

Children’s Mercy 4 Core Leadership Excellence Model

Definitions and Narrative

Created By

Pixel Leadership Group, LLC

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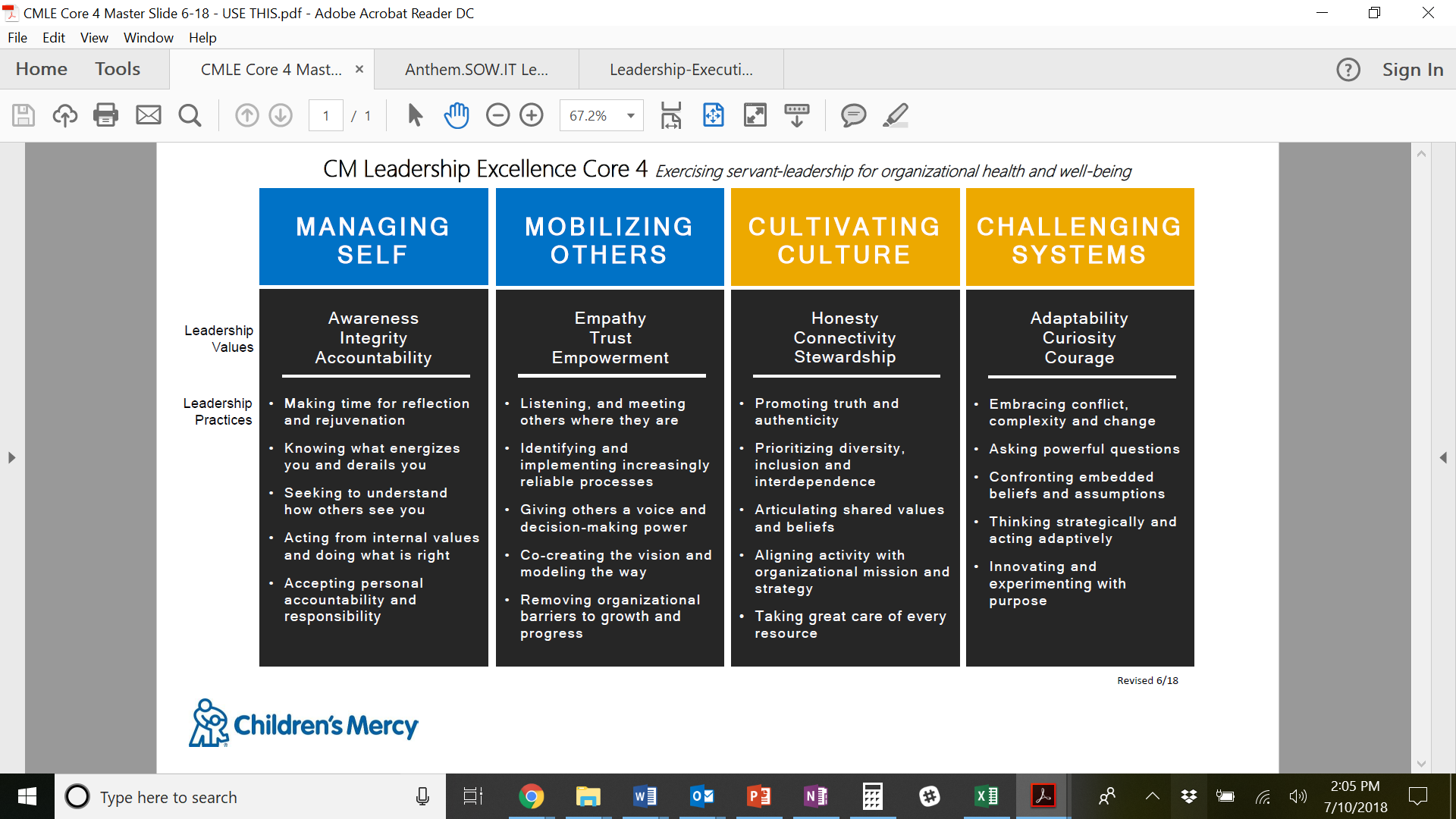
Our Perspective on Leadership Excellence[[1]](#footnote-1)

We know that **strong, effective leadership** throughout Children’s Mercy will be essential to achieving our 2022 Vision of being *a national and international leader recognized for advancing pediatric health and delivering optimal health outcomes* through innovation and a high-value, integrated system of care. [**CHILDREN’S MERCY DECISION POINT:** it would be more evergreen to say the mission here, but the Vision might be more compelling:...our mission of *improving the health and well-being of children by providing comprehensive family-centered health care, committing to the highest level of clinical and psychosocial care, and exhibiting research, educational and service excellence.*] The *Children’s Mercy Core 4 Leadership Excellence Model*, which is based on a philosophy of servant-leadership, provides the organization with a common framework for what leadership success looks like within our organization, and outlines a shared understanding, language, and behavioral expectations for leaders.

In order to provide our leaders the support and guidance they need to become exemplars of the *Core 4 Leadership Excellence Model*, Children’s Mercy has created this empirically-derived, custom-designed 360-degree assessment instrument. This 360-degree assessment was created *by* Children’s Mercy *for* Children’s Mercy, and uniquely reflects our voice, our culture, and our aspirations.

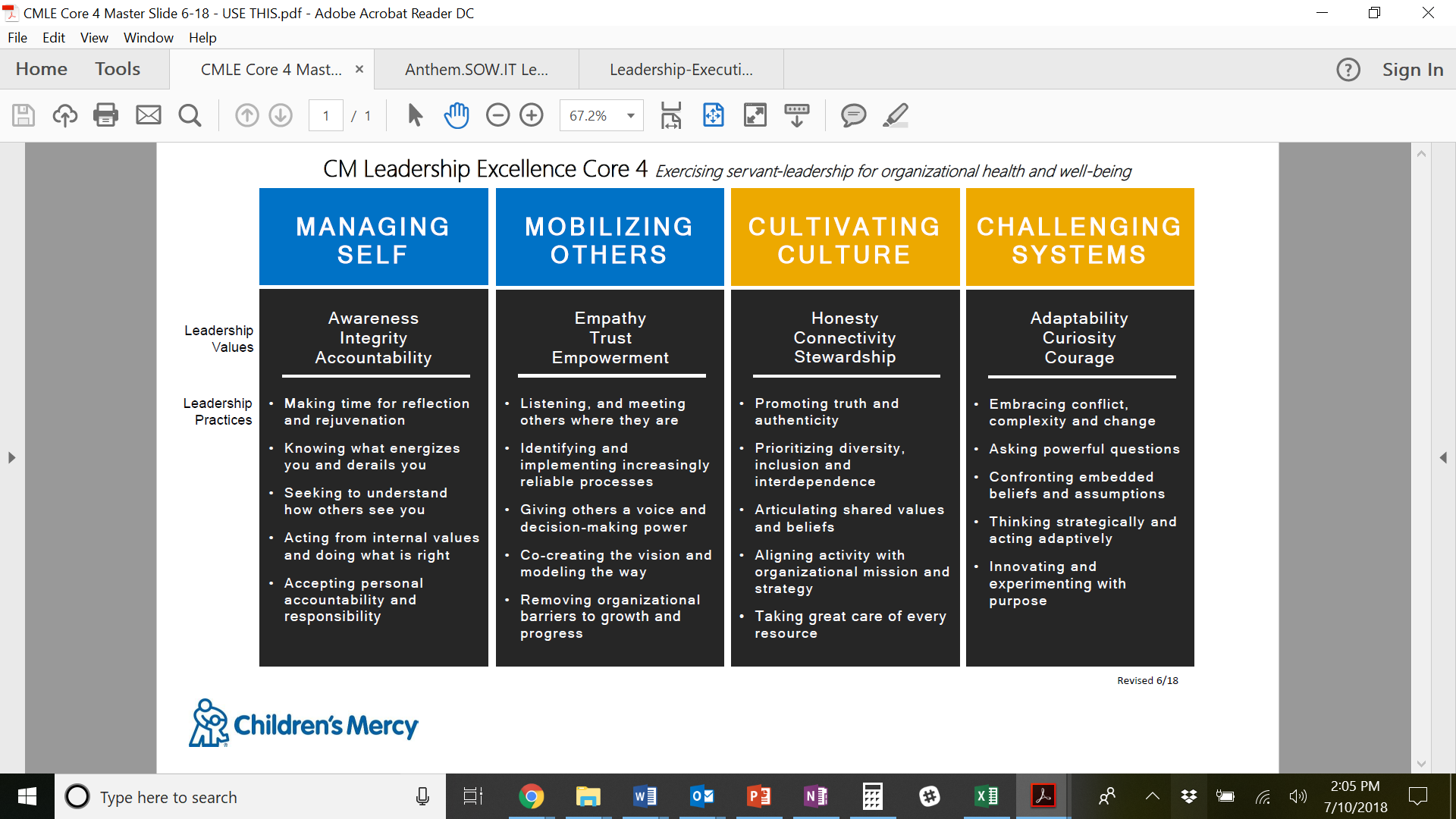
This tool will provide you with rich, behaviorally-based, actionable feedback, which will allow you to reflect on your leadership performance, gain insights into your strengths and opportunities for improvement, and will inform the focus of a personalized development plan. This report will provide you with meaningful and targeted feedback against our *4 Core Leadership Excellence Model* to ensure the feedback is relevant to your success here at Children’s Mercy, and to allow you to design a tailored plan to accelerate and maximize your potential within our organization.

The 4 Core Framework



*Excellent leaders achieve excellent results.* At Children’s Mercy, we believe ***leadership excellence*** is expressed through four core areas: the way individuals manage themselves, mobilize others, cultivate culture, and challenge existing systems (i.e., the Core 4). Mastery across these four areas allows individuals to achieve maximum influence, impact, and effectiveness within the Children’s Mercy System and with the individuals we serve.

The Importance of Leadership Values



While this instrument measures leadership ***behaviors***, the assessment is structured around the the *Children’s Mercy 4 Core Leadership Excellence Model’s* leadership ***values***. An organization works best when its leaders exemplify through their behaviors its established values and help to promote these values to their teams.

Leadership values serve as blueprints that influence how leaders make decisions, solve problems, and resolve conflicts. Values also impact interpersonal relationships, color how leaders interpret situations, and can affect their managerial performance. Therefore, values significantly shape an individual’s leadership effectiveness and success.

Understanding the Model

Below you will find the definitions for each of the Core 4 areas and the corresponding 3 values that fall within each area. These definitions will help you to understand and interpret your feedback within this report.

# Managing Self

Leadership excellence *begins with you*. Self-management is the foundation of emotional intelligence which enables individuals to regulate their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions as necessary to succeed in a variety of professional and personal contexts. Managing oneself requires leaders to deeply understand their unique strengths and potential career derailers, and to use this information to shape the work they do and to maximize the positive impact they have on the organization.

Within the Children’s Mercy Leadership Excellence Core 4 model, self-management includes cultivating the values of **awareness**, **integrity,** and **accountability**. A leader who is strong in the area of **Managing Self** has a deep understanding and appreciation of their abilities and the impact they have on others. They behave in a way that is genuine and consistent with their internal beliefs and values while holding themselves to a high standard of performance.

## Awareness

Awareness in the context of the Children’s Mercy Leadership Excellence Core 4 is the ability to know oneself and one’s impact on others. Robert Greenleaf (1977/2002) said: “*Awareness is not a giver of solace – it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener.”* By looking inward, awareness helps leaders develop humility, and encourages them to continuously grow, stretch, and strive to be better. A self-aware leader is always cognizant of their physical and emotional limits, and they know what energizes and derails them and in what environments.

Self-awareness is a central component of emotional intelligence, and a failure to be self-aware can lead to miscommunication and conflict, as well as an increase in the likelihood of project failure due to a poor fit between a leader’s skills and project objectives. Self-aware leaders regularly ask for feedback to gain a better understanding of their impact on others. Successful leaders make time for reflection in order to grow, and appreciate the need for rejuvenation when necessary to nurture their well-being. They value introspection as a method for exploring their strengths and weaknesses, and to shift their thinking, behavior, and relationships. Awareness helps leaders to view situations from a more integrated, holistic way, while deepening their appreciation for complex issues such as ethics, power, and values.

## Integrity

Universally across the leadership success literature, integrity has been identified as the foundation of leadership effectiveness. Simply stated, integrity is *‘modeling the way’* by doing what is right. Integrity represents an alignment between one’s core set of internal values and one’s actions, which in turn inspires trust in the leader. Leaders with integrity behave in an ethical manner with the intent to do good for their organization and their larger community. Leaders express integrity through telling the truth, keeping promises, making decisions impartially, treating others with respect, and giving credit where credit is due. Leaders who lack integrity or model unethical behavior set the stage for poor employee behavior, less collaboration, and lower performance throughout the organization.

## Accountability

In line with our organizational values, Children’s Mercy recognizes Accountability as an essential leadership value. As a leader, being accountable means taking personal responsibility for the outcomes of your behavior, your decisions, and for the quality of your work, as well as for the areas over which you have control or influence. The accountable leader owns up to their mistakes as well as the team’s, and answers for the repercussions of their actions even when these behaviors are not in the leader’s immediate best interest. Accountability is also expressed by regularly seeking feedback and measuring performance and results to ensure quality and in the pursuit of continuously improving one's outcomes.

Poorly developed leaders may inappropriately place blame on others. They do not apologize for errors, admit mistakes, or take ownership of problems, but rather spend needless energy seeking to identify another individual or group as the cause of errors. They care about promoting themselves over the needs of the organization. On the other hand, successful leaders not only shoulder the liability for mistakes but work to remedy the situation. They are not afraid to take on more responsibility and challenges, ask others for feedback when necessary, and are honest about areas where they may need improvement.

# Mobilizing Others

Leaders can’t go it alone; in order to achieve great results, they must inspire, align, and mobilize others towards the same goal. A strong leader inspires and energizes their teams without controlling or demanding. They spur forward motion with an awareness of basic human needs for autonomy, recognition and esteem of others, and a sense of personal achievement or mastery. A leader who gives their team opportunities to satisfy these drives can elicit powerful and productive responses. Therefore, mobilizing others is one cornerstone of leadership success.

Within the Children’s Mercy Leadership Excellence Core 4 model, mobilizing others includes developing the values of **empathy**, **trust,** and **empowerment**. A leader who is strong in the area of **Mobilizing Others** seeks input by listening actively and deeply, giving others a voice, and involving them in the decision-making process. They have earned a reputation of credibility and are trusted because they provide clear expectations against which others are consistently held accountable. They can be counted on to make decisions in a fair and equitable manner, and identify and implement increasingly reliable processes. Leaders mobilize others by collaborating to co-create a vision; then modeling the way forward to achieve it. They provide the autonomy and support for others to empower them while removing organizational barriers to their growth.

## Empathy

Empathy is the ability to experience the feelings of others, to meet them where they are, and through that understanding, to take action. This experience goes beyond simple sympathetic support in a challenging situation. To successfully lead others, one must possess a deep commitment to listening intently to others, and to fully understand them, one must truly experience their struggle as well as their success. The servant leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps to clarify that will. He or she listens receptively to what is being said and what goes unsaid.

Leaders who possess empathy accept and recognize people for their unique strengths, talents, experiences, and challenges while assuming individuals have good intentions that guide their actions. Leaders who can describe and communicate an individual’s experience accurately will be more likely to connect with the individual on a meaningful level and guide that individual to overcome workplace challenges. That individual, in turn, will be more likely to commit to collaborating with leaders who can see the world from their perspective.

## Trust

Trust in one’s leader strongly impacts employees’ level of engagement, discretionary effort, job performance, and workplace satisfaction. Trustworthy leaders create an atmosphere of trust by modeling transparency, consistency, and reliability. They are not only honest, direct, and forthcoming in their communications with others, but their work and the processes they champion are developed to best serve the organization and can be relied upon by others. These leaders make others feel safe in their work environment, they keep confidences, are clear about their intentions, recognize others for their accomplishments, and act fairly and in the best interest of all whenever possible.

Lack of trust in an organization and its leaders is one sign of a toxic culture, and when employees cannot trust their leaders, they withhold information, avoid accountability, and seek work elsewhere. Trust is the foundation upon which employees feel they can contribute fully knowing their work will be appreciated and that they will be adding to something consistent with their values. Additionally, successful leaders continually seek out feedback from others on how they can build upon and improve a culture of trust in the organization and with others.

## Empowerment

***"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."* - Bill Gates**

In line with our organizational values, Children’s Mercy also recognizes Empowerment as an essential value for leadership effectiveness. Empowerment reflects a leader’s commitment to the growth of others, inclusion, and equality, by entrusting others with authority and power to make decisions. Leaders who empower others give them a voice, encourage initiative, and emphasize collaboration and teamwork. By empowering others, the leader multiplies their influence by creating many leaders at all levels of the organization.

Empowerment is achieved when leaders recognize potential in others, delegate important tasks appropriately, effectively convey trust in their skills to accomplish what is needed, and remove organizational barriers to support their success. Leaders who empower others give them the tools, confidence, autonomy, and encouragement necessary. Followers feel empowered by leaders who encourage reasonable autonomy, while modeling the way, coaching, and mentoring to help them achieve their goals. Successful leaders understand that empowerment involves letting go of responsibility and control, being respectful of different opinions, and putting aside their own desire for power or control to let others take the lead.

# Cultivating Culture

Leaders shape organizational culture through their behaviors. Culture is cultivated by leaders through the explicit and implicit messages their actions send, for example, by what they choose to measure, the results they pay attention to, how they allocate resources, and how they distribute rewards and promotions.

Within the Children’s Mercy Leadership Excellence Core 4 model, cultivating culture includes developing the values of **honesty**, **connectivity,** and **stewardship**. A leader who is strong in the area of **Cultivating Culture** is authentic and transparent, who not only is able to articulate the shared values and beliefs of the organization, but is also a role model who consistently lives those values every day, and teaches and coaches others to become exemplars themselves. They value diversity and practice inclusivity because they know that leveraging differences and building on unique strengths leads to better outcomes. Leaders who successfully cultivate culture align work with the organization’s mission and strategy, while appreciating the interconnectedness of the people and teams that must work together to achieve goals. Finally, they are aware of their role in doing what is right for the organization in order to ensure its success and longevity.

## Honesty

Honesty is the state of being sincere and straightforward about one’s own actions and internal beliefs, experiences, and intentions for the future. At Children’s Mercy, we practice our value of transparency internally as well as operate in an open and honest manner within the larger communities we serve, and we expect the same from our leaders.

Leaders convey their honesty by measuring outcomes, soliciting feedback, and then sharing and discussing the results with others. They are open with their team about their intentions, decisions that are made, costs incurred, and opportunities to improve. They promote open and transparent communication within their team by making it safe to speak up, share concerns, and offer opposing views. Leaders also create a transparent and honest environment by including others in conversations and the decision-making process. Leaders who are perceived as dishonest alienate others and will fail to create the strong team support necessary to accomplish joint objectives. Alternatively, successful leaders build a culture of honesty and openness in their teams, have the courage to be truthful even in challenging times, behave ethically and candidly in professional environments, and choose honesty even when conflict may result.

## Connectivity

A connected leader is one who values people and relationships. Leaders who are connected cultivate a sense of community by building and nurturing relationships with internal and external partners. They are in touch with the needs of others in their organization, in terms of their work, their concerns, their working styles, and their professional relationships. These leaders integrate collaboration and teamwork into every relevant step of a project initiative by articulating shared values and beliefs and promoting interdependence, inclusion and acceptance of a diversity of people and ideas. They know that teams are more creative, innovative, and successful when they honor and leverage the unique qualities and diversity of the members. They take actions to ensure that the organization’s mission and strategy guide the work of the team and make an explicit connection for team members between their daily work and key organizational outcomes.

## Stewardship

Stewardship is the prioritization and commitment to serving the needs of others. Leaders, specifically, are in a position of trust and service to their followers, the organization, the patients and their families, and ultimately the society at large. Stewardship involves managing the resources or affairs of another person or entity with great care and concern for their safety, security, longevity, and success. Thus, taking on a position of leadership within an organization means being entrusted to ensure the long-term vitality and success of the organization and community long beyond the leader’s tenure.

A leader exercises stewardship by taking great care of organizational resources and taking into account the greater good when making decisions that could include factors beyond simply the financial impact, immediate organizational goals, or the individuals directly involved, to look to the future impact on both the organization and the community. Leaders must also act as stewards for the individuals who they directly manage. Leaders who adopt a stewardship style of management act to improve the quality of life for their staff as individuals and as a team. Promoting Individual and group well-being is of high importance for the leader-steward who understands that when employees are fulfilled through their work, satisfied in their environment, and empowered to leverage their skills, organizations succeed.

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# Challenging Systems

At Children’s Mercy, we strive to *make good health care even better*, thus, we expect our leaders to be change agents who challenge embedded beliefs and systems while enthusiastically championing continuous improvement.

Within the Children’s Mercy Leadership Excellence Core 4 model, challenging systems includes developing the values of **adaptability**, **curiosity,** and **courage**. A leader who is strong in the area of **Challenging Systems** is a strategic, systems thinker who is comfortable with the complexity of a large healthcare organization. They have a compelling vision of the future, and effectively adapt to and lead organizational change to achieve our strategic objectives. Leaders who successfully challenge systems realize that innovation and confronting ingrained beliefs will elicit resistance and conflict, yet they show personal courage and ask powerful questions to harness opportunities for growth.

## Adaptability

Adaptability is the ability to adjust to change as needed, whether that change represents changes in the environment, people, or growth over time. Successful leaders not only cope with change, but embrace and lead it, and are optimistic about potential new opportunities. Leaders who are highly adaptive are strategic thinkers who possess foresight, which is the ability to synthesize the historical context with the present situation while anticipating the likely future consequences of a variety of potential actions.

An adaptable leader accepts that while leading organizational change and innovation they will be confronted with strong emotions, resistance, and conflict. They remain agile in their thoughts, feelings, and behavior so they are able to apply the appropriate response within an appropriate context to increase their effectiveness when faced with these reactions. Their vision and future-focused thinking allows them to successfully guide the trajectory of change and help others develop through change.

## Curiosity

Curiosity involves not only the desire to seek knowledge, but the recognition of a knowledge gap that needs to be closed. Leaders who adopt a curious approach appreciate that they do not have all the answers and do not possess all the necessary knowledge to identify creative solutions or make the best decisions, but instead they realize that multiple perspectives lead to better, more innovative outcomes. To be a curious leader one must be open to new experiences, experiment, share perspectives, and solicit and receive information and experiences from others without attention to personal biases and prejudice. Successful leaders have a growth mindset and seek out new ideas with which to innovate while encouraging curiosity in others. To express curiosity, leaders ask powerful questions, indicate they have an open mind, and ask for people to express different opinions or ideas. Curious leaders seek innovative solutions, are comfortable with some risk taking, and they encourage experimentation even if it sometimes means making a mistake or failing. Leaders who lack curiosity do not ask the right questions, are often fearful of being vulnerable, and may be narrowly focused on short-term goals and initiatives.

## Courage

Courage, at its core, is a willingness to be vulnerable and endure emotional discomfort (such as fear or anxiety). Courageous leaders act with bravery and confidence to challenge embedded beliefs and assumptions in order to move the organization toward success. When faced with a challenge, these leaders strive to obtain all the information, make sure all stakeholders are heard, confront difficult issues and ingrained systems, and put themselves in the center of the struggle when necessary. They communicate honestly and directly and take personal risk in the face of pressure or opposition to make the right decision for the organization. A successful leader engenders feelings of safety in their followers, creating a space where an individual can bring a problem to their attention and know their leader will support them in doing what’s right. Courageous leaders don’t simply present a strong exterior, they are also not afraid to be vulnerable, admit their mistakes, and ask for advice when appropriate. Leaders who lack courage are often risk-averse, fail to take on new challenges, avoid accountability, may not stand up for the less powerful members of their teams, and do not move the organization forward.

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1. A Note on Pronouns: At Pixel we work hard to ensure that our communications and products are consistent with our values of diversity and inclusivity. We typically use "they/them/theirs" pronouns when there is no clear need for a gendered pronoun. We welcome our clients' feedback on any communications we may produce, and are happy to adapt your customized product to your preference. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)