

Metro North Health CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT



Leader for a day

Time: Approximately 1 hour.

Materials needed: None.

Participants: Team.

Values in Action: High Performance, Integrity, Teamwork, Respect.

Outcomes: Develops leadership skills, strategic thinking, confidence, and accountability.

Purpose

This activity gives team members a chance to step into a leadership role by tackling realistic workplace challenges. It builds leadership confidence, sharpens strategic thinking, and helps individuals better understand the responsibilities leaders face.

How to run the activity

Step 1: Set the scene (10 minutes)

Assign one team member to be the “Leader for a Day.” Present them with a realistic leadership scenario, such as:

- Responding to an unexpected budget cut
- Addressing a drop in team morale
- Managing a staffing issue
- Launching a new service or initiative
- Communicating a difficult decision

Tip: Choose a scenario relevant to your team’s work and values.

Step 2: Planning the leadership response (10–15 minutes)

Give the acting leader time to think through and prepare their response. They should consider:

- Key priorities and stakeholders
- The potential impact of their decisions
- How they would communicate their approach
- How they would involve the team or others

Optional: Let them write down notes or present their thinking verbally to the group.

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Step 3: Present and discuss (15–20 minutes)

The acting leader shares their plan or decision-making approach with the team.

Then, open the floor for group feedback:

- What worked well in their approach?
- Were all relevant factors considered?
- What leadership qualities did they demonstrate?
- How might they improve their response?

Facilitator tip: Encourage respectful, constructive feedback.

Step 4: Group reflection and key takeaways (15 minutes)

Invite the group to reflect together:

- “What did the experience teach us about leadership?”
- “How did it feel to make decisions from a leadership perspective?”
- “What new appreciation do we have for the complexity of leading?”
- “How can we support leadership growth across the team?”

Encourage all participants to identify one personal leadership quality they’d like to strengthen.

Optional variations

Rotate leaders weekly: Run this as a recurring activity with new scenarios.

Co-leader model: Pair two team members to tackle a challenge together.

Anonymous scenario draw: Let participants pull random challenges from a bowl.

Real-world tie-in: Use actual challenges your team is currently facing.

Key takeaways

- Leadership involves tough decisions, clear thinking, and balancing multiple perspectives
- Practising leadership in a safe environment builds confidence and skill
- Everyone on the team can develop leadership capabilities, regardless of role