



where are you coming from? looking at shared leadership

- purpose**
- To examine individual leadership styles both for personal insights and for group development
 - To identify some common ground in leadership
 - To begin the process of identifying the group's assets relative to leadership styles

time 60 minutes

group size 20 to 30 participants

- materials**
- Animal pictures
 - Flip chart paper and easel
 - Leadership quotations displayed on wall of training space
 - Markers (enough for small groups)
 - Handout: Attributes of Leaders

trainer note: The time for this exercise can vary. Trainers may choose to spend more or less time with the context-setting discussion, depending on time constraints and the interests of the groups.

introduction

Ask participants to spend some time thinking about someone in their lives who they consider to be an exemplary leader. Explain that this leader may be someone they know or someone who influenced them without knowing them personally. Have participants introduce themselves and share who their leader was in five words or less.



Explain that one of the first hurdles to overcome in developing leadership is to rethink long-held notions about leadership. Both adults and youth tend to hold on to traditional views about leaders and leadership. Many believe that leaders are people who hold political offices, run businesses, or coach sports teams, but the truth is that leadership is much more complex and can include a broad range of people, actions, and abilities.

step one

Tell the group that leadership has many definitions and interpretations. Point out that around the room are several quotations on leadership by some currently recognized experts on the topic (see pg. 125-131).

Ask for a volunteer to read each quotation. To encourage participation, a different volunteer for each quotation should be selected.

Ask the participants, “What do these definitions have in common?” (The main answer is that they all recognize that leadership can occur only in the context of a group of people who are working together.) As these definitions reflect, many different leadership models are out there. Many organizations operate using a top-down, or hierarchical, leadership model, which relies principally on the expertise of the people at the top. Some examples include the military and many of our corporations.

Ask the group to think of organizations they have been involved with that had hierarchical leadership structures.

These examples have applications within a certain context. Within the context of effective youth–adult partnerships, however, the shared leadership model is more closely aligned with our philosophies. Inherent in an effective youth–adult partnership is the effective practice of shared leadership.

Shared leadership, or a facilitative leadership style, is a democratic leadership model in which an organization (group) has more than one leader. Shared leadership recognizes both a functional and a situational component, allowing that at different times, while addressing different tasks, groups need different leadership skills. Shared leadership helps ensure the right mixture of skills and keeps the group dynamic and its members committed.



People differ in the leadership styles they find most comfortable and effective. Many people have a preferred leadership style to which they gravitate when in a leadership role. In an effective shared leadership model, it is important to recognize this preferred style in oneself and respect the individual styles of others. It is increasingly recognized, however, that a successful leader is able to modify his or her style to fit the group's needs.

step two

Distribute the Attributes of Leaders handout (pg.123). Ask participants to take a minute to read the handout quietly to themselves. As people complete the reading, ask the following questions:

- What words stood out for you?
- What attributes struck you as being especially critical?
- What attributes do you think would be most challenging?
- How does the list reflect your own leadership style?

step three

Introduce the topic of leadership styles, and invite participants to examine their own styles in an activity. Explain that just as we are individuals in other ways (e.g., dress, learning style, and social style), we differ in our style of leadership. Tell the group that this exercise will ask them to examine their own leadership style and reflect on its implications in different situations.

Have pictures of animals ready. Invite the group to think about the leadership qualities inherent in each animal and decide which animal is most like their own leadership style. Hold up each picture as you read the animal's name: (pg.117-122).

DOG SNAKE CAT LION DEER MOUSE

Then post the animal pictures around the room.



step four

Ask participants to go to the animal that most reflects their leadership style. Give each group two sheets of flip chart paper. Instruct each group to identify a presenter, who will present the group's answers, and a "scribe," who will record the group's responses to the following question:

"What are the qualities of your animal that best describe your leadership style?"

step five

Allow the groups 15 minutes to discuss, debate, share, and laugh on this question and write their responses on the first sheet of paper. Ask the presenters to present their animal's qualities to the group.

Have tape ready to post the paper on the wall as the "presenter" speaks.

step six

After all the groups have shared, ask each participant to select one of the other animals in the room and respond to this question:

"Given the qualities of this animal, what will I need from that animal in order to work with it successfully?"

Ask participants to write their answers on the other sheet of paper. Give the groups about 15 minutes to discuss the question and write their thoughts.

step seven

Ask for presenters to share their groups' thoughts. Their paper should be posted next to their first paper on the wall.

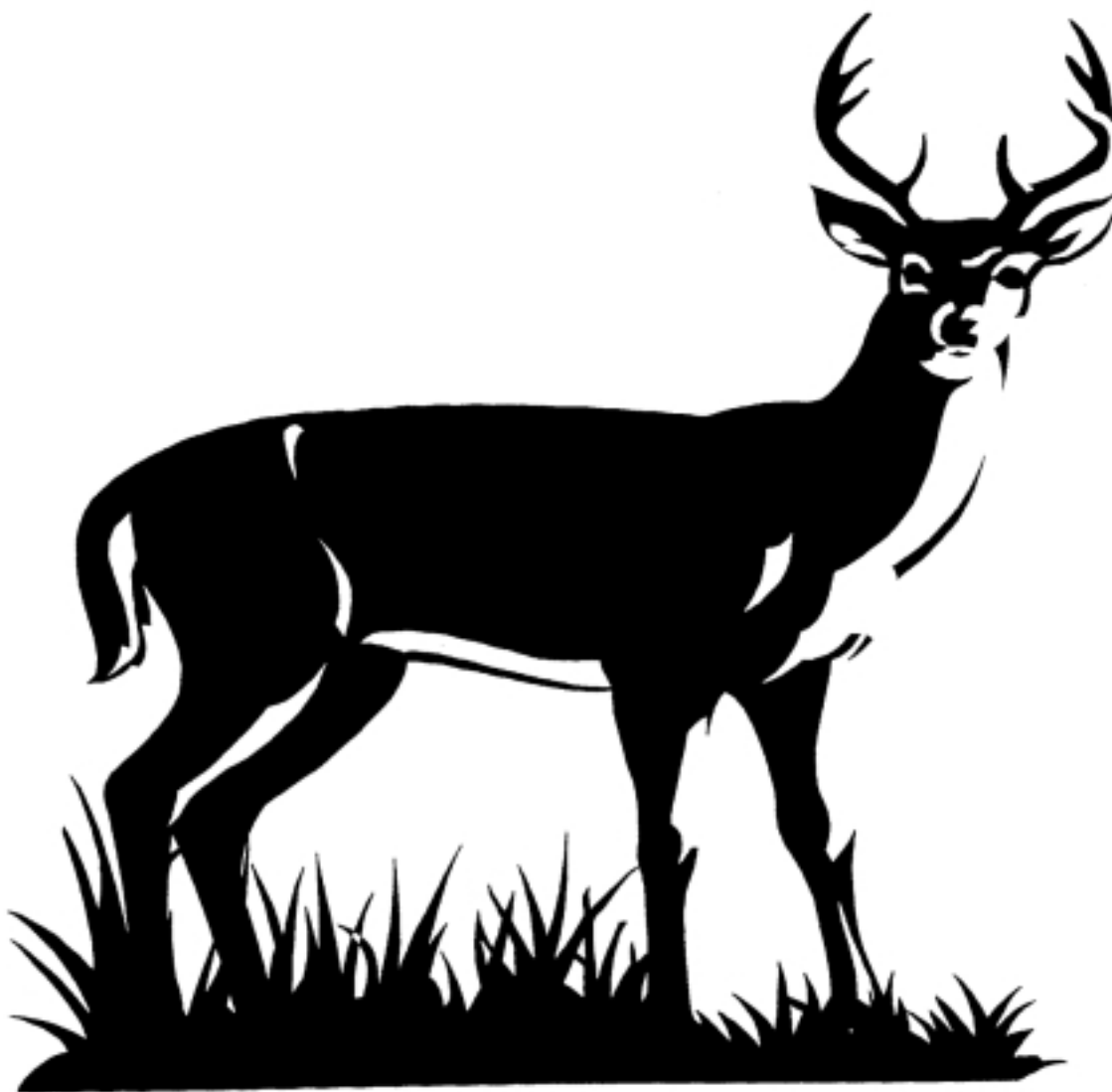


reflection and discussion

Process the exercise with the following questions:

- What did you see when you looked at the people in your group?
- How did your group approach the tasks assigned?
- What were some challenges you experienced?
- How did you feel when your animal was discussed by another group?
- What insights did you gain on your own leadership style?
- How could you apply those insights to your youth–adult partnership experience?

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DEER

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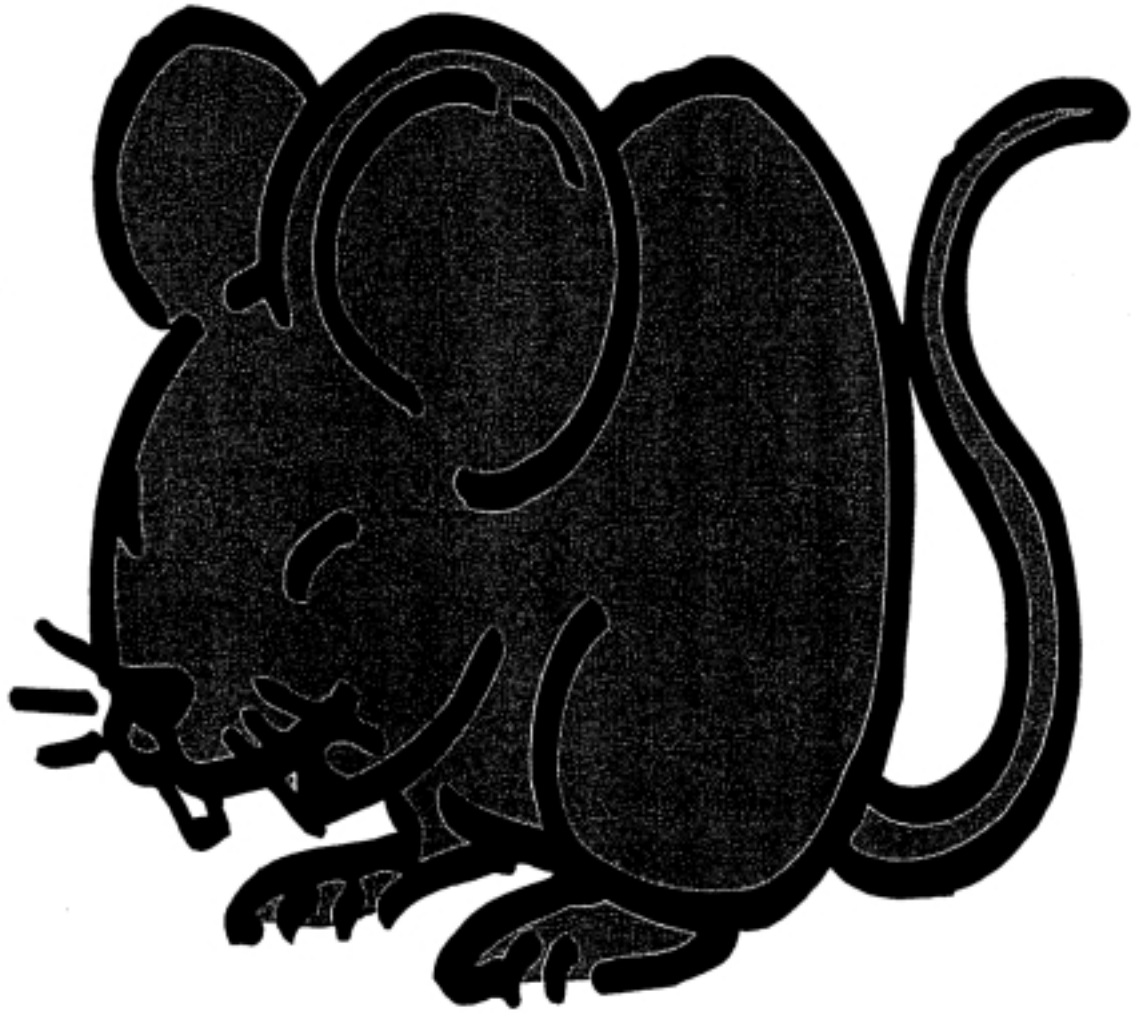
DOG

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CAT

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MOUSE

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SNAKE

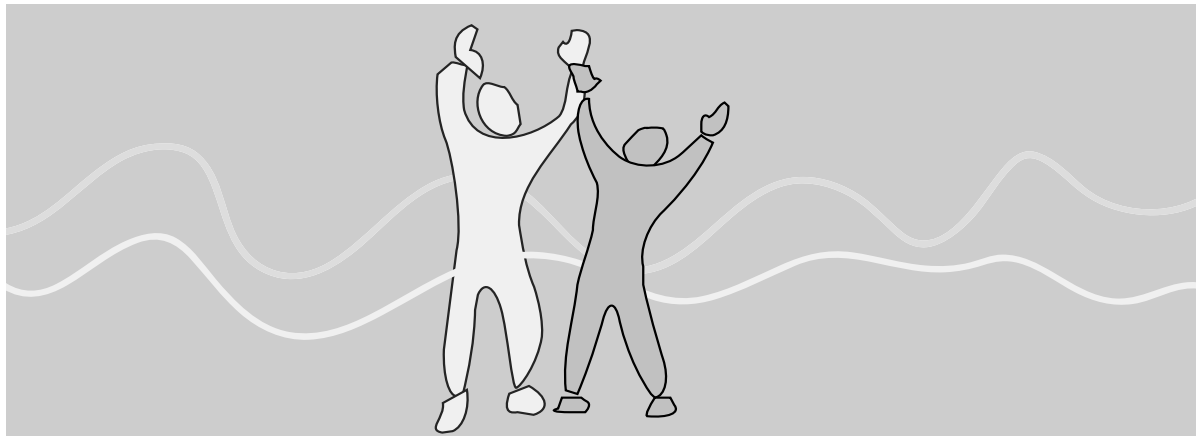
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LION

attributes of leaders

- Physical vitality stamina
- Intelligence and judgment-in-action
- Willingness (eagerness) to accept responsibilities
- Task competence
- Understanding of followers/constituents and their needs
- Skill in dealing with people
- Need to achieve
- Capacity to motivate
- Courage, resolution, steadiness
- Capacity to win and hold trust
- Capacity to manage, decide, set priorities
- Confidence
- Ascendance, dominance, assertiveness
- Adaptability, flexibility of approach



closure

Remind the group that many different leadership styles exist and that no one style is better than another. No one style is age exclusive. Certain tasks require certain styles of leadership, and some tasks may be more or less challenging for people of one style than others. Shared leadership allows for different styles to operate as best fits the task at hand. In a youth–adult partnership, as in any partnership, insights into the different styles can facilitate the intentional selection of a leadership style.

If you can
dream it,
you can
do it.

–Walt Disney

Fail to honor people,
they fail to honor
you; but of a good
leader, who talks lit-
tle, when his work is
done, his aim ful-
filled, they will all
say, “We did this
ourselves.” *–Lao-tzu*

True leadership
is the art of
changing a
group from
what it is to
what it ought to
be.—*Virginia Allen*

quotes

If you are a block ahead of the parade . . . you're leading it. If you are two blocks ahead of the parade, you aren't even in it.

—*Dr. Lawrence Kratz*

Time is neutral
and does not
change things.
With courage
and initiative,
leaders change
things.

–Jesse Jackson

Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to forms of music yet to be heard.

–Warren G. Bennis

Do what you do
so well that they
will want to
return to see it
again and bring
their friends.

*–Walt Disney at the opening of Disneyland,
1955*

quotes