

Empowerment

Month 2 Leadership Practice

Purpose

This month's leadership practice invites you to explore how leadership behaviors can create conditions that support thriving, learning, and sustainable performance. Through small changes in how work is structured, information is shared, feedback is provided, and team members are engaged in decisions, leaders can help others contribute, learn, and grow. The goal is not simply to delegate work, but to create opportunities for ownership, learning, and meaningful participation.

Why This Matters

Research suggests that employees who experience both vitality (feeling energized at work) and learning (developing new knowledge and skills) are more likely to thrive. Thriving has been associated with stronger performance, greater organizational commitment, higher job satisfaction, and lower burnout. While organizational resources and structures matter, leaders can influence thriving through everyday leadership practices. Research highlights four mechanisms that support thriving: 1) Decision-making discretion, 2) Information sharing, 3) Performance feedback, and 4) Civility and respect. Together, these practices help create an environment where people can contribute meaningfully, learn from experience, and perform at their best.

Spreitzer, G., & Porath, C. (2012). Creating sustainable performance. *Harvard Business Review*, 90(1), 92–99.

This Month's Leadership Practice

Over the next several days, hold one structured conversation:

1. **Identify an opportunity for greater ownership.** Select a routine task, workflow, process, or decision where team members may benefit from increased input, influence, or decision-making discretion.
2. **Increase participation in decision-making.** Explore opportunities for those doing the work to help shape how the work is accomplished, within appropriate organizational and professional boundaries.
3. **Share information transparently.** Help team members understand how their work connects to broader goals, priorities, and outcomes.
4. **Create opportunities for feedback and learning.** Discuss how individuals and teams can recognize progress, measure success, and learn from experience.
5. **Foster a climate of civility and respect.** Consider how your leadership behaviors help create an environment where people feel comfortable contributing ideas, asking questions, and learning from mistakes.

CU Thrive Leadership Circles

Example Prompts by Mechanism

Decision-Making Discretion:

- “What decisions do you need authority over to do this well?”
- “How would you approach this if you owned the outcome?”

Information Sharing:

- “What information do you need to make better decisions here?”
- “How does this work connect to our larger mission?”

Performance Feedback:

- “How would you know if this is working? What should we measure?”
- “What does quality look like from your perspective—for the patient, the learner, or the team?”

Civility and Climate:

- “What would make you feel safe trying new approaches here?”
- “What happens when mistakes occur? Does that help or hinder learning?”

Reflection Questions

After completing this month’s leadership practice, reflect on the following:

1. Which of the four mechanisms did you address? Which were harder to implement?
2. Did you see signs of increased vitality or learning in your team? What did that look like?
3. What information did people need that they didn’t have? How did sharing it change their engagement?
4. When did you find it difficult to share ownership or decision-making? What factors influenced your thinking?
5. How did feedback mechanisms affect people’s sense of ownership and focus?
6. How did the interpersonal climate influence people’s willingness to contribute ideas, ask questions, or take initiative?
7. What impact do you think these leadership practices may have on team effectiveness, learning, engagement, or performance over time?