Building Relationships

Workshop Guide

Module 5

University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin-Madison, & Purdue University
Building Relationships
Workshop Guide

Objectives

Participants will be able to
1. Define terms related to building relationships, including trust, rapport, and reciprocity;
2. Identify factors that contribute to positive relationships;
3. Assess situations and determine why positive relationships do or do not exist.

Materials Needed

- Flipchart & markers
- Enough of the following materials for each participant:
  - Index Cards
  - Pens/pencils
  - Thin strips of scrap paper
  - Balloons
- Copies of the following materials for each participant:
  - “Relationship Vocabulary”
  - “Individual Reflection Sheet on Building Relationships”

Workshop Outline

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Note: Instructions to conduct this workshop are given in italics print. The “script” for a workshop facilitator is given in regular type.

Icebreaker – 10 Minutes – “Unique Facts”

As participants enter the room, give each person a thin strip of paper, and ask them to write a fact about themselves that is unique and probably unknown to anyone else in the room. They should not include their name anywhere on the paper.

Once all participants have a fact written, instruct them to fold their paper up and insert it into their balloon. Each participant should then blow up his or her balloon and tie it off. All balloons should be tossed in the air until they are thoroughly mingled.

Next, ask each participant to find a balloon, pop it, read the fact inside, and attempt to locate the person who wrote it.

Once the unique facts have been connected to individuals, ask participants to share what was written on the paper they found and whom it identifies.

Introduction – 5 Minutes

Relationships are foundational to leadership. Because leadership is a process that involves more than just one person, it is important that we understand how to work well with others. This involves building rapport, keeping others engaged in the leadership process, and maintaining strong connections that will help us achieve our goals. When you think about the term “relationship,” several different relationships may come to mind—these could include relationships with friends, family members, co-workers, romantic partners, neighbors, and many others. How do you define the term “relationship”? What are some of the key concepts and terms that should be included? Why?

Ask participants to help you create a definition of relationships. Write their responses on flipchart paper for the group to consider.

As you think about how you would define relationships, consider also the following questions.

• How are relationships initiated?
• Why are relationships initiated?
• How are relationships maintained?
• How long do relationships last?
• What determines when relationships should end?

Some concepts that are likely to emerge include shared values and goals, needs, mutual benefit, search for new perspectives, task at hand, etc. All input is valid. Allow participants to share thoughts, and direct the discussion until several of these concepts have emerged. Use prompting questions, and provide validation as appropriate. After a brief discussion, move on to the introductory activity.

Activity – 10 Minutes – Relationship Vocabulary/Matching Terms

To prepare for this activity, use terms and definitions from the “Relationship Vocabulary” handout. Write each term on an index card, and write its corresponding definition on the reverse side of the same card. Cut the index card into sizable pieces with enough of the writing showing that the pieces can be matched together. The number of pieces should equal the number of participants.

Give each participant a piece of an index card. Ask them to find others in the room who have corresponding pieces that will complete a quote or phrase on one side and a term and definition on the other.
Once participants have found their partner(s), ask them to spend a few minutes discussing their term and its definition (or how it connects to their quote or phrase) and then to come up with a real-life example.

Ask each pair or small group to share their term, definition, and example with the larger group.

**Topic Discussion – 15 minutes**

Leadership is defined in different ways and explained from a variety of perspectives. Those who study leadership have created various theories and approaches to help us better understand what leadership is. The Style Approach is one such approach that begins to show us how important actions and relationships are to the concept of leadership.

**Style Approach**

The Style Approach is a perspective on leadership that maintains that leadership is determined by the behavior of the leader, or what the leader does. This is the first approach to leadership that recognizes relationships as an important piece of the puzzle. According to the Style Approach to leadership, a leader’s style depends on the combination of his or her task and relationship behaviors.

Task behaviors focus on doing the work at hand in order to achieve the desired goal or outcome. Relationship behaviors focus on the process and are concerned with whether everyone involved is comfortable, satisfied, and benefiting from the experience in some way. We each exhibit both behaviors in leadership situations, and we also tend to have a preference for one behavior over the other. Both behaviors are necessary. Certain situations will call for more task behavior, and others will call for more relationship behavior.

Ultimately, however, because relationships are an important component of the leadership process, good leaders will want to make sure that they are able to use good relationship behaviors. Our understanding of ourselves and others, and our ability to form successful relationships are all aspects of our emotional intelligence.

**Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is an aspect of human intelligence that has been studied by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKe (2002) and others. EQ is measured using four quadrants: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management.

- **Self-Awareness** deals with the competencies necessary to understand one’s own emotions and perspectives, as well as where those emotions and perspectives come from. Self-aware leaders are those who recognize their own strengths and limitations, can articulate their positions, and understand how their emotions and experiences influence their leadership.

- **Social Awareness** deals with the competencies necessary to understand the emotions and perspectives of others. Socially aware leaders are those who can empathize with others, take on the perspectives of others, and even anticipate how others may feel or react in certain situations.

- **Self-Management** deals with the cluster of competencies necessary to regulate one’s own individual behavior, respond to situations in appropriate and socially acceptable ways, and use personal strengths for effective leadership.

- **Relationship Management** addresses the ability of leaders to initiate and maintain positive relationships with others. In order to do this, we need to be able to “read” people—recognize their needs, wants, and motivations; understand our commonalities and differences; and figure out the best way to create a connection.
Relationship Management is, in many ways, the culminating quadrant. Whereas self-awareness is seen as foundational to emotional intelligence, relationship management can be considered the application of emotional intelligence—leading to the ultimate objective of connecting with others.

**Relational Model of Leadership**

Susan Komives and her colleagues (1998) created an approach to leadership that is based on connections and relationships, the Relational Model of Leadership. Komives points out that leadership does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in context. Therefore, when we are engaged in a leadership situation, our relationships with others are central to the process. Leadership, according to Komives, is a process of “knowing,” “being,” and “doing.”

There are five components of the Relational Model of Leadership and thus five attributes of Relational Leadership: Inclusive, Purposeful, Empowering, Ethical, and Process-Oriented. These components can act as guideposts to help leaders know what kinds of behaviors will help them to create solid relationships and lead effectively.

Relational Leadership is . . .

**Inclusive**—In other words, it makes room for a variety of stakeholders and perspectives. Not only that, but good leaders are intentional about seeking diverse ideas and input in order to make sure that they are working toward their goals in the most effective way possible.

**Purposeful**—Every leadership process has a goal or objective. It may even have several goals or objectives. In thinking about the best way to accomplish the desired goal, leaders make sure that every step of the process is intentional and moves the group toward the goal. The purpose of the process is known to others in the group and is used as a guide for the work of the group.

**Empowering**—Multiple people are usually involved in the leadership process. Rather than having one person, or leader, who keeps the information and makes all the decisions, the leadership process allows all participants to be engaged, contribute, and make decisions.

**Ethical**—Participants in the leadership process do not ask each other to do things that go against their values or their sense of right and wrong. Everyone involved is treated with dignity and respect, and the end goal is something that is believed to be in the best interest of others. Leaders are expected to be honest, fair, and supportive.

**Process-Oriented**—Rather than being hierarchical, with one person issuing orders down a chain of command, Relational Leadership recognizes that a group of empowered individuals should be able to communicate freely, exchange ideas, and move forward collectively. The end goal is important, but so is the relationship among the people involved, the quality of their experiences, and each person’s individual growth and development.

**Activity – 30 minutes**

*Divide participants into five small groups. Assign one of the attributes of Relational Leadership (Inclusive, Purposeful, Empowering, Ethical, or Process-Oriented) to each group. Provide each group with a copy of the information contained in this module and a sheet of flip chart paper and markers. Ask them to identify a reporter who will record their responses to report back to the larger group. Each group should discuss the following questions:*

- What does it mean for leadership to be *(insert attribute here)*?
- What are some examples of *(insert attribute here)* leadership that you see in your everyday life and/or in the world around you?
- How does a leader who is *(insert attribute here)* behave?
After the groups have had sufficient time to explore their attribute of Relational Leadership, ask them to present their thoughts to the larger group.

**Reflection, Application, & Summary – 10 minutes**

To conclude this workshop, I’d like you to reflect on your own leadership experiences. Which relationships did you value? Which relationships hindered your progress? Which relationships do you continue to maintain? How would you go about using the Relational Leadership Model to form positive leadership relationships that will be an asset to you both now and in the future? Conversely, what are some leadership behaviors you use currently that are not helpful in the establishment and nurturance of leadership relationships? How will you change them as you move forward?

Distribute copies of the “Individual Reflection on Building Relationships” activity sheet. Allow a few minutes for participants to reflect on their relationships and write their responses.

Our relationships with others are central to the leadership process. It’s important, then, to be intentional about initiating, building, and maintaining those relationships. They don’t just happen by chance—and if they are not nurtured, they won’t be as personally satisfying, dynamic, and productive as they could be.

**References**


**Relationship Vocabulary**

**Credible:** Believable, trustworthy, and reliable. The leader can be trusted to do what he or she says he or she will do. Kouzes and Posner maintain this is the foundation of leadership.

**Trust:** Firm reliance on the integrity or ability of a person.

**Rapport:** A relationship of mutual trust and affinity.

**Reciprocity:** A mutual or cooperative interchange of favors.

**Cooperation:** Working together for a common end. Komives and her colleagues define this as a relationship that helps each party achieve its own goals.

**Collaboration:** Working together in a joint effort. Komives and her colleagues define this as a relationship that occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders engage in an interactive process toward a shared goal.

**Persuasion:** The act of convincing someone (by argument, reason, or entreaty) to adopt a course of action or point of view.

**Stakeholder:** Someone who has an interest in the goal or change being worked toward.

**Community:** A group of people having common interests or a connection and spirit of collegiality.

**Empowerment:** The vesting of rights or authority in order to promote involvement.
**Individual Reflection on Building Relationships**

*Instructions: Reflect on the following questions and write your responses.*

Which relationships did you value?

Which relationships hindered your progress?

Which relationships do you continue to maintain after the initial goal was achieved? Why?

How would you go about using the Relational Leadership Model to form positive leadership relationships that will be an asset to you both now and in the future?

Conversely, what are some leadership behaviors you use currently that are not helpful in the establishment and nurturance of leadership relationships? How will you change them as you move forward?
About Leadership in Action

Leadership in Action is a multi-state leadership development program for college-age students. It was funded in part by an USDA/CSREES HEP Challenge Grant, 2005-2009 to the University of Illinois, Purdue University, and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Undergraduate students from those universities participated in a 21-month program during which the workshop modules were developed, used during the two cohort programs, reviewed, and revised.

We intend that students who have been trained in conducting effective workshops use these materials for leadership workshops with various student organizations. The materials can be used separately for individual workshop sessions, in any combination for a short-term program, or in their entirety for a long-term program.

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