According to Deborah Meehan, Executive Director of Leadership Learning Community, we need to build our understanding of leadership as a collective and relational process if we are to encourage leadership that results in transformational changes. Effective leadership needs to support organizations, networks and communities to take action on the issues we care deeply about. This is why we are very interested in hearing from you. What opportunities have you created, taken advantage of or participated in that have supported you as a leader to help create transformational change?

We know that many of you have created leadership learning opportunities in your own communities and organizations. Others of you may have participated in leadership training convened by leadership development organizations. Still others are on their way to more serious and long term educational endeavors in the area of leadership. All of you have experiences to share. Please respond with your stories to Ellen Kagen at kageneb@georgetown.edu for the chance to have them included in an upcoming issue.
It is becoming increasingly obvious that leadership is not the domain of a singular person. In fact, the more we practice leadership together, the greater our success will be. This is not because we have become smarter about leadership but because the world has changed. The paradigm of leaders and followers or directors and workers had its roots in an old industrial model. There, someone was telling others what to do…and others followed the orders. The leaders were the ones who had the authority and with that authority they held the information or insights to be able to see what needed to happen. It was then their job to direct human resources towards accomplishing those ends. The paradigm was “I know best…. I am privy to information that you do not have, so do as I say.” Today, the world is much more transparent. Information is readily available for those who seek it and the keepers of knowledge are finding that the old phrase “knowledge is power” is applied to the many, not the few.

In the new models, people are in networked relationships with each other. Each individual provides a variety of functions that are less proscribed than in past models and this creates a well connected and collective enterprise. Such a way of working helps an organization or community to thrive. In her writing, Claire Reinelt, Research and Evaluation Director of the Leadership Learning Community, describes one particular model which she calls Network Leadership. Here, leadership emerges in a connected environment and Reinelt describes it as a “collective process”.

When I read this, it reminded me of our discussions in the Leadership Academy about the “Collective Intelligence”. This can be found when groups of people provide the requisite information, energy and leadership skills to solve adaptive challenges. The definition of collective intelligence, as taken from the Harvard Business Review article on The Work of the Leader (1997), describes a way of working in which people from all corners of the community or organization use one another as resources, often across boundaries, to learn their way to new solutions.
this definition so fundamentally new to the leadership literature at its core?” If there is one thing that sets collective intelligence apart from traditional leadership philosophies, it is the word learning. This word asks each leader to step back and be humble enough to say “…I do not know the answer, or the right way to go…even if I have a lot of information and knowledge and even if I am the boss.” It allows other voices, from sometimes surprising sources, to emerge and shine. These could be voices that provide new pieces of information or highlight different perspectives within the established way of thinking. Such new contributions allow a new vantage point to be seen.

Many of us have been in the heart wrenching situation where a leader believes that their way is the right way. Some leaders bring in consultants who will affirm exactly that, only to find that several years later, support for the “leader’s way” has waned and the visibility and vibrancy of the organization has diminished.

Many of us have also seen leaders who know that the best way to develop a group of people is to connect to their collective intelligence, both within an organization and within a community. This, however, is not always enough. The trick is to take the risk and step out of the comfort zone. Good leaders must seek the perspectives of others, even if these new views are different from a leader’s own. The collective intelligence (and a deep and honest desire to connect into it) exists only if we are brave enough to tap it and take advantage of it. It is only by reaching out across traditional barriers and having these conversations that will we be able learn something that we did not know before which can then be used for the common good.

Through the years, it has been an interesting challenge to think of ways to support leaders in their efforts to tap into this magnificent resource in meaningful ways. To that end, go to https://gushare.georgetown.edu/xyt_howsfs/webui/_xy-7228506_1-t_ArJrXc1X to download a worksheet (yes, a tool!) that may help you. This can be used to practically guide reflective thinking about your cross boundary interactions so that you will be aware when you are, in fact, in a moment of connectedness. It highlights that such connectedness offers a moment of learning, not just random sharing, and demonstrates how a real, deep and honest dialogue will allow questions to rule because it is no longer sufficient to take the time to convince or order someone to support your idea (however right it may be) when common viewpoints have not been established. This new way of working shows the other person that you honor their perspective and reaffirms that their view will enhance the overall process.

This is called The Collective Intelligence Moment and if we were to begin to practice this simple technique on a regular, ongoing basis we will benefit in ways that we have yet to recognize. As you use the tool, you are particularly encouraged to reach out to people who you know have ideas that are unlike your own. This would include the families and youth for whom, and hopefully with whom, the system was designed to work as well as other agency leaders whose mission and core values might differ from your own. Their distinct perspectives can add a new or unique twist to your thinking.

So, try it yourself. Let us know how it worked for you. Let us know what you learned about the situation at hand…and more importantly, let us know what you learned about yourself. Because that, my friends, is what leadership learning is all about.
When I heard of the important leadership tool of “viewing from the balcony,” (R.A. Heifetz, 1998, Leadership Without Easy Answers) while attending the Georgetown Leadership Academy, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there was a concept related to what I already generally conceptualized as “understanding the big picture.” As we learned at the Academy, leaders are not typically “born,” they “grow into” their abilities, and can certainly benefit from training and experience in their roles.

As a physician, I know that professionally we are thrust into many “leadership roles” with very little of the training or experience required to be an effective leader. Many people often errantly assume that our medical education has somehow taught us to be leaders in addition to physicians. After attending the Leadership Academy, I better appreciate the skills leaders need: vast experience alone is usually not sufficient for the most effective leadership, even in the most sedate of times.

And unfortunately we, as leaders in mental health services for children, do not currently find ourselves in the most sedate of times. It is currently “budget season” here; in many ways, we feel that our system is still recovering from last year’s budget season, and we now find ourselves in the next one. Last Spring feels too close at our heels, and it is evident that strong and effective leadership will be necessary for this one.

To be effective, a leader must be aware of the “big picture,” the challenges that are current and future, and those historical pieces that contribute to the present. To be effective, a leader must be aware of the “big picture,” the challenges that are current and future, and those historical pieces that contribute to the present.

What do you do as a leader facing a “view from your balcony” that may be bleak? “Bleak” can have multiple meanings in systems, and may or may not be related to finances. “Bleak” may mean that a leader is facing staff reductions, as well as programs reductions, many of which may feel quite harsh in their magnitude. Ultimately, a leader must face the effects of these sometimes “bleak” changes in mental health systems on the children, youth, and their families that their system intends to serve.

When facing a “bleak view” from your leadership balcony, one leadership tool alone is not going to be enough for you. As we learned at our Leadership Academy, there are multiple effective leadership tools, and leaders usually need to utilize many more than one of these to be an effective leader. Two that have been important to me are related to resiliency: preserving a sense of purpose, and distinguishing self.
from role (R.A. Heifetz, 1998, Leadership Without Easy Answers). I can say that my training as a psychiatrist has helped in utilizing these effectively.

Providing medical care is centered in a “sense of purpose”: that of best serving the needs of your patient. For me, this is easily transferable to providing leadership in a system intended to best serve the mental health needs of children and their caretakers.

As to “distinguishing self from role”, many of us are already familiar with those important, although now quite historical, concepts of “transference and counter-transference”. Though our field has positively advanced toward a much fuller and more respectful understanding of clients involved in psychotherapy, I believe that these two concepts have remained relevant. This is encompassed in the need to understand and respect a client’s feelings for you as well as your own feelings about a client and how these factors may impact both of your interactions. In addition, being able to “observe and utilize” your own role effectively in a treatment relationship helps you to do that in other systems—whether small or large—in your own program, or within your complex agency.

Leaders who can move back and forth between the operational field of action, i.e., the day-to-day operations, and their balcony view will succeed and survive (Heifetz, 1994). Effective leaders, “on their balcony,” cannot get swept into the swirls of happenings around them, whether these are in the day-to-day operations, or whether these are happening in the larger arena and will affect them and their agency. At times, some leaders may find themselves facing very personal challenges in these “swirls”, asking themselves whether their own position might be threatened by changes in or beyond their system.

Leaders need support and mentorship from their peers, and I am excited to have this opportunity to share my experiences with you through this listserv tool. I anticipate that Georgetown Leadership Academy’s new Listserv will help to provide two additional important tools for me in my leadership role: it can be used both for us to post information about leadership in the field as well as for Alumni to share knowledge with their colleagues. What serves your leadership needs when you have been faced with a balcony view that is not pretty? I’d welcome your experiences in this regard, and look forward to hearing from you!

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**Don’t Forget the Six Principles for Leading Adaptive Work!**

1. Get on the Balcony
2. Identify the Adaptive Challenge
3. Regulate Distress
4. Maintain Disciplined Attention
5. Give the Work Back to the People
6. Protect Voices of Leadership

Ronald A. Heifetz & Donald L. Laurie
Memorable Words from Leaders

Many of us use quotes to support our work and link ourselves to others who have come before us in our endeavors to bring about systems change. Here are some of our favorites, ones we have heard quoted often, especially in relation to taking risks in adaptive work:

Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.
—James Baldwin

You may be disappointed if you try something and it doesn't succeed. But you are doomed if you don't try.
—Beverly Sills

One of the greatest mistakes you can make in life is to be continually afraid you will make one.
—Elbert Hubbard

Success isn't permanent, and failure isn't fatal.
—Mike Ditka

The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it's the same problem you had last year.
—John Foster Dulles

High expectations are the key to everything.
—Sam Walton

If we're growing, we're always going to be out of our comfort zone.
—John Maxwell

Being defeated is often a temporary condition. Giving up is what makes it permanent.
—Marilyn Vos Savant

We are continually faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.
—John W Gardner

The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.
—Benjamin E. Mays

ULTIMATE PEN DESIGN

Feeling inspired? Now we need you to come up with the inspirational quotes and help us to design the Leadership Academy Alumni Pen!

Through Michele Herman of SAMHSA we have identified a great pen that has space for 6 phrases. To fill those spaces, we would like to use the words and ideas that come directly from YOU…the Alumni!

What do we mean? Remember the Banner paper around the room at the Leadership Academy in Santa Fe that was used to collect your AH HA's? This is exactly the kind of thing that we need from each of you.

Listen and Silent are written with the same letters
Step back to take on new perspectives
From competing positions to common interests
Refuse to be a prisoner of experience
My world is filled with adaptive challenges!
Change is like going to heaven...Everybody likes the idea but nobody wants to go there!

Selected ideas, quotes or phrases will be printed on the pen* and highlighted in upcoming communications.
SEND YOU IDEAS TODAY by FEBRUARY 28, 2011 to Ellen Kagen at kageneb@georgetown.edu or call (202) 687-5087.

*We retain the right to edit the submissions as required to fit the manufacturer’s space limitations.
What’s New in the Leadership Literature

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World
by Ronald A. Heifetz, Marty Linsky, Alexander Grashow

Book provides:
• a hands-on, practical guide with stories, tools, diagrams, cases and worksheets
• suggestions for taking people outside comfort zones to assess and address toughest challenges.

Operating Across Boundaries: Leading Adaptive Change
by Ronald Heifetz

Book chapter from “Crossing the Divide: Intergroup Leadership in a World of Difference” discusses:
• outlining work required when organizations need new organizational or cultural adaptation
• three aspects of adaptive work:
  i. commonality of loss
  ii. politics of inclusion and exclusion
  iii. task of renegotiating loyalties

Understanding Your Roles: Identifying the Values You Represent in Your Role(s) as Leader of Adaptive Change
by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Mary Linsky

Book chapter, adapted from “The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World” discusses:
• the role a leader plays in adaptive change
• how the behavior in a leader’s roles depends on values and contexts of given situation

Thrive: To Lead Adaptive Change Effectively, You Need to Take Care of Yourself
by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Mary Linsky
Harvard Business Review (2009) 18 pages; $6.95

Book Chapter adapted from “The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World” suggests leaders:
• not work to exhaustion
• ensure causes joined have best chance of success
• follow specific practices for thriving while leading adaptive change

Orchestrate Conflict: Leading Adaptive Change by Surfacing and Managing Conflict
by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Mary Linsky

Book Chapter adapted from “The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World” discusses:
• seven steps to follow to surface relevant conflicts to generate progress on adaptive change
• teasing out differences in perspectives preventing organization from reaching goals
• acknowledging competing views, values and visions
The Leadership Equation
Strategies for Individuals Who Are Champions for Children, Youth, and Families
EDITED BY GARY M. BLAU, PH.D. & PHYLLIS R. MAGRAB, PH.D.

When mental health professionals are promoted into leadership roles, they’re often expected to “hit the ground running” with little training or experience. This eye-opening book is the perfect way for new leaders to fill that gap in professional development—and help their organization meet the needs of children and families.

Bringing to book form the principles and practices behind the renowned Georgetown University Leadership Development Program, this essential resource dispels the myths about good leadership and sheds light on the values and actions that steer an individual and an organization toward success. Mental health administrators and program developers will

- learn about five effective leadership styles—and how to choose the right one for different contexts and situations
- master the shift between multiple leadership functions within their organization or system
- develop specific skills and attitudes associated with good leadership, such as being flexible, welcoming diverse perspectives, and knowing when to relinquish some control
- build productive, collaborative relationships with a wide array of providers, consultants, case managers, and community agencies
- overcome personal, organizational, and environmental obstacles to effective leadership
- strengthen resilience by using proven strategies for managing stress and adversity
- ensure that their personal values align with a strengths-based, family-centered, and culturally competent system of care

Throughout the book, the expert contributors distill the best of today’s theory and research on leadership and bring key points to life with real-world examples and anecdotes. And practical worksheets help readers address conflict, improve their resiliency, clarify their views of leadership, collaborate effectively during team meetings, and more.

No matter where readers are on their leadership journey—whether they’re new to their roles or veterans seeking to renew their passion and commitment—this book will help them master the skills they need to guide and motivate staff, bring about positive systems change, and ensure the best outcomes for children and families.

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