



LEADER FACILITATION GUIDE

Prepared for Arizona Fire Chiefs Association by The Leadership Crucible Foundation

Introduction:

At The Leadership Crucible Foundation, we are passionate about cultivating leaders who possess two core traits that are essential for making a positive impact in the lives of others: the drive to leave the organization in a better state than they found it and the commitment to pay it forward by nurturing the next generation of leaders. We believe that personal stories and experiences from individuals of diverse backgrounds provide valuable lessons on overcoming challenges and shaping lives. Experience is truly the best teacher, and we are dedicated to sharing these stories with others by offering monthly podcasts and newsletters that your team can watch, read, and discuss.

The Leadership Crucible's podcasts and newsletters offer great opportunities to hear from and read about a variety of leaders who have shared their experiences, challenges, and leadership insights so that others might benefit. By listening to the podcasts and discussing their key points, participants in the ensuing discussions can become better leaders and positively impact themselves and others. We have found that designating a facilitator for each session is an excellent way to promote engagement and enable everyone to get the most out of the material.

The Facilitators Role:

The primary role of a facilitator is to create a productive and effective environment that enables the group to achieve its goals. The word "facilitate" means "to make it easy." As a facilitator, your job is to make the discussion easier for all participants. The facilitator's role is to manage the design and flow of the meeting rather than to focus on the content. The goal is to have a constructive dialogue in which participants can express and explore new ideas and concepts, enhance their skill sets, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Achievement of this goal will create learning opportunities and insights that will help the team develop their skills as a group and as individuals. Facilitator responsibilities include:

- Planning the session and communicating the logistics to participants. There will be two resources provided, one link will include the podcast, the newsletter and team discussion guide, the other is this facilitator guide. You can determine how to best distribute to your team.
- Ensuring everyone is included and preventing any one person from dominating the discussion
- Intervening if the discussion starts to fragment
- Identifying and addressing any dysfunctional behavior
- Summarizing discussions and conversations
- Bringing closure to the meeting with an actionable end result or outcome

By managing the discussion in a constructive and effective way, the facilitator can help the team achieve its goals and allow individuals to develop their skills, which ultimately lead to a more productive and successful organization.

THE LEADERSHIP CRUCIBLE PODCAST

Episode Synopsis:

Are you a military or first responder leader seeking to debunk common myths about mental health challenges? Have you heard these misconceptions: mental health issues are a sign of weakness, seeking help can jeopardize your career, and admitting struggle is a sign of failure? Stay tuned as we unravel the truth behind these myths and equip you with the knowledge to effectively support mental health in your organization.



About the Podcast Guest:

Dr. Tracy S. Hejmanowski is a licensed clinical psychologist, with over 20 years of expertise working with service members, first responders, veterans, and their families. Her work began in a VA Medical Center, followed by an assignment working with repatriated prisoners of war. She was stationed both overseas and stateside as an active-duty U.S. Navy psychologist, followed by work as a DoD contractor for 11 years as the Program Manager of Naval Hospital Jacksonville's Deployment Health Center.

Dr. Hejmanowski worked full time as a Baptist Behavioral Health outpatient provider in early 2020 through the pandemic and transitioned to part-time teletherapy for first responders and veterans in late 2021. [Learn more.](#)

Key Discussion Points From This Episode:

1. Invaluable insights into leadership strategies honed in demanding military environments.
2. Proven techniques for navigating and triumphing over challenges in leadership roles.
3. Maintaining strong, unified teams via remote work, ensuring productivity and collaboration.
4. Cultivating a culture of personal responsibility to drive success and growth.
5. Effective approaches for identifying and empowering the future leaders of your industry.

THE LEADERSHIP CRUCIBLE NEWSLETTER

Key Discussion Points From The Newsletters:

1. Situational awareness is about knowing what is going on around you.
2. How to achieve the highest level of situational awareness.
3. Never get so focused on what you think you know that you lose sight of the bigger picture.
4. Be aware how your own schema and biases can create blind spots for you.
5. We need other people we trust with knowledge and experience to tell us what they see.

Information from the above two lists will provide initial discussion points for the group's discussion to get your meeting started. You also may opt to listen to the podcast as a group and facilitate a dialogue immediately after. In that case, participants we would encourage you to have your team read the newsletter on their own before the meeting. You know your group best, so choose the approach that works best for your team.

ENGAGING YOUR GROUP

Prior to your meeting, it's a good idea to send an email to your group containing the links to the podcast, newsletter and team discussion guide. Encourage your team to listen to the podcast and read the newsletter beforehand. Ask them to note down their key takeaways from both, with a focus on the leadership and life lessons learned. This way, everyone will come to the meeting prepared and ready to engage in a meaningful discussion.

Facilitation Tips:

Creating a Forum for Healthy Dialog - As the facilitator of this group discussion, you need to create a safe and respectful space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. The primary goal is to have a meaningful and constructive exchange of ideas on the chosen topic. Adopting the following (or similar) procedures will result in the desired meaningful and constructive exchange of ideas. Be sure that you and your participants establish a few initial ground rules. For example, decide whether participants must listen to the podcast and read the newsletter on their own before the meeting or whether this will be done as a group during the session.

Importantly, you must help the participants identify behavioral norms that will result in a non-judgmental space where everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinions. Because balanced participation is crucial for a productive discussion, it's your job as the facilitator to encourage everyone to speak up and share their perspectives. You also may wish to explore different methods of discussion, such as individual written reflection, sharing in pairs or small groups, and other techniques that accommodate different learning and reflection styles.

Wrapping it Up - As the facilitator of this group discussion, you need to create a safe and respectful space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. The primary goal is to have a meaningful and constructive exchange of ideas on the chosen topic. Adopting the following (or similar) procedures will result in the desired meaningful and constructive exchange of ideas. Be sure that you and your participants establish a few initial ground rules. For example, decide whether participants must listen to the podcast and read the newsletter on their own before the meeting or whether this will be done as a group during the session.

Have the group discuss how the specific points that resonated with them can make your organization better. Record the answers below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

As the facilitator, it's important for you to capture the follow-up actions during group discussions and create a plan to address and implement them. Designate someone to take notes during the meeting. The plan you develop should include specific actions, identify responsible parties, and specify deadlines for completion. Communicate the plan to all members to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities for the plan's implementation and the deadline(s) by which they must complete their designated tasks.

Follow-up Action Items:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In summary, it's important for you, the facilitator, to approach these leadership discussions with a positive attitude. Treat them as opportunities to help develop a great team. Set a time for your next session at the end of every meeting and encourage everyone to participate. Remember to have fun with these discussions and to keep an open mind. Together, you and your team can become better leaders by learning from others' experiences.