

Shared Equity Leadership (SEL) Values and Practices Inventory and Mapping Toolkit

Purpose

The SEL Values and Practices Inventory and Mapping Toolkit is designed for leaders to assess their own strengths and identify potential areas for growth in the values and practices necessary to effectively practice Shared Equity Leadership. Leaders can assess and reflect on their strengths individually and also map the strengths present in their team or group.

Goals

1. Familiarize yourself with the various values and practices associated with Shared Equity Leadership.
2. Identify particular SEL values and practices that are areas of skill or strength for you.
3. Reflect on strengths and brainstorm ways to further develop and apply SEL values and practices.
4. Identify and map the values and practices that are represented on your team.
5. Reflect on how your team can benefit from individuals' strengths in particular values or practices and grow or build capacity in areas that may not be present.

Description of Values Associated with Shared Equity Leadership

- **Love and Care:** An ethic of love and care underscores the personal nature of equity work and shared equity leadership. Leaders feel and display love and care for those they are working with and for— fellow leaders, students, faculty, staff, and community members. They try to approach their relationships with those they may disagree with or who have different experiences, with a deep sense of caring and compassion.
- **Comfort with Being Uncomfortable:** Equity work can be uncomfortable, especially when talking about race. It also sometimes requires that leaders just sit with the emotions and pain of students and community members in uncomfortable situations rather than immediately finding solutions. It is important for leaders to be comfortable with such feelings of discomfort.
- **Transparency:** A value of transparency means being honest, clear, and open about decision-making and about success and challenges in doing this work.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Creativity and innovation are important both in performing equity work and leading in a collaborative or shared manner, especially because there are no universally agreed-upon ways of doing this work.
- **Courage:** Courage for shared equity leaders means standing up for equity and remaining dedicated even when it's not popular or easy and in the face of resistance or skepticism.
- **Self-Accountability:** Self-accountability refers to holding yourself accountable for doing the work, getting results, learning about equity, continuing to challenge your preconceived notions, and being willing to change your beliefs and practices as you continue to learn and grow.
- **Humility:** Humility means to admit when you have done something wrong or when something has not worked well. It also means to understand that you don't have all the answers or solutions, that your experience isn't everyone's experience, and you have things to learn from other people.
- **Vulnerability:** Vulnerability means to open up about difficult personal experiences or putting themselves out there even if they don't know exactly how they will be received. These vulnerable experiences are often around race or other aspects of identity and are painful to share. Being vulnerable can help faculty and staff build connections and trust with one another and better understand the perspectives and experiences of other people, including students.

Individual Values Inventory

Directions: All of these values are important for Shared Equity Leadership, and you may find that all of them strongly resonate with you! For this exercise, instead of selecting the values that resonate most or feel most important to you, please instead select only those values which you feel you are able to embody or display most strongly in your work.

Love and Care	Comfort with Being Uncomfortable	Transparency	Creativity and Innovation	Courage	Self-Accountability	Humility	Vulnerability

Individual Values Reflection Questions

1. Select one of the values you chose as a strength and describe an example of a time you demonstrated or embodied that value. (You can do this for multiple values!)
2. How might you leverage your strengths in a team-based or shared leadership setting? (EXAMPLES of what that could look like)
3. Were there any values that felt especially challenging or even off-putting for you? Why do you think these are more challenging or uncomfortable for you? Are there structures, systems, or conditions on your campus or in your department that might be contributing to these feelings of challenge or discomfort?
4. Are there any values you don't fully understand that you would like to explore and learn more about?
5. Are there any values you would like to work on developing and growing? How might you go about that process of growing your strengths in these areas?

Team Values Reflection Exercise

1. Does your team have one or a few values that are very strongly represented on your team map? How have you seen this value manifest in your day-to-day work given that so many team members have strength in this area?
2. Are there any values that were selected by only one or two members of the group? How might you capitalize on their strengths in these areas to bring these values to the forefront of your team's work?
3. Are there any values that no one selected as their area of strength? How might you cultivate these values on your team without existing reservoirs of direct expertise or strength? Are there conditions or systems on your campus that may be inhibiting the expression of these values?
4. How could you connect people with strength in a particular value with those who want to grow or develop in this value?

Description of Practices Associated with Shared Equity Leadership

- **Foundational Practice**

- ***Centering Students' Needs*** (or ***Centering Needs of Systemically Disadvantaged Communities***): The first and foundational practice of shared equity leadership is centering students' needs or the needs of systematically disadvantaged communities when having discussions and making decisions by thinking about all different ways that students and people of those communities could be impacted by a particular decision.

- **Relational Practices**

- ***Building Trust***: Leaders need to build trust and strong relationships among members of the leadership team to effectively lead around issues of equity in a collaborative manner.
- ***Cultivating Positive Relationships***: Leaders can learn to trust each other by cultivating positive relationships in more informal settings, such as having a potluck party outside of formal professional settings.
- ***Welcoming Disagreements and Tensions***: Disagreements and tensions are an inevitable part of doing equity work, and thus, it is important to normalize disagreement and conflict among the leadership team. By welcoming and respectfully managing disagreements and tensions, the leadership team creates a safe place where a diversity of perspectives are valued and rewarded.

- **Communication Practices**

- ***Using Language Intentionally***: The practices of using language intentionally are to (1) explicitly name race issues or other equity challenges, (2) talk about equity frequently and publically to emphasize its importance, (3) intentionally use asset-focused rather than deficit-focused languages, and (4) use different language to frame their work for different audiences in order to more effectively garner support.
- ***Setting Expectations***: Equity work takes time. It is important for leaders to set expectations for the long term so that other members of their leadership teams, the broader campus community, and stakeholders understand that the larger systemic changes to make institutions more equitable take time to enact.
- ***Listening***: Listening authentically and actively to others' perspectives and experiences is crucial for equity leaders to collaborate effectively.

- **Developmental Practices**

- **Learning:** Leaders learn about equity and leadership in four different ways: (1) listening, specifically to others' stories of their lives experiences, (2) looking at data, facts, and figures, such as racially disaggregated data on student outcomes, (3) learning formally through professional development sessions on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and (4) learning informally through reading or discussions with colleagues.
- **Helping Others Learn:** Leaders help others learn using the inverse of the four strategies they used to learn themselves: (1) sharing personal stories, whether it is their own perspective as a member of a marginalized group, their own journey to becoming an equity leader, or others' experiences, (2) marshaling data to draw colleagues' attention to inequities, (3) facilitating professional development sessions about equity or specific leadership skills, and (4) creating environments where colleagues can learn from one another informally.
- **Modeling:** Leaders model the shared equity leadership values and practices by actually exercising them so that others can see how they work and gain confidence that equitable change was possible through the shared leadership effort.

- **Practices that Challenge the Status Quo**

- **Diminishing Hierarchy:** Diminishing organizational hierarchy and power differentials enable all perspectives to be heard. Minimizing hierarchy helps leaders without positional authority feel comfortable challenging senior leaders and serves to promote greater equity for leaders from minoritized backgrounds whose voices might otherwise be overlooked. For example, leaders could flatten the hierarchies by forming a circle in a meeting, or senior leaders could volunteer to take on a less prestigious service role in a meeting.
- **Questioning:** Asking questions is another strategy to challenge the status quo. Leaders need to ask questions about taken-for-granted policies and practices, deeply held assumptions you and your colleagues have, and the issues to which they did not know the answers or solutions.
- **Disrupting:** A step-further practice that leaders can take is to intentionally disrupt traditional norms or ways of thinking and operating to point out inequities.

- **Structural Practices**

- **Hiring Diverse Leaders** (or composing diverse teams): Hiring leaders from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, those who were low-income or first-generation college students, or LGBTQ+, is an important practice of shared equity

leadership in order to better represent the diversity and complexity of the student body. The complexities inherent in solving equity challenges at a broad or systemic level benefit from the perspective of people who bring different ideas and experiences at the table.

- ***Systemic Decision-Making***: When engaging in systemic decision-making, leaders (1) connect or build up pockets of existing work and make sure to have a cohesive approach across campus and (2) embed equity in every facet of the institution and make it unavoidable.
- ***Creating Rewards and Incentives***: Rewarding and incentivizing equity work is another important practice of shared equity leadership. Leaders and institutions can reward/incentivize equity work by tying unit budgets to achievement of DEI goals, building in rewards for equity work in the faculty review process, providing seed grants for faculty and staff who want to experiment with an equity-oriented project, and providing professional development credits for faculty who participate in equity-related professional development opportunities.
- ***Implementing New Approaches to Accountability***: While self-accountability was an important shared value, equity leaders also enacted new practices around accountability as they worked to hold one another accountable as a collective. Some of those accountability approaches can be more informal (e.g., holding colleagues accountable in a respectful, professional way) and can be more formal (e.g., explicit and measurable DEI goals or holistic and qualitative approaches to accountability).

Individual Practices Inventory

Directions: Write each team members' initials in the boxes that correspond with the practices they selected as their biggest strengths.

Foundational Practice	Relational Practices			Communication Practices			Developmental Practices			Practices that Challenge the Status Quo			Structural Practices			
Centering Students' Needs	Building Trust	Cultivating Positive Relationships	Welcoming Disagreements and Tensions	Using Language Intentionally	Setting Expectations	Listening	Learning	Helping Others Learn	Modeling	Diminishing Hierarchy	Questioning	Disrupting	Hiring Diverse Leaders	Making Decisions with Systemic Lens	Creating Rewards and Incentives	Implementing New Approaches to Accountability

Individual Practices Reflection Questions

1. Which practices did you identify as areas of strength? Was there one (or more) category of practices for which you selected multiple areas of strength?
2. Select one of the practices you chose as a strength and describe an example of a time you demonstrated or enacted that practice. (You can do this for multiple practices!)
3. How might you leverage your strengths in a team-based or shared leadership setting? (EXAMPLES of what that could look like)
4. Were there any practices that felt especially challenging or even off-putting for you? Why do you think these are more challenging or uncomfortable for you? Are there systems or structures on your campus or societally that might be discouraging these practices, either implicitly or explicitly?
5. Are there any practices you feel you don't fully understand that you would like to explore and learn more about?
6. Are there any practices you would like to work on developing and growing in? How might you go about that process of growing your strengths in these areas? What do you need from your team or institution?

Practices Team Mapping Exercise

Directions: Write each team members' initials in the boxes that correspond with the practices they selected as their biggest strengths.

Foundational Practice	Relational Practices			Communication Practices			Developmental Practices			Practices that Challenge the Status Quo			Structural Practices			
	Building Trust	Cultivating Positive Relationships	Welcoming Disagreements and Tensions	Using Language Intentionally	Setting Expectations	Listening	Learning	Helping Others Learn	Modeling	Diminishing Hierarchy	Questioning	Disrupting	Hiring Diverse Leaders	Making Decisions with Systemic Lens	Creating Rewards and Incentives	Implementing New Approaches to Accountability
Centering Students' Needs																

Team Practices Reflection Exercise

1. Are there one or a few practices that are very strongly represented on your team map? How have you seen this practice manifest in your day-to-day work given that so many team members have strength in this area?
2. Are there any practices that were selected by only one or two members of the group? How might you capitalize on their strengths in these areas to build this practice into your team's work?
3. Are there any practices that no one selected as their area of strength? How might you cultivate these practices on your team without existing reservoirs of direct expertise or strength? Are there structures or systems on your campus that may be inhibiting the enactment of these practices, either implicitly or explicitly?
4. How could you connect people with strength in a particular practice with those who want to grow or develop in this practice?

Further Reflection on SEL Values and Practices

There is space below for you to reflect on all the values and practices in any way that would be most helpful for you. Some suggestions for how you might use this space:

- In your own words, describe what each value and practice means to you and how you have embodied them in your role on campus.*
- Give an example of a time you have seen each value or practice embodied or enacted by colleagues. Or provide several examples of how you might have seen a value or practice enacted in different ways by different people.*
- Describe how you might struggle with a particular value or practice or feel that it is difficult for you to enact and reflect on why that might be.*

Values	
Love and Care	

Comfort with Being Uncomfortable	
Transparency	
Creativity and Innovation	
Courage	

Self-Accountability	
Humility	
Vulnerability	

Practices

Foundational Practice

Centering student needs (or centering needs of systemically disadvantaged communities)

Relational Practices

Building trust

Cultivating positive relationships

Communication Practices

Setting expectations

	Welcoming disagreements and tensions	
	Using language intentionally	
	Listening	
<i>Practices that</i>	Diminishing hierarchy	

<i>Challenge the Status Quo</i>		
	Questioning	
	Disrupting	
<i>Structural Practices</i>	Hiring diverse leaders	

	Making decisions with systematic lens	
	Creating rewards and incentives	
	Implementing new approaches to accountability	
<i>Developmental Practices</i>	Learning and helping others learn	

	Modeling	