

## **Leadership Philosophy**

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Leadership is a part of the counselor educators identify. Therefore, creating a leadership philosophy is something that will help me identify my identity even further. While creating my identity it is also important to note where I get my beliefs and values and understand further how I identify as a leader.

Growing up I felt that those in power or leaders were only good when supporting those around them, therefore, I aim to be a supportive leader. This means I aim to listen to my students, supervisees, and employees and gain insight into their concerns and help them to my best ability. Another thing that bothers me is when a supervisor is willing to give feedback, however, the supervisees are not, and in this case, it also applies to professors. I think we all make mistakes and therefore, even as supervisors or professors, should be open to feedback.

I personally feel drawn to the Transformational leadership model. I feel that my personality and my way of thinking is more rooted, as mentioned earlier, to helping and supporting others. This idea might be due to being a person-centered counselor. I enjoy creating an atmosphere where people feel heard, cared for, and trusted. I also enjoy providing an atmosphere where people can learn and gain feedback, while being given instructions, however, still being able to ask questions if needed. Leaders that provide tasks for supervisees, students, or employees, and do not allow for questions or for further explanation might hinder the workflow, or so I believe, which is why I personally am always willing to answer questions when needed. Something that I also feel I tend to do as a leader is step in when I feel someone is stuck on a task or is having trouble with something. I feel it is important to create an embracing environment where those around us feel cared for and able to reach out if they need something.

Being a Christian I hold the Bible very close to what I do and how I act, this includes leadership. One verse of the Bible that governs how I treat others as well as my leadership is

Colossians 3:23-24, which states “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” This means to me that as a leader, I treat everyone as if they were Jesus, with respect, humility, kindness, and compassion. I understand there are times where I must be strict or provide crucial feedback, but that does not mean I stray away from compassion, but it means that I meet the person where they are and still provide the feedback or at times reprimand when needed. I have had the opportunity to write someone up at work, yet, still filled with compassion and understanding and they were able to change their behaviors due to my support and compassion. God wants us to love, and that means even as leaders.

There have been many leaders I have worked with in my life, teachers, professionals, supervisees, and employers. There are three leaders that have shaped me to be the leader I wish to be. One is Jesus himself, for He being God, still washed feet and still walked this Earth. The other is a mentor I had when I was a child. She was an amazing leader. I remember seeing her stand up and everyone listened to her. She was able to advocate for children and teens who were deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired, in the state of Florida. She even started to work in the Department of Education to ensure state exams were suited for this specific population. She always told me “show others compassion and care and you can change things one step at a time.” Even though she is no longer with us, I feel her still leading me to a better leader. The last person is the current owner of the clinic I work at. He has an open-door policy and is always willing to hear how the business can do better, for the staff and the patients. I want to do that, help those around me. He is also always willing to hear feedback and always willing to help in whatever way he can. He also refuses to micromanage but trusts all of us to do our

work and only jumps in when needed. This is very much what I see myself doing as a leader, again a transformational one (Lewis, 2022).

I know all these leaders are not counselor educators, but I have not had one that has molded my leadership philosophy. However, if I must pick someone, it would be my advisor at Nova Southeastern University who had an open-door policy, and she was willing to be with her students where they were. She was filled with empathy, compassion and was always willing to give you a new project to learn. She also tended to push her students to do better, go to conferences, join research teams, and even join organizations. I honestly do not think I would have been in my counselor educator journey if it was not because of her, and of course God. This makes me realize that the professors I had that really impacted me were the ones willing to answer a question after class. I also appreciated professors that helped me make connections to things I am passionate about or how to be a better counselor. I feel that counselor educators need to have empathy, creativity, and eagerness to spend time with students and answer questions, something I experienced a lot and still am with my old advisor. Therefore, reflecting on these specific traits, I have realized that my transformational leadership is also linked to how I want to be as a counselor educator. I would like to help guide and transform the students that come to me, be it as students, advisees, or mentees. I want to help shape the future and help them feel understood and able to reach out when needed.

As a counselor educator I plan to let my students know that they can reach me in case they have any questions about the subject or the profession. I also aim to guide them to what the profession is like as well as connect them with the various professional organizations. I also aim to help them find their passion for counseling and research and help them find someone, if not me, that will build their scholarship. As a counselor educator, I am a leader to my students, and

aim to hear their concerns of the program and see what could be done. Students are the next group of counselors, and helping to shape them into great counselors is a privilege.

I have not had much leadership experience, is something that I like to say. However, I have had a seat as a graduate student representative in the Florida Association of Counselor Educator and supervisor and have had the opportunity to sit in several committees, both nationally and state. In the leadership positions I have been I have been told I am very approachable and very eager to help. I have also been told I am reliable and open to feedback as well as to giving it. I think based on my experiences I am very entuned with the transformational leadership model I feel connected with. I currently help the clinic's director with some of the interns and they also say I am approachable, filled with empathy, and easy to talk to. I really would like to continue as a counselor educator.

Looking into the future I hope to be a great leader in the counseling profession. I hope to be able to help future counselors gain a love and a passion for counseling and hopefully for counseling education. I also hope that my leadership leads me to inspire other counselors with disabilities to feel equal to other counselors. I hope to help decrease stigma for individuals with disabilities to help them become counselors if they are equipped to do so. Being a counselor educator, I hope to inspire minorities to become counselors and counselor educators. I also aim to help make connections between students and faculty for their to be growth in the profession as well in the student's identity as a counselor. As a leader, I hope to be president of the American Counseling Association one day and speak on behalf of the counseling profession. I also hope that as a leader I am one day be able to help counseling programs in universities shape their program to meet credentialing status.

I know these are big goals, however, I am slowly working toward them. I currently have put my name out for state division secretary this year, waiting for election time. I also have and am seated on several committees from various professional organizations. I feel that every experience I have helps me to be a better leader. I also have presented in several conferences and plan to continue to present in more, building on my leadership and gaining new professional networks. I also aim to work in a university and hope to be the voice for the students if allowed. I think sometimes programs forget the students have a voice, and therefore, I would like to remind them of this, be it by creating counseling student groups or helping in the CSI chapters. I have great aspirations for my future as a counselor educator and it is simply because I am passionate about the field. I plan to continue to speak on behalf of counselors with disabilities in conferences, journals, and hopefully inspire change in the profession. I also hope to continue going to leadership conferences to help build my communication and leadership skills. Some may say I have big dreams, but a good leader has a great vision for the future.

To summarize it all up, I am a transformational leader. I hope to support and inspire my students, supervisees, mentees, and employees. I also aim to help them when they need it and be compassionate. I hope to help them grow, while helping the counseling profession grow as well. I have great aspirations for my future leadership; however, it is all because of the passion I have for the profession. I am ready for the future leader I am becoming.

### References

*English Standard Version*. (2016). Bible Gateway. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A23-24&version=ESV>

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