

Strategies for Creating, Developing and Leading Productive Teams

Wendy Johnson, PhD

A group of nine diverse professionals, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, are smiling and posing for a photo at what appears to be a conference or industry event. They are dressed in business casual attire, and several are wearing lanyards with identification badges. In the background, a large blue screen displays the text "LEADERSHIP FOR IMPACT: INNOVATE. INSPIRE. LEAD." in white capital letters. The overall atmosphere is positive and professional.

Welcome and Overview

Session Purpose

Focus on	This session will focus on:
Strengthen	Strengthen how leaders create, develop, and lead productive teams.
Move	Move from good intentions to intentional leadership practices.
Connect	Connect clarity, trust, accountability, communication, and development to team performance.
Practice	Practice conversations that help teams move forward with confidence.



Two-Day Learning Journey

OVERVIEW

- **Day 1:** Build the foundation for productive teams.
- **Day 2:** Lead through challenges, accountability, and engagement.

Both sessions combine strategic teaching blocks, discussion, role play, reflection, and action planning.





Session Description & Outcomes

Description



High-performing teams do not happen by accident, they are the result of intentional leadership, clear expectations, and consistent development. This session is designed for leaders who are responsible for building, developing, or leading teams and want practical strategies to improve performance, engagement, and accountability.



You will explore the core elements of productive teams, including role clarity, communication norms, trust, accountability, and alignment with organizational goals. We will examine how leadership behaviors directly influence team dynamics and outcomes, and how leaders can adapt their approach to meet the needs of diverse, cross-functional, remote, or hybrid teams.



Through guided reflection, real-world examples, and applied exercises, you will assess their current team effectiveness, identify common barriers to productivity, and learn actionable strategies to strengthen team performance. Emphasis is placed on creating sustainable team practices that support results while fostering collaboration, ownership, and continuous improvement.



Learning Outcomes



Define what makes teams productive and high performing.



Clarify purpose, roles, expectations, and accountability practices.



Identify team strengths, communication patterns, skill gaps, and development needs.



Apply practical strategies for difficult team dynamics and performance conversations.



Commit to leadership behaviors that build trust, cohesion, engagement, and productivity.





House Keeping & Insight

- Engage and pay attention
- Interact and be present
- Think quick on your feet
- Candor & transparency
- Effective Leadership
Development + Being
Uncomfortable = GROWTH
- Why am I here? **Transform
your leadership abilities!**

Professional Experience/Relevance

- Wendy Johnson “aka” Dr. Wendy
 - PhD Administration & Management
 - Graduate of Leadership Houston – Class XXIV
 - Leadership & Workforce Development Strategist
 - Over 20 years of academic administrative and training experience
 - Vice Chancellor, Dean, VP Academic Affairs, Director Faculty Management, Academic Dean, Regional Dean Academic Affairs, Executive Trainer and Director Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer
 - Taught various graduate and undergraduate level leadership, career development, organizational development and doctoral research courses.
 - Authored 2 books and written several articles
 - Consulting Business
 - LinkedIn, Tiktok and IG
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Reflection: Why Are You Here?

What leadership challenge, team dynamic, or development goal do you want to strengthen during this session?

1

Share one situation you want to improve.

2

Identify the leadership behavior that situation requires from you.

3

Be prepared to connect today's ideas to that real situation.



Today's Guiding Question

FRAME

- Productive teams do not happen by accident.
- They are created by leaders who communicate clearly, follow through consistently, and develop people intentionally.
- As we move through both sessions, keep this question in mind:

Guiding Question:

Why does productive team leadership require intentionality?



Part 1

Building the Foundation for Productive Teams



Wednesday, July 29 | 8:15 AM - 10:00 AM



In my experience...

The foundation of high-performing teams is built on a combination of **clarity, trust, shared purpose, and accountability.**

These foundational elements ensure that the team is **aligned, cohesive, and empowered to consistently deliver strong results.**





The Productive Team Foundation Framework

Clarity

People understand goals, roles, priorities, and expectations.

Trust

People feel safe enough to communicate, contribute, and ask for help.

Productive Team Leadership

Intentional leadership connects the work, the people, and the outcomes.

Shared Purpose

People see how their work connects to team and institutional goals.

Accountability

People follow through, own outcomes, and address gaps early.

Why are These Items Important?



Contextualizing
the Past

Understanding
Human Ingenuity

Tracing Family
& Culture

Lessons from
Nature

Consider the
role of the
past in the
present

Here's a breakdown of the key components:

Clear Purpose and Goals

- Every high-performing team starts with a well-defined mission.
- Members understand the “why” behind their work and how it connects to organizational objectives.
- Goals are specific, measurable, and commonly understood.

Defined Roles and Expectations

- Each team member knows their responsibilities and how their work supports the team.
- Overlap and ambiguity are minimized, which reduces conflict and confusion.

Here's a breakdown of the key components:

Trust and Psychological Safety

- Trust is the backbone of collaboration, team members must feel safe to speak up, share ideas, and admit mistakes.
- Leaders model vulnerability, respect, and fairness to build a culture of safety.

Strong Communication

- Open, honest, and consistent communication helps align efforts and resolve issues early.
- Effective teams listen actively and give and receive feedback constructively.

Here's a breakdown of the key components:

Accountability and Ownership

- Team members hold themselves and each other accountable for results and behavior.
- There's a shared commitment to excellence and mutual responsibility for outcomes.

Shared Values and Team Norms

- A cohesive team operates with agreed upon values and behaviors (e.g., respect, transparency, reliability).
- Norms create consistency in how the team interacts and makes decisions.

TIME

TO

WORK!



ROLEPLAY



PRACTICE. PERSPECTIVE. IMPROVE.

*Step into real-world situations,
understand different viewpoints,
and grow together.*



PRACTICE

Step into real-world situations to build confidence.



PERSPECTIVE

Understand different viewpoints and broaden awareness.



IMPROVE

Apply lessons and strengthen your skills.



GROW TOGETHER

Learn from each other and create stronger, more connected teams.

BETTER CONVERSATIONS ★ STRONGER TEAMS ★ BETTER RESULTS

VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!



Role Play #1

"Clarifying Purpose & Expectations"

- **Scenario:** An employee initiates a meeting to discuss uncertainty around their job's purpose, how their role adds value to the organization, and the lack of clear expectations within the team.
- **Looking for two volunteers:** one to play the *Manager*, and one to play the *Employee*.
- **Non-participants:** Listen and be ready to provide feedback.



Conversation Tips!

1. Listen Without Defensiveness

Give the employee space to express their concerns fully before responding. Avoid jumping to conclusions or immediately explaining, it builds trust when the employee feels truly heard.

2. Acknowledge and Validate Their Experience

Even if you weren't aware of the confusion, acknowledge the employee's feelings and the impact unclear expectations may have had. Validation creates a foundation for collaboration, not blame.

3. Clarify Role Purpose and Alignment

Be ready to articulate how the employee's role connects to team goals and the organization's mission. If that's not yet clear, commit to working together to define it more precisely.

Conversation Tips!

4. Address Teamwide Expectations

Recognize that if one person feels unclear, others may too. Commit to improving clarity at the team level through defined roles, shared goals, or structured communication.

5. Follow Through with Action

Don't let the conversation end with talk. Schedule a follow-up to revisit the discussion, clarify responsibilities, or introduce team changes. Accountability builds credibility.



LET'S
DISCUSS

The Purpose!

This scenario highlights the importance of transparent communication, active listening, and mutual understanding in building productive, aligned teams.

The Goal: Help demonstrate how to approach difficult yet necessary conversations in a professional and solution focused way.



Let's Talk...

FOUNDATION OF HIGH- PERFORMING *Teams*

Strong Foundations.
Extraordinary Results.



Foundation of High-Performing Teams

8:25 - 8:



What makes a team productive and high performing?



Why clarity, trust, shared purpose, and accountability matter.



How strong communication and clear norms shape day-to-day productivity.



Where leaders must be intentional in setting direction and expectations.



FOUNDATION 1:

CLEAR PURPOSE AND GOALS

Everything we do starts with **why**.



CLEAR PURPOSE

We know why we exist.



MEASURABLE GOALS

We set targets that drive progress.



SHARED DIRECTION

We move forward together with focus and alignment.

OUR PURPOSE



OUR VISION

Where we are going



OUR GOALS

What we will achieve



OUR IMPACT

The difference we will make

Performance-Driven Skills Teams Need

1. Self-motivation and initiative
2. Time management and organization
3. Proactive and written communication
4. Adaptability and resilience
5. Problem-solving and emotional intelligence
6. Follow-through, reliability, and ownership



OUR PURPOSE
Empower people. Build better futures.



GOAL 1

Improve lives through education.



GOAL 2

Build strong communities.



GOAL 3

Drive innovation for impact.

FOCUSED. ALIGNED. COMMITTED.

Clear Purpose and Goals

- A team performs better when members understand why the work matters.
- Clear goals reduce confusion and help people prioritize the right work.
- Purpose gives daily work meaning beyond a task list.
- Leaders must connect individual contributions to the larger mission.



FOUNDATION 2:

Defined Roles and Expectations



CLEAR ROLES

Everyone knows their part.



CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Alignment drives success.

*Clarity
Alignment
Success*



Defined Roles and Expectations

- Role clarity prevents duplication, gaps, and frustration.
- Expectations should define responsibilities, decision rights, communication norms, and measures of success.
- Leaders should not assume people understand what success looks like.
- Clarity is a leadership responsibility, not a one-time announcement.



FOUNDATION 3:

TRUST — and — PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

A safe team is a strong team.
We speak up. We listen.
We grow together.

RESPECT

SUPPORT

LISTEN

INCLUDE

SAFE TO
SPEAK
OPEN TO
GROW

EMPOWER



TRUST

We believe in
each other.



SAFE TO SPEAK

We share ideas and
concerns without fear.



LISTEN DEEPLY

We value every voice
and perspective.



SUPPORT EACH OTHER

We have each other's
backs.



EMPOWER GROWTH

We learn, grow and
succeed together.

*When people feel **safe**, they perform at their **best**.*

Trust and Psychological Safety

- Trust allows people to speak honestly, ask questions, and admit mistakes early.
- Psychological safety does not mean avoiding accountability.
- It means people can engage in honest dialogue without fear of embarrassment or punishment.
- Trust grows through consistency, fairness, confidentiality, and follow-through.



FOUNDATION 4:

STRONG COMMUNICATION

Clear words.
Stronger teams.
Greater results.



*Clear Communication
Strong Connections
Better Outcomes*

SPEAK
LISTEN
CONNECT
SUCCEED



OPEN DIALOGUE
We communicate



ACTIVE LISTENING
We value every



SHARED INFORMATION
We keep everyone



FEEDBACK & SUPPORT
We give and receive



ALIGNMENT
We stay aligned on

Strong Communication

- Productive teams communicate before confusion becomes conflict.
- Communication rhythms should match the complexity and urgency of the work.
- Strong communication includes clarity, active listening, timely updates, and shared context.
- Silence from leaders often creates uncertainty for the team.



FOUNDATION 5:

ACCOUNTABILITY

— and —

OWNERSHIP



We commit.
We follow through.
We deliver results.



TAKE OWNERSHIP

Own your role.
Own the outcome.



BE ACCOUNTABLE

Do what you say you will do.
Hold yourself to high standards.



DELIVER RESULTS

Follow through.
Make an impact.



BUILDS TRUST

People trust those
who follow through.



DRIVES PERFORMANCE

Clear accountability
leads to better results.



EMPOWERS PEOPLE

Ownership creates
confidence and initiative.



STRENGTHENS TEAMS

We rely on each other
to succeed.



ACHIEVES

Account
Su



DEFINE IT

We know our
goals and
expectations.



OWN IT

We take
responsibility
for our role.



DO IT

We follow
through and
support each
other.



DELIVER IT

We measure
results
celebrate
success.

*Accountability is a commitment to excellence.
Ownership is the key to results.*



Accountability and Ownership

- Accountability is not punishment; it is clarity plus follow-through.
- Ownership means team members understand their role in the outcome.
- Accountability is strongest when expectations are clear before performance is evaluated.
- Leaders model accountability by addressing issues early and consistently.



FOUNDATION 6: SHARED VALUES *and* TEAM NORMS

When our values align
and our norms guide us,
**we do our best work
together.**



SHARED VALUES
and our compass.

TEAM NORMS
are our guide.

TOGETHER,
we create a culture
of trust, respect,
and high performance.



**ALIGNED IN
VALUES.
UNITED IN
PURPOSE.**



OUR TEAM NORMS



**WE
COMMUNICATE
OPENLY**

We listen, share
honestly, and
encourage
dialogue.



**WE
RESPECT
EACH OTHER**

We value diverse
perspectives
and treat
everyone with
dignity.



**WE HOLD
OURSELVES
ACCOUNTABLE**

We follow
through, own
our actions, and
support each
other.



**WE STRIVE
FOR
EXCELLENCE**

We raise the bar,
solve problems,
and seek
continuous
improvement.



INTEGRITY
We do the



RESPECT
We value every



COLLABORATION
We work together



EXCELLENCE
We are committed



Shared Values and Team Norms

- Team norms define how people work together when the leader is not in the room.
- Values become visible through daily behaviors, decisions, and communication habits.
- Productive teams agree on what respect, responsiveness, professionalism, and collaboration look like.
- Norms should be reinforced, not simply posted.





TABLE DISCUSSION:

Foundation Check



STRONG FOUNDATION
STRONGER TEAM



THE SIX FOUNDATIONS



1. Clear Purpose
and Goals



2. Defined Roles
and Expectations



3. Trust and
Psychological Safety



4. Strong
Communication



5. Accountability
and Ownership



6. Shared Values
and Team Norms



1. REFLECT

What's strong already?



2. REVIEW

What areas need work?



3. DISCUSS

What options can we explore?



4. COMMIT

What will we do?

Table Discussion: Foundation Check

DISCUSS

Where is your team strongest, and where does the foundation need attention?

1. What is one foundational element your team does well?
2. What is one foundational element that needs strengthening?
3. Where does lack of clarity, trust, or accountability show up most often?



Clarifying Purpose, Roles, and Expectations

Aligned teams achieve
clearer goals and
stronger results.



Clarifying Purpose, Roles, and Expectations

8:55 - 9:25 AM

1. Why role clarity matters in productive teams.
2. How unclear expectations create confusion, overlap, and frustration.
3. How to connect individual roles to team and organizational goals.
4. The leader's responsibility to clarify expectations and follow through.



Why Role Clarity Matters

CLARITY

1. People cannot perform confidently when they are unsure what they own.
2. Unclear roles create delayed decisions, repeated work, and unnecessary tension.
3. Role clarity improves collaboration because team members understand where they contribute.
4. Clear roles help leaders coach performance more fairly and specifically.



When Expectations Are Unclear

RISK

1. Team members fill in the gaps with assumptions.
2. Strong employees may over-function while others under-function.
3. Confusion can turn into frustration, conflict, or disengagement.
4. Leaders may mistake unclear expectations for poor performance.



Connect Roles to Team Goals

ALIGNMENT

1. Explain how each person's role supports the larger outcome.
2. Show the connection between daily work and team priorities.
3. Use goals to reinforce alignment, not just task completion.
4. Help team members understand how their work creates value.



Conversation Tips for Addressing Uncertainty

LEADERSHIP LANGUAGE

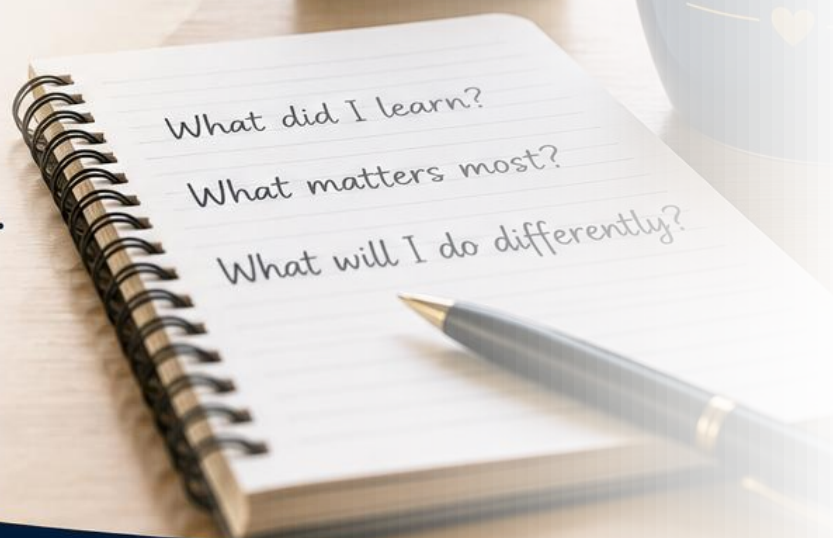
1. Listen without defensiveness.
2. Acknowledge and validate concerns.
3. Clarify the role purpose and expected outcomes.
4. Address teamwide expectations, not just individual confusion.
5. Follow through with clear actions and timelines.



Reflection Time!



Pause. Think. Reflect.
The best insights come
when we take time to reflect.



Reflection: Why Are You Here?

What leadership challenge, team dynamic, or development goal do you want to strengthen during this session?

1

Share one situation you want to improve.

2

Identify the leadership behavior that situation requires from you.

3

Be prepared to connect today's ideas to that real situation.



Building and Developing the Team

1. Productive teams are built by understanding both work requirements and people needs.
2. Development requires knowing strengths, communication styles, career interests, and skill gaps.
3. Leaders strengthen productivity by coaching, aligning, and supporting growth.
4. The goal is not only to manage work, but to develop capability.



Performance-Driven Skills Teams Need

SKILL BUILDING

1. Self-motivation and initiative
2. Time management and organization
3. Proactive and written communication
4. Adaptability and resilience
5. Problem-solving and emotional intelligence
6. Follow-through, reliability, and ownership



Know Team Members Beyond Job Titles

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

1. What strengths do they naturally bring to the team?
2. How do they communicate best?
3. What career interests or development goals do they have?
4. Where do they need coaching, resources, training, or clarity?
5. What conditions help them do their best work?



Applied Team Mapping Activity

Identify what you currently know and still need to know about your team members.

1. Who communicates well?
2. Who needs development or coaching?
3. Who is interested in career growth?
4. Who has strong project management skills?
5. Who needs additional support, training, or clarity?



LEADERSHIP ADJUSTMENT

Great leaders **adapt**
their approach to
drive **people, performance,**
and **results.**



ASSESS
Observe
& Listen



ADJUST
Shift Your
Approach



ALIGN
Clarify
& Support



ACHIEVE
Drive Results
Together



Leadership isn't about having all the answers.
It's about adjusting to lead effectively.

Part 1 Exit Reflection

COMMIT

What is one leadership adjustment you will make to improve clarity, trust, communication, or expectations?

1. Capture one adjustment you can make immediately.
2. Name the team behavior or outcome it is intended to improve.
3. **Be ready to reconnect with this commitment in Part 2.**





Part 1 – 7/29 @ 8:15am
CPE Code: 97W1XJ

WELCOME

Back!



Part 2

Leading Through
Challenges, Accountability,
Engagement, etc.

Thursday, July 30 | 8:15 AM -
10:00 AM



Part 1 Review



Productive teams need clarity, trust, shared purpose, and accountability.



Role expectations must be communicated, reinforced, and followed through on.



Team development requires knowing people beyond job titles.



Part 2 shifts from team foundation to leadership action.



BUILDING THE TEAM

What Skills Are
Needed to Create
a Productive Team?



SKILLS NEEDED TO CREATE A PRODUCTIVE TEAM



CLEAR COMMUNICATION

Share information openly and listen actively.



TRUST & RESPECT

Value each other's ideas and build strong relationships.



COLLABORATION

Work together, leverage strengths, and support one another.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Take ownership, follow through, and hold each other to standards.



PROBLEM SOLVING

Think critically, challenge ideas, and find effective solutions.



ADAPTABILITY

Embrace change, stay flexible, and adjust as needed.



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Performance-Driven Skills

- Self-Motivation
- Time Management
- Proactive Communication
- Written Communication
- Adaptability
- Problem-Solving



Performance Driven Skills

- Focus
- Collaborative
- Emotional Intelligence
- Initiative
- Ability to Pivot
- Resilient
- Organized



Performance Driven Skills

- Building a high-performing teams requires finding individuals with skills that support autonomy, communication, and collaboration across divisions.
- Selecting team members with these skills will support productivity, engagement, and collaboration in a productive work environment.



BY ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

How do you accomplish this task?

HOW WELL
— DO YOU —
KNOW
YOUR TEAM?



MAKE TIME — TO GET TO — KNOW YOUR TEAMS!



BUILD
TRUST



STRONGER
RELATIONSHIPS



BETTER
COLLABORATION



HIGHER
PERFORMANCE



LISTEN



RESPECT



SUPPORT



GROW
TOGETHER



Great teams don't just happen.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...



Common – Things to Know...



- Who has a birthday this month?
- Who has children? If so, how many, and how old they are?
- Which are married?
- Which are grandparents?
- If any have parents living with them?
- Who has a pet?
- If anyone is experiencing any personal matters that may hinder their performance?

Common – Things to Know...



- What kind of thinker each team member is? Creative? Analytical? Visual? Big Picture Focused? Detail oriented?
- Who displays good project management skills?
- The strengths and weaknesses of each of them?
- Who is a good communicator?
- Who is interested in career development/growth?

Common – Things to Know...



- Who is interested in more training, skill building or earning a degree?
- Who is a good public speaker?

You can also incorporate a SWOT Analysis...



STRENGTHS

- Experienced Team
- Strong Brand
- Unique Technology



WEAKNESSES

- Resource Constraints
- Outdated Systems
- Narrow Market



OPPORTUNITIES

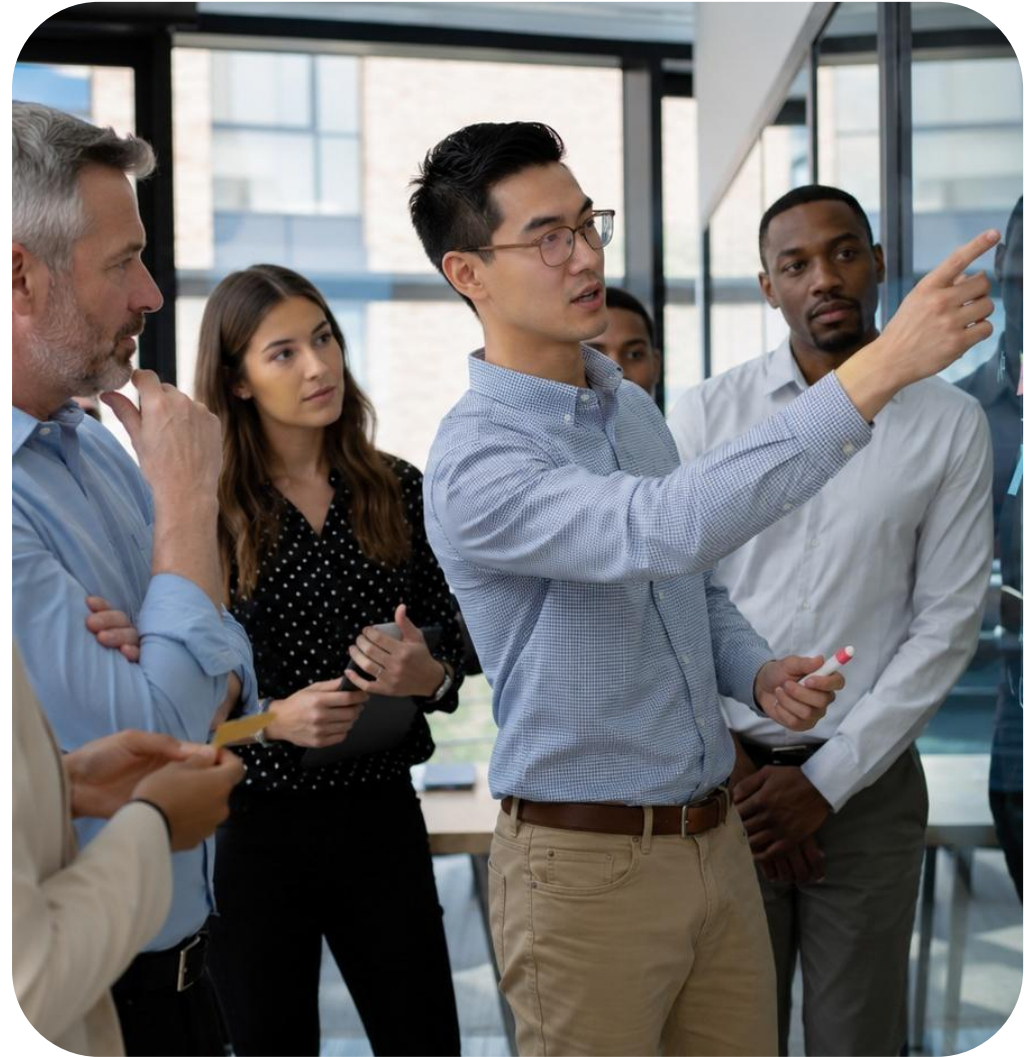
- New Market Entry
- Strategic Partnerships
- Product Diversification



THREATS

- Market Volatility
- Increased Competition
- Regulatory Changes

Building a Productive Team... Will Bring Challenges!



Common Team Challenges



A full-page background image showing two hikers on a rocky mountain peak. One hiker is standing on a higher ledge, reaching down to help another hiker who is climbing up. The scene is set against a dramatic sunset sky with warm orange and yellow hues. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a glow over the landscape. The hikers are silhouetted against the bright sky. The overall mood is one of perseverance and teamwork.

Overcoming **Challenges**

Overcoming Challenges

Lack of Role Clarity

- **Challenge:** Team members are unsure of their responsibilities, leading to confusion and overlap.
- **Solution:** Define and communicate clear roles, expectations, and success metrics. Use job descriptions, RACI charts, or kickoff meetings to reinforce clarity.

Poor Communication

- **Challenge:** Misunderstandings, siloed information, or lack of transparency hinders progress.
- **Solution:** Establish regular communication rhythms (e.g., stand-ups, one-on-ones, team updates) and promote open, two-way dialogue.

Overcoming Challenges

Conflicting Personalities

- **Challenge:** Personality clashes or different work styles create tension.
- **Solution:** Use tools like DISC or MBTI to build self-awareness and appreciation for differences. Encourage respectful conflict resolution and team-building activities.

Low Trust

- **Challenge:** Without trust, team members hesitate to collaborate, take risks, or share openly.
- **Solution:** Model vulnerability, consistency, and follow-through. Create psychological safety by encouraging input and not punishing mistakes.

Overcoming Challenges

Lack of Motivation or Engagement

- **Challenge:** Disengaged team members don't perform at their full potential.
- **Solution:** Align work with individual strengths and career goals. Recognize achievements regularly and foster a sense of purpose.

Resistance to Change

- **Challenge:** Some team members struggle with adapting to new processes or leadership.
- **Solution:** Involve the team in change efforts early. Communicate the "why," provide training, and celebrate small wins to build buy-in.

Overcoming Challenges

Unclear Team Goals

- **Challenge:** Without shared goals, efforts become fragmented and productivity stalls.
- **Solution:** Set SMART goals collaboratively and revisit them often. Make sure every team member sees how their work contributes to the bigger picture.

Skill Gaps

- **Challenge:** A team member/s lack the competencies needed to execute effectively.
- **Solution:** Assess skill needs regularly. Provide access to training, mentoring, or reassign tasks based on strengths.

Overcoming Challenges

Inadequate Resources

- **Challenge:** Lack of tools, time, or people prevents productivity.
- **Solution:** Advocate for necessary resources with leadership. Prioritize and sequence work realistically to avoid burnout.

Ineffective Leadership

- **Challenge:** Leaders who micromanage, lack direction, or don't inspire can stifle performance.
- **Solution:** Invest in your own leadership development. Seek feedback, stay emotionally intelligent, and empower the team rather than control them.

TIME

TO

WORK!



ROLEPLAY



PRACTICE. PERSPECTIVE. IMPROVE.

*Step into real-world situations,
understand different viewpoints,
and grow together.*



PRACTICE

Step into real-world situations to build confidence.



PERSPECTIVE

Understand different viewpoints and broaden awareness.



IMPROVE

Apply lessons and strengthen your skills.



GROW TOGETHER

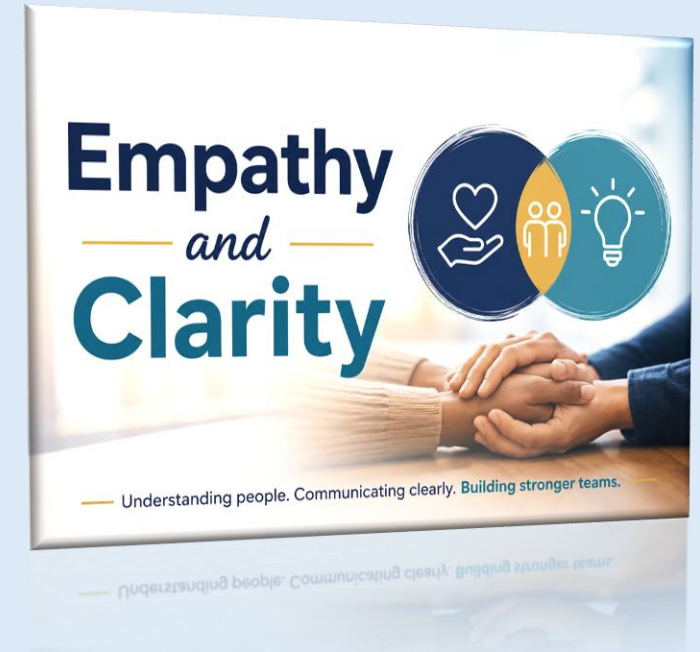
Learn from each other and create stronger, more connected teams.

BETTER CONVERSATIONS ★ STRONGER TEAMS ★ BETTER RESULTS

Role Play #2: Skill Gaps with Empathy & Clarity

Scenario: The manager initiates a meeting with an employee to discuss observed skill gaps that may impact performance.

- **Roles:** Manager and Employee.
- **Manager goal:** Ask questions, clarify expectations, and identify support.
- **Employee goal:** Share perspective, barriers, and needed resources.





LET'S
DISCUSS

Role Play #2 Debrief

DEBRIEF

How did the manager balance empathy, clarity, and accountability?

- What questions helped uncover the employee's perspective?
- How should the manager document and follow up?
- What support should be offered without lowering expectations?
- What language kept the conversation professional and respectful?



Addressing Skill Gaps

1. Skill gaps must be addressed directly and professionally.
2. Avoiding the issue does not protect the employee or the team.
3. Strong leaders balance empathy with accountability.
4. The goal is to create a resolution plan, not to shame the employee.



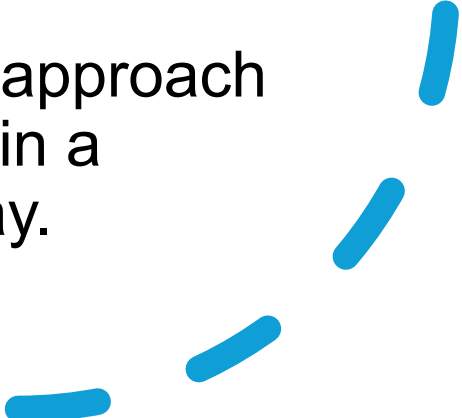


The Purpose!

This scenario focuses on respectful communication, active listening, and growth-focused leadership.

Tip: The manager was advised to lead with curiosity, not criticism. Ask open-ended questions to explore the employee's self-awareness before offering constructive feedback and a resolution plan (e.g., training, coaching).

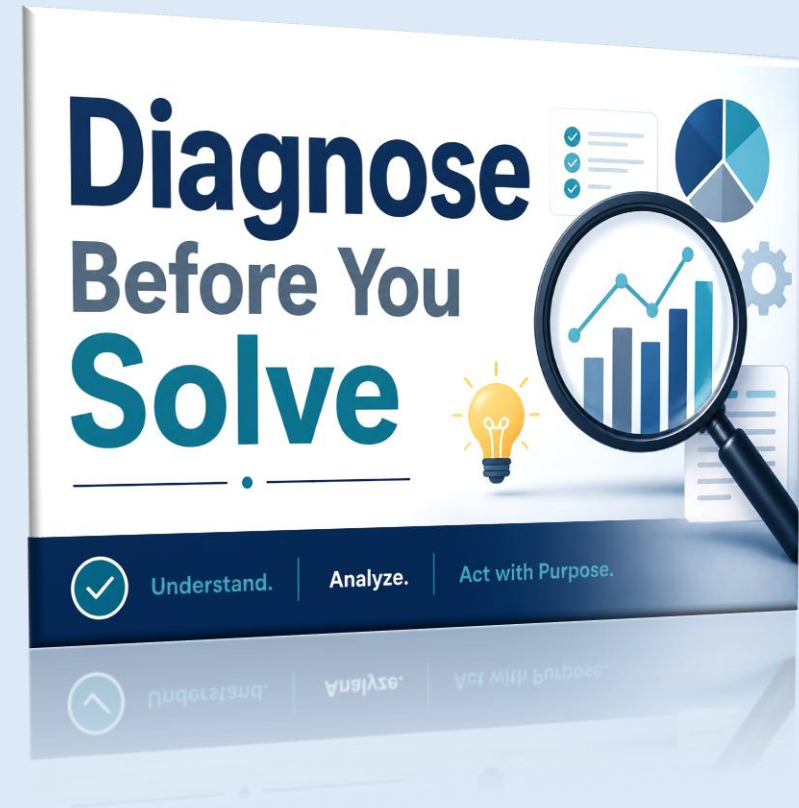
The Goal: Help demonstrate how to approach difficult yet necessary conversations in a professional and solution focused way.



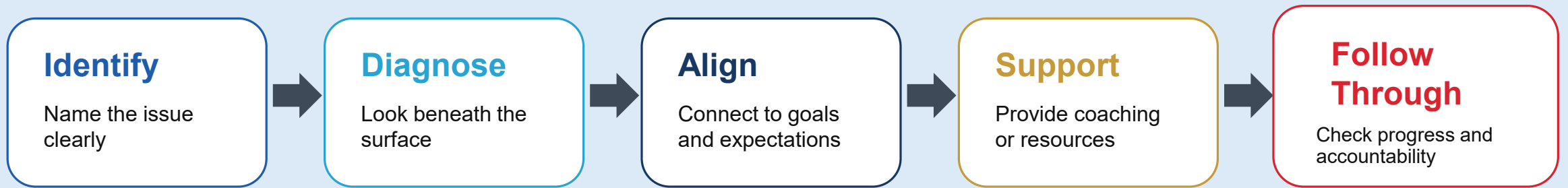
Diagnose Before You Solve

DIAGNOSTIC LENS

- What is the visible behavior or problem?
- What is the deeper issue: clarity, skill, will, trust, resources, or leadership?
- What has already been communicated or reinforced?
- What is the risk if the issue continues?
- What leadership action is needed now?



From Challenge to Leadership Action



A productive team leader does not simply react to problems; they interpret the issue and respond with purpose.

Discussion: Challenge to Solution

Select one common team challenge and move it toward a practical leadership solution.

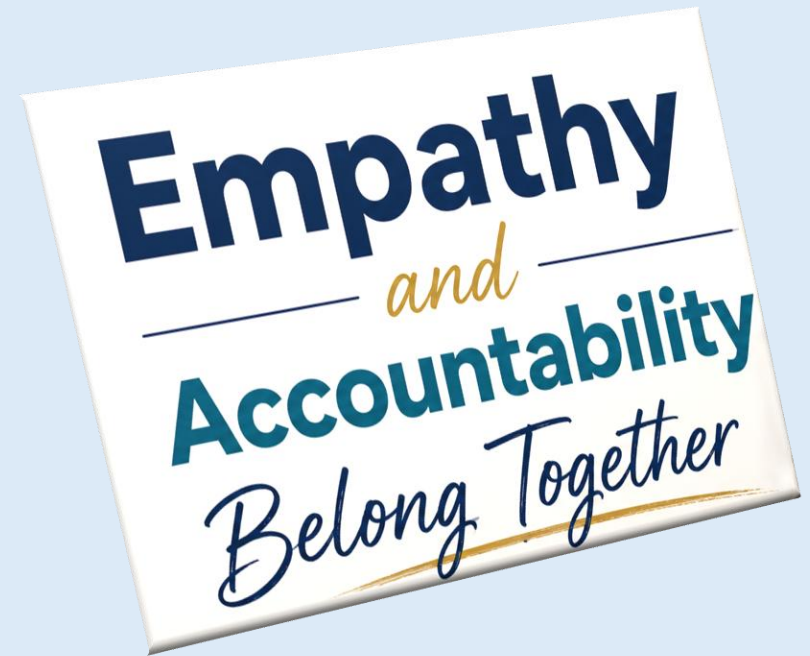
1. What does this challenge look like in the workplace?
2. What is the leadership risk if it is ignored?
3. What solution or leadership behavior would help resolve it?



Empathy and Accountability Belong Together

BALANCE

- Empathy helps you understand context, barriers, confidence, and support needs.
- Accountability keeps expectations, standards, and outcomes visible.
- Empathy without accountability can lower standards.
- Accountability without empathy can damage trust.
- Productive leadership requires both.



Lead with Curiosity Before Criticism

COACHING



Ask open-ended questions before offering constructive feedback.



Listen for barriers, misunderstandings, resource gaps, or confidence issues.



Separate the person from the performance concern.



Clarify what needs to improve and why it matters.



Invite the employee into the solution.



Create a Resolution Plan

ACTION PLAN

1. Define the specific skill or performance gap.
2. Identify the expected standard or outcome.
3. Determine what support, training, coaching, or resources are needed.
4. Set checkpoints, timelines, and documentation expectations.
5. Follow up consistently without lowering expectations.



Courageous Leadership, EI, and Listening

Productive team leadership requires more than task management.



Leaders must demonstrate courage, emotional intelligence, and active listening.



This is where leadership presence becomes visible.



These behaviors determine whether people trust the leader enough to engage honestly.



Courageous Leadership Traits

COURAGE



Integrity, decisiveness, and accountability.



Vulnerability and willingness to challenge the status quo.



Advocacy for others and fairness in decision-making.



Resilience under pressure.



Empathy with the courage to address what needs attention.



Courageous Leadership Traits

Integrity

- They do what's right, even when it's unpopular or inconvenient. Courageous leaders uphold strong values and model ethical behavior consistently.

Vulnerability

- They are open about challenges, admit mistakes, and ask for help. This honesty builds trust and psychological safety within their teams.

Decisiveness

- They make tough calls when needed, even with incomplete information. They don't let fear of failure stall action.

Willingness to Challenge the Status Quo

- They question outdated processes and push for innovation, knowing that progress often requires discomfort and resistance.

Courageous Leadership Traits

Advocacy for Others

- They stand up for their team, give voice to the unheard, and confront injustice or bias, even when it comes at a personal cost.

Accountability

- They take responsibility for their actions and hold others accountable in a fair, transparent way. They lead by example.

Resilience

- They stay grounded and focused through adversity, setbacks, or criticism, motivating others by their steadiness and optimism.

Empathy

- Courageous leaders lead with heart. They take the time to understand others' perspectives, emotions, and experiences especially during conflict, change, or uncertainty. Empathy strengthens relationships and fosters a culture of inclusion and trust.

Emotional Intelligence in Team Leadership

EI



Recognize your own reactions before responding.



Read the emotional tone of the team.



Stay steady during conflict, uncertainty, or resistance.



Focus on outcomes, not just activity.



Promote inclusivity, trust, and thoughtful communication.



Active Listening Techniques

LISTENING

Ask	Ask open-ended questions.
Be	Be fully present and remove distractions.
Paraphrase and reflect	Paraphrase and reflect what you heard.
Listen	Listen to understand rather than prepare your response.
Use	Use appropriate nonverbal cues and follow-up questions.



Leadership Self-Assessment Pulse Check

PULSE CHECK

What leadership behavior do you need to demonstrate more consistently to build trust, accountability, and engagement?

- Rate yourself on one courageous leadership trait.
- Rate yourself on one emotional intelligence behavior.
- Choose one behavior to practice more intentionally.



Cohesion, Accountability, Engagement, Productivity

1. Team cohesion is the degree to which people work together with trust, alignment, and commitment.
2. Cohesion supports collaboration, productivity, communication, job satisfaction, and retention.
3. Cohesion is strengthened through consistent leadership practices, not occasional team-building activities.



Strategies That Create Cohesion

COHESION

1

Maintain regular communication.

2

Clarify goals, roles, policies, procedures, and training needs.

3

Use team-building and cross-functional projects with purpose.

4

Provide recognition and feedback.

5

Reinforce trust and accountability practices.



Engagement and Productivity Practices

ENGAGEMENT

1

Create an inclusive culture where people can contribute.

2

Invest in professional development.

3

Inspect progress without micromanaging people.

4

Use SMART goals and clear measures of success.

5

Minimize unnecessary meetings and communicate transparently.



Action Planning: Productive Team Leadership Commitment

ACTION PLAN

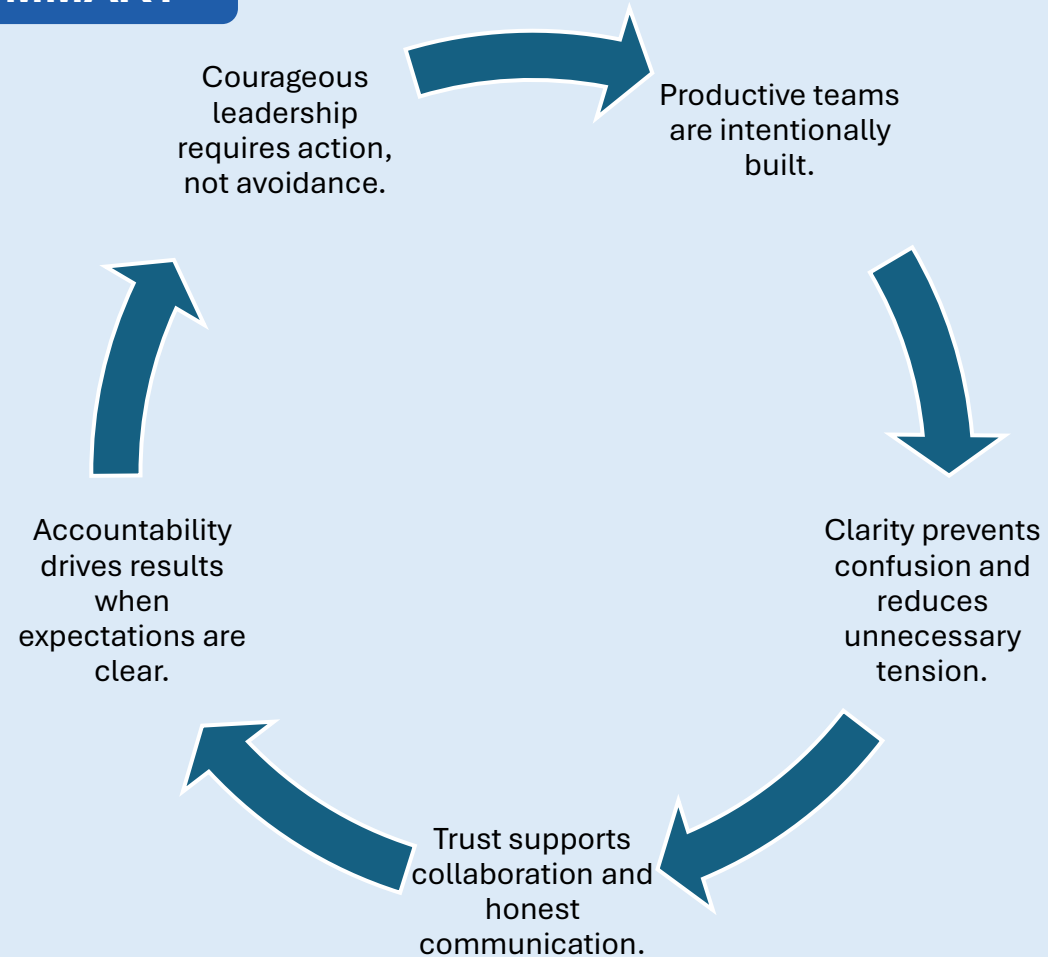
Identify one action you will take in each leadership area.

1. Build trust.
2. Improve communication.
3. Strengthen accountability.
4. Increase engagement.
5. Support productivity.



Key Takeaways

SUMMARY



Key Takeaways



PEOPLE FIRST

Strong teams start with trust, respect, and open communication.



ALIGN ON PURPOSE

Shared goals and clarity drive collective success.



ADDRESS CHALLENGES

Acknowledge challenges early and tackle them together.



BUILD AND DEVELOP

Invest in skills, growth, and continuous improvement.



COLLABORATE AND ADAPT

Stay flexible, support one another, and keep moving forward.



Final Reflection: What Will You Do Differently?

COMMIT

Complete one closing commitment that moves your leadership from intention to action.

1. I will clarify...
2. I will communicate...
3. I will address...
4. I will strengthen...
5. I will follow through on...



Productive teams are created when leaders provide clarity, build trust, address challenges, and follow through with purpose.



Provide Clarity

DEFINE
DIRECTION &
EXPECTATIONS



Build Trust

CULTIVATE
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY



Address Challenges

NAVIGATE
OBSTACLES
& ADAPT



Follow Through with Purpose

EXECUTE WITH
INTENT & RESULTS

