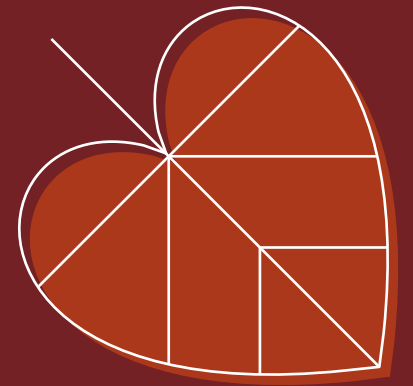
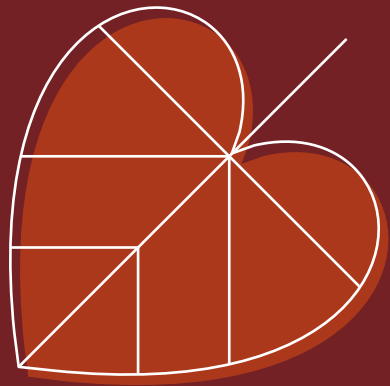




ACTION LEARNING
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



RURAL PUBLIC
HEALTH WORKFORCE
TRAINING NETWORK
GRANTEE MEETING



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Image Credit: Yong Kang Chan

AGENDA



Overview of Action Learning



Types of Leadership Challenges



Activity: What's my challenge?



How do Sets Work?



Activity: Role Play a Set



Wrap-up and Next Steps



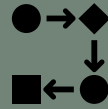
OVERVIEW OF ACTION LEARNING

Adapted from the National MCH Workforce
Development Center's *Guide for Action
Learning Sets*, 2014

WHAT IS ACTION LEARNING?



A tested approach for accelerating learning so that individuals can handle complex situations more effectively



A process that involves a small group working on real problems, taking action, and learning



Helps leaders practice leadership actions and behaviors



Simultaneously solves problems and develops leaders; its simple rules force participants to think critically and work collaboratively

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKS?

- Case study reports were collected from 139 action learning coaches (Peacock et al, 2016).
- Findings included over 100 examples of where skills learning through action learning were transferred to the workplace.
- Five key themes emerged:
 - Participants appreciated the **safe environment** that they could practice their chosen leadership skills.
 - Team members saw how easy it was to practice their chosen leadership skill and appreciated the **real-time feedback**.
 - The development of **leadership skills** is a natural outcome of action learning.
 - Team members **transferred the newly practiced skills** to their organizations.
 - The organization learned that **creating breakthrough strategies** could be achieved while developing leadership skills.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?



Help change leaders become more strategic through practicing leadership actions and behaviors.



Facilitate progress on a change leadership challenge faced by participants



Engage with colleagues who will challenge and support one another



Gain courage and support from a group of peers on a common journey.

WHEN SHOULD WE USE ALS?

Action Learning is especially effective in the following circumstances:

- When issues are complex, usually in an organizational setting,
- When there is no obvious solution (e.g. there is no expert with the answer),
- When there are several viable approaches/solutions and people disagree,
- When conditions are unstable, changing, or unpredictable,
- When senior managers are willing to be open to experimentation, and
- When people are willing to take a risk and take action.

TYPES OF LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES





LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

1. Complex, "wicked" problem
2. Personally meaningful
3. Organizationally meaningful
4. Actionable within reasonable time frame
5. Something you control



LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

NOT:

- Technical
- Too general

BUT RATHER:

- Something that can be improved, but not resolved
- Often related to partnerships, innovation, culture



ACTIVITY



*What's my leadership
challenge?*

Handout

HOW DO SETS WORK?



SAMPLE SET AGENDA

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
- 2) Session presenters share goals, context, challenge
- 3) Set members ask the presenters questions to support and challenge their thinking
- 4) Presenters close with specific actions they are planning to take
- 5) Facilitator “checks in” – what are key learning points, what questions were most helpful, how can the next set meeting be more effective



PRESENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Share your current approaches to the challenge.
- 2) Reflect on whether your approaches are wise and fruitful.
- 3) Consider new insights based on questions from set members.
- 4) Try new approaches that you craft with the help of other set members.
- 5) Report back about what you learn from your action-about yourself, the challenge, the methods used.



SET MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

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- 1) Ask clarifying questions.
 - 2) Encourage the presenter to expand on their thinking.
 - 3) Refrain from offering your ideas and opinions.
 - 4) Be comfortable with silence.

SAMPLE SET QUESTIONS

SAMPLE SET QUESTIONS FOR LISTENERS

<p>Ask about What Is Working (Appreciative Inquiry)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is going well? • What do you appreciate most about the people you are working with? • What are your assets? 	<p>Ask about a “Solved State”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would things look like if they were going right? • What would be happening – that isn’t? • What do you want you don’t have? • How will you know the problem is solved?
<p>Ask about Individual Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want? • Why is this challenge important to you? What are you most excited about? • Do you have similar experiences in your past? • What feedback have you received that may be relevant? • What is helping you? What is holding you back? • What attitudes and self-beliefs would help you be successful? 	<p>Ask about Other Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whose opinions should you consider in addressing this challenge? • What agreements do you need to proceed, or to be successful? • Who <u>has to own</u> <u>the</u> shared vision? • Who else knows about this? Who else cares?
<p>Ask about Support from Networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who would be a helpful advisor or consult on this? • What do you need? Who can assist you? Where is your personal support? • How might these influence your leadership goals, strategies, or actions? • Do you want to hear a story about what <u>may be a similar situation</u>? 	<p>Ask about Restraints and Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your restraints and constraints? • What are all the things you must do? • What are all the things you can’t do? • Who says? Are the restraints real or imagined? • What are you assuming? What are you overlooking? • Can you get there from here? • What <u>has to give</u>? Resources? Results? Time? Money?
<p>Ask about a Course of Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your options? • What are their costs? What are their benefits? • What are their side effects? 	<p>Ask about Plans and Schedules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of time frame are you talking about? • What could go wrong? • How will you know if things are going okay or not?



ACTIVITIES



Fishbowl
&
Practice Sets

HOW CAN ACTION LEARNING
BE USED TO EXPLORE
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES
FOR YOUR PROGRAM?



REFERENCES

- Mary Volz-Peacock, Bea Carson, and Michael Marquardt. Action Learning and Leadership Development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 2016 18:3, 318-333.
- National MCH Workforce Development Center: *Guide for Action Learning Sets*, 2014.

THANK YOU



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