay and backlog of "initial assessments" was significant. This played out in a few ways.

A Leadership Strategy

Ximena wanted to accomplish two things in her work with her supervisory staff:

- create a sense of teamwork and collaboration
- help her supervisory staff insist on accountability from their workers

While Ximena wanted to use the data about initial assessments in her management meeting, she did not want to create resentment. The conversation she had to have was tough, because the office culture was, at the time, very cynical about the use of data and numbers.

Ximena's use of the implementation drivers and the adaptive leadership approach served her well. Ximena was able to use and model many of the behaviors that would lead to effective change, such as taking time to diagnose both the system and herself. She started to notice not just that there were barriers to improving performance and getting closure (timeframes, permanency), but that some of the underlying issues and root causes were really more about the staff (including herself) than they were about the families or context of the work:

> *"When we discuss social issues as a leadership team, my supervisors and I are all on the same page and have lively discussions about the root causes of problems facing the families in our county. When the conversation changes to issues around compliance with performance standards, it's almost like an invisible wall goes up and the conversation is more strained."*

A review of the numbers presented another challenge. Ximena saw that a longtime peer of hers, who had once supervised her, had the greatest number of backlogged cases. Ximena was concerned that she did not have enough credibility or legitimacy in her role to hold her longtime peer accountable. Ximena realized that she needed to step up and be clear and compelling as a leader, and that she would never change if her lack of confidence allowed her to fall back on old patterns.

Ximena tapped into several tenets of adaptive leadership related to her use of data with the leaders. She was able to orchestrate conflict and regulate distress in leading the focus on data and using pre-work and her relationships to help the team grapple with the task at hand. Ximena also used the tactic of "giving the work back to the people" by having the group struggle with how to be timely with assessments. As a result of Ximena's approach, which was to name the difficult challenges, the management meeting went well.

As a result of those meetings and other interventions Ximena led at the organizational and administrative levels, the office achieved a 75% reduction in backlog assessments within nine months!

That initial success continues to inform the way the management team functions and drives performance beyond timeliness, as Ximena and her team continue to strive to understand how to use required data to address the adaptive challenges intrinsic in child welfare work. Ximena's approach, which exemplified distributive leadership by sharing the responsibility for solutions and her own personal leadership power through her own advocacy role to move administrative drivers, is a great model for what she would like to see for families.

A Coaching Strategy

Coaching was an important part of self and organizational development. As a coach, my role was to witness and probe for further diagnosis of the system and of Ximena's strategy. The primary coaching opportunity was to help Ximena with her own action planning around the delicate balance of asserting her authority and her right to the role of manager, while also helping her build on her tremendous strength for empathy and teambuilding without getting stuck in either inaction or replicating ineffective patterns.

Ximena set difficult tasks for herself, such as asking her "boss" for permission and support in working differently with I.T. or having a tough conversation with a supervisor who was not fully on board with Ximena's leadership role. Resisting the urge to maintain predictable and comfortable behavior is extremely hard—and sometimes painful—work. Coaching provided a structured and trusting environment for Ximena to be vulnerable and strategize new behavior. The fact that Ximena brought a focused and clear set of goals to each coaching session

supported her clarity, commitment, and accountability.

There are still aspects of the new practices that Ximena hopes to improve. She continues to focus on results and building a work culture of high performance and successful outcomes for children and families. She added the data analyst to the advisory group for permanency roundtables and is working with that team to identify some key outcomes of permanency. Ximena has been able to use data to bring clarity to her work with the management team and with the staff. Her next goal is to develop a team equipped to use data to influence stakeholders, including the court system and the county.

Last month, the initial assessment unit reached their critical goal with significant permanency improvements. Ximena and the supervisors surprised them with a congratulatory party, complete with flowers to signify the coming of spring and the new and fresh work they were doing. She was not sure how this appreciation went over until staff in the various units told her that the initial assessment staff were abuzz with pleasure at being recognized. Ximena has continued to plant seeds and is starting to see her office and team flourish as they grow in their ability to work for effective processes that bring great results for children and families.

Coaching Case Study 2: The Adaptive Challenge

From the start, Angela was on a mission. She came to the Leadership Academy attentive and focused. Her conversations centered on the work she was doing to move her state toward improved trauma-related services and outcomes for children. The initial focus of her change initiative was working with resource family development and training. As the lead for the project, Angela struggled to feel effective and valued by her leadership team. During the Leadership Academy, Angela worked on how to present her informed views in a way they would be heard and her ideas implemented. Since the Leadership Academy focused on the leader's role in implementation and the importance of aligning identified drivers, Angela began to develop new ideas about the ways that understanding trauma could and should transform the system.

Shortly after returning to work from the Leadership Academy, Angela learned that the work she was doing was going to be outsourced to a private agency and would furthermore be piloted on the opposite side of the state. She was told she would continue in her lead role; however, the logistics of leading from across the state compromised her opportunity to fully participate:

> *"During the initial phase of the change initiative implementation, it concerned me that the agency could not commit to fully adopting my plan to train staff and resource parents on the impact of trauma that influenced the outcomes for children in foster care and their parents. I was happy to learn that the western half of our state would receive*

the much needed information, but I was disheartened by what felt like a disconnect between my energy to create the change and the limited focus I could devote to the project, since I obviously couldn't lead it from a distance. I was very concerned that the project would flounder, or result in a very small impact on only a few foster parents, leaving out our staff and relative care providers. I had to work hard to stay involved and active as the project seemed to move away from me. I used coaching to think about leading in a different way."

Angela had to regroup, but remained strong in her mission. She continued to follow the progress of the initiative related to training and supporting resource families. Meanwhile, some of the coaching Angela used concerned her goal to establish her value to the agency during reorganization. She gained independence and worked on new programs, "Really, the hardest part of the reorganization was the long wait, seven months, to figure out where I would eventually land then capturing my footing as I learned new programs and built a new team."

Months after attending the Leadership Academy, Angela and her fellow Leadership Academy attendees were invited to do a presentation to the state leadership about their Leadership Academy experiences and change initiative. There was renewed interest in the initiative, as the department of mental health was encouraging child and family services to become trauma-informed, along with a similar emphasis by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). It was a great opportunity but meant that Angela had to face her worst nightmare: publicly speaking to the agency's executive team.

Angela used coaching to prepare for the presentation. Angela's primary goal was to convey the urgency and importance of addressing trauma and finding resources and kin families who could help children heal while in foster care. Angela's secondary goal was to promote the ideas and values she learned at the Leadership Academy regarding the importance of leading for results. She used data and logic models to link the drivers and interventions taking place between the first step (conveying the importance and value of trauma-informed practice) and the final goal (serving children who have experienced trauma in a way that provides stability and promotes healing). Just prior to the speaking event, Angela practiced her presentation with her coach.

The presentation was very well received by leadership. Angela garnered validation and kudos from the executive team and a university partner who offered to assist with the data collection following training.

Internal resources were still scarce, but Angela arranged community support for no-cost train-the-trainer courses for staff, resource development staff, and fellow training resource parents. Angela used coaching to identify free technical assistance from the National Child Traumatic

Stress Network, and she focused on developing capacity in court, case management, and internal stakeholders, as well as the foster parents and kin providers. Eventually the agency subcontracted with the Children's Advocacy Center to provide training consultation for the workgroup.

One of the topics discussed most often in coaching was Angela's challenge of increasing awareness of trauma among staff, foster caregivers, parents, and relatives when there were few resources to provide trauma-healing treatment among parents and children. Angela was able to include providers and the school(s) of social work on the advisory and participatory boards, so that the community could develop a response in addition to the work being done in the agency and in the caregiver community.

Angela became a very public speaker about trauma and its impact on children, youth, and families, a demand that continued to cause her stress. Her coaching focused on how to use her strengths to help her work through the rough parts and to use strategies she learned in the Leadership Academy to demonstrate her leadership:

> *I pushed myself to do more up front advocacy during the process of the project development, and I used coaching to prepare myself and to prepare materials that would support me in a more public role than I would usually choose. At the same time, I used coaching to identify ways that I could comfortably and effectively delegate training and other speaking roles to others in the advisory group."*

Angela's demonstrated ability to lead with strong commitment to the mission of the work is a model for those directly involved in the initiative and for the agency. Her public advocacy and voice have become stronger and more polished as she has been able to use her commitment to overcome her natural discomfort with public speaking:

> "*It's frustrating to have experienced two downsizings, two reorganizations, change of leadership/supervision, office locations, staff, programs, etc. in a matter of two years. Staff's morale and focus have been divided between managing their work and struggling to determine if they even have employment, and if so, what it will look like in the future. These circumstances have made it especially hard to ask them to commit and focus on my change initiative when they are preoccupied with their personal welfare. At the same time, having a trauma-informed and responsive system assists staff and the agency with achieving several of our PIP goals/outcomes. The support of my community partners, my coach, and the commitment of the contracted partnerships have kept the work moving*

forward. Over time I have gathered the tools and developed partnerships needed to convince administration and staff that we need the information to improve our work with children, families, and resource providers."

The following table summarizes the diagnoses of self and agency and the actions that resulted through coaching.

	Diagnosis:	**Action:**
Self	- Totally committed to what children need: will do what it takes to remain active on this initiative, because she believes it is information that has to inform the way the system and foster, kin, and parents work to heal children - Wants to become more respected and effective as a leader - Hates public speaking and presenting, which are required for the leadership role	- Stay involved, even if the project is not a state priority - Push to pilot even if initiative is delayed - Balance commitment within the constraints of newly assigned programs and work - Push self to present - Take risks in public speaking and advocacy
Agency	- Did not have the manpower to devote to this endeavor while focused on meeting CFSR requirements - Working to upgrade resource parents' training, but nothing in the works for all staff - Constant change due to budget, reorganization, and resource shortages means it's hard to stick with any initiative - Leadership changes to a project: 1) outsourcing the project to a private agency, and 2) piloting in a location several hours from Angela's home base, both of which changed her ability to directly lead the initiative	- Advocate and ensure that child welfare staffs the service array and caregivers understand and act in ways that are trauma-informed - Find and use free resources - Build community supports for the work

Coaching Case Study 3: State Administered, State Run System

In state administered systems, middle managers are often the top tier of administration and work directly for appointed executives. These middle managers are often under pressure to carry out the administration's plans quickly and achieve fast results and change to support the authority and credibility of state leadership.

Olivia attended the Leadership Academy while serving in a specialist position, and when she returned to work following the Academy, she was promoted to deputy director. Olivia had strong analytic and advocacy skills as well as energy and commitment to work hard to get things done. Olivia is also reflective and used the Academy's journaling process as an ongoing practice in her life. Olivia requested ongoing coaching before the Leadership Academy ended, and her goal was to be an effective advocate and leader, while staying true to her own convictions about the needs of children and youth in the system.

Olivia brought much strength to her new role as a deputy to a new director. The director came to the agency from another state, while Olivia's extensive knowledge about the state's system and contacts came from her long professional career in the state. Her background complimented the new director's demonstrated success, leading the child welfare system in a different state. Olivia was able to help the new director establish credibility and garner support for tasks that were central to the governor's plans and were also challenging to implement from a political and practical standpoint. Olivia quickly became a confidante and "go to" person for the director.

Early coaching focused on helping Olivia move into a political role, which involved facilitating several collaborative stakeholder workgroups to tackle complex policy and contracting issues. She won support of judges, providers, and internal staff for her ability to bring people together without compromising the needs of the agency and the interests of children. Olivia's personal goal was to bring all voices forward, even when she represented some "non-negotiable" positions of the administration.

During this time, coaching focused on two goals:

- To create a holding environment where Olivia could express her thoughts and emotional reactions to the internal teamwork in the agency and recognize her contribution to the situation.
- To strategize and plan for ways to effectively hold true to and advance her personal commitment to children in the system.

With coaching, Olivia was able to stand on the balcony, seeing things from a wide perspective,

which allowed her to assess and strategize her adjustment into a new role. She also practiced ways to advocate for changes that would help the children in the state's care, "Coaching was especially useful in providing a 'safe' environment in which to process the dynamics regarding my promotion to a position in which I became the supervisor of those who had most recently managed me."

When the legislature was in session, Olivia used her coaching time to develop ways to move forward politically. Coaching helped Olivia determine when she should keep advocating and pushing for actions with her own leadership. At other times, she used coaching to consider how to infuse legislation, policy, or communications with language and principles that reflected agency goals while maintaining her commitment to meaningful outcomes.

By the end of coaching, two questions would be important: 1) How do the actions you are considering right now impact your long-term effectiveness in this work and effort, and 2) How are you taking care of yourself?

Newly promoted managers tend to work extra hours and sacrifice self-care in order to prove their value and competence while they are learning a new set of tasks, roles, and responsibilities. Olivia used coaching to develop and monitor plans for self-care and balance. The coach pointed out times when Olivia was overstretching, particularly in areas where she could delegate to preserve her own calm and centered approach to the work:

> *"During this time, coaching provided an environment to discuss politically charged issues, while balancing that with the needs of children and families across the state. Coaching also allowed me to discuss why achievement is so important on a personal level, and this enabled me to balance my passion for the work with my life outside of work."*

As the legislative session continued, the level of "over performance" Olivia demonstrated early on became the norm for her leader and her team. Her gift at working to support and expand the influence of the director evolved into a complex predicament of political tension. Stakeholders increasingly approached and confided in Olivia rather than the director, creating a level of competition with the director, who began to make demeaning demands or disparaging remarks to Olivia in front of other internal and external team members. Coaching interactions provided a safe place to discuss these delicate issues that are hard to manage in the political realm. Olivia also used coaching to balance herself in a holding environment, safe from the political arena.

Coaching Case Study 4: State Supported, County Administered System

While federal funding for child welfare services runs through the state, county-run systems administer the funds and have some latitude through local leadership, giving the manager the opportunity to impact the service delivery system. County directors are hired and are subject to oversight by a local board of commissioners who are publicly elected and held accountable by voters as well as administrative and funding regulations. Child welfare managers in most small counties work directly for the director and often have a stable workforce due to the limited number of available professional jobs.

Darleen was sent to the Leadership Academy by an administration eager for her to enhance her role as a trainer and leader on the state's Differential Response Leadership Council. After 25 years in the field, Darleen was still excited about what she could learn personally and contribute to the field of child welfare. Darleen was also active with the Statewide Implementation Team, which was developing practice profiles and redefining the workforce hiring and development program.

Coaching began with the adaptive challenges underpinning Darleen's change initiative, differential response. Darleen was responsible for implementing the new practice with her unit and also assisting her peers in implementation and decision-making among programs.

Darleen and her fellow managers were adjusting to a new leader in the office, as well as trying to understand and implement the significant practice changes represented by differential response. Initially, the new director was interested in Darleen's experiences during the Leadership Academy training, but there were emerging tensions and stress in the relationship between the new leader and the management team:

> *"I valued and looked forward to my coaching sessions. Coaching was a place where I could think through what I wanted to propose and where I could identify the ways that what I was asking might seem threatening to a leadership team where trust was a challenge."*

Darleen worked to build leadership in line staff and supervisors by sharing tasks and work that fit with the strengths of individuals on the team. She focused on building champions for the work.

Implementation of a change initiative is generally a mix of technical and adaptive challenges. Using compliance to achieve technical change includes focusing on whether people are doing what they have been asked to do and doing it well enough to get results. The more complex adaptive level of change requires an organizational culture shift, so this new behavior becomes

"the way we do things." Focus is then on values intrinsic to this shift.

Darleen understood that she needed different levels of support and ownership from different stakeholder groups in her agency. She considered the needs and interests of her peers, which centered primarily on personnel issues including hiring. She used existing initiatives and the current hiring process to help her peers think through leadership and practice strategies that would advance the goal of hiring and developing a competent workforce. Darleen was also able to guide her agency supervisors and field staff to think through new approaches with families, balancing engagement and accountability.

Darleen used the Leadership Academy Coaching to strategize at multiple levels, moving between working the change in practice and working the change in organizational culture, understanding that both adaptive and technical challenges have to be met to achieve sustainable change, "I spent many hours devoted to evaluation and 'getting on the balcony.' My coach reaffirmed that I was making the best decisions for myself, for my agency, and for the families we serve."

Following a year of controversy and coaching, the leadership changed. The new director has been committed to and supportive of the work on which Darleen has been focused. With the director's support, the management team was able to step back, do some healing together, and recommit to a collaborative process that would rebuild trust.

Coaching provided Darleen the opportunity to reflect on practice and use the "holding environment" of coaching to explore perceptions of her style and effectiveness. Darleen began to work with other teams to promote some team reflection and group consultation. The trust level in the office improved and the managers have formed a team that is willing to take risks together. Darleen's tenure, expertise, and credibility have allowed her to successfully build a supportive learning environment.

Summary

Leaders from all organizational levels often move into their positions with limited awareness of the political environment of their work. The ability to operate politically shifts into an important new level of skill for leaders at any level. The coaching approach promoted self-exploration and conversations about how to advocate effectively for changes. These middle managers often used coaching as a safe place to make ethical decisions about how to carry out their role to serve children most effectively. Coaching also helped to create awareness of the importance of readiness for change and the ability to keep goals on the table, ready for the opportunity to expand collaborative thinking and planning with leadership teams. Other middle managers

learned ways to balance engagement and accountability on both personal and systemic levels.

Leaders also worked on self-management. Since many leaders work on multiple projects and are often over-extended, coaching provides the chance to step back and assess commitments and performance and link to personal and professional goals and actions. As one the Leadership Academy graduate said:

> *"Coaching helped me stay focused on what was important to me in terms of helping children, families, and staff. In order to drive practice, I had to dance on the floor and step away by looking from the balcony long enough to remember that I need to build connections within leadership and advocate for collaboration, time, and support within my own leadership team."*

While each of these case studies is unique, they also represent typical and shared challenges faced by leaders every day. One hour of coaching per month afforded these and other leaders a place to reflect rather than simply react. Coaching provided a safe environment for self- and systemic-exploration.

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