

LEADERSHIP FOR EYE HEALTH SERIES

Leadership Styles & Activity

Scenario

Your team is managing a national cataract surgery programme. Cataract is the leading cause of sight loss in the country, and surgeries are provided free of charge. However, uptake remains low in rural areas. Many older adults are unaware that cataracts are treatable, and some fear surgery due to myths or past negative experiences. At the same time, surgical teams are under pressure to meet performance targets, and local health workers feel excluded from the planning process.

Discussion

- What leadership behaviours might help address the challenges in this scenario?
- How could different leadership styles support better outcomes?
- What would leadership look like at different levels of the system?

In your groups, reflect on this scenario through the lens of the four leadership styles below.

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership empowers individuals and organisations to navigate uncertainty and change. It involves diagnosing challenges, engaging stakeholders, and adjusting strategies in real time. Leaders practising this style remain flexible, encourage innovation, and help others build resilience, enabling teams to thrive in complex and evolving environments.

Strengths

- Promotes flexibility and responsiveness in uncertain contexts.
- Encourages innovation and learning from failure.
- Empowers teams to take ownership of change.

Challenges

- Can be uncomfortable due to ambiguity and lack of clear direction.
- Requires high emotional intelligence and resilience.
- May face resistance from those preferring stability.



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Inclusive Leadership

Inclusive leadership ensures every team member feels respected, heard, and valued. It embraces diverse perspectives and actively promotes equity and belonging. By fostering open dialogue and psychological safety, inclusive leaders create environments where everyone can contribute meaningfully, leading to stronger collaboration, innovation, and shared success.

Strengths:

- Enhances team engagement and morale.
- Leads to better decision-making through diverse input.
- Builds trust and psychological safety.

Challenges

- May require more time to reach consensus.
- Needs ongoing effort to address unconscious bias.
- Can be challenging in hierarchical or rigid systems.

Transformative Leadership

Transformative leadership inspires people to exceed expectations through vision, passion, and purpose. These leaders drive meaningful change by empowering others, challenging the status quo, and aligning teams around a shared mission. Their influence sparks growth, creativity, and long-term impact across individuals, organisations, and communities.

Strengths

- Inspires commitment and enthusiasm.
- Drives innovation and long-term impact.
- Fosters a sense of shared mission and values.

Challenges

- Can overlook operational details in pursuit of vision.
- May depend heavily on the leader's charisma.
- Requires sustained energy and alignment from the team.



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Servant Leadership

Servant leadership centres on serving others first. These leaders prioritise the needs, development, and well-being of their teams and communities. By listening, empathising, and supporting growth, servant leaders build trust and loyalty, creating a culture of care, collaboration, and sustainable success.

Strengths

- Builds strong, trust-based relationships.
- Encourages collaboration and team empowerment.
- Promotes ethical and people-centred leadership.

Challenges

- May be perceived as passive or indecisive.
- Can be difficult in fast-paced or high-pressure environments.
- Requires a deep commitment to others' development.

