

► BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO LEAD CHANGE

Feb 2022

Every Court Leader Should Know

As court leaders, it is no secret that we often intentionally or unwittingly seek to address court related matters from within the walls of our profession and institution. Of course, it's easiest to draw upon our existing relationships and those individuals who are most familiar to us, but when it comes to leading meaningful change intended to improve the court response to mental health and co-occurring disorders, a cross-sector and community-based approach is necessary. Once stakeholders are identified, the next priority is to turn the most promising contacts into collaborative relationships.

PURPOSE (THEORY OF CHANGE)

Relational Leadership Theory is often simply defined as the process of building relationships and using those relationships to facilitate change or make progress toward a shared vision or goal. Using relational leadership principles can accelerate change through teamwork and empowerment.

The relational leadership theory consists of five main components that court leaders should know and practice to build effective relationships: inclusiveness, empowerment, purposefulness, ethics, and process.

INCLUSIVENESS: Promotes inclusivity and uses all stakeholders' perspectives to identify where change should occur

EMPOWERING: Empowers others to communicate ideas and opinions

PURPOSEFUL: Identifies and inspires common goals

ETHICS: Lead by example

PROCESS: Ensures understanding of roles and tasks



APPLICATION

As courts are often the leading referral source to behavioral health services, building relationships with local, state, and national organizations and workgroups is essential to leading change. Since many of the stakeholders involved in these initiatives are unfamiliar with court rules and processes, making an initial contact may be intimidating.

Therefore, courts should proactively seek participation within existing initiatives or take on the role as conveners to indicate a sincere interest in collaboration.

As you discover what strength you can draw from your community in this world from which it stands apart, look outward as well as inward. Build bridges instead of walls.

- Sonia Sotomayor

- Be proactive
- Build **relationships** which are cross-sector and community-based before they are “needed”
- Listen
- Share goals and interests
- Identify and **discuss** commonalities
- Plan
- Communicate
- Motivate and enable
- Broadcast successes

Importance to Leading Change

As court leaders, we are responsible for inspiring public trust and confidence. We care deeply about our communities and the people who make up those communities. It is often the wellbeing of those communities and people that inspire our passion to lead and facilitate change for the common good. As we seek to improve our court and community response to mental health and co-occurring disorders, we will draw motivation, strengthen partnerships, and achieve goals through our relationships and engaging our resources.

RESOURCES

CSG Justice Center - CSG Justice Center: [My Community Resources](#)

[What Is Relational Leadership? \(Definition and Tips\) | Indeed.com](#)

Suggested Reading: [Relational Leadership: Theory, Practice and Development, 1st Edition](#) by Nicholas Clarke

