The LEADS in a Caring Environment Framework represents the key skills, behaviours, abilities and knowledge required to lead in all sectors and all levels of the health system. It presents a common understanding of what good leadership looks like, across all levels of service provision in healthcare.

The dimensions of the framework represent the collective wisdom of the current literature on health leadership, leadership development and the capabilities required by leaders dedicated to making meaningful health system change. The framework is informed by, and extends, the work done in the creation of major, progressive leadership frameworks in the public and private health sectors around the world.

A key foundation for the LEADS Framework is CARING – for patients, for staff, for the health of citizens. CARING is the common thread that unites all health leaders. For a health provider, caring means delivering the best and most appropriate service with compassion and support. For the leader, caring means that compassion and support infuse our collective efforts to build a more effective health system.

Caring leaders maximize the potential for universal, efficient and effective service delivery to all Canadians.

The LEADS Collaborative is supported by the Canadian College of Health Leaders, and is partnered with CHLNet and Royal Roads University. Through the LEADS Collaborative, LEADS programs and services are provided to those organizations, networks and individuals who support the growing interest in the use of the LEADS in a Caring Environment across Canada. The LEADS Collaborative endorses the following principles:

- Quality leadership is fundamental to improving health system performance;
- A common conception of leadership – the LEADS Framework – as validated by research, will unite leaders and organizations in building the leadership capacity needed in Canada;
- Maintaining the research and integrity of the LEADS Framework is fundamental to its use, and for ensuring that appropriate standards and quality of leadership are created through its use; and
- Sustained effort across the health system is required to build the leadership capacity needed in Canada.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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“Leadership is the capacity to influence self and others to work together to achieve a constructive purpose.”
- Graham Dickson
LEAD SELF
Self-motivated leaders...

Are self aware
They are aware of their own assumptions, values, principles, strengths and limitations

Develop themselves
They actively seek opportunities and challenges for personal learning, character building and growth

Manage themselves
They take responsibility for their own performance and health

Demonstrate character
They model qualities such as honesty, integrity, resilience, and confidence

ACHIEVE RESULTS
Goal-oriented leaders...

Set direction
They inspire vision by identifying, establishing and communicating clear and meaningful expectations and outcomes

Strategically align decisions with vision, values, and evidence
They integrate organizational missions and values with reliable, valid evidence to make decisions

Take action to implement decisions
They act in a manner consistent with the organizational values to yield effective, efficient public-centred service

Assess and evaluate
They measure and evaluate outcomes, compare the results against established benchmarks, and correct the course as appropriate

SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION
Successful leaders...

Demonstrate systems / critical thinking
They think analytically and conceptually, questioning and challenging the status quo, to identify issues, solve problems and design, and implement effective processes across systems and stakeholders

Encourage and support innovation
They create a climate of continuous improvement and creativity aimed at systemic change

Orient themselves strategically to the future
They scan the environment for ideas, best practices, and emerging trends that will shape the system

Champion and orchestrate change
They actively contribute to change processes that improve health service delivery

ENGAGE OTHERS
Engaging leaders...

Foster development of others
They support and challenge others to achieve professional and personal goals

Communicate effectively
They listen well and encourage open exchange of information and ideas using appropriate communication media

Contribute to the creation of healthy organizations
They create engaging environments where others have meaningful opportunities to contribute and ensure that resources are available to fulfill their expected responsibilities

Build teams
They facilitate environments of collaboration and cooperation to achieve results

DEVELOP COALITIONS
Collaborative leaders...

Purposefully build partnerships and networks to create results
They create connections, trust and shared meaning with individuals and groups

Demonstrate a commitment to customers and service
They facilitate collaboration, cooperation and coalitions among diverse groups and perspectives aimed at learning to improve service

Mobilize knowledge
They employ methods to gather intelligence, encourage open exchange of information, and use quality evidence to influence action across the system

Navigate socio-political environments
They are politically astute, and can negotiate through conflict and mobilize support

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP
Do these capabilities apply to all leaders regardless of role or formal position?

Yes... All leaders — regardless of their role, or position in the health system — must be able to lead themselves, engage others, achieve results, develop coalitions, and conduct systems transformation in order to create the Canadian health system of the future.

and NO... For each of the five LEADS domains, ‘leader effectiveness’ differs, depending on the context in which an individual exerts influence. In different contexts, capabilities differ in expression.

To create a leadership culture, each person in the system, regardless of position or title, must exercise leadership when it is required. This is distributed leadership.

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Communicate effectively
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“Existing roles and functions of decision-makers need to be evaluated to ensure they meet the leadership needs of the new and emerging healthcare paradigms.”
- Don Briscoe

“The mastery of the art of leadership comes with the mastery of the self. Ultimately, leadership development is a process of self-development.”
- James Kouzes & Barry Posner, The Leadership Challenge