

YOU Are a Leader

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Food and nutrition professionals are leaders, inspiring others through their words and actions. They lead fellow professionals, patients, and consumers. The public looks to the RDN to lead them to improved health through evidence-based knowledge and behaviors. No matter the practice setting, RDNs can aspire to become leaders, leaders who make a difference.

In this interactive session, communication skills for leadership will be explored and experienced. Participants will reflect on their leadership roles and assess their personal leadership communication strengths and weaknesses. Examples of leadership in dietetics will be showcased and participants will set goals to develop their leadership communication skills.

Learning Objectives:

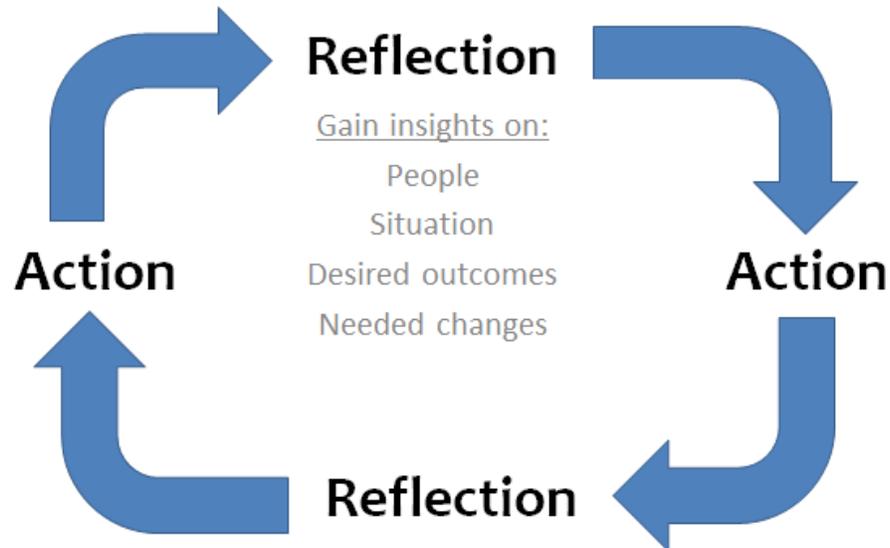
1. Session participants will reflect on their personal leadership communication strengths in four distinct skill areas: understanding others, demonstrating empathy, situational analysis, and vision casting.
2. Session participants will be able to describe effective strategies for assessing needs, demonstrating empathy, researching problems and solutions, and envisioning growth and change.
3. Session participants will determine action steps to build leadership communication skills in one or more areas discussed during the session.

I Am a Leader:

My leadership roles:	Who I lead:	How we're related:	How many:

Leadership _____ = the ability to assess and respond to leadership situations effectively. An agile leader assesses the situation and responds accordingly.

Reflective Action



Joiner WB, Josephs SA. *Leadership agility: Five levels of mastery for anticipating and initiating change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley. 2007.

The leadership role I will reflect on today:

The leadership situation I have in mind:

How I would like it to be different:

5 Communication Tips for Leaders

Effective leadership requires communication

Many qualities describe effective leaders – honest, intelligent, innovative, and compassionate, among others. No one set of characteristics defines what leaders need in every situation. However, what every leader does need to be effective, no matter the setting or group they are leading, is the ability to communicate well. Communication skills set leaders up for success.

Employ communication skills to understand people

The act of leadership involves leading others. It requires understanding the people one is leading and involves the communication skills of assessing their needs, listening to their dreams and concerns, demonstrating empathy, finding common ground, and creating connections. When people feel understood they participate in accomplishing goals and facilitating change.

Employ communication skills to research a situation

Leadership is needed when a situation arises that requires problem-solving, decision-making, or change. The effective leader employs a variety of communication skills for researching the facts, anticipating barriers, comparing and contrasting options, determining the desired outcomes, and selecting a course of action. Effective leaders are critical and creative thinkers.

Employ communication skills to cast a vision

Effective leaders are skilled at vision casting. This requires putting the problem or situation into context others can understand, helping them see what needs to be done, the role they can play, and the steps needed to reach the desired outcomes. When people can visualize the destination desired, they are well on their way to overcoming a problem or achieving their goals.

Continually grow your communication skills

Effective leaders are learners, continually growing their knowledge base and developing their skills. Having a teachable disposition creates in leaders a humble mindset, a willingness to expand their thinking, an openness to novel ways of solving problems, and flexibility for trying out new approaches. Leaders who grow lead others to grow, change, and achieve their goals.

Assessment of My Leadership Communication Knowledge and Skills

- 1 = absent, never practiced
- 2 = limited, rarely practiced
- 3 = emerging, seeking more practice
- 4 = growing with frequent practice
- 5 = proficient or expert

I consider my level of knowledge and skill needed to...	Is...				
	1	2	3	4	5
Assess the needs of the people I lead (including their beliefs, values, feelings, behaviors, motivators, etc.)					
Demonstrate empathy to the people I lead and confirm that they feel understood and validated					
Research the facts of a situation or problem, understanding fully all variables and inputs					
Describe potential solutions/desired outcomes, cast a vision others find relatable and desirable					

See list below for possible areas to assess, add any others that are relevant and important to you:

Assess the needs of people I lead (including beliefs, values, feelings, behaviors, motivators, etc.)
Actively listen to others in order to understand their dreams and concerns
Demonstrate empathy to the people I lead and confirm that they feel understood and validated
Find common ground with others and make meaningful connections
Research the facts of a situation or problem, understanding fully all variables and inputs
Compare/contrast potential solutions, identifying barriers as well as sources of support
Determine desired outcomes all parties can commit to achieving with relevance and purpose
Select a course of action that may be challenging yet is realistic and attainable
Explain the problem or situation to others, putting it into understandable context
Empower others to fill their roles and take the needed steps to achieve their goals
Adopt a humble, teachable disposition
Be willing to expand my thinking
Be open to novel ways to solve problems
Be flexible in trying out new approaches
Be an agile leader!!

Reflecting on my leadership role and situation...

Thoughts on how I can better assess the needs of the people I lead:

A potential action step: Study Chapter 11 in *Communicating Nutrition* and/or visit <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/assessing-community-needs-and-resources>

Thoughts on how I can better demonstrate empathy to the people I lead:

A potential action step: Study Chapter 3 in *Communicating Nutrition* and/or access Reading the Mind in the Eyes test: <http://socialintelligence.labinthewild.org/mite/>

Thoughts on how I can better research problems and solutions with the people I lead:

A potential action step: Study Section 2 in *Communicating Nutrition*

Thoughts on how I can better communicate a vision for change to the people I lead:

A potential action step: Study Section 3 in *Communicating Nutrition* and/or access free communication tip sheets: <https://www.nutritioncommunicator.com/tip-sheets>

Which leadership communication area do you want to learn and grow in this season?

- Seeking to understand/assessing needs
- Demonstrating empathy
- Using research skills to explore problems and solutions
- Communicating a vision for change

My Goals for Taking Action:

My current level of knowledge and skill is: _____ (see p 4)

By December 31, 2022, I would like my level of knowledge and skill to be: _____

1-2 specific action steps I can take to build my knowledge and skill in this area are:

- 1.
- 2.

1-2 specific action steps I can take to put my knowledge and skill into practice in this area are:

- 1.
- 2.

My plan for continued reflection and action:

Once every week/month I will revisit the leadership situation described on p 2, or new one(s), and reflect on the area above, or new one(s), and my progress on the action steps listed, or new ones.

Meet Barb Mayfield

Barbara J. Mayfield, MS, RDN, LD, FAND, Founder and President, Nutrition Communicator, LLC, leads other nutrition professionals to communicate with excellence and confidence. She served as Editor-in-Chief for *Communicating Nutrition: The Authoritative Guide*, published by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in August 2020. She honed her expertise during 16 years on the faculty of the Nutrition Science Department at Purdue University



teaching future nutrition professionals to be effective nutrition communicators. Barb has also worked as an early intervention specialist and served the WIC Program as a nutrition educator, high-risk counselor, breastfeeding coordinator and local program coordinator. Barb led Noteworthy Creations, a company dedicated to high quality nutrition education resources for 17 years. She has published curricula for preschoolers, early elementary, high school, college, and professional audiences. Barb enjoys sharing her expertise via keynotes, concurrent sessions, longer workshops, and webinars. Since 1988 she has spoken to more than 200 professional audiences in 35 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. Barb's presentations are engaging and interactive, tailored to the audience, up-to-date, reality-based, and inspiring. Barb lives with her husband, Joe, in Delphi, Indiana. They have three grown children and six grandchildren.

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