

Leadership Considerations



A note to leaders about how to engage in compassion resilience groups

Thank you for supporting the compassion resilience (CR) work with your teams. Your facilitation team will meet with you periodically to talk about specific activities ahead of time so you can prepare yourself and follow-up on any activity as needed. You can set the tone for this work by communicating the **WHY** of the work and the **WHY** of your participation. If at any time you or your facilitation team need additional guidance, please feel free to reach out to the WISE team for [support](#).

Remember the organizational **WHY** and the **WHY** of your engagement in CR

- Your organizational values align with the toolkit values of individual, team, and organizational responsibility for a culture that promotes compassion resilience, equity, and trauma informed care.
- Create and sustain a culture that attracts and retains diverse team members, promotes your values, and reinforces those values with consistent action
- Build and deepen relationships with your team as a co-learner to form the foundation of your culture
- Gain clarity of expectations that leads to accountability
- Identify where gaps of inclusion, knowledge, or skill are on your team so you can better coach your team
- Identify culture improvement opportunities with your team and organization

Leadership Considerations

Tips for effective leader participation in CR groups and huddles

- Support consistent engagement by the team members who have committed to attend. Ask yourself what you can do to remove any barriers to team member participation.
- Prioritize being present yourself, or if not participating, prioritize time with facilitation team between each session.
- If participating, these conversations are not the place to correct employees' perceptions. Instead, get insights into what you or others need to communicate more clearly and do so later.
- Do not be the first to speak in the group. Be aware of team members following your lead rather than thinking independently. Also avoid being the last to speak so you do not appear to be giving the final and "right" answer.
- Demonstrate appropriate vulnerability in your answers to the discussion questions. Do not make the discussion centered on you yet do share suitable challenges.
- Add to the drivers of fatigue and resilience [exercise](#) (in section 4) from your perspective. Let the team know that you are open to what they have to say and ask that they practice assuming your good intent to listen and reflect on potential response to items related to leadership. Inform them that you will also be adding to the lists from your perspective as leader. Be sure to do the follow-up work that the facilitator will explain to you before that activity.



Comprehensive components

Leaders can monitor the overall facilitation of the toolkit to ensure that planning for each session includes how the essential components will be implemented. These are the components that are essential to a comprehensive approach to compassion resilience:

- Share document to distribute with group ahead of the session (or in follow-up, as decided by the facilitation team)
- Meet with leader to prepare leadership endorsement/response/interaction/modeling
- Hang visual in common areas
- Make a connection to the content with the group between sessions
- Keep list of ideas for ongoing connection with the content after the toolkit sessions end and schedule regular check-ins to assess if the work is being sustained
- Identify with leader what policies, procedures, or actions will become the way the organization functions as a result of this work
- Implement any pre, mid, post surveys to get feedback on the work and the facilitation

Leadership Considerations

Specific leadership considerations for each section of the toolkit and the components that go into a comprehensive approach

Section	Concept or Activity	Leadership Considerations
1	Rationale for the focus on compassion resilience, Compassionate Action Steps introduced to create common language and understand what it means to act with compassion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Whether you as a leader are participating by supporting the facilitators without joining the group or plan to fully participate, clarify your interest in the work, some personal learning you have already gained from it, and how you will be engaged with the group. Example: regular touch base with facilitators so you can be responsive to the group's ideas and needs, regular participation with open mind to learn and improve your leadership, drop-in when requested, etc. Invite the facilitation team to consider how the Compassionate Action Steps mirror some of their previous training and how using this common language would impact the team. Share areas of the steps that are more challenging for you and how you have dealt with that challenge. Example: When someone comes to me as their leader, it is easy for me to think that they want me to solve a problem for them. I remind myself that often people have the answers within them, and it is my role to guide them to their own solutions.
2	Wellness compass and self-compassion, beginning to identify personal sources of fatigue and resilience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you are participating in the group meetings, practice not being the first to answer questions and avoid giving advice or correcting staff perceptions. Enlarge and print the Wellness Compass and display it in your office area to visually represent your commitment to this work. Take the Self-Compassion Test, an easy, self-scoring online version, and consider how you will communicate to staff what insights you gained.
3	Understanding compassion fatigue through the cycle of fatigue, initial self-assessment (cycle and/or ProQOL)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on both your experience of fatigue throughout your career and the impact that your team, your supervisors, and the system you worked within had on your experience of the cycle of compassion fatigue. Be prepared to share your insights with the facilitation team and if invited, with the group.

Leadership Considerations

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What might you and your leadership team do today that would alleviate some of the burden of initial unrealistic self-expectations that new employees have in the Zealot Stage, or recent experiences of imperfections of clients/team/ organization/ surrounding systems for those in the Irritability Stage, or the overwhelm employees are experiencing from the complexity of the work for those in the Withdrawal Stage? Example: gather new employees to discuss what is needed to run the marathon of this work (celebrate initial success of “sprint behavior” and invite them to let go of some unrealistic self-expectations). You will get more ideas from the Section 4 activity. 3. For additional leadership applications, please visit this resource.
4	Identify and learn to lessen the ways our individual mindsets, team patterns, and our system contributes to our compassion fatigue. Discover what we can change, what leadership can and will address, and what would be best to let go.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This section will begin with a brainstorm on what is driving staff fatigue and resilience. If you are participating, avoid defensiveness and share your own drivers of fatigue and resilience, resist the temptation to correct perceptions brought forward by staff. As the activity unfolds you will see that it asks staff to consider both what they can control and what they look to you as a leader to control. One goal is to increase an internal locus of control mindset to promote shared accountability for the culture. 2. The leadership team should be prepared to discuss items the staff designated to “leadership control” after the session and report back to the staff which items leadership is or will be exploring this year or next and which items would likely not change in the next two years. Some items you may want to ask for clarification from staff or engagement of a team to address. Reporting plans back to the staff allows the staff to add the items the leadership team will not address to their “cannot control” list. It is most helpful to validate the need to look at those items in the future, once other priorities are met, unless there is no possibility of change. Let the staff know that you will share progress on the items the team has chosen to address will be shared throughout the year. 3. This document names sources of system stress and protective factors under leaderships’ control.

Leadership Considerations

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5	Identify helpful expectations and transform unhelpful expectations that compromise our ability to approach others and ourselves with compassion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look back at the list of the drivers of fatigue and resilience the team brainstormed in Section 4. Notice how many relate to a sense of unclear, unreasonable, conflicting, or assumed expectations. 2. Expectations include a why, what, and how. Effective leaders engage people in conversations to ensure clarity on all three of these components of an expectation. They also encourage employees to ask questions if such clarity does not exist. 3. If you participate in the group, as unclear expectations are discussed, resist the pull to give explanations during the meeting. Thank the participants for describing unclear expectations and offer to work to remove such barriers with your leadership team. If you are not participating in the group, the facilitators may share the unclear or unrealistic expectations that the group uncovered with you. 4. As you explore expectation communication, keep in mind the tips in this handout. 5. For additional leadership applications, please visit this resource.
6	Practice the approach to setting compassionate boundaries (linked to expectations) and begin to define the behaviors that would support a desired workplace culture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As the participants explore what boundaries they can set to support the priorities in their work and non-work life, you have the opportunity to support such conversations and to demonstrate your own practice of boundary setting to support your priorities. 2. If you are part of the group conversation, it can be helpful to reiterate that you believe it is a leader's role to engage with supervisees in looking at boundaries and monitoring expectations accordingly. 3. For additional leadership applications, please visit this resource.
7	Develop culture agreements that are behaviors that will support desired culture. Also, look at working within one's lane and connecting with others in the larger system of care/work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The list created in Section 6 of behaviors that the group believe would lead to a healthy culture are condensed and prioritized to create agreements that the team aspires to fulfill with each other in order to share accountability for the desired culture.

Leadership Considerations

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How you and the facilitation team plan to support the consistent messaging of the culture agreements and to keep them in the forefront of all employees from orientation to regular team meetings to 1:1 coaching, will determine the impact on your organizational culture. These provide ongoing opportunities to learn together how to act according to the agreements. The creation and use of the culture agreements is most pointed to as a tangible and impactful outcome of the compassion resilience work. For additional leadership applications, please visit this resource.
8	The mind section includes being well-organized, engaging in meaningful work, and being fully present in the moment. Also in this section, the Wellness Compass Assessment is introduced.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> These sections include the wellness practices portion of the toolkit. Your participation in the conversations as a peer-learner for personal well-being will provide an opportunity for you to make authentic and personal connections with the group. The wellness sessions should give you insight into potential well-being supports that you can offer to all staff.
9	The spirit section includes connecting to our sense of purpose with intentionality, exposing ourselves to resilience in those we serve, and recreating ourselves through rest and play.	
10	The strength section includes stress resilience and care for the body, with strategies explored such as perspective on stress, help-seeking, listening to our bodies.	
11	The heart section includes our emotions and our relationships, both with ourselves and with others.	

Leadership Considerations

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12	Explores taking compassion resilience concepts and applying them to secondary relationships.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The final section looks at applying all that has been learned to relationships that support the primary clients/students you serve. It is an opportunity to pull concepts together.2. This is also the section where you will want to have prepared with the facilitation team some ideas of what you want to take from the work and integrate into ongoing procedures. It is helpful to ask the group what they believe would be important to look at on a regular basis and what practices or procedures might be added or revised based on the learning.

