



QUICK GUIDE

Inspired Leadership Training Activity & Resource Packet



For more information, referrals, or support,
call the NAMI Chicago Helpline at: 833.626.4244

M-F 9am-8pm CST | Sat & Sun 9am-5pm CST



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INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION

1. What is working?
2. What is not working?
3. What do I need to do more of?
4. What do I need to do less of?
5. What am I grateful for?

WELLNESS CARD

When I feel stressed or upset, I'll take the following steps:

1. Activity or Skill _____
2. Activity or Skill _____
3. Activity or Skill _____
4. Repeat all of the above!

If I continue to feel the same way, if things get worse, or if I start to feel unsafe I will call

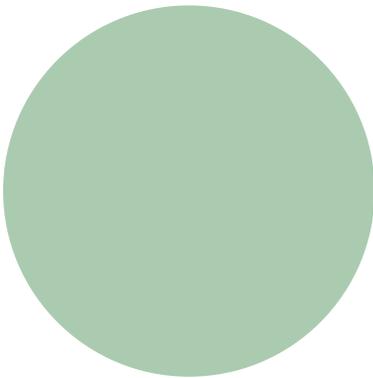
Emergency Contact Name _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number _____

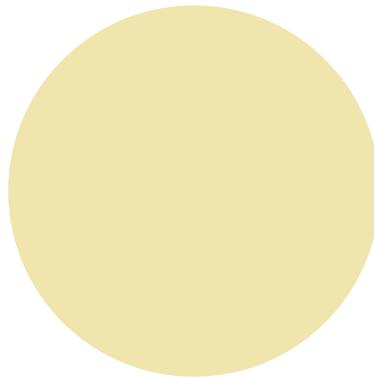
NAMI Chicago Helpline: 888.626.4244

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK

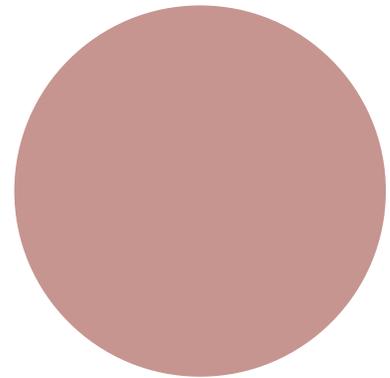
**SIGNS THAT
I AM DOING WELL**



**SIGNS THAT
I NEED MORE SUPPORT**



**SIGNS THAT
I AM STRUGGLING**



HOW I PREFER TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS

Light blue rectangular box for writing communication preferences.

VALUES IN LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

1. Think of a supervisor, colleague, or elder in your family that made you feel good and/or supported and what values did they possess? Who would you highlight as a mentor in leadership?
2. Using the visual below, which values do you struggle with at work and why?
3. If you had to guide all of your decisions at work through a set of values, which do you pick?

authenticity
growth respect compassion
patience wellness vulnerability
competence accountability
learning mentorship
positivity balance
honesty dignity

RECAP AND REFLECTION

1. What is your purpose as a leader?
2. What does purpose have to do with wellness?
3. What are your values and why?
4. Are there values that conflict?

RECAP AND REFLECTION

1. What will I start doing to foster psychological safety?
2. When will I dose psychological safety?
3. How will I decrease stigma around seeking support?
4. When are moments for pause, reset, stillness?
5. What am I taking with me or an epiphany?

WHY BREATHWORK

Controlled breathing is the fastest, most effective way to trigger the relaxation response, enabling you to think more clearly and perform better under pressure.

“When our phone battery goes from green to red, we immediately stop and recharge. But when our own bodies go into the red zone, we push through. Living in the red zone means living in a zone of depletion where we’re more susceptible to burnout, anxiety, or depression.”

TRY IT ON

Deep Breathing Focus

- » Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly
- » Through the nose inhale; allow the hand on the belly to rise, then allow the hand on the chest to rise.
- » Open mouth exhale; allow both hands to fall together.
- » Inhale for a slow count of 5, then exhale for a slower count of 7
- » Repeat 5-10 times.

Equal Time Breathing

- » Sit or stand comfortably.
- » **JUST NOSE BREATHING** (Inhales and exhales with lips sealed)
- » Start with a 5 count...breathe in for a count of 5, match it with breathe out for a count of 5...do 3-5 times, then add on.
- » Work on controlling the pace of your breath and also matching the inhales to exhales in pace.
- » Work up to a count of 10-12 for both breathe in and out.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- » Sitting or laying down is preferred for this exercise.
- » Find a comfortable space, close your eyes, and focus on your body from bottom up.
- » On your inhale, tense up your focused bodypart as tight as you can, on your exhale, relax it completely. Do it twice and then move to the next part.
- » Feet/Toes, Calves, Quads, Glutes, Hips, Belly/Low Back, Chest, Fingers, Arms, Shoulders, Neck, Face/Crown of Head.
- » Once complete, do full body tense and release!

PROMOTING WELLNESS AS AN INSPIRED WORKPLACE LEADER

Workplace leadership is a big job.

People say that employees don't leave workplaces, they leave bosses. No pressure, but that means that as a leader, you are critical to creating a culture that people want to work in, and that fosters talent and wellness. Your leadership is also critical to combating toxic stress in the workplace. But they often don't teach you any of that in school.

Being an inspired workplace leader centers around how you behave and how you relate to others. Here are some core concepts you should know.

#1: Empathetic Leadership

A vital leadership competency: empathy in the workplace is positively related to job performance. When a person practices empathy, it means they work to understand a situation from another person's perspective and react with compassion. When leaders demonstrate this empathy, it enhances work relationships and work performance.¹

Building rapport is a significant part of empathetic leadership. Empathetic leaders move beyond *surface-level rapport* (focusing on general facts and interactions) and form bonds and trust with their employees. This might include the leader and employee connecting over common interests, and the leader self-disclosing their own experiences in a way that encourages trust and safety.

Some behaviors and traits that leaders can exhibit to help build rapport include patience, kind humor, responsiveness and reliability. Practicing sensitivity, tolerance and inclusivity also go a long way.

#2: Psychological Safety

Psychological safety in the workplace means that people feel comfortable speaking up and creating productive, healthy conflict, because they know the team is a strong unit and has each other's backs. It means that people feel comfortable asking questions and brainstorming out loud without fear of consequences, in order to innovate and collaborate.²

As a workplace leader, you play an enormous role in making psychological safety a priority. Talk about it explicitly at work, and why it's important for innovation, team engagement, and a sense of inclusion. Model the behaviors you want to see, and set the stage by showing empathy in the workplace.

Facilitate everyone speaking up. Show genuine curiosity, create space for new ideas, even wild ones—and be positive when someone is brave enough to say something that challenges the status quo.

Establish norms for how failure and conflict are handled. Encourage learning from failure and disappointment, and openly share your hard-won lessons learned from mistakes. Embrace and foster productive conflict: dialogue and debate that helps resolve conflicts productively and moves positive change forward.

It's all about conversations—the foundation of your organizational culture. The quality of the conversations in your workplace has the power to accelerate or undermine everything you do.³

¹<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/empathy-in-the-workplace-a-tool-for-effective-leadership>

²<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/what-is-psychological-safety-at-work>

³<https://www.ccl.org/webinars/transforming-your-culture-with-conversations>

Why it Matters

Empathetic leadership and psychological safety in the workplace open doors to promoting employee well-being and success.

The workplace is inherently stressful, and it's only become more that way during the COVID-19 pandemic. When you as a leader build safety and rapport in your workplace, and when you model the kind of communication you want to see—you make it possible for people to be honest about how they are doing. You create opportunities for employees to share how the workplace could adapt to help them manage stress and burnout and improve quality and innovation of your work.

Bringing in a local mental health organization or a local leadership coach can be a great resource for learning how to put some of these ideas into practice. You can also utilize expert resources like this [Workplace Wellness Mental Health Toolkit](#) created in partnership between NAMI Chicago and WELCOA, and those linked in the references section of this article.

Kasey Franco, MA and Rachel Bhagwat, MA are mental health leaders at NAMI Chicago, an affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Learn more at namichicago.org.

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Why Good Leaders Make You Feel Safe

» https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_why_good_leaders_make_you_feel_safe#t-303679

The Question is the Foundation of Psychological Safety

» <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/359290>

Importance of Empathy in the Workplace

» <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/empathy-in-the-workplace-a-tool-for-effective-leadership>

How to Foster an Innovative Mindset at Your Organization

» <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/how-do-you-respond-to-a-new-idea>

6 Tips for Leading through Conflict

» <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/calm-conflict-in-the-workplace>

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness: Bringing It Out

» <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-article/emotional-intelligence-and-leadership-effectiveness>

Unleashing the Power of Mindfulness in Your Corporation

» <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2018/unleashing-power-of-mindfulness-in-corporations>