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LEADING FROM THE CENTER

How Caring, Communication, and Creativity Enhance the Spirit of Collegiality

In order to present the skills and principles of *Leading from the Center* so that participants can put them into daily practice, a curriculum of six two-hour training modules was developed. Each module will include lecture, demonstration, and the opportunity for practice and feedback. The six modules are as follows:

Finding your Center – There are many stereotypes regarding where we derive the models for leadership in our various communities. Seldom does the sight of a psychologist sitting in a book-lined office with his patient jump to the forefront of our vision as an ideal of leadership. Yet, a closer examination of this relationship reveals all of the rudiments needed for anyone to develop their own potential as a leader. The process of becoming a psychologist involves not just learning about others, but learning about ourselves. It is nearly impossible to help others find their center if you haven't found yours. At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of finding our own center in leadership.
- Know the need for vulnerability in leadership.
- Use a strategy to create internal serenity and balance.

- Utilize a mindfulness strategy to focus on the present moment and create possibilities for the future.
- Use techniques to change our relationships with our thoughts and emotions and act out of our values.
- Recognize the importance of self-compassion in leadership.
- Use methods to move through fear into right action by attuning to the wisdom of the heart.

Feeling their Center - A psychologist helps his patients become a better version of themselves by leading them on a journey toward their center. Through deep empathy and active listening the psychotherapist guides the patients around obstacles to discover what is most important. This is the essence of leadership. By mastering some of the most basic skill groups of the psychotherapist, all of us can lead sometimes and sometimes inspire others to lead. At the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Use techniques to increase empathy and compassion with others.
- Use non-verbal techniques for communicating empathy.
- Recognize blocks to effective listening.
- Use verbal and non-verbal active listening strategies.
- Recognize the importance of not personalizing another's communication.
- Give feedback that is courageous, timely, and supportive.

Communicating Consciously – Those who develop the leadership qualities of module 2 can create energized communities among their peers by learning to move beyond empathy to a frank discussion of goals and aspirations through active and constructive engagement with one another. This creates an environment in which conflict is reduced and when it does arise, it can be more readily resolved and framed as an opportunity for growth and creativity. At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Utilize active constructive responding as a way of promoting acknowledgement and recognition.
- Use an ancient strategy for increasing the probability your communication will be well received.
- Understand the importance of pacing and then leading in persuasive communication.
- Understand optimal emotional conditions for effective conflict resolution.
- Use a self-control strategy to deal with emotionally challenging situations.

Creating Caring Communities – Individuals who flourish are characterized by five elements: positive emotions, engagement with life, relationships that enrich, a sense of meaning or

purpose, and accomplishments. A vibrant community promotes these same aspects. By learning to raise their level of energy, curiosity, optimism, and gratitude, community members become models of mutual support and persistent effort toward shared goals. At the end of the training, participants will be able to:

- Understand the importance of positive emotions in learning and creating.
- Know the importance of positive emotions in undoing the negative effects of stress.
- Recognize the value of creating an atmosphere of acceptance and appreciation in promoting open communication.
- Understand the value of developing strengths rather than remediating weaknesses.
- Recognize the 7 key strengths for accomplishment.
- Utilize strategies to increase their experience of gratitude and promote more optimistic perceptions.

Reimagining Conversations – Creative conversations are built upon the foundation of skills, perspectives, and questions. Perhaps most important is to ask: To what do we aspire? What would we want to bring into being? Creativity can be taught and nurtured. There are strategic styles of inquiry that promote alternative patterns of thinking and different ways of behaving. At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Utilize strategies to create win/win environments.
- Ask questions of others and themselves that promote shifts in paradigms and the ability to reframe situations.
- Understand the central premise of question creation that underlies Appreciative Inquiry.
- Recognize the importance of both critical and uncritical thinking.
- Use a “Sit-Down” strategy to deal with difficult situations.

Playing for Pay – Can we reinvent our relationship with work and those we work with to recapture the imaginative freedom we experienced as children? There are basic compass points that, when followed, lead us down a path of discovery and creativity. Humor and playfulness lead the way as it appears the muses like to be amused. At the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Cultivate confusion endurance.
- Welcome and embrace uncertainty.
- Recognize when they have been in a state of flow or timeless awareness.
- Create environments which promote positive emotions.
- Recognize the importance of movement in creativity.