

# **Becoming a Leader**

## Toolkit and User Guide



**21<sup>ST</sup>  
CCLC**

**NTAC**

National Technical Assistance Center

For out-of-school time and summer learning programs



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## Becoming a Leader Toolkit User Guide

**T**he Becoming a Leader Toolkit consists of this user guide and the eight tools described and included herein. The tools were developed for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) programs, but any out-of-school time program can use them.

### How to Access the Tools

The tools are available on the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC National Technical Assistance Center website in the [Becoming a Leader Toolkit](#), which you can download as a zip file. The zip file includes (a) a PDF version of the user guide and toolkit and (b) a Microsoft Word version of each tool for easy customization.

### Ways to Use the Tools

#### To support professional development:

- Read the tools to increase your understanding of a topic or strategy.
- Note ideas you'd like to put into practice or learn more about.
- Use the tools in staff meetings or training sessions as discussion starters or in small-group activities such as think-pair-share.

#### To help your program implement or improve a practice:

- Use the tools to assess and reflect on what you already know and do — and what you need to know and do — to implement or improve a practice.
- Use them during a planning or strategy session to inform decisions about how to adjust current practices or implement new ones.
- Share bite-size ideas from the tools in emails, text messages, or staff meetings to help program staff implement a new strategy or practice.
- Customize the tools to include information, examples, or guidance specific to your program.

#### To engage and inspire stakeholders:

- Share a tool (or ideas from a tool) with school-day staff, community leaders, partners, volunteers, families, or students to help them understand a program initiative or to inspire them to get involved.
- Share excerpts or ideas in your newsletter and in emails, social media posts, and other communications with stakeholders.

### How to Customize a Tool

You may customize the Microsoft Word version to meet your needs.

#### Get Resources for Your Out-of-School Time Program

Check the [21<sup>st</sup> CCLC NTAC website](#) for learning opportunities and resources on this and other topics. To stay updated as new content is added:

- Subscribe to our newsletter.
- Follow us on social media.



**Tips for customizing tools:**

- If you plan to print multiple copies for distribution, you may print the tool in black and white if you're concerned about the cost of color printing.
- If you delete or replace any of the text or graphics, you may need to adjust the formatting or page breaks.
- If you add or revise content, please replace the text box at the end with the following statement:

**Note:** Parts of this document are based on information in the Becoming a Leader Toolkit, a resource developed by the Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC). The toolkit is in the public domain and is available at [21stcclcntac.org](http://21stcclcntac.org).

**Tool Titles and Descriptions**

The following tools are included in the Becoming a Leader Toolkit. Use this annotated list to identify the tools you need.

- The list is organized into three categories: (a) Learn (b) Plan and Implement, and (c) Assess and Reflect.
- Each tool described below is included in this document.
- If you want to use or distribute a tool “as is,” you may print the pages for that tool.
- If you want to customize a tool, download the [Becoming a Leader Toolkit zip file](#), which includes a Microsoft Word version of each tool.

**Learn**

**Effective Workplace Communication for Leaders** — Use this tool to explore communication methods and practices for working with staff members and to get tips for communicating with partners and families.

**The 10 Pillars of Servant Leadership** — This summary describes the 10 pillars of servant leadership and includes tips for implementation.

**Plan and Implement**

**Circle Practices to Foster Community, Engagement, and Discussion** — Get examples of practices (such as restorative circles) that can enhance relationships within your out-of-school time community by giving all participants equal voice and responsibility.

**Real Talk Coaching Technique to Use With Staff and Students** — Use this technique to coach someone by using questions and dialogue to help them clarify their thinking, set realistic goals, or make a decision. This coaching technique may be used during facilitated group discussions, one-on-one coaching sessions, or informal sidebar conversations.



**Saying Yes or No to a New Initiative: A Decision Tool for Leaders** — This planning tool explains how to use the National Implementation Research Network’s Hexagon Discussion and Analysis Tool to explore the fit and feasibility of an initiative in the context of your program.

**Staff Recruitment, Training, and Retention at a Glance** — Use this reference tool as you plan to hire, train, and develop staff. It reminds you of the elements of a good job and includes strategies for managing and developing human resources.



## Assess and Reflect

**Professional Learning Planner and Self-Reflection Survey** — Use the checklist, staff survey, and learning schedule in this tool to work with staff to create personal professional learning goals.

**SWOT Analysis and Action Plan Worksheet** — Use this worksheet to conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and build an action plan based on the analysis.

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## Circle Practices to Foster Community, Engagement, and Discussion

**What to do:** Review the circle practices, purposes, and functions described below. Decide which practices might work well in your program. Identify specific ways to introduce the practices to students and provide opportunities for practice.

**Why it matters:** Incorporating circle practices into your program builds community and gives everyone equal voice and responsibility. Whenever a challenging situation arises, you and your students will be ready to address it in your circle.

### Community Circles

A community circle is, at its core, a safe space for discussion. It differs from a group discussion by its specific intent to build connections and trust. Facilitators and students participate equally. Community circles motivate and engage students by empowering them to express their ideas and opinions in a safe, nonjudgmental space. Here are essential components to a community circle:

- **Circle:** All participants face each other, with no physical barriers between them.
- **Talking piece:** This is an object held by the person who's speaking. It should be something easy to pass from one speaker to the next, like a feather, pebble, or ball.
- **Facilitator:** The facilitator is usually a teacher or another adult, but it can be a student.
- **Student-centered aspects:** From setting the agreements (norms) to carrying out the discussion, all aspects of the practice should be student led.
- **Routine:** There's a list of steps for the group to follow while holding a community circle. The list may include things like doing certain movements or stretches, reciting a poem, or opening and closing circle time a certain way.

### Conversation Circles and Circle Practices: A Brief History

From gathering around the family dinner table, to having coffee with friends, to sitting around a campfire looking at the stars, humans have been gathering in conversation circles since the beginning of time to share wisdom, discuss events, tell stories, and solve problems. The terms *circle groups*, *circle practices*, *reflective circles*, and *restorative circles* are used in a variety of ways and circumstances, but all draw from society's rich history. The common denominator is the circle, a shape that gives everyone equal voice and responsibility.



## Restorative Circles

Students walk into your program each day having experienced a variety of issues that may weigh heavily on their hearts and minds. Restorative circles aim to help students process their thoughts and feelings so that they can be more present and engaged during program activities. Establishing restorative circle practices enables students to build relationships and skills they can use to support one another and face challenges as they arise. Restorative circles are frequently used in place of punitive discipline. They're most effective when they're an integral part of the school and/or out-of-school time program culture.

Key elements of restorative circles are similar to those of community circles. Program staff should:

- Create an emotionally safe, supportive space for all participants.
- Prepare for “when, where, and what” to discuss, whether you’re the facilitator or a participant.
- Select a focus area, theme, or topic in advance.
- Schedule appropriately to allow time for all to participate.
- Develop an opening routine and a closing ceremony to help participants transition (mentally, emotionally, and/or physically) into and out of the circle.
- Encourage students to connect within the circle by sharing personal stories or insights.
- Use a talking piece to denote and honor the speaker at a given time.
- Model empathy by acknowledging, summarizing, and paraphrasing contributions as appropriate, and encourage students to do the same.
- Develop the concept of “being an ally” (using your voice, influence, or presence to support another person).
- Look at issues on a systems level, if age appropriate.

## Circle Practices

Be responsive to students’ backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, traditions, and knowledge. For example, the [Navajo Nation Math Circles Project](#) brings mathematicians into schools to mentor teachers and students and to facilitate interesting math activities that draw on traditional Navajo ways of knowing. A [six-minute video](#) shows how these math circles work.

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*We cannot help young people understand each other when we don't understand ourselves and how we've been shaped to view the world.*

— Erica Buchanan-Rivera

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## Implementing Community or Restorative Circles

Start simple. Developing the desired discussion and interactions within your circle takes time and trust. Let participants get the feel by discussing something that will elicit differing opinions yet feels like a “low risk” topic — for example, a favorite movie, or whether they prefer the beach or the mountains. Here are some examples of possible questions and topics to get you started:

- If you could live anywhere, where would it be?
- If you could visit any time and place in history, where would you go?
- What motivates you?
- Talk about something happening in the world that concerns you.
- Talk about something happening in the world today that excites or inspires you.
- Name something you’ve never done but would like to try.
- What makes you feel like you’re an important part of our program?
- What felt fun, easy, or natural for you today? What felt weird, scary, or challenging?
- When have you felt confident (e.g., connected, powerful, positive, hopeful, safe, supported) about something, and what do you think helped you feel that way?
- What do the words *justice* and *injustice* mean to you? How do you think we can create a more just program, community, and world?

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*To have real conversations with people may seem like such a simple, obvious suggestion, but it involves courage and risk.*

— Thomas Moore

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## Effective Workplace Communication for Leaders

**What to do:** Use this tool to explore communications methods and practices to use with staff members, program partners, and families.

**Why it matters:** Communicating effectively when providing feedback to staff, addressing conflicts, and navigating difficult conversations can be managed by using approaches that respect others' perspectives and come from a mindset that promotes personal growth.

### Choosing Methods of Communication

Although it may sound easy to choose a method to communicate, deciding how and when to do so deserves some thought. Whether you're providing feedback to a staff member, reaching out to a current or potential partner, or requesting information from (or providing information to) families, take time to choose an appropriate method.

Be sure to include a way for your contact to reply, if necessary. Both speaking and listening are important to good communications.



in person



virtual



text



phone



email or  
snail mail



other written  
communication

### Tips for Communicating With Staff

Here are some general guidelines:

- Communicate with clarity and purpose, whether you're announcing a schedule change or acknowledging a staff member's contributions to a successful community event.
- Have regular staff meetings and encourage input, questions, and ideas from everyone. Use icebreakers and team-building activities to help create a sense of community.
- If your staff or team uses a group messaging app, make sure everyone has access and knows how and when to use it.
- Make time for one-on-one interactions.
- Be aware of your body language and tone of voice.



## Providing Feedback to a Staff Member

Providing effective feedback is an important way to build your staff's confidence and competence. But it's not always easy. Think about a time when you felt uncomfortable sharing your thoughts with a supervisor. What was it about the situation that made you uncomfortable? Could better or more effective communication have resolved the discomfort?

### Components of Effective Feedback

When you're reviewing employee performance or offering feedback based on an observation, make sure your feedback is:

- **Focused on improvement.** Begin by opening a dialogue with the person. Let your staff know you're there to support their work and to help them improve their skills.
- **Specific.** Use specific details when offering feedback. If an employee is doing a great job, tell exactly why you think that person is doing a great job, and reference an action you observed to support your assessment. Conversely, if an employee's performance is poor, describe particular actions you've observed so that there aren't questions about what behaviors need to improve.
- **Ongoing.** Review employee performance throughout the year. Don't wait for specific review periods. Provide informal feedback as needed.

### A Trusting Environment for Feedback

What steps would you take to create a trusting environment when providing feedback during an employee review or a difficult conversation? Here are some steps to consider:

- Schedule a meeting with the staff member to show respect for that person's time as a professional.
- Consider providing a substitute for the staff member if the meeting is during program hours.
- Choose a meeting area that's quiet, private, and free of as many distractions as possible.
- Smile and greet the staff member when they enter the meeting space. Include brief, personal conversation where appropriate (commenting on the weather, for example).
- Don't blindside the staff member by launching straight into a problem. Begin by discussing the methods of review, or by explaining that the conversation might be difficult.
- Discuss the feedback or situation simply and objectively, leaving out comments such as "I was shocked to see...." Instead, state facts and be specific: "During the first 10 minutes of the group activity, the instructor set the stage for learning by...."
- Provide an opportunity for the staff member to respond. Keep in mind that not everyone responds positively to feedback. Be prepared to answer any questions. Make sure the person understands what's expected and agrees on a plan of action.
- Refer to program policies and use terms like "we" instead of "I" to discuss how you'll work to make improvements. Using the term "we" changes the tone and implies that you're in this together.
- If necessary, follow up with the employee shortly after the conversation to check on progress and provide any needed support.



## Tips for Communicating With Program Partners

School and community partners can be valuable program assets and may even be considered extensions of your staff, so pay attention to good communications practices. Here are some practices for using communication to keep or establish effective working relationships with partners:

- Keep communication lines open and talk frequently.
- Keep program goals in mind — yours and the partner's.
- Recognize partners' successes and contributions — not just when speaking with them but also in public ways, such as on your program's website, social media, and print materials.
- Refer to written agreements and the memorandum of understanding (MOU) if you need to have a difficult conversation with a partner.

## Tips for Communicating With Families

Communication between your program and families requires mutual respect for the roles and strengths each has to offer. Here are some practices to consider:

- Communicate clearly, consistently, and frequently, using more than one medium to reach as many families as possible. (For example, put urgent information such as temporary changes to program hours on the program website and the school website, in a text, on social media, and in a print message that goes home with students).
- Make sure families know that the communication lines go both ways and that you'll respond if they reach out.
- Find out about and use each family's preferred method of communication.
- Provide information in languages other than English when necessary.
- Find opportunities to build relationships — and to sustain them over time.
- Focus on shared goals for children and their learning environment. Reach out regularly to share observations, ask questions, and learn from the family's experience and knowledge.
- Communicate from strengths-based attitudes such as these:
  - Families are our partners.
  - All children have strengths.
  - Families are the first and most important teachers.

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## Professional Learning Planner and Self-Reflection Survey

**What to do:** Use the staff training checklist, staff survey, and learning schedule in this tool as you work with staff to help them create individual professional learning goals.

**Why it matters:** Planning for professional learning and growth helps staff members grow, develop, and succeed at work. When program leaders get involved, they can provide important guidance, training, and support.

**Tip:** Aim to provide professional learning opportunities that meet the needs of both the program and the people who make it work — including you! Consider posting a schedule electronically and sharing it with your staff so that it becomes a living document you can update as needed. Encourage staff to let you know if new training needs and opportunities arise.

### Staff Training Checklist

On which topics do staff need training?

- ☐ Collecting data
- ☐ Using data to intentionally design activities
- ☐ Creating project or activity SMART goals to link with content
- ☐ Understanding program goals and how they connect to school-day learning
- ☐ Communicating with teachers and schools
- ☐ Supporting student learning in homework time
- ☐ Understanding academic standards
- ☐ Developing students' 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (the 4 C's — communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity)
- ☐ Understanding and using the 5 C's of positive youth development (competence, confidence, connection, caring, character)
- ☐ Assessing students
- ☐ Engaging students
- ☐ Documenting learning to share with teachers
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How much time is available, and when, for staff training?

- ☐ During orientation: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ During staff meeting time: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ During program breaks: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ In conjunction with school-day professional learning for teachers: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ At conferences: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ In professional learning sessions scheduled during the year: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Self-Reflection Survey	
My strengths	
Areas where I've grown	
How I can use my strengths within the program	
My skills and interests	
Three things I did well in the past six months	
A difficult or negative experience I managed to turn into a positive	
A goal I've met in the past year	
A goal I'm working toward	
Resources or support that would help me meet that goal	
My general approach to problem solving, and the strategies I use	
My biggest challenge when trying to solve problems	
New skills I'd like to learn	



Professional Learning Schedule				
Topic	Date	Time	Who Participates	Who Leads

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*The strength of the team is each member.  
The strength of each member is the team.*

– Phil Jackson

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## Real Talk Coaching Technique to Use With Staff and Students

**What to do:** Use this technique to coach someone by using questions and dialogue to help them clarify their thinking, set realistic goals and expectations, or make a decision. The approach can be as formal as a facilitated discussion with a group, or as informal as a one-on-one sidebar conversation.

**Why it matters:** This technique creates a partnership with the person you're coaching. It shows respect by taking their ideas seriously; responding with genuine curiosity and care; being honest if they ask your opinion; and standing by their side as they face hard truths, grapple with challenging situations, and deal with emotionally difficult decisions.

When using this technique to coach someone, you should:

- Listen carefully to their idea, plan or proposal.
- Make sure you understand by using prompts and questions like:
  - Tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Could you explain \_\_\_\_\_?
  - In other words, you're saying \_\_\_\_\_, right?
- Offer responses and feedback to keep the conversation (and the thinking) going. The purpose of your feedback isn't to "critique" what the other person tells you, but to "keep it real" by guiding and supporting them through the critical thinking process so they can make their own judgment. Your responses might offer a different perspective, an overlooked fact, or new information that could help them move toward a clear solution or plan. For example, you might say things like:
  - That's interesting. Are you assuming \_\_\_\_\_?
  - I know what you mean. What about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - You'll need to work out the logistics. How will you \_\_\_\_\_?
  - I see your dilemma. What other solutions might work?
  - Did you know that \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What criteria will you use for \_\_\_\_\_?
  - You've described the disadvantages. What are the advantages?

*A great coach not only inspires but supports and encourages others to get results.* —Richard Schuy

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## Saying Yes or No to a New Initiative: A Decision Tool for Leaders

**What to do:** Review the diagram below and the description of the Hexagon Tool on the next page. The next time someone proposes a new initiative for your program, try using the tool to help you decide if the initiative would be a good fit and a good use of available resources. You can also use it during implementation to help diagnose challenges related to contextual fit. Work with a team to encourage discussion and ensure representation of diverse perspectives.

**Why it matters:** When working to reach your program goals, you may recognize a need to try something new to get the results you want. Using this tool can help you be strategic and make well-informed decisions.

### Hexagon Tool Diagram

#### SYSTEM INDICATORS

##### Capacity to Implement

- Staff meet minimum qualifications  
Able to sustain staffing, coaching, training, data systems, performance assessment, and administration
- Financial capacity
  - Structural capacity
  - Cultural responsiveness capacity
  - Buy-in process operationalized
  - Practitioners
  - Families

##### Fit With Current Initiatives

- Alignment with community, regional, State priorities  
Fit with family and community values, culture, and history  
Impact on other interventions and initiatives  
Alignment with organizational structure

##### Need

- Target population identified  
Disaggregated data indicating population needs  
Family and community perceptions of need  
Addresses service or system gaps

#### INNOVATION INDICATORS

##### Evidence

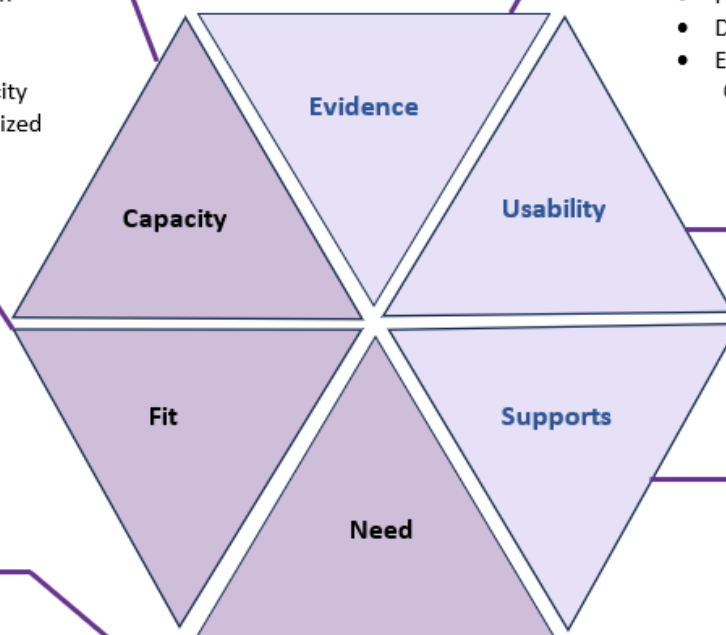
- Strength of evidence — for whom and in what conditions:
- Number of studies
  - Population similarities
  - Diverse cultural groups
  - Efficacy or effectiveness
- Outcomes — is it worth it?  
Fidelity data  
Cost-effectiveness data

##### Usability

- Well-defined innovation  
Mature examples to observe  
Several replications  
Adaptations for context

##### Supports

- Expert assistance  
Staffing  
Training  
Coaching and supervision  
Equity impact assessment  
Data systems and technology supports (IT)  
Administration and systems



## About the Hexagon Discussion and Analysis Tool (“The Hexagon Tool”)

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) created the Hexagon Tool based on implementation science. Developers grounded the tool in the belief that successful implementation of a program or practice must first consider the impacts on the community that will be affected by the program. The developers designed and tested the process outlined in the diagram shown on page 1 to help leaders consider six factors before they decide whether to adopt a new program, practice, or initiative:

- Need
- Fit
- Capacity
- Evidence
- Usability
- Supports

## Find More Information

The information in this document is based on materials available on the SISEP AI Hub. (SISEP stands for the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices Center.) Visit the [SISEP Active Implementation Hub](#) to get more information about the Hexagon Tool, to see case studies, and to download templates and a full description of the process.

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## Staff Recruitment, Training, and Retention at a Glance

**What to do:** Use this tip sheet as you plan to hire, train, and develop staff.

**Why it matters:** Becoming an employer of choice is a strategy, not an accident. Putting yourself in the shoes of potential job applicants and focusing on the elements of a good job can help you build a workplace that attracts and retains high-quality staff.

### Job Design Considerations

To create good jobs and good workplaces, address the job elements listed below.

#### The Elements of a Good Job

Basics	Support	Opportunity	Voice
<i>The basic elements of a good job</i>	<i>Help workers perform well and achieve stability</i>	<i>Help employees advance in their careers and develop their skills</i>	<i>Employees are empowered, engaged, and have agency</i>
Compensation Work environment Supervision quality	Training Internal assistance External supports	Career development Mentoring and coaching Acknowledgment	Engagement Improvement Participation

#### The Result

As you strive to build a program where your employees can thrive, you'll attract and retain high-quality staff.

### Managing and Developing Human Resources in Out-of-School Time Programs

Strategy	Tip for Using This Strategy
1. Identify a staff recruitment team.	<i>Include diverse skills and perspectives.</i>
2. Budget for staffing.	<i>Know your budget before you post a job.</i>
3. Link core competencies to staff roles.	<i>Decide which hard and soft skills matter most.</i>
4. Develop a human resources plan.	<i>Identify staff roles, write job descriptions, and review human resource policies and procedures.</i>
5. Identify qualified candidates.	<i>Network via social media, flyers, and word of mouth.</i>
6. Hire staff.	<i>Use scenario-based questions as part of your process.</i>
7. Plan and conduct effective training.	<i>Plan, design, deliver, and assess training.</i>
8. Build a positive work environment.	<i>Ask staff, "How's our program culture and climate?"</i>
9. Manage staff performance and provide effective feedback.	<i>Provide timely, constructive feedback regularly instead of waiting until the end of the year.</i>

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## SWOT Analysis and Action Plan Worksheet

**What to do:** Use this strategic planning technique to identify your program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Use the template on page 2 to create an action plan that builds on strengths to overcome threats and take advantage of opportunities.

**Why it matters:** A SWOT analysis helps you get a different perspective on daily operations and short- and long-term planning. It can help you evaluate progress, identify new possibilities, and make adjustments to support continuous improvement and sustainability.

### Part 1: Conduct a SWOT Analysis

Internal Factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
What does your program do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your program's strengths?	What could your program improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
External Factors	
Opportunities	Threats
What opportunities are open to your program? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	What threats could harm your program? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?



## Part 2: Create an Action Plan to Capitalize on Strengths and Overcome Challenges

	<b>Opportunities</b> <i>(external, positive)</i>	<b>Threats</b> <i>(external, negative)</i>
<b>Strengths</b> <i>(internal, positive)</i>	<b>Strength – Opportunity Strategies</b>	<b>Strength – Threat Strategies</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b> <i>(internal, negative)</i>	<b>Weakness – Opportunity Strategies</b>	<b>Weakness – Threat Strategies</b>

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## The 10 Pillars of Servant Leadership

**What to do:** Read this tip sheet to help you understand and use the value-based leadership approach known as *servant leadership*. Reflect on ways you might use this philosophy and set of practices to motivate people to take action toward common goals.

**Why it matters:** Effective leadership sets the cornerstone for an environment where students and staff can flourish. The practices described here can help you recognize and employ a wide range of strengths, skills, and talents to build a quality program. Servant leadership enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations, and ultimately creates a more just and caring world, according to [Robert Greenleaf](#), who coined the term.

### 1. Listening

You believe the best way to understand and help others is to listen. Many times, the purpose of listening is to gather information so you can form a response. As a servant leader, you go a step further and use active listening to make sure you fully understand what's being communicated. This technique, also called reflective listening, supports clear communication and reduces misunderstandings.

**Tip:** Limit judgements, don't interrupt, wait for a pause to follow up, empathize with the speaker, watch for nonverbal cues, provide feedback, and "practice, practice, practice."

### 2. Empathy

You understand that everyone has their own perspective, and you try to see the world through their lens. Even if you reach a different conclusion or have a different opinion, putting yourself in someone else's shoes improves insight and understanding, and it helps you communicate effectively. If you worry that "too much empathy" might make you seem like a softie, consider this: In a [survey of over 150 CEOs](#), more than 80 percent said empathy is key to success.

**Tip:** Think about the differences between pity (I feel sorry for you), sympathy (I feel for you), and empathy (I feel with you). Try to move beyond empathy to compassion to let others know that you not only *hear* them, but you're *here* for them.

### 3. Healing

You recognize that, as a leader of others, you can change the narrative of their stories. Effective leaders understand that to reach individual and collective goals, healing must sometimes occur. A program environment that provides a sense of safety and belonging is essential to addressing student learning gaps and positive youth development. As a leader, you must seek to create healing on multiple levels: within yourself, via relationships with others, and in service to the program and community.

**Tip:** Consider ways to use one-on-one conversations, mentoring, and community circles within your program.





## 4. Self-Awareness

Servant leadership requires psychological maturity and self-regulation. After all, your words, actions, and decisions affect program staff and outcomes. Self-regulation requires self-awareness. Awareness of your words, actions, and decisions — and their effects on others — helps you recognize when your approach isn't getting the desired responses and outcomes. Then you can reflect on your approach and make adjustments. Self-awareness and reflection are key to managing yourself and your relationships with others to keep the team moving toward their goals.

**Tip:** Be aware of how staff members process information and the time they need to do so. Instead of putting them on the spot, provide an open-ended invitation for sharing.

## 5. Persuasion

Your role isn't to direct others' every move, but to encourage them to move in a direction that benefits themselves and others. In an out-of-school time program, each staff member's personal and professional growth affects the growth and success of your program. At times, the program goals and objectives you establish will require some level of growth and change among staff. Change can be unsettling for some people, even when it's positive change. To influence others and get them to invest in change, you must understand their starting point. For a servant leader, the purpose of persuasion isn't to bring your staff around to your way of thinking. Its effectiveness is in nudging people to consider new ideas and perspectives, find common ground, and collaborate on goals they agree are worthwhile.

**Tip:** Personal stories or experiences can be powerful persuasive tools when used appropriately.

## 6. Conceptualization

As a leader, you're in a position to share the vision of desired outcomes for your program so that your team can help you determine how to get there. Conceptualization puts awareness, listening, healing, and persuasion into action. It synthesizes the best of each to create a vision that addresses the unique characteristics of your staff, students, and program.

**Tip:** Nurture your ability to dream big dreams. Stretch your thinking beyond the day-to-day to encompass broad-based, long-term ideas.

## 7. Foresight

You can predict and understand the impact of actions and help navigate a better course. As an out-of-school time program leader, you likely have an acute awareness of the realities of student needs, staffing requirements, budgetary constraints, and more. As a servant leader, you'll reflect openly on past lessons while incorporating present realities to predict your program's likely future situations and circumstances.

**Tip:** To gather and assess important information about a program or initiative to help you make informed decisions, use a SWOT analysis. S = Strengths, W = Weaknesses, O = Opportunities, and T = Threats.





## 8. Stewardship

Your accountability and commitment to lead extend beyond the people in your program to include your parent organization and the community. When you're viewed as a credible role model who acts altruistically to serve the greater good (rather than to boost your own ego or personal gain), it can inspire team members to emulate your behavior. Two behaviors that are important to establishing yourself as a good steward are accountability and responsibility.

**Tip:** Ask for opinions, use feedback to improve your team and yourself, practice effective communication, and fulfill your promises.

## 9. Growth

Your single greatest accomplishment as a servant leader is to grow and develop your people. Developing strong, positive relationships with your staff can happen only if they view you as a credible, supportive leader. Credibility and trust grow when you're able to demonstrate that your process of learning, planning, and implementation have led to useful outcomes. Before you can serve your staff, you need to familiarize yourself with who they are and what they hope to achieve.

**Tip:** Involve your staff from the start so they can grow as individuals and as professionals as the program grows and as you grow as a leader.

## 10. Community

Your workplace culture, ideally, creates a place where all are welcome and all matter. Servant leadership builds a sense of social identity that fulfills the basic human need to belong. Make time for team members to share and celebrate each other's successes. Model leadership that balances the power dynamic between personalities, communication styles, and staff roles. By creating an environment where people recognize one another's value and potential, and support them in their quest for fulfillment, servant leaders foster community.

**Tip:** Change the organizational attitude toward mistakes and failures. Both are necessary to learn and grow.

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*It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man  
can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.  
Serve and thou shall be served.*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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