



Crises as a Catalyst: A Call for Race Equity & Inclusive Leadership

Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	3
II.	HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE.....	5
III.	LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AT THE LEVELS OF SELF, PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, SYSTEMS.....	7
	A. LEADERSHIP OF SELF PRACTICES.....	8
	B. LEADERSHIP OF PEOPLE PRACTICES.....	9
	C. LEADERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICES.....	10
	D. LEADERSHIP OF SYSTEMS PRACTICES.....	11
IV.	CONSIDERATIONS FOR POSITIONAL LEADERS.....	12
V.	APPENDICES.....	14
	A. WORKING MATRIX AND DESCRIPTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PRACTICES.....	14
	B. CONTRIBUTORS AND REVIEWERS.....	16

Introduction

Times of crisis challenge social sector leaders in extraordinary ways. The unprecedented circumstances brought forth by COVID-19 and recent acts of police brutality call on each of us to individually reflect, collectively support, and intentionally adapt our work to meet the urgent needs of this moment. We see this as a catalyst to evolve our leadership practices toward a long term goal of a world free of systemic oppression and rooted in race equity, where all people thrive. The current crises that we are facing demand that we evolve who we are as leaders and ignite an inner transformation that can sustain the work needed to support Black, Indigenous, and communities of color in the social sector as a whole.

The global pandemic and international movement for Black lives both highlight the importance of leadership that focuses on race equity and inclusion within the social sector. Leaders must prioritize the full humanity of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), in both policy and practice. We can begin by identifying the systemic advantages, often normalized by whiteness, that these crises are causing us to confront. Once we expand our understanding of the interlocking forms of systemic oppression that disproportionately harm communities of color, we can work to move beyond white dominant culture and the racism that separates us, encourages individualism, and denies the full humanity of people of color.

Social sector leaders must develop a responsibility for social justice. It is time for us to harness our collective power and make decisions in ways that support a shared vision for a racially equitable and just society. Together, we have the power to create a world where Black people are not treated as inherently dangerous but valuable and innately worthy. A world where all people have access to meaningful educational opportunities, secure housing, reliable health care and safe public spaces. A world where people of color are able to explore and experience the fullness of life with joy, peace and prosperity.

Although our roles in cultivating this vision may differ, our sector is nonetheless connected by this cause. At ProInspire, we are learning as we navigate this moment and we have found value and meaning in some key leadership practices that are particularly relevant for leaders focused on race equity and inclusion. These practices emerged from a project we initiated in 2016 to identify core mindsets, skills, and behaviors that leaders at all levels need to advance impact and race equity in their work. Over the past four years, our thinking about this work has evolved as we deepened our work in organizational equity and recognized that race equity should be a constant

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

Merriam Webster's dictionary defines a crisis as a "decisive moment, an unstable or crucial time with the distinct possibility of an undesirable outcome." When we started writing this, it was with the pandemic as a heightened crisis that is gripping the world. Yet communities of color face ongoing crises because structural racism is woven into the very fabric of the United States. It is the root cause of the racial disparities encompassing COVID, criminal justice, health and economic crises in Tribal communities, family separation of migrants in the U.S./Mexico border, and more.





During a crisis, we have an opportunity to take radical actions as leaders and organizations. Intentional actions that explicitly center race equity will move us towards our goals of a world free of systemic oppression, that affirms the full humanity of us all. Social sector organizations, particularly those that have been historically white-led, must use this moment to be intentional around how crisis creates an opportunity to be more inclusive in our leadership practices, and create momentum in our journey towards equity and inclusion.

lens through which we lead, grow, and evaluate our impact. This work has been informed by feedback from a wide circle of colleagues within and beyond our organization. We have deep gratitude for their wisdom and feedback that has pushed our thinking. While we will publish a guide detailing the practices later this year, we wanted to share our current thinking on how leaders can be intentional about inclusive leadership in this moment of heightened crisis.

In order to foster more inclusive work environments, we must address the barriers and challenges that often get in the way – including norms that perpetuate exclusion and maintain systemic oppression. Oppression operates in multiple ways, often referred to as the 4 I’s: internalized, interpersonal, institutional and ideological manifestations. We have identified **16 practices** that leaders can cultivate to increase awareness, shift mindsets, and create change to advance equity and sustain inclusion in impactful ways within their work.

At the foundation of these leadership practices are the following principles that ProInspire believes to be critical for leaders at all levels in the social sector:

- One can operate as a leader from any position within an organization or system
- Leaders must center race equity in their work
- Individuals inside organizations and systems have the ability to change them

	Leadership of	 Self	 People	 Organizations	 Systems
Leadership at	Individual <i>Awareness and knowledge</i>	Active Learning	Conscious Communication	Dynamic Problem Solving	Systems Thinking
	Interpersonal <i>Mindsets and behaviors with others</i>	Emotional Agility	Building Relationships	Collaborative Decision Making	Innovative Approach
	Institutional <i>Skills, practices, and policies</i>	Intentionally Adapting	Fostering Inclusive Environment	Developing Shared Vision	Aligning Values
	Ideological <i>Beliefs and norms</i>	Sense of Identity	Lifting Voices	Navigating Multiple Perspectives	Reimagining the Sector

WORKPLACE BEHAVIORS YOU MAY NEED TO UNLEARN OR CHANGE AS YOU WORK WITH THE PRACTICES

- Shift from having a clear set of annual goals to a more flexible model that incorporates rapidly changing circumstances
- Let go of standards for productivity and provide flexibility for when and how work will get done
- Move away from perfectionism to being okay with “good enough”

How to use this guide

We have created this guide to serve as a tool to support leaders with reflecting on how they are advancing race equity and inclusion during crises. We consider this version 1.0. We've found the practices to be helpful for our organization internally and are sharing our early thinking in hopes of generating action-oriented dialogues about race equity and inclusive leadership practices that make an impact in both experience and outcomes. Within this guide are questions to support both individual reflection and team discussions, the latter of which can be held within small work teams, across management teams, and organization-wide. We also recognize that leaders of color and those who hold positional authority have additional and more consequential considerations during times of crisis. We highlight some of those in this guide and will expand on them over the coming months.

We erred on the side of a more comprehensive set of guidance, since leaders may be seeking support in different areas. You don't have to answer every question or have all of these team conversations. Instead, you can do one or more of the following:



Focus on the self-reflection questions. Take one section per week and work through the questions. You can journal, draw, or try another approach that helps you with reflection.



Invite team discussions. Ideally you can find a partner to facilitate team discussions to help address power dynamics that can show up in these conversations. Pick one area (self, people, organizations, systems) that you would like your team to discuss further. Ask everyone to think about the self-reflection questions as pre-work. Then use the team discussion questions together.



Try the tools and considerations offered here. People who have seen this guide have shared that these are the most helpful components.

WE HOPE THIS GUIDE WILL SUPPORT YOU WITH



PERSONAL WORK — The guide provides self-reflection questions and examples that individuals can use to understand their own leadership and engagement with colleagues and partners.



GROUP DISCUSSIONS — Teams can use these questions to facilitate discussion about their relationships and their role in creating a culture of race equity and inclusion.



DECISION-MAKING — Leaders at all levels can use these questions to consider how they are aligning decisions in the organization and the system with goals to advance race equity and inclusion.



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER — Funders, board members, intermediaries, and peers can use these questions to challenge mindsets and encourage paradigm shifts among colleagues during crises.

We continue to learn as we navigate this crisis, and so much of our learning is shaped by feedback from other leaders. We hope that you will share tools, examples, and considerations that you find helpful so that we can iterate on this guide and share it out more broadly.

A NOTE FOR FUNDERS & BOARD MEMBERS

For those who have historically held power – particularly funders and board members – this is the moment to get serious about your commitment to advance race equity. We encourage you to view this as an opportunity to shift practices to live into that commitment now and in the future. For example, the funders who signed on to the [Council on Foundation's pledge](#) during COVID-19 are taking important steps by unrestricting grants, providing nonprofit partners with maximum flexibility, and supporting organizations created and led by the communities most affected. These shifts are all critical to support organizations in facing this current crisis and longer term to do the work that is needed for crises that happen every day in communities. Some important steps you can take now to support leadership in crisis:



Change your funding decisions and processes to demonstrate that you value equity, flexibility, and change. Assess how this moment will inform longer-term changes to your practices:

- Increase investments for organizations led by people of color. Organizations led by people of color have been historically under-resourced, so their organizations have less financial reserves to rely on in crisis.
- Provide unrestricted funding and maximum flexibility in grants, which is always a valuable practice.
- Expand or adjust your funding to account for the stress and trauma of this crisis. Few are working at capacity right now, and this can be an opportunity to fund in a way that supports depth, not breadth.



Deepen relationships with nonprofit leaders, particularly leaders of color. Leaders of color face additional challenges in crisis as they are more likely to identify with the communities most impacted and face the burden of being one of the few CEOs and executives of color in many places. While ensuring financial stability is important, what is also critical is the need for funders and Board members to support leaders who are coping with the emotional stress of leading in a crisis. Some things you can do:

- Take time to listen, without judgment. Ask “What is going on for you personally during this crisis? What worries you for the future? Are there ways that I can help?”
- Pay for coaching and mental health activities. Ensure that Executive Directors have adequate support for navigating the leadership and staff implications of this crisis.
- Bring transparency to funding decisions so that leaders can provide feedback and plan ahead.

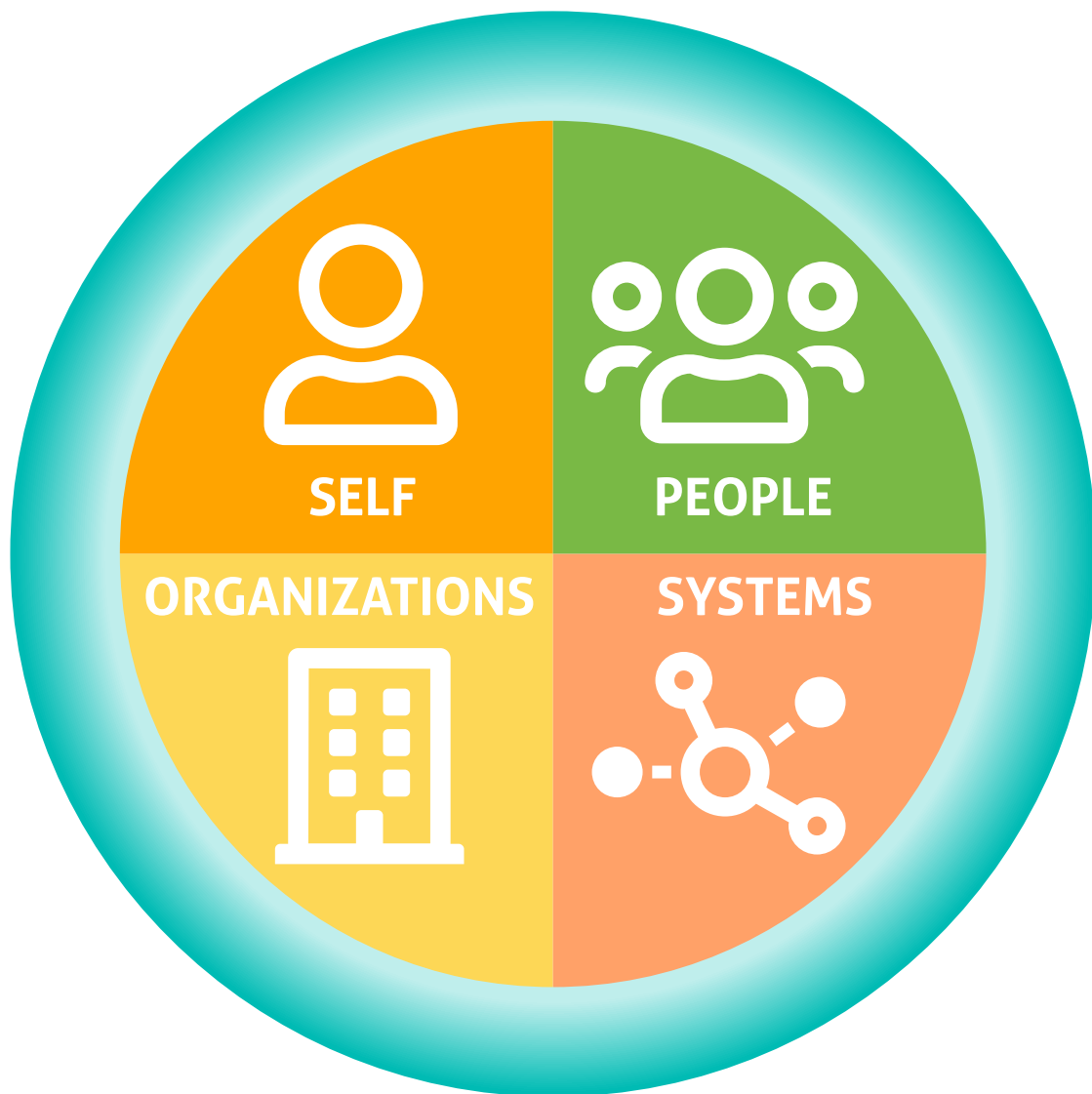


Balance the urgent needs of this crisis with long-term systems change. This crisis has laid bare how systemic racism underlies every aspect of our society – health, education, employment, and economic opportunity – and it is time to address it.

- Provide multi-year grants so that organizations can address the immediate crisis, advance long-term work, and take risks in this period.
- Use your privilege to support smaller organizations led by the communities most affected in this crisis. Some will not survive without people who have access to resources figuring out ways to support them.

Leadership practices at the levels of self, people, organizations, systems

As leaders operate from any position within an organization, they have four key areas of influence: self, people, organizations, and systems. We have identified four leadership practices within each of these areas of influence, and the working definitions are outlined in the [Appendix](#). While we believe these practices are relevant in many different situations, they are especially important during times of change and crisis.



LEADERSHIP OF SELF PRACTICES

In developing practices for leading **SELF**, leaders are **building an understanding** of how they show up and have an impact in situations, and particularly how their individual contributions can advance equity in the workplace. These practices include: *active learning, emotional agility, intentionally adapting, and sense of identity.*



SELF REFLECTION

- How am I assessing my own needs and concerns as they relate to the impact of this crisis through ongoing reflection? For white leaders, what is the work I can do to better understand how racism is connected to this crisis without putting emotional burden on people of color?
- How am I processing my emotions during this crisis? How am I processing the grief, trauma, and stress brought on by this crisis? How does that impact how I engage and lead?
- How do I approach my work with flexibility and self awareness that allows me to challenge my own way of thinking and working style in order to incorporate new ideas?
- How is my understanding of this crisis shaped by my identity and lived experience? How does this come with biases and blindspots? How can this bias or blindspot cause harm to the people with whom I work?
- How am I communicating my needs in this moment to the people with whom I work? Are there fears or barriers that prevent me from communicating those challenges?



TEAM DISCUSSION

- Are we creating an environment where team members feel they can share their own needs and concerns, free of judgment or retribution?
- How are we creating space for the complex feelings and emotions of ourselves and others?
- How are we gathering input to address the individual and collective needs within our organization? Are we supporting the well-being needs of those who are most impacted by this crisis in our organization?
- How do we support each other with intentionally adapting in this moment? Where can we exercise empathy through our actions with each other?
- As a team, how do we suspend judgment as it relates to our individual and collective needs/ response during this crisis?
- Are our words and actions communicating that we value interconnectedness over individualism at this time?



TOOLS & CONSIDERATIONS

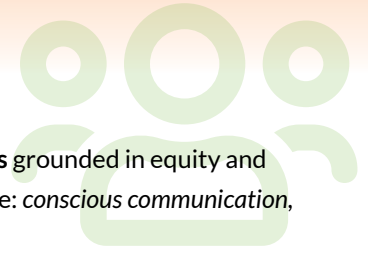
- Create spacious meeting agendas; don't try to cram everything in
- Start meetings with a check-in and ask how people are feeling, but don't require people to share
- Discuss how identity and lived experience impact people's emotions in this crisis
- Consider racial identity based affinity groups to support different needs around learning and healing
- Be honest about what you don't know and how you are managing uncertainty
- Ask people what support they need given the crisis (e.g., counseling, training, time off)
- Encourage people to block time on calendars for self care, child care, etc.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Racial Equity Tools](#) has 2500+ resources to deepen your learning around racial equity
- [Change Elemental's](#) Resources
- Resolutions Northwest [Before You Bring All Staff Together](#)
- Rockwood Institute's [Resilience](#) resources
- [Scaffolded Anti-Racist Resources](#) for white folks

LEADERSHIP OF PEOPLE PRACTICES

In developing practices for leading with **PEOPLE**, leaders are **fostering inclusive relationships** grounded in equity and influencing individuals at all levels within and beyond the organization. These practices include: *conscious communication*, *building relationships*, *fostering inclusive climate*, and *lifting voices*.



SELF REFLECTION

- How am I building strong, trusting relationships? Am I creating space for the complex emotions of those around me?
- How do I encourage and value differences, creating a sense of belonging in the organization especially as people are feeling more vulnerable?
- What power do I hold in my role? Where am I privileged? How does that impact the work I should be doing in this crisis?
- How do I support my colleagues to work in ways where they can bring forth their strengths? Create space for their well-being?
- How am I sharing power? Am I lifting the voices of people with less formal authority, supporting staff autonomy, and considering the race equity impacts of decisions?



TEAM DISCUSSION

- How are different identities, lived experiences, and personality styles impacting our response to this crisis?
- Are we having explicit conversations about race and racism as they relate to ourselves, each other, and the work?
- Where are we upholding norms of white dominant culture in how we interact with each other? What norms might need to change?
- How do we work to build honesty, vulnerability, and trust through our channels of communication — particularly while we are remote?
- How can we operate with even more transparency and authenticity as a team?
- Have we created space for communicating individual and collective needs?
- What strengths do we each bring? How can we leverage each other's strengths?



TOOLS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Discuss what support you can provide for people to adapt to the new environment that is within your organization's means and grounded in equity (e.g., time and resources for self-care, mental health benefits)
- Have conversations about daily practices that give you energy (e.g., cooking, looking out a window) and how you can make space for those — even if they may not be seen as wellness
- Discuss how you will be flexible given people's availability, well-being needs, and the organization's priorities
- Discuss what perspective each person brings from their lived experience, identity, and organizational knowledge around how to prioritize and how the team should move forward

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Colorlines](#) daily news site where race matters
- CompassPoint's [blog posts](#) about leadership in this period
- The Management Center's [COVID-19 Resources](#)
- StrategyLift's [Triage Tool](#) to revisit strategy and priorities
- Tema Okun and dRworks [White Supremacy Culture](#)
- AchieveMission's [Leading In and Through Uncertainty](#)

LEADERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS PRACTICES

In developing practices for leading with **ORGANIZATIONS**, leaders are **adapting work to exercise institutional influence** and solidifying their commitment to equity in culture, practice, and goals with a long-term view. These practices include: *dynamic problem solving, collaborative decision making, developing shared vision, and navigating multiple perspectives.*



SELF REFLECTION

- What ways of working might I need to shift in this moment in order to support the organization and our communities? What knowledge or awareness do I need to release, build, or adapt?
- What decisions am I making, and how can I be inclusive and collaborative in decision-making?
- How am I engaging with our communities right now? What would it take to support our communities to pursue innovative solutions to the challenges they are facing right now?
- Which obstacles and opportunities am I choosing to prioritize? How have those priorities shifted in response to this crisis? How do they align to shifts in the organization's goals and priorities?
- How have I centered the experiences and perspectives of those most impacted by the crisis in my analysis of the organization's work right now? Are there new ideas we could explore to align our work to the needs?



TEAM DISCUSSION

- How can we use this moment to transform our culture to be more inclusive and equitable? What ways of working (e.g., prioritizing productivity) might we need to let go of?
- How can we hold ourselves accountable to statements and/or values we have around race equity?
- As a team, how are we connecting with our community, especially those most vulnerable and impacted by this crisis, and supporting them right now?
- What decisions are we making? How are we approaching decision-making as a team? Whose voices should be included in these decisions? How are we considering the equity impacts of decisions?
- How are we being transparent and communicating with various stakeholders about how this crisis impacts the organization?



TOOLS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Shift your organization's work and approaches to the needs of staff and community in the crisis (e.g., pausing programs and redirecting those funds as cash or other support to community members)
- Ask each team to develop plans for how their work would change under different scenarios
- Evaluate short-term and long-term in planning, considering future phases of the crisis

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training webinar [Beyond Diversity: How to Build a Truly Anti-Racist Organization](#)
- Equity in the Center's [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#)
- Equity Meets Design's [Organization-Wide Equity Pause Resources](#)
- Future Good's [COVID-19 workbook](#) to identify potential scenarios
- Interaction Institute's post [From Emergency Response to Resilient Futures: Moving Towards Transformation](#)
- SeaChange's [Decision Framework for Nonprofit Leaders and Boards](#)

LEADERSHIP OF SYSTEMS PRACTICES

In developing practices for leading with **SYSTEMS**, leaders are **approaching work within the interconnected system** and analyzing the impact of strategies to address the root causes of inequity. These practices include: *systems thinking, innovative approach, aligning values, and reimagining the sector.*



SELF REFLECTION

- How can I move from reacting to this crisis to proactively influencing at the systems level? Where should I take space and make space?
- How am I deepening my understanding for how structural racism impacts our community and individuals inside our organization?
- If I were to envision a future where this crisis led to changes that address root causes, what would that look like, and what role can I play in the changes?
- How am I creating opportunities for partnerships and coalitions to achieve greater impact, in response to this crisis and in pursuit of race equity?
- Have I allowed space and time in my process for creativity? What do I need to expand my thinking, for new ways of working or being that would support the outcomes we seek?



TEAM DISCUSSION

- How do we move from reacting to this crisis to building the future we want to create?
- What are the root causes and systemic problems this crisis lays bare? In what ways could we influence the system short-term and long-term?
- What is our role in advocacy? Where do we need to publicly take a stance?
- What does solidarity look like at the systemic level? How do we shift away from a scarcity mindset?
- At which tables do we have an opportunity to be? How do we open doors? Where do we step back?
- What possibilities have we not explored?



TOOLS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Come together in collective conversations and coalitions where different players across systems are working together to pursue a common future
- Identify where your organization can advocate for systems change (e.g., media, policy, philanthropy)
- Recognize where your organization has privilege and how that can inform where to take space and make space

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Agenda to Build Black Futures resources](#)
- Building Movement Project's [Reflection Guide for Mapping Roles in a Social Change Ecosystem](#)
- Institute for the Future's [Writing the Stories of the Future Guide](#)
- PolicyLink's [COVID-19 & Race: Principles](#)
- Racial Equity Institute's [The Groundwater Approach: building a practical understanding of structural racism](#)
- Up With Community's tool on [Strategic Thinking in a Long Term Crisis](#)

Considerations for Positional Leaders

While we believe that one can lead from any position, we recognize that those who hold positions of authority within their organization have additional burdens and greater responsibilities when making critical decisions during this time. Positional leaders (e.g., Executive Directors, leadership teams) play an important role in setting and evolving the culture for staff members and partners. We have additional suggestions and considerations for these leaders:

- Model your own self-awareness, emotional processing, and responsibility to speak about race as it connects to this crisis. Create space for people to talk about how identity connects to their experiences.
- Take intentional action on your commitments to racial equity beyond awareness building. Be ready to share what accountability will look like for the organization to uphold that commitment.
- Use personal stories about the challenges of this moment to make space for others to share their challenges, but also recognize privilege about which stories are told and which stories are invisible — such as the stories of single people or people whose family members are impacted by frontline work or layoffs.
- Broaden your focus beyond the crisis in the organization to consider how your organization fits within the interconnected system in the short- and long-term.
- Invest time in building trust as people feel more vulnerable during crises. As you look beyond your organization, work on creating new networks that are inclusive and challenge you to grow — not just ones that reinforce current norms and ways of working.
- Name the power you or your organization holds and consider how that power can be shared to identify solutions that address systemic inequities, such as supporting smaller organizations with engaging funders.
- Make the small things obvious, such as blocking time on your calendar for self-care, not replying to emails on weekends, welcoming an interruption by your child or pet during a video conference, or upholding boundaries the organization puts into place. Staff notice when positional leaders do these things, and it makes them more comfortable following the lead.

In times of crisis, positional leaders confront the additional challenges of making critical decisions that deeply impact others and considering the implications of these decisions. Some of the most challenging decisions that positional leaders confront in a crisis may involve staffing (e.g., furloughs, layoffs), programs (e.g., reduction or full elimination of services), or major restructuring (e.g., merger or dissolution). Some things to keep in mind as positional leaders process these choices:

- Consider how short-term actions can support long-term change that aligns to the organization's values and advances equity (e.g., ensuring staff who are carrying more burden are adequately compensated, addressing pay inequities, shifting resources to programs and activities that support the most vulnerable)
- Use an equity lens in making these decisions*. Some questions to ask include:
 - Who is affected by this decision? How are their voices being represented in this process? These decisions should be made by a body that is demographically representative of the communities the organization serves. Staff representatives, board members, and individuals from the community can be included in the decision making process.
 - How am I disaggregating data to understand the equity impacts of this decision?



*These questions are informed by research from Ericka Hines and Jessica Fish.

- What power dynamics may influence managing and implementing this decision?
- What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from this? Who could be negatively affected? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?
- Communicate with transparency, clarity, and frequency. Share how decisions will be made, and provide regular updates on how they will impact people, programs, and the long-term view.
- If you have to make staff reductions, use your networks to support people with making connections and finding other opportunities. Identify how you will support employees who continue in the organization and solidify your organization's commitment to equity in culture, practice, and goals.




WHAT'S NEXT

Moments of heightened crisis provide an opportunity for transformation because we can no longer ignore the glaring racial disparities and structural inequities within our social systems and organizations. Inclusive leadership practices provide an opportunity for us to consider additional approaches and actions needed to create inclusion and sustain equity, especially during times of crisis. Our work to embody values that advance equity and inclusion is an ongoing process that requires commitment and frequent reflection. We invite you to join us in this work as it continues to evolve.



Appendices

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR INCLUSION AND IMPACT WORKING MATRIX AND DESCRIPTIONS

	Leadership of	 Self	 People	 Organizations	 Systems
Leadership at	Individual <i>Awareness and knowledge</i>	Active Learning	Conscious Communication	Dynamic Problem Solving	Systems Thinking
	Interpersonal <i>Mindsets and behaviors with others</i>	Emotional Agility	Building Relationships	Collaborative Decision Making	Innovative Approach
	Institutional <i>Skills, practices, and policies</i>	Intentionally Adapting	Fostering Inclusive Environment	Developing Shared Vision	Aligning Values
	Ideological <i>Beliefs and norms</i>	Sense of Identity	Lifting Voices	Navigating Multiple Perspectives	Reimagining the Sector



In developing practices for leading **SELF**, leaders are **building an understanding** of how they show up and have an impact in situations, and particularly how their individual contributions can advance equity in the workplace. These leadership practices include: *active learning, emotional agility, intentionally adapting, and sense of identity.*

- **ACTIVE LEARNING** — Assesses and recognizes own strengths and areas of growth through ongoing reflection and input from others; takes ownership for personal growth; actively pursues both formal and informal learning and commits to ongoing inner-work and external race equity learning
- **EMOTIONAL AGILITY** — Acknowledges, understands, and works with one’s own emotions; cultivates practices that support the inner work of racial justice and values the healing, emotions and experiences of others; acts in a mindful, values-aligned, and culturally inclusive way
- **INTENTIONALLY ADAPTING** — Approaches work with flexibility to align around shared goals; navigates complex and changing environments internally and externally; works to understand stakeholders’ and community priorities and adapts accordingly
- **SENSE OF IDENTITY** — Understands one’s own personal and social identities and has a commitment to suspend judgment about the identities of others (particularly but not exclusively racial identity and white privilege); understands how identities are shaped by surrounding social and historical contexts and the impact value judgments based on identity have on mindsets, perceptions, behaviors, and relationships



In developing practices for leading with **PEOPLE**, leaders are **fostering inclusive relationships** grounded in equity and influencing individuals at all levels within and beyond the organization. These practices include: *conscious communication, building relationships, fostering inclusive climate, and lifting voices.*

- **CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION** — Maintains an openness that is other-oriented through mindful reflection and discovery; works to build honesty, vulnerability and trust through communication; has knowledge and flexibility to communicate across diverse social identities and lived experiences

- **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS** — Values cooperation and kindness; devotes time and resources to building authentic and trusting relationships to accomplish common goals; forms partnerships, networks and alliances across structural boundaries
- **FOSTERING INCLUSIVE CLIMATE** — Fosters a culture of mutual support and care where people feel safe bringing problems to the group; works to create an organizational culture where visible and invisible measures of diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged towards the organization's mission; intentionally cultivates a culture of belonging.
- **LIFTING VOICES** — Values the unique ways people learn, lead, and approach work; supports the development of others' ability to lead, contribute, and grow by effectively delegating, coaching, and providing ongoing feedback; encourages the organization to support multiple ways of being and working that are reflective of the community.



In developing practices for leading with **ORGANIZATIONS**, leaders are **adapting work to influence the organization** and solidifying their commitment to equity in culture, practice, and goals with a long-term view.

These practices include: *dynamic problem solving*, *collaborative decision making*, *developing shared vision*, and *navigating multiple perspectives*.

- **DYNAMIC PROBLEM SOLVING** — Identifies obstacles and opportunities based on goals and strengthens the resources and partnerships needed to navigate them; cultivates new possibilities and seeks “both/and” solutions in the face of challenges
- **COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING** — Creates collaborative and inclusive processes to make decisions; aligns decisions with values and short-term and long-term impacts towards the mission; allocates resources accordingly
- **DEVELOPING SHARED VISION** — Builds vision with others, particularly those most impacted by it; communicates and models ownership, commitment, and accountability for shared desired outcomes and ones role in achieving them; inspires and creates systems and practices to sustain commitment and create pathways for others to do the same
- **NAVIGATING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES** — Shares personal perspective and creates space for and values others' perspectives, particularly those most marginalized; seeks mission-oriented and values-aligned solutions in pursuit of greater impact; prioritizes incorporating feedback on issues connected to inclusion and equity



In developing practices for leading with **SYSTEMS**, leaders are **approaching work to fit within the interconnected system** and analyzing the impact of strategies to address the root causes of inequity. These practices include:

systems thinking, *innovative approach*, *aligning values*, and *reimagining the sector*.

- **SYSTEMS THINKING** — Considers how one's work is situated within the broader system; makes decisions that are informed by history, current context, and future possibilities; acknowledges impact as distinct from intent when working within the system to change the system
- **INNOVATIVE APPROACH** — Utilizes an inventive approach to change; pursues innovative solutions and opportunities to bring about strategic change to meet goals; values all experience as expertise
- **ALIGNING VALUES** — Seeks out and incorporates perspectives from all stakeholders; prioritizes the perspectives from the community members most impacted; collaboratively moves everyone involved towards a common goal focused on creating a deeper and more sustainable impact
- **REIMAGINING THE SECTOR** — Recognizes that the social sector is founded on systemic inequities, like racism; actively works against white dominant culture internally and externally; explores new ways of being to strengthen impact and cultivate belonging; actively works towards a better future free of systems of oppression

CONTRIBUTORS

We have deep gratitude for the many people who have advised us on the leadership practices project over the past four years. In particular, we would like to express appreciation for the individuals who contributed to and reviewed this mini-guide during this short period.

Bianca Anderson, ProInspire

Monisha Kapila, ProInspire

Kate Loving, ProInspire

Kristen Lucas, ProInspire

Ashlynn Polanco, ProInspire

Martha Searby, ProInspire

REVIEWERS

Tony Bond, Great Places to Work and ProInspire Board Member

Toby Chaudhuri, SocialxDesign and ProInspire Board Member

Raquel Guitierrez, Blue Agave Partners and ProInspire Board Member

Isabelle Moses, Faith in Action and ProInspire Board Member

Erik Stegman, Native Americans in Philanthropy and ProInspire Board Member

Kerrien Suarez, Equity in the Center

Jasmine Sudarkasa, Hewlett Foundation

Nancy Withbroe, National Women's Law Center and ProInspire Board Member





www.proinspire.org



info@proinspire.org