



*Supporting Staff Resilience: Field
of Counseling Lessons To Manage
Pandemic and Post-Pandemic*

Burnout

*Online Learning Consortium 2022
Innovate Conference, Dallas*



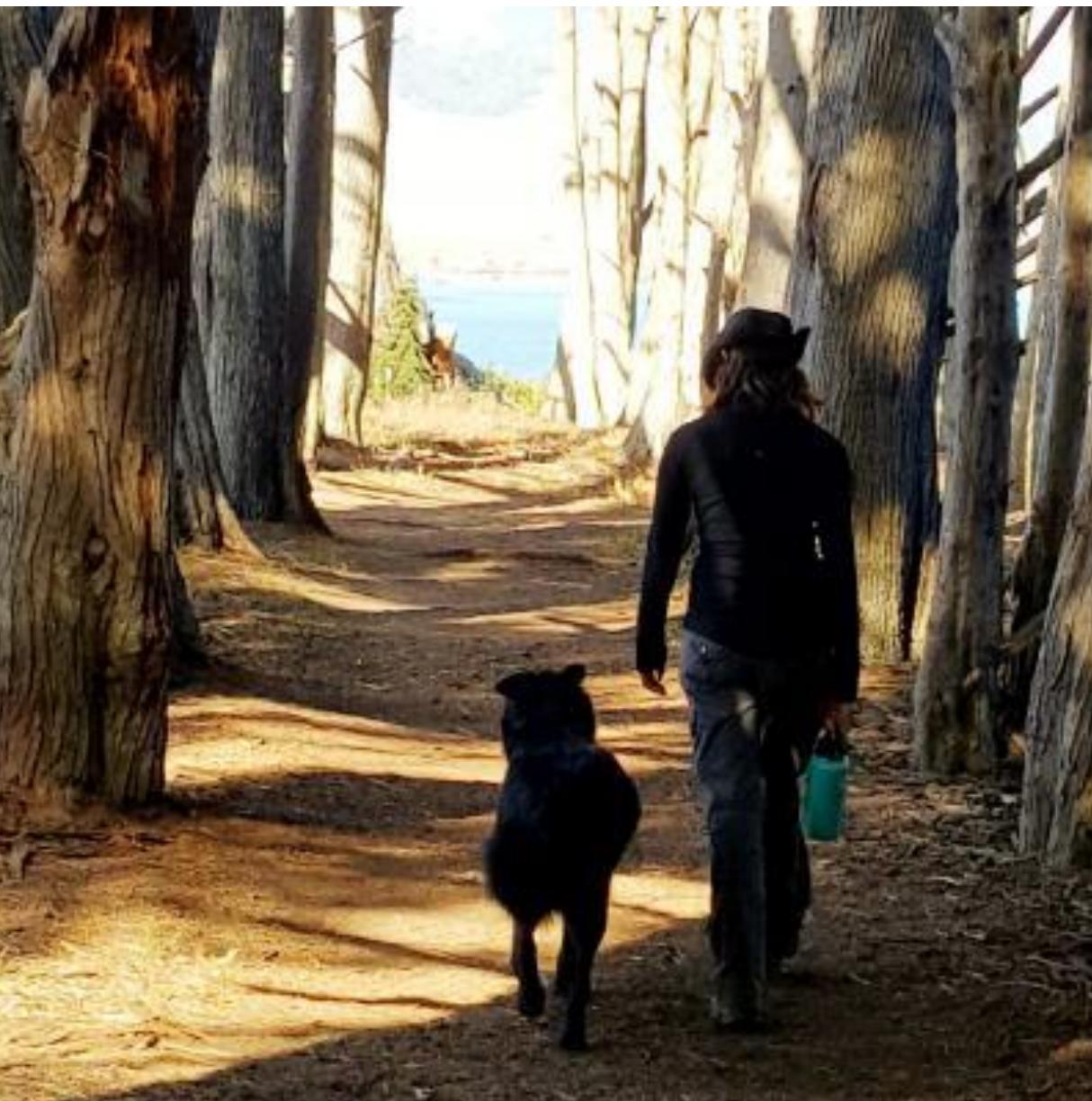
Prescott College

Agenda



1. Introductions (5 min.)
2. The Challenge (15 min.)
3. The Role of Supervisors and Organizational Leaders: Leadership Studies Perspective (15 min.)
4. What Does the Field of Counseling Have to Say? (30 min.)
5. Break-out Groups (20 min.)
6. Break-out Groups Reports Back to Plenary Session (25 min.)
7. Conclusion / Take-aways (5 min.)
8. Q&A (5 min.)
9. Adjourn

Introductions



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The Challenge: Facts and Figures



According to an American Psychological Association (APA) and Harris Poll survey (2021) of over 3,000 adults nationally:

- Overall there's optimism about the pandemic ending (70%)
- But pandemic-related stress symptoms have continued for many:
 - Greatest stress levels among
 - ...the younger (Generation Z, Millennials)
 - ...had lower income levels (below \$50,000 per year)
 - ...and were parents
- Respondents with high stress levels...
 - avoided social situations (24%)
 - altered eating habits (23%)
 - procrastinated or neglected responsibilities (22%)
 - altered physical activity levels (22%)
- 74% of respondents reported a physical impact of stress, including headaches, feeling overwhelmed, fatigue, and changes in sleep.
- Physical symptomology was exacerbated for parents compared to non-parents

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The Challenge: Facts and Figures



K12:

- 55% of teachers now say that because of the pandemic, they're going to leave the profession sooner than they'd planned
- Worse Among African American teachers (62%) and Hispanic or Latin-American teachers (59%)
- 90% say burnout is a “serious problem”
- 86% say they've seen colleagues leave the profession since the start of the pandemic.
- The number of retirements doubled in 2021 (The average annual approximates 1.5 million; in 2021 it was around 3 million)
- A survey of U.S. public sector workers released in 10/21: K-12 educators are the most likely to report higher levels of anxiety, stress and burnout during the COVID* pandemic.

*NOTE: For our purposes, the use of the term “Covid” includes Covid pandemic and Post-Covid Pandemic effects and conditions.

NEA (2022)

The Challenge: Facts and Figures

Higher education is not much better:



- Almost 70% of respondents said they feel stressed (over double the 2019 32%)
- 2/3 of respondents feel fatigued (compared with less than 1/3 in 2019)
- 35% feel angry (12% in 2019)
- The majority of faculty are experiencing elevated levels of frustration, anxiety, and stress
- More than half of all faculty are considering retiring or changing careers and leaving higher education, with tenured faculty members even more likely to retire than others.
- Reported decreases in self-efficacy

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Why? How did we get Here?

It's simple to just say it's because of Covid. That's partly true but there's more to it:

1. Structural Issues
2. Coping capabilities to handle Covid vary
3. Covid impact on employees' personal lives varies
4. Covid impact on the job

Let's take a closer look at each of these...



What Non-Covid Factors Are Impacting Our Post-Covid Challenges?

Interest in the teaching profession has been waning for a decade

- Low pay
- Difficult working conditions
- Little to no room for career advancement
- Individuals have had to manage rapid changes in education technology and approaches, many times with inadequate training, support, or other professional development

***Enrollment in teacher-prep programs has decreased by more than a third since 2010
(Center for American Progress, 2019)***

Did We All Share the Same Capabilities When Covid Started?

Some individuals have lower stress resilience*, based on past experiences and previous or existing trauma**.

Examples:

- Community violence
- Family trauma
- Grief and loss
- Human-caused disasters
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters
- Poverty
- Refugee and immigrant trauma

Covid impacts were worse for some individuals. For example, individuals who have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences evidence lower coping capabilities. Covid stressors, meanwhile demanded more coping!

Important Definitions:

*Stress Resilience: ability to **adapt** successfully to stress, trauma and adversity, enabling individuals to avoid stress-induced mental disorders

**Trauma: an emotional response to a terrible event

Burnout: tiredness of body and mind, and lower motivation because of work stress or frustration that does not end. Occurs when there is an unequal balance between demands of the job and coping resources.

Compassion Fatigue: Emotional and physical tiredness leading to decreased ability to empathize or feel compassion for others.

Pandemic Fatigue: a reaction to sustained and unresolved adversity which may lead to complacency, alienation and hopelessness, emerging gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions.

Stress Resilience When Covid Started Was NOT the Same for All

Covid had differential impacts:

- Community violence
- **Family trauma (e.g., lockdown psychological effects)**
- **Grief and loss (e.g., Family, friends deaths)**
- **Human-caused disasters**
- **Medical trauma (e.g., Covid and its aftermath – “long Covid”)**
- Natural disasters
- **Poverty (e.g., job loss, medical expenses)**
- Refugee and immigrant trauma



In an APA survey of adults, individuals with low stress resilience were more likely to report stress levels so high that they had difficulty making basic decisions daily (i.e., what to eat, what to wear).

How Did Covid Impact Personal Lives?

The pandemic produced additional demands and stress for those directly and indirectly exposed.

- Directly exposed:
 - Isolation
 - Sickness (employees' own health)
 - Job loss
 - Kids' schools being online
 - Homes becoming workspaces
- Indirectly exposed through the impact of:
 - Family member/ Friend illness, Isolation, Job loss, etc. (e.g., one in three teachers were caring for their own children during this time)



Bridging both personal and job Covid aftermath, for a growing number of Americans, Covid's led to a reevaluation: Gigantic office buildings, work cubicles, water-cooler conversations, rigid work hours, massive rush hours and lockstep career paths are falling away.

The mental health impact of COVID and its ripples across our society have taken a life-changing toll. Whether they are seeking a different location or supervisor, greater potential for growth/advancement, or a new environment, many in our workforce are unhappy and unfulfilled.

How Did Covid Impact Our Jobs?



- Problems caused by the pandemic are myriad and vary by institution and situational factors, but generally...
- Major stressors:
 - Teaching dual instruction simultaneously (in-person and online)
 - Remote instruction
 - Administrative support (many institutions were new to online, with little to no infrastructure, training and/or support for new-to-online instructors expected to migrate to online virtually overnight!)
 - Instructional anxiety flowing from new instructional requirements.
- Staff shortages have left employees exhausted and increasingly burned out; Staff shortages have spread beyond the classroom
- More than 2/3 of Higher Ed survey respondents said they struggle with increased workloads and a deterioration of work-life balance—particularly female faculty members.
- Covid impact on students has expanded student needs, in turn creating yet more demands on instructional and staff employees.
- The effects of Covid have led to resignations and turnover, worsening the challenges for remaining employees
- In many institutions of higher education, folks were already tapped out: Many colleges were already running lean due to budget constraints and the competitive situation in higher education.

What Now?

- In short, compare what was on your plate, on your instructors' plates, and on staff's plates before the pandemic versus now
- Covid may be receding, but Covid and post-Covid impacts remain with us -and likely will for some time
- Within the structural / macro constraints that we can't change immediately ourselves, an important question is:
 - **What can we do NOW as educational leaders to improve outcomes for our team members and for our organizations?**
- That's the focus of our discussion today.
- Let's start by examining what the field of leadership provides in terms of guidance about our role.



Covid/ Post-Covid through an Organizational Leadership Lens

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting economic conditions, supply chain crises, and widespread social and political unrest are forcing leaders in all organizations to adapt to new ways of working and examine assumptions about the best ways to help employees and organizations succeed.
- Leaders struggle to make sense of the shifting environment, keep up with fast-changing events, and learn how to lead the people in our teams effectively and successfully in the midst of turmoil.
- Many leaders are not prepared to effectively lead through times of dramatic and anxiety-inducing events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - ***Only 15 percent of around 10,000 respondents from 10 countries strongly agreed that their employers were offering the resources to support their overall well-being.***

Leadership

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.

The individuals who are leaders are a person who guides others.

Effective leaders are company's managers.

Leadership is very important.

Leadership During and After Crisis

- Covid has brought a challenge to the forefront: How can leaders help people remain physically, emotionally, and psychologically healthy as well as productive during times of crisis?
- Leaders have a lot to deal with Covid and its aftermath, and the emotional well-being of employees can sometimes get lost among the tremendous variety and complexity of demands on leaders' time. Based on the literature, five points effective leaders use as guidance at such times:
 - **Communications.** Talking with people who are scared, anxious, and sometimes angry is especially important during crisis or uncertainty. Err on the side of over-communication. Good communication underlies each of the following four points.
 - **Project calm.** Effective leaders strive to project calmness, managing their own emotions and uncertainty so they can help others cope with the stress and anxiety inherent in a crisis.
 - **Show compassion and concern.** Employees, customers, and other stakeholders who are affected by the crisis need to know that their leaders care about what they are going through.
 - **Reduce uncertainty.** Leaders are clear in communicating the size, scope, and possible impact of Covid. Workplaces are developing what will become the new norms for working from home, instruction standards, etc. Leaders can help during this stage of uncertainty.
 - People want to know what they are facing, even if it's tough.
 - Leaders who regulate their own uncertainty can better move ahead with decisions and actions in a timely way, even when they do not have clear answers.

(Daft, 2022)

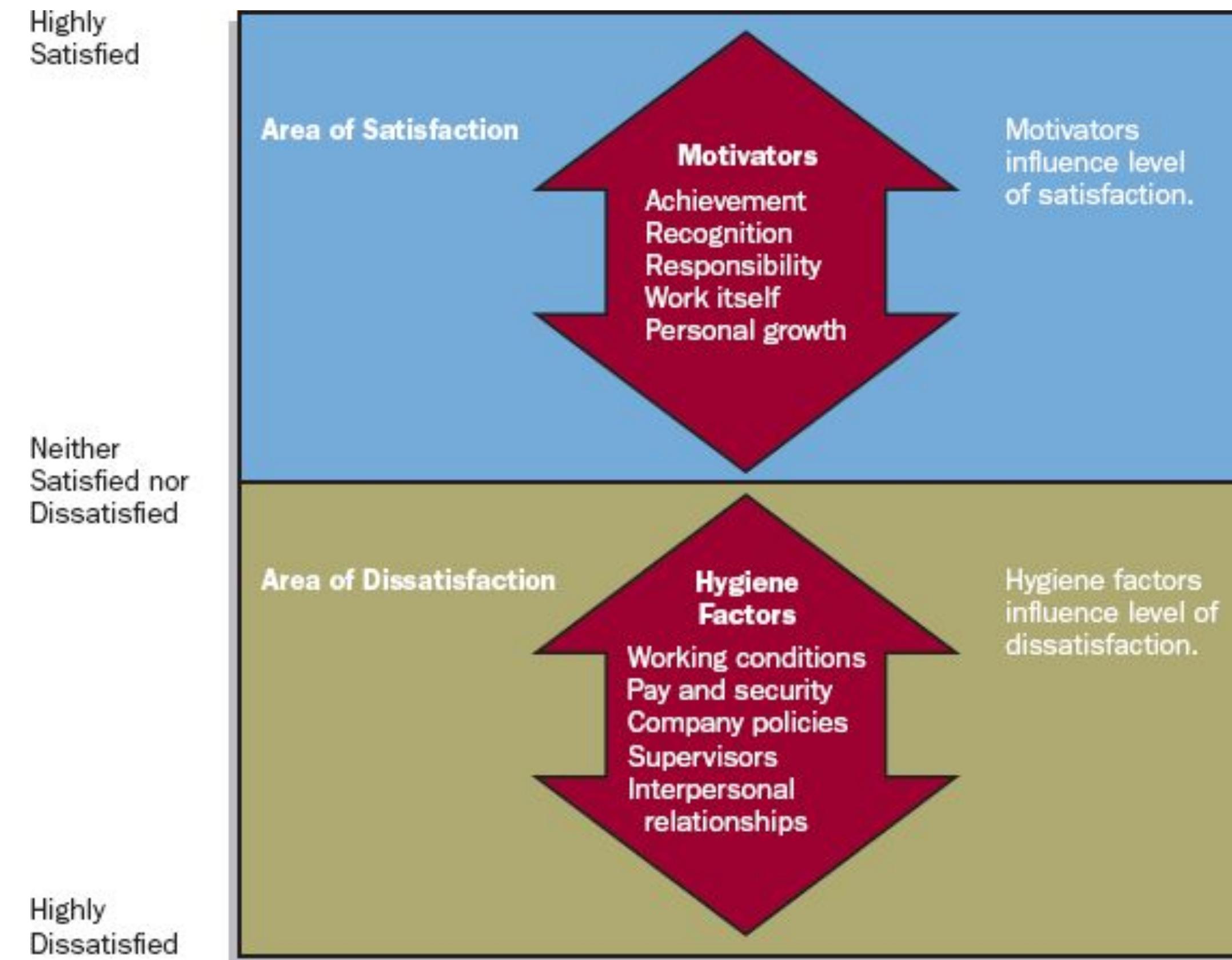
Leadership During and After Covid

- Five points effective leaders use as guidance at such times (con't):
 - **Build trust.** Cultivating trust and a sense of community and connectedness is another critical part of leading through a crisis.
 - *Protecting community and a sense of belonging -even in small ways: Meadow Office Interiors, with headquarters in New York City, used to have wine gatherings on Wednesdays and pizza on Fridays but had to find a new approach for people working at home because of the shutdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders decided to let remote workers choose \$45 worth of personalized snacks from SnackMagic that were sent to their homes.*
 - *Many leaders have also found that praise and expressions of appreciation are powerful extrinsic motivators.*
 - People appreciate a sense of purpose and belonging. Leaders can strive to help people connect their work to a larger vision.
 - Leaders build trust by combining “deliberate calm” with “bounded optimism.” People need to feel confident in the organization’s collective ability to meet the challenges they face.
 - Humility helps to build the trust that is essential to help people through difficult times.
 - *Halla Tómasdóttir, CEO of The B Team and co-founder of Reykjavik University, said, “what [the COVID] crisis has shown us is that the leadership style of ‘I know it all’ is not a good leadership style for this moment or any other challenge we ... need to deal with collectively, collaboratively, with compassion, and with care.”*

Let's take a closer look at a few ways to apply these five points...

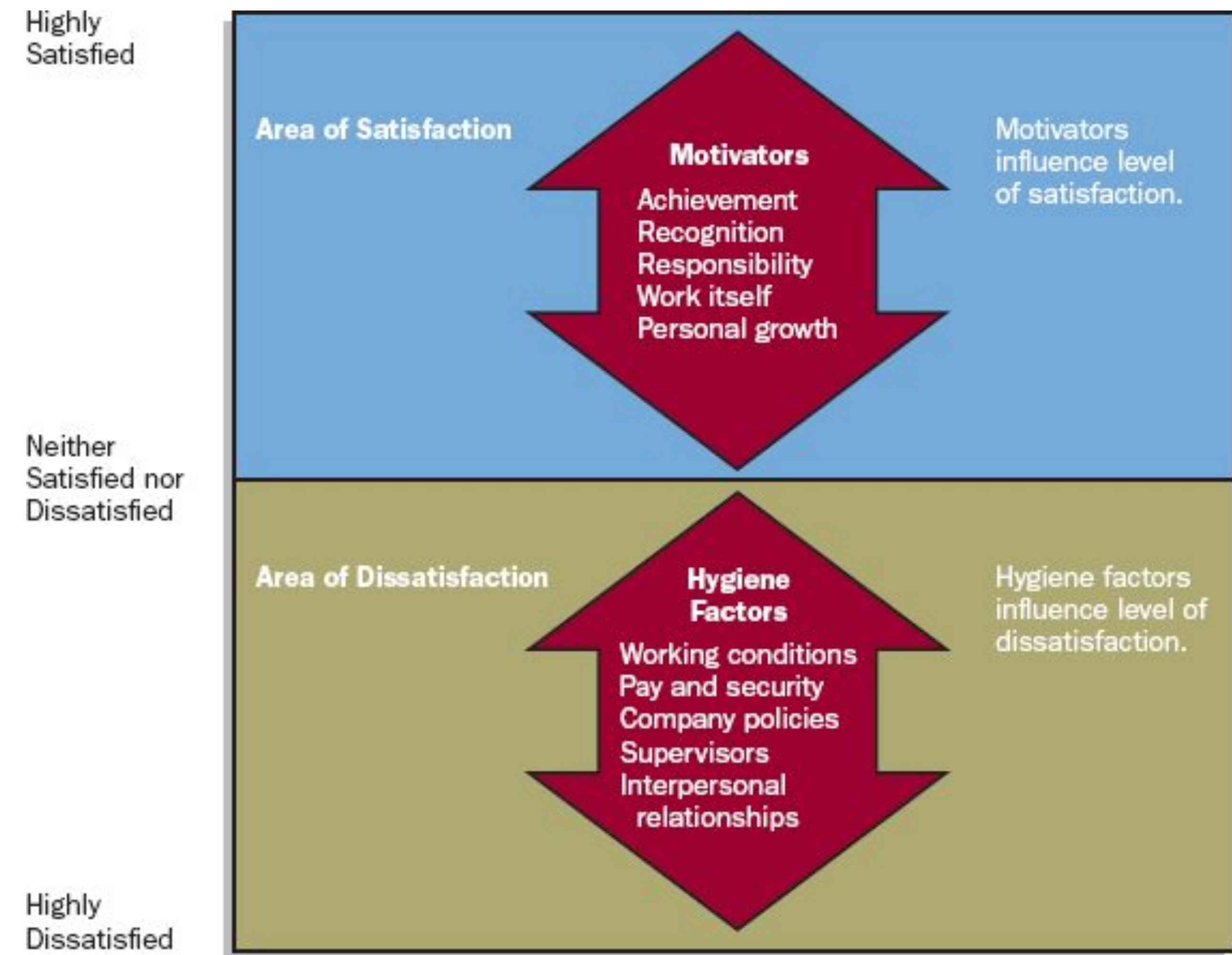
Leadership: Motivation and Empowerment

- Motivated and empowered employees are more productive and innovative. Ideally work behaviors satisfy both higher and lower needs while serving the mission of the organization
- Motivation flows from intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that satisfy both lower and higher needs.
 - Covid's left higher needs unmet
 - Covid's shifted reliance on extrinsic rewards
- What leaders can do to restore the intrinsic rewards of work?
 - Increase intrinsic rewards through empowerment (e.g., flextime, work-from-home flexibility)
 - Increase engagement - or give people a chance to grow and advance (e.g., Improve training and development opportunities to mitigate instructional anxiety)
 - *A survey of more than 8,000 people in the United States in mid-2020 found that engagement had fallen 16 percent since the start of the pandemic. A subsequent study identified the attitudes and behaviors of leaders as the primary factors influencing whether people's engagement levels declined. Leaders who connected with employees emotionally as well as professionally, encouraged them to take opportunities to build their skills, and kept them focused on the purpose of their work, helped people stay engaged.*



Leadership: Motivation and Empowerment

- It's an interesting exercise is to think about the impact of Covid in terms of sources of satisfaction versus dissatisfaction...
- To improve motivation /increase satisfaction, leader focus includes (1) reduction of dissatisfaction sources (e.g., offset Covid impact on working conditions), and/ or (2) increase of satisfaction sources
- The benefits of a happy and fulfilling workplace are not just in retention in this "quits" era, but in productivity as well
 - ***Happiness, in one study, resulted in a 12 percent spike in productivity, while unhappiness was associated with a 10 percent drop***

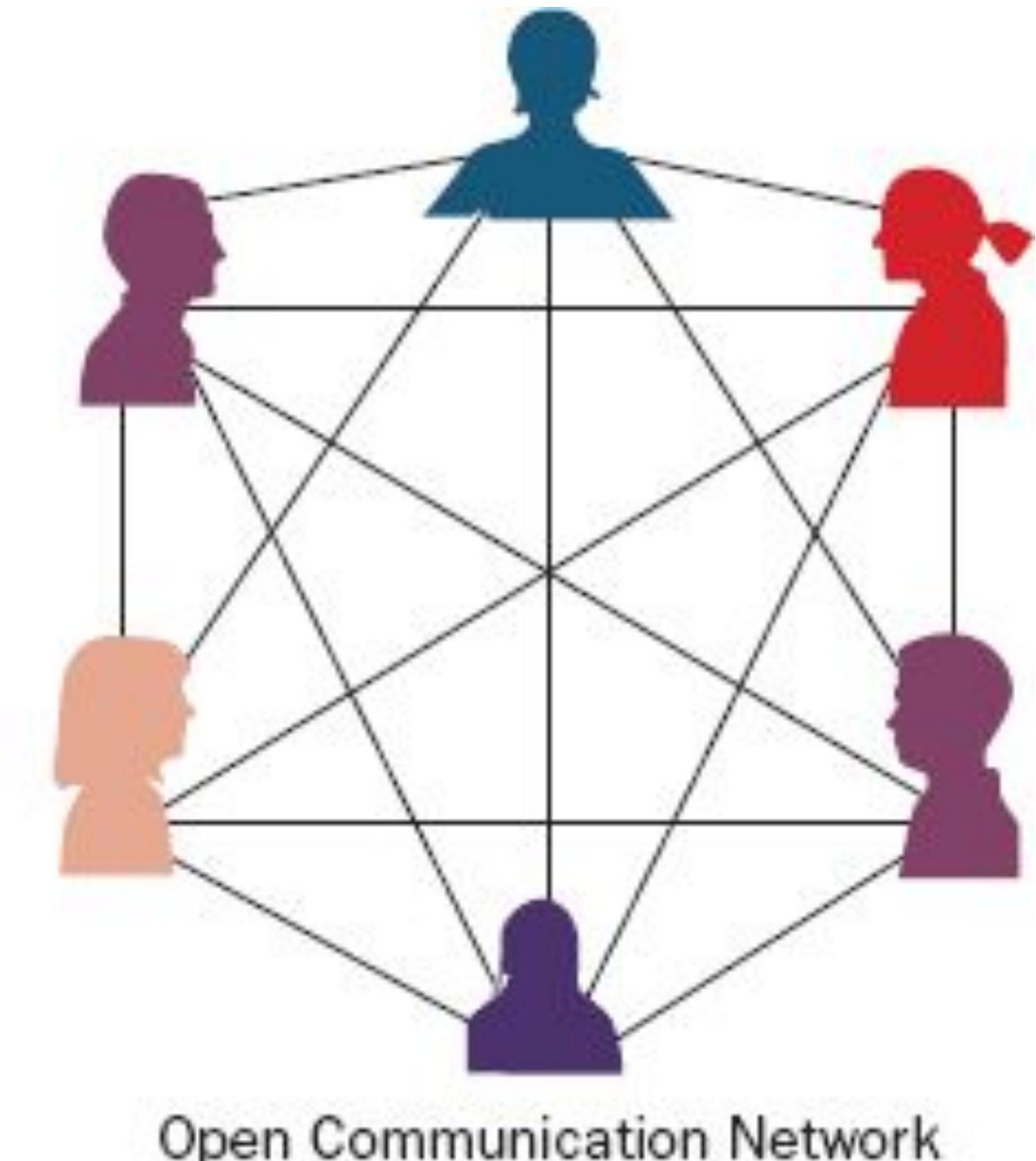


Leadership: Motivation and Empowerment

- **People who have a strong individual purpose have a greater sense of well-being, are more resilient and recover better from negative or stressful events, and typically live longer and healthier lives.**
 - To attack the anxiety, stress, and fearfulness among nurses caring for COVID-19 patients, Emily Fawcett, a nurse at Lenox Hill Hospital, started “hope huddles,” in which nurses and doctors gather on either side of a hallway to cheer COVID patients being discharged. The practice, which spread to hospitals nationwide, replaces negative feelings with positive emotions and makes people feel more hopeful about their work. “It really brings a smile to everyone’s day and... keeps them going through another long shift”.
 - Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic found that when comparing people who say they are “living their purpose” at work with those who say they are not, the former reported levels of well-being that are five times higher than the latter –and they were four times more likely to report higher engagement levels.

Leadership: Communication

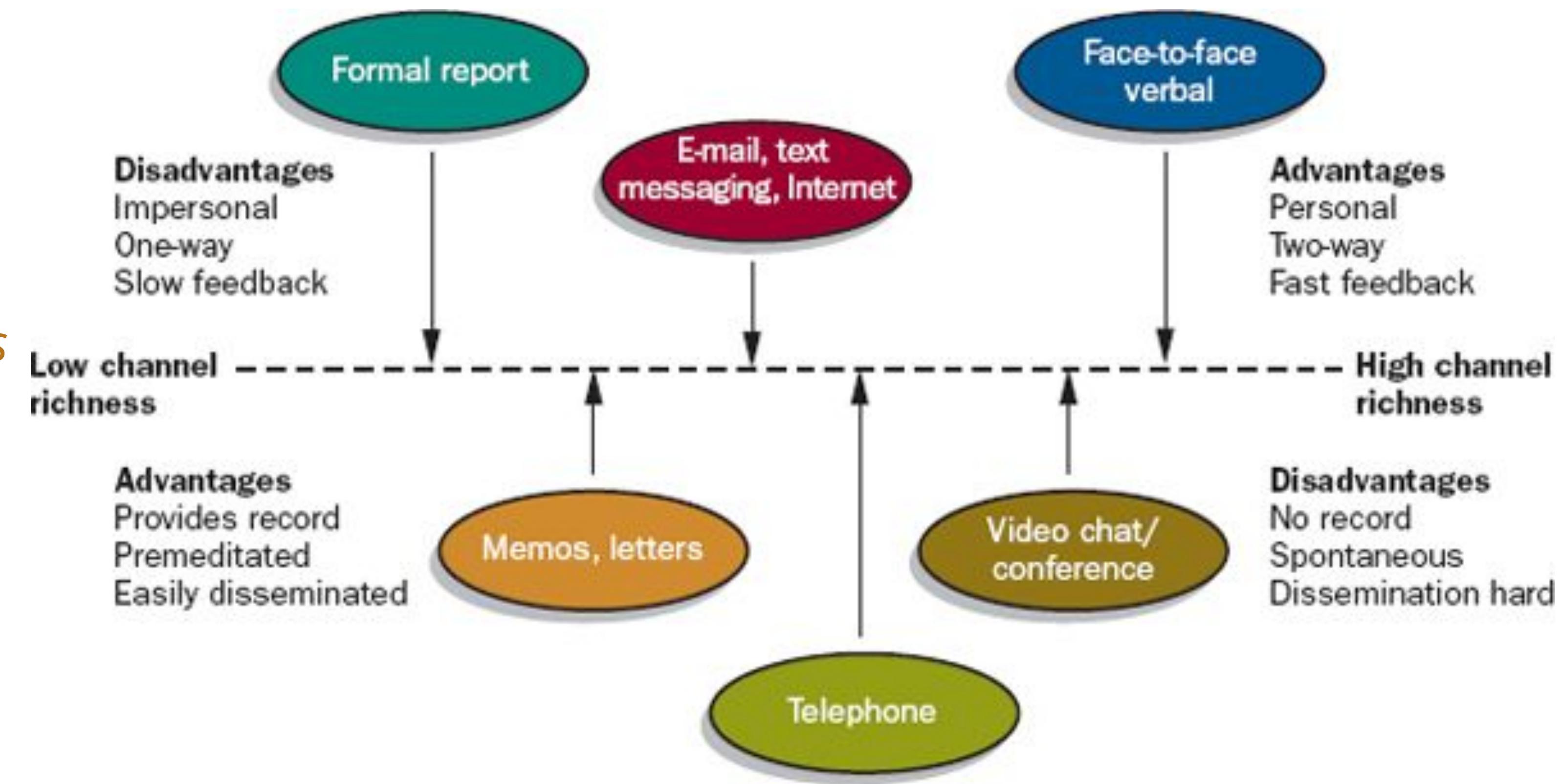
- Back to communication... Effective leaders strive to be communication champions
- Applying Key elements of leader conversations
 - Open communication
 - Asking questions
 - Listening
 - Candor



Leadership: Communication

Using the best communications channels for the message

- Many people found regular phone calls more satisfying than text, e-mail, or video meetings for connecting with colleagues or clients while they were working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A step down in richness, and one that increased in use during the COVID-19 pandemic, is Zoom. While not quite as rich as face-to-face, video chats do enable some eye contact and reading of facial cues and body language, along with the immediate feedback needed to resolve issues.



Leadership: Non-Verbal Communication

- Value of awareness of how nonverbal communication influences the ways in which messages are received
- Nonverbal communication: Messages transmitted through
 - actions,
 - behavior,
 - facial expressions, and
 - tone of voice...

...accounts for over one-half of the entire message received in a personal encounter

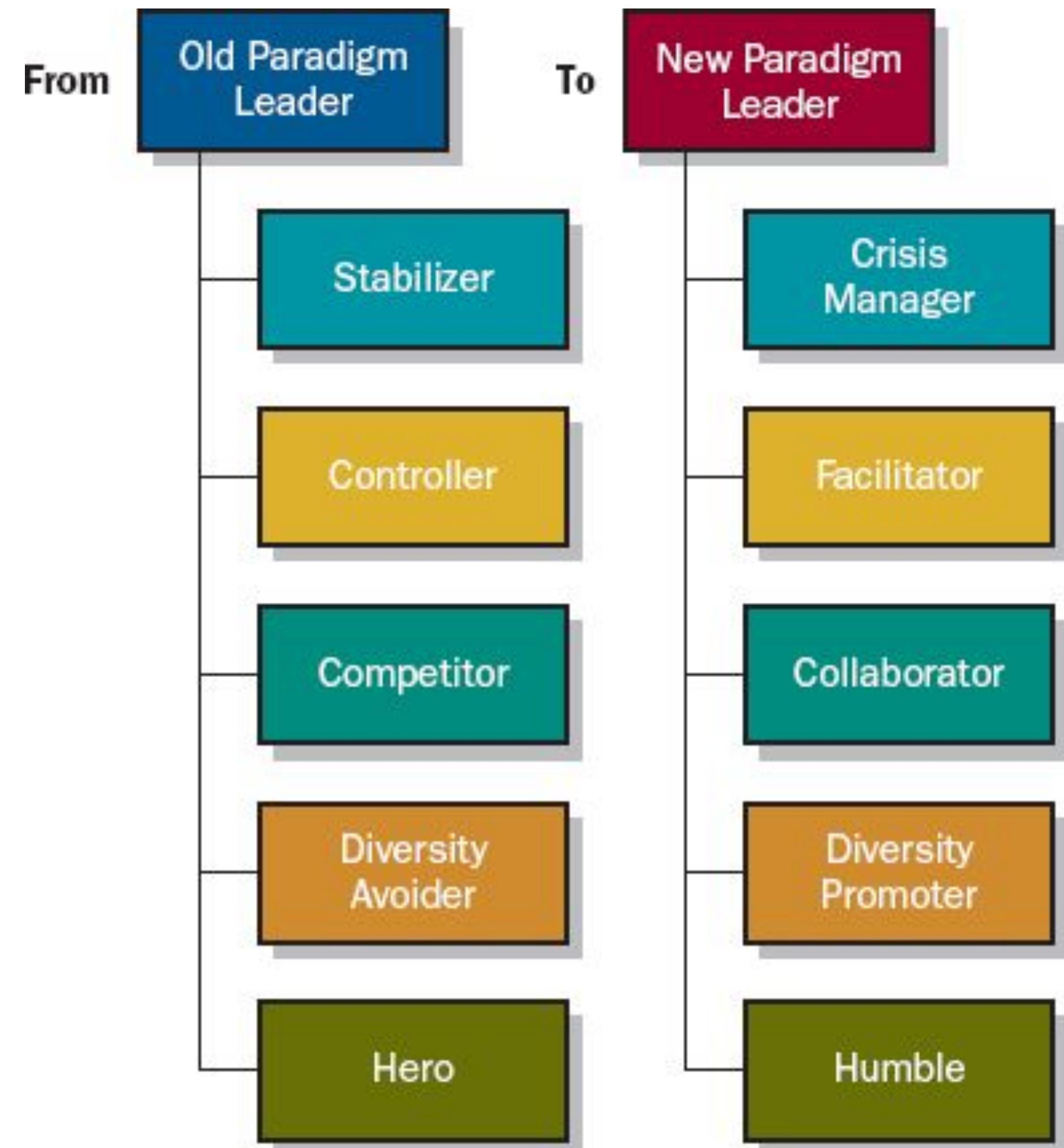
- Effective leaders pay attention to what they signal to others in addition to their verbal messages
- One way leaders nonverbally communicate the value of feedback is by practicing management by wandering around, which means that leaders leave their offices and speak directly to employees as they work.
 - *From Controller to facilitator: During the COVID-19 pandemic, when many people were working from home, one team at a European company launched a virtual open-door policy. People could access a videoconference link at any time to share concerns, ask for help and advice, or simply check in. Top leaders loved the idea and decided to set up a dedicated crisis team, opening the videoconference link to all employees as well as to clients, providing a form of always-on virtual feedback and support.*

Covid & Post-Covid: A Shift in Leadership Styles

- **Rise of Mindfulness:** During the pandemic, many leaders shifted their leadership style toward demonstrating a more people-oriented approach, particularly when employees were working from home with offices shut down, leaders found a greater need to keep tabs on the emotional state of their employees, not just track their completion of tasks.
 - *Pat Wadors, chief talent officer at Service-Now, a cloud computing services company, said "forgiveness has never been higher" among leaders because employees were working from home. "We're not as worried about the polished output, and we're more engaged with employees".*
 - *With growth of work-at-home, Kimberly Anstett, global chief technology officer at Iron Mountain Inc., adapted a concept called "silent meetings," which begin with a quiet time to study written materials. During meetings, teams of employees actively collaborate at the same time, discussing and evaluating the materials. "Silent meetings get all attendees to participate and share their ideas instead of having one voice dominating the conversation".*
- Effective leaders recognize the importance not only of keeping their own emotions in balance but also of helping others manage negative emotions so they don't negatively impact the entire team or organization.
- Leaders who once expected their employees to show up at the office for work each day began allowed working remotely. Remote work's becoming a norm at many organizations.

The New Reality for Leaders

- . The COVID-19 pandemic sparked a renewed interest in what **leaders' traits and behaviors are valuable for leading during a time of crisis.**
- . Every organization will face a crisis at some time, and **leaders must be prepared to effectively lead during this time of anxiety and uncertainty.**
- . **The “New Reality” for leaders includes risk of pandemics, remote work, virtual teams, social justice expectations, globalization, artificial intelligence, geopolitical wars, climate change, resource scarcity, and redistribution of economic power.**



Field of Counseling Lessons: Self-Care is More Important than Ever

Why is it important to take care of yourself first?

As a Counselor

- It is an ethical obligation; as a counselor we are charged with ‘doing no harm’
- We need to be aware of, and manage, our stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, etc., in order to be there for our clients
- Helps in building our own resilience so we are more prepared for the unexpected challenges when supporting our clients
- We need to be fully present with our clients to create the space to build a working alliance that promotes trust
- Striving to be our best self, can empower clients to towarding being their best selves as well

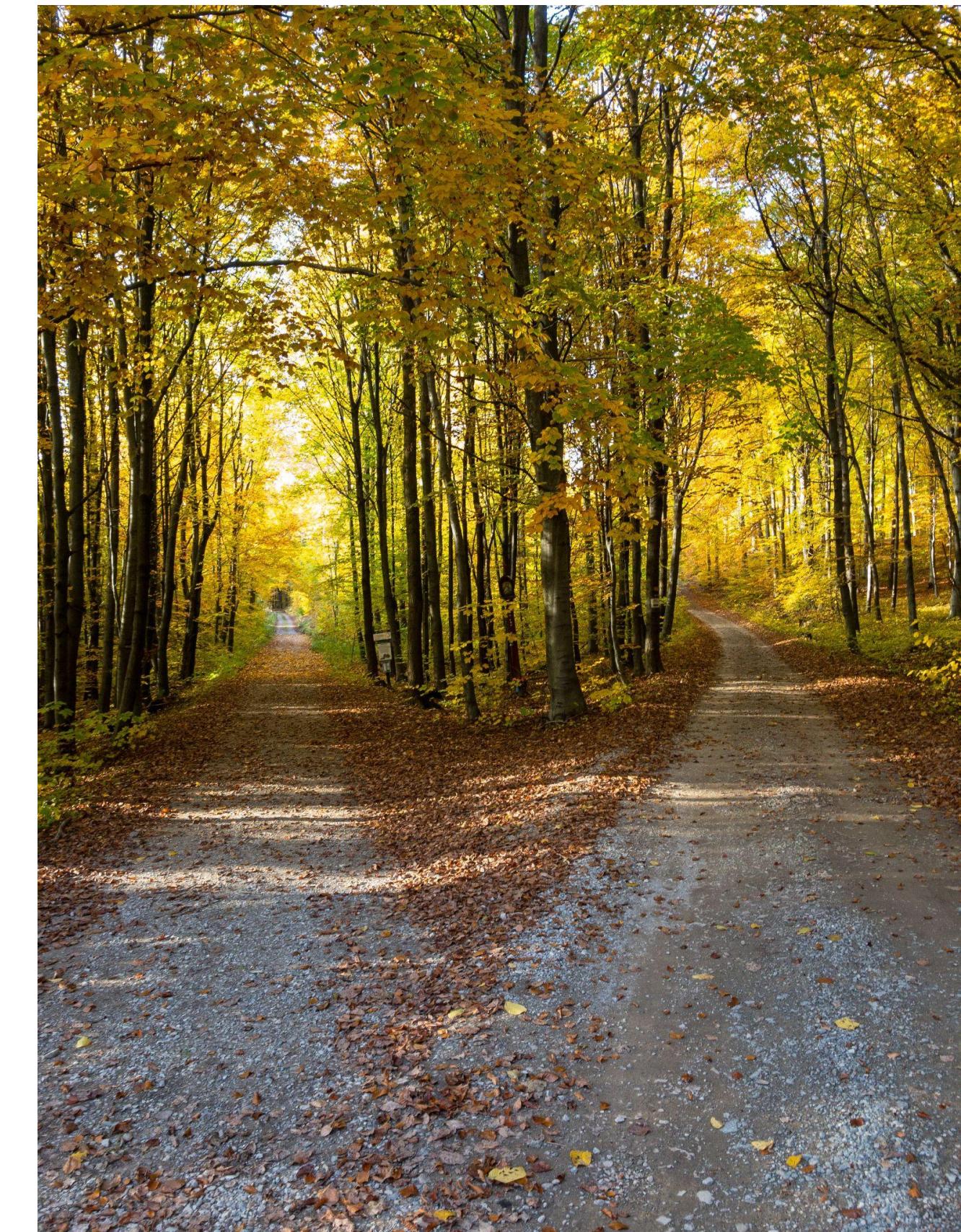
As a Leader

- Best practice and just good ole common sense
- We need to be aware of, and manage, our stress, burnout, compassion fatigue in order to be there for our staff/employees
- We need to build resilience so we are prepared for the unexpected challenges to support empower our staff/employees
- We need to be fully present with our staff/employees to create the space to build trusting relationships
- Being our best self, can empower others to be there best selves too

Field of Counseling Lessons: Barriers to Self-Care

Why is taking care of ourselves so hard to do?

- Feel too overwhelmed
- Feel guilty, selfish, or even undeserving
- Don't believe we have time
- Have an idealized view of what self-care 'should' look like
- Put others' needs before own
- Don't know how to begin
- Do not have a good sense of own values or boundaries!



Damian Sirotak on Unsplash

Field of Counseling Lessons: Self-Care and Wellness

According to The Wellness Institute, “Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.”

Six Domains of Wellness

1. Social
2. Emotional
3. Spiritual
4. Intellectual
5. Physical
6. Occupational



Field of Counseling Lessons: Self-Care and Wellness

Chambers Christopher et al. (2006) state “Self-Care practices are self-initiated behaviors that promote good health and well-being”

Daily Practice

- Mindfulness work
- Breath work
- Meditation
- Moving your body
- Being outside
- Reading
- Journaling

Overall

- Diet/Sleep/Exercise
- Personal therapy
- Spend time with friends and family
- Make time for yourself
- Know your limits
- Boundaries between work and home
- Lead with your values

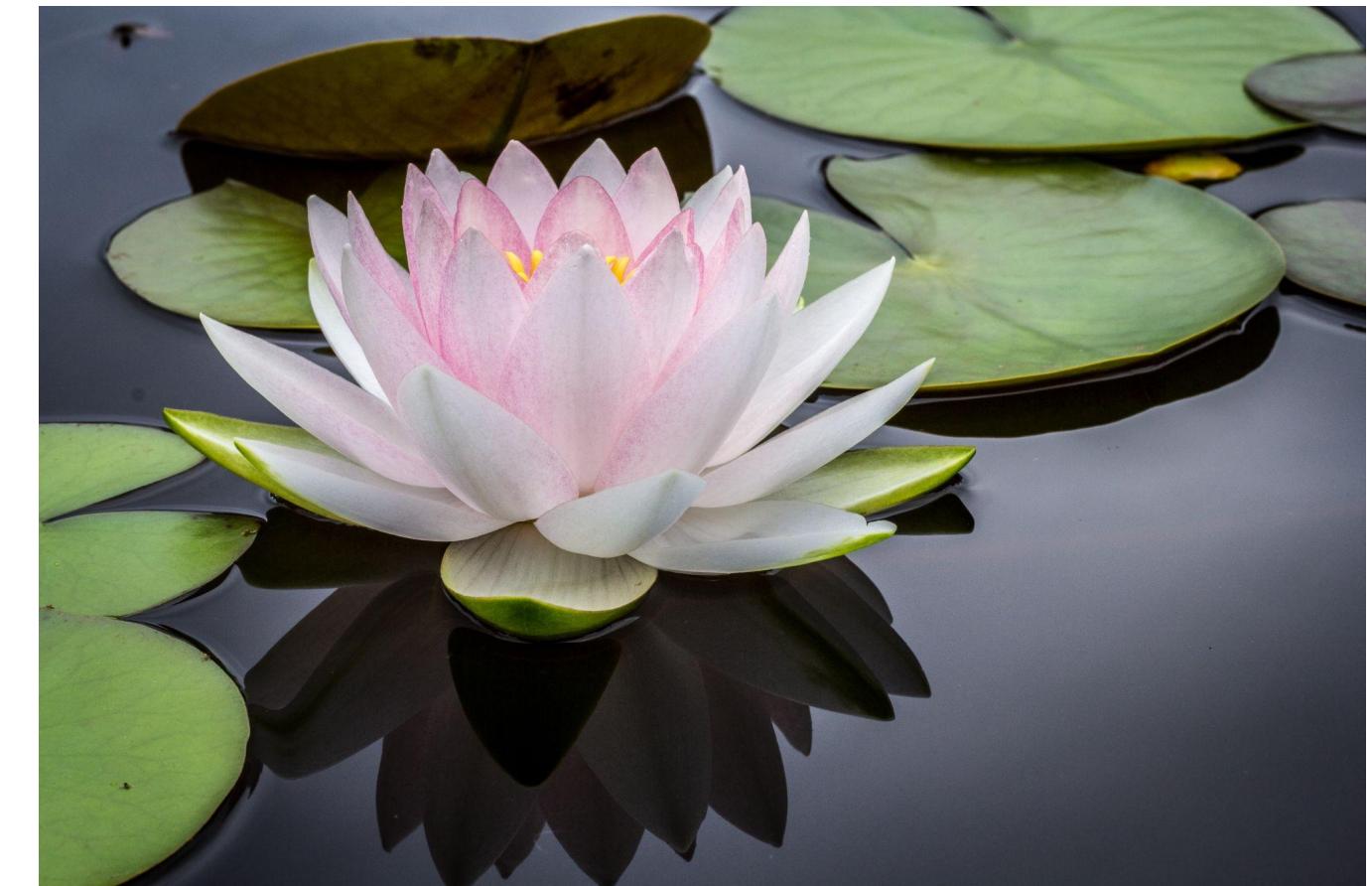


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Field of Counseling Lessons: Know Your Values, & Boundaries

Engaging in a process of reflection to understand your Values and Boundaries can set the foundation for more meaningful self-care practices

Values

- Identify your core values, i.e. health, family, alone time, creative expression, etc.
- Align your self-care practices with your values
- Understanding ‘Why’ you are doing something can help you commit long term to your self-care practice
 - Example: If relationships are one of your top values, practice a no technology night once a week and be present with your friends/loved ones.

Boundaries

- Identify your personal boundaries within your work life, within your home life, and in between
Recognize those that are hard boundaries, and those that can be more permeable
- Practice saying ‘no’
- Understand the relationship between your values and your boundaries, and return to your values when you need support

Field of Counseling Lessons: Self-Assessment & Resources

Self-Assessments

- [Burnout Self-Test](#) from Mind Tools
- [Compassion Fatigue Test](#) from Healthy Place
- [Self-Care Assessment](#) from Therapist Aid

Resources

- [Self-Care Tools](#) from Professional quality of Life (ProQOL)
- [Self-Care Resource Center](#) from the American Psychological Association
- [Self-Care](#) resources from the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families
- [Wellness Resources & Tools](#) from the National Wellness Institute

Self-Care Plan Templates

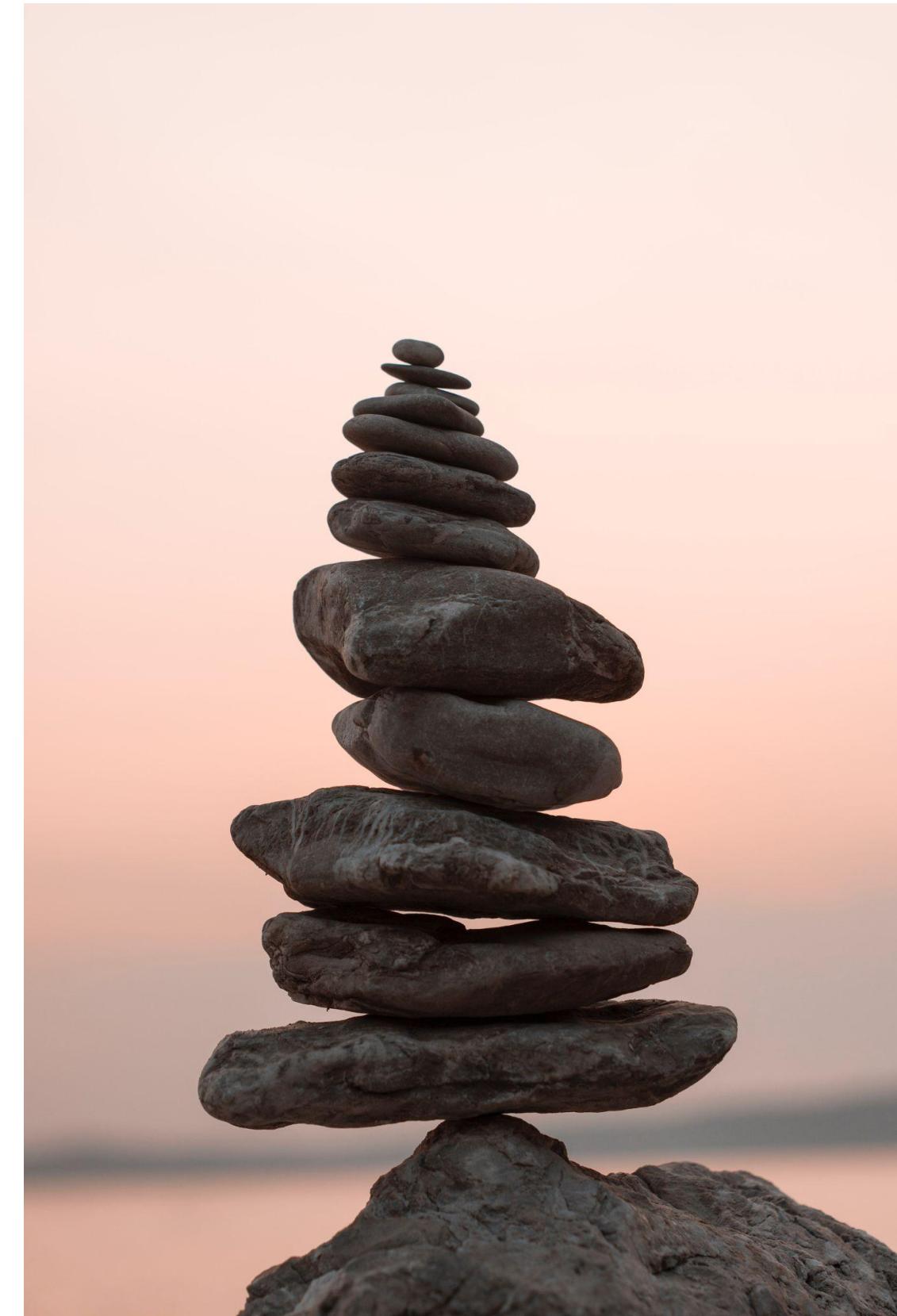


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Field of Counseling Lessons: Taking Your Self-Care to Work

As Supervisor

- Urging folks to ask for support (helps the supervisor be effective in providing support!)
- Encouraging low-impact debriefing with supervisors
- Take inventory of available resources for you and your staff/employees
- Role model!!!

Systemic dimensions discussed in Management Perspective section:

- Fair salary
- Positive feedback and other non-compensation rewards that recognize good work
- Healthcare and mental health support
- Time off policies
- Resources to minimize stress from the job (e.g., training, orientations)
- Modeling and promoting an organizational culture that's positive.

Break-Out Groups

- Let's shift gears now to share the challenges and solutions that (1) you've experienced and (2) your institution has experienced.
 - Breakout rooms
 - Designate a note-taker who will report back your group's results in the plenary session
 - For the next 20 minutes, please discuss:
 - i. Start by revisiting the wellness activity. Share your views on the role of leader wellness; whether you had any "aha moments," etc. Did anything surprise you?
 - ii. What challenges have faculty or staff experienced at your institution related to the pandemic? What were the responses by the institution's leadership that you thought most effective for you, the organization and other employees?
 - iii. How have you been addressing self-care as you manage Covid and post-covid challenges. If you're a supervisor, how have you managed these challenges in that role? What practices have been most effective (and that others here today may find useful)?

Groups Report Back

- Please summarize insights from your group (25 minutes)

Questions????



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Thank you!

Evaluate Sessions and Win!

- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen
 - Complete session evaluation*



*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per person per session) = one contest entry. **Five (5) \$25 gift cards** will be awarded.