

# Learner Guide

## Unit 8 - Leadership



RSAS Training Strategy Project 2018

[P1]

## Objectives

This unit provides RSAS staff with a clear understanding of the meaning of leadership and what is viewed as the qualities of good leadership. You will work through the principles of leading groups and how these skills can be used in your RSAS role. You will build on your awareness of how to lead by example, to be viewed by others as a leader, and how to utilise these skills to mentor others around you.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, participants will

- Understand the meaning and purpose of leadership and the qualities of a good leader
- Start to develop the skills and knowledge to become a leader within their own community
- Have developed an awareness of how to lead by example and create opportunities for others to see them as a leader
- Understand how these skills can be transferred to others in the community through mentoring

## Resources

The resources provided are a Learner Guide, Workbook and Trainer Guide.

This Learner Guide provides a resource to support the activities in the Unit 8 Workbook. It is designed to help trainers, RSAS officers and members of the community better understand how RSAS officers can become more effective community leaders.



This icon represents action when an individual task needs to be completed. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 8 Workbook



This icon represents action when a task is to be completed as a group. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 8 Workbook

## Part 1: What does it mean to be a leader?

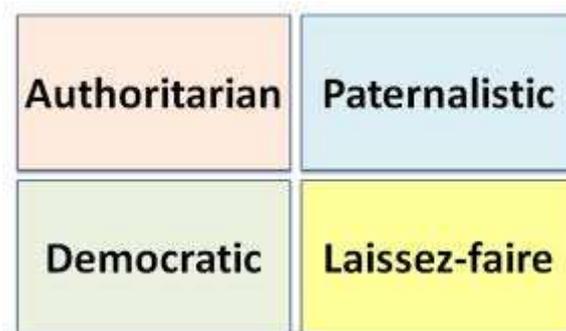
*“Every person has the ability to be a leader, but they have to step into being a leader if they choose to do that. It’s not about being born a leader, it is about developing yourself to being a leader.” Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre*

Often in broader Australian society, a leader is seen as someone at the top. People like the Prime Minister, or a top sportsperson, or the head of a company. This is not the same for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders. In our communities, leadership is often shared among people with different responsibilities.

The authority of our leaders is based on their cultural knowledge and reputation, personal qualities, recognised expertise and their ability to look after others—not only their family and group, but also the land, its resources, and related systems of knowledge and law. This course is based on the concept of indigenous leadership, and how you might exercise this kind of leadership in your community.

### **Leadership Styles**

There are many different kinds of leaders. What is right for one situation, for example a leader of soldiers going into war, is not necessarily the best model of leadership, or the right qualities for a leader, in a different situation.



**Authoritarian** – An authoritarian leader gives orders and expects obedience or submission. This is a good style if you are leading an army into battle because you don’t have time for discussion. It can also be the right style of leader to manage a crisis for example fighting a bush fire, or pulling someone out of a flooded river.

**Paternalistic** – This sort of leader acts as a father figure by taking care of their people as a parent would.

**Democratic** leaders involve the members of the group. This is a more participative role in the decision-making process.

**Laissez-faire** leaders give group members the freedom to make their own decisions. They assume everyone knows what is best for themselves.



**Activity 1:** Which style of leadership do you think is most appropriate for a leader in your community?

## *Qualities of Leadership*

Within the context of community leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, it is generally accepted that the main qualities and skills for a leader are:

- respect for culture
- self-awareness and confidence
- integrity and wisdom
- support for all your people
- clear communication and direction
- good mediation and negotiation skills
- enthusiasm and ability to inspire
- adaptability and humility
- a sense of humour.

Some of these qualities such as respect for culture, integrity and wisdom, a sense of humour and humility, are things we need to work on individually if we want to be leaders. This can take a long time, often starting when we are children.

Other skills such as communication skills, self-awareness and confidence, and good mediation and negotiation skills, we can learn at any age. These skills are taught in the RSAS program as well as by many other support organisations such as the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre.

## *Representation and accountability*

Being a leader takes more than having the qualities of leadership. You need to be willing to represent the people you care about or have responsibility for, and you need to be accountable.

What does this mean?

To represent means to act as a recognised delegate or spokesperson for somebody else's interests, wishes, rights or welfare.

To be accountable means to answer for your actions and take responsibility for your mistakes, to be responsible to another and to be able to explain what happened.

This takes courage and strong self-esteem. We can learn to be more courageous and develop our self-esteem and these skills are taught in Units 17 (*Resilience and persistence*) and Unit 18 (*Building self-esteem*)

Being accountable takes patience and an ability to work with others. Leaders are expected to go back to their fellow group members to discuss information, ideas and decisions with them. This means their leadership has to be continuously earned and proven through their actions and communication.

They need to act on the basis of consensus.

In resolving issues and making decisions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders usually spend a lot of time hearing from everyone. It is considered important in maintaining harmonious relationships and allows people to share thoughts about the issue.

This is looked at in more detail in Unit 6 (*Working with others*)



*Activity 2: Draw a map of the qualities of leadership and what they mean.*



Indigenous leader Shane Phillips was named Australia's 2013 Local Hero for his community leadership. *Source: AAP*

## Part 2: Leading By Example

Being accountable also means being able to lead by example, and being a good role model.

We too often hear stories of people whom we have looked up to as leaders and who have disappointed us with their bad behaviour. Sometimes we wonder why they have done this, when they have so many good leadership qualities.

This often comes down to two things:

- a failure to have developed self-regulation
- lack of a strong value system

### *Self-regulation*

Self-regulation is an ability to control ourselves and our emotions. The finest leaders are strong on self-discipline.

We all sometimes feel impatient; want to yell at someone; want to indulge in activities we know are bad for us; or simply just not turn up for a difficult job or meeting. This is where self-discipline comes in. It means resisting the temptation to do things that are bad for us or reflect badly on us or our community.

The good news is we can all develop better self-regulation. Here are some tips

#### **1. Know yourself**

An important part of being self-regulated is what your weaknesses are, and how other people's behaviour can affect you negatively.

#### **2. Identify your triggers**

Make a list of all the times when you've given in to your negative impulses. You will probably recognise the same type of thing triggers this reaction. It might be being disrespected; or it might be conflict; or feeling overlooked, lonely or being taken for granted. When you've identified emotions and reactions that aren't useful, work out how to replace them with more positive behaviours when you meet this trigger again.

#### **3. Consider the consequences first**

Before acting or speaking in haste, make a habit of stopping and considering what the consequences might be if you take this action. If you have a trusted friend or mentor, you might call on them for help.

## *The importance of strong values*

Having a strong set of values that we live by helps us maintain our self-control and focus. They provide an anchor for us when times get tough, and help us to keep strong.

The number one value across the whole of Australian society is family. This is probably a strong value for you too, but there are also other values that people feel strongly about.



### *Activity 3: What values are important to you?*

Consider the following values. Tick those you feel most strongly about. You might like to number them from 1 to 10 with 1 being your strongest value.

- Family
- Community
- Honesty
- Integrity (Doing what you say you will do)
- Justice
- Respect
- Learning
- Obeying the law
- Love
- Friendship
- Caring
- Other (you name them!)

## *Role models*

Many fine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people from different walks of life are held up as leadership models. Some have been recognised for this as Australian of the Year.

### **Aboriginal Australians of the Year**

- 2014 Adam Goodes (AFL player)
- 2009 Mick Dodson (Professor of Law)
- 1998 Cathy Freeman (athlete)
- 1992 Mandawuy Yunupingu (Yothu Yindi band leader)
- 1984 Lowitja O'Donoghue (nurse and ATSIC chairperson)
- 1979 Neville Bonner (first Aboriginal parliamentarian)



*Activity 4: Choose a role model (Groups of two or three)*

*Task 1: Choose one of the leaders above whose story you know, and explain how you think they display the qualities of:*

- respect for culture
- self-awareness and confidence
- integrity and wisdom
- support for all your people
- clear communication and direction
- good mediation and negotiation skills
- enthusiasm and ability to inspire
- adaptability and humility
- a sense of humour.

*Task 2: Now write the name of a leader you know personally in your workbook.*

This person can be a local person, or a well-known person from any walk of life, or a sports person. Write the qualities they have that you think make them a good leader.

Share your role model with the group.

### **Part 3: Being Seen as a Leader**

**LEADERSHIP**  
IS ABOUT MAKING OTHERS  
**BETTER** AS A  
RESULT OF YOUR PRESENCE  
AND MAKING **SURE**  
THAT IMPACT LASTS IN YOUR  
**ABSENCE.**

Not everyone feels comfortable about speaking up or putting themselves out the front.

While this is one way of being a leader, there are many other ways we can be seen as a leader. Some of these ways are:

- Looking for opportunities to make a difference outside your own responsibilities
- Motivating others to do the right thing and helping keep them focused
- Being a good role model for your kids and community
- Being strong and standing proud
- Speaking positively
- Holding strong values
- Having a vision for your community as a good place to live and learn and a plan for working towards that
- Working with others to make the vision a reality
- Showing respect for culture, for your community elders and for your team
- Listening to others and making the right decision for everyone, not just for now but also for the future
- Keeping a sense of humour and enjoying your life and your work

- Continuing to learn
- Being seen – sometimes it is just a matter of being there when you are needed
- Knowing yourself and what you can contribute

### *Understanding your leadership strengths*

We talk a lot about strengths and developing your strengths in the RSAS program. It is now time to re-visit these strengths in terms of leadership. The following checklist was designed by a number of leading indigenous organisations. Consider where you and your community leaders have strength.



#### *Activity 5: Do the leadership checklist*



## Check-up: The qualities of effective leaders

Ask yourself whether you and your leaders exhibit these qualities and skills.

Quality	Skills	Yes	No
Cultural standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows respect for who they are within their own culture.</li> <li>• Shows respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, beliefs, skills, traditions, relationships and behaviour.</li> </ul>		
Competence and self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows what to do and gets it done.</li> <li>• Develops their own values, passions, skills and strengths.</li> <li>• Admits weaknesses, learns from mistakes and seeks help.</li> </ul>		
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is aware of what is expected behavior.</li> <li>• Acts for the greater good, despite external pressures.</li> <li>• Exhibits ethical behavior and a belief in leading by example.</li> </ul>		
Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believes they can meet most challenges.</li> <li>• Follows through and acts on their vision.</li> </ul>		

Vision and insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has personal growth goals and leadership goals.</li> <li>• Has a strong sense of where they think their society, community or Organisation should be going, and how they might get there.</li> <li>• Inspires people to follow that vision.</li> <li>• Recognises potential problems before they arise or get out of hand.</li> </ul>		
Consensus-builder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps people come to an agreement by negotiating disputes and healing conflicts.</li> </ul>		
Enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows interest in the people, issues and events around them.</li> </ul>		
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinks creatively, takes risks and develops new solutions.</li> <li>• Challenges and inspires people to move outside their comfort zones.</li> </ul>		
Wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibits intelligence and insight, empathy and experience.</li> <li>• Draws on cultural knowledge and experience to help other people understand and cope with new situations and changes.</li> </ul>		
Adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is flexible and responds to change.</li> <li>• Believes in continual learning, both formal and informal.</li> <li>• Learns from mistakes.</li> </ul>		
Strong interpersonal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interacts and works well with others.</li> <li>• Motivates others to do their own job and work as a team.</li> </ul>		
Effective communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens to and understands the thoughts, ideas and concerns of others, and can clearly communicate their own.</li> <li>• Communicates in different cultural contexts, explaining cultural differences when required.</li> </ul>		
Peer respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspires respect from other leaders (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and non-Indigenous).</li> <li>• Leads discussions, maintains discipline and encourage contributions.</li> </ul>		

Sense of humour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laughs at themselves and is able to relieve tense or stressful situations with humour.</li> </ul>		
Delegation and teaching skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trusts others and shares some authority with them.</li> <li>• Shares skills and knowledge.</li> <li>• Mentors others</li> </ul>		

Source: <http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/4-1-indigenous-leadership> (March 2016)

## Part 4: Developing Your Leadership Strengths and Helping Others Develop Their Strengths

If you look at all the areas of leadership in the checklist, you will realise leadership is a big subject, and we have only just touched on it in this unit.

To develop these strengths, you might want to think about further work on leadership. There are many ways of doing this:

### *Find a mentor*

A mentor is someone who has the wisdom and experience to be able to guide you. They may be a friend, or they may be someone in an official role such as a RSAS supervisor or mentor. Mentoring is not about telling; it is about listening and showing. Your perfect mentor will be someone you relate to well; someone you can trust and respect, and someone who has the knowledge and strengths you would like to build in yourself.

### *Become a mentor*



Source: <http://www.itehealth.com.au> (March 2016)

We often learn best what we teach others. You will have recognised that you have a lot of strengths, some which you were aware of before, and some which you have only just become aware of in the course. Why not use these strengths to help someone else who wants to improve in this area?

For example, you may be strong in culture whereas some of the kids or other people you work with may not have this strength. You may be able to help guide them in this regard. If you have completed the unit on Self-Esteem, and you are strong in this, you may help others when they have self-esteem problems.

You may choose to mentor just one person at a time, or many people in different areas. Remember though that you cannot force this on people. Often it means making an offer by asking “Would you like some help with this?” and waiting for them to come back to you. Or maybe waiting for someone to come to you with a need.



A great idea is to use the opportunity in your planning today to choose someone in your team as a peer mentor. Peer mentors help each other build their strengths and also help each other become better mentors to others.

### *Continue learning*

There are many opportunities to learn. The RSAS program covers a range of areas of leadership including:

- Developing our children and young people
- Dealing with complex situations
- Motivating and engaging
- Working with others
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Working as a team
- Problem solving
- Walking in two worlds
- Positive conversations
- Building resilience and persistence
- Building self-esteem

You might also like to consider achieving a qualification in leadership. If this is part of your plan, accredited courses are available through the **Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre**

PO Box 186 Curtin ACT 2605.

Phone: 02 6251 5770

Free-call: 1800 284 087

Fax: 02 6251 6312

Email: [ailc@ailc.org.au](mailto:ailc@ailc.org.au)



Leadership courses at AILC cover many areas such as

- Develop Leadership Skills as a Member of an Indigenous Community
- Dealing with Diversity Across Communities
- Effective Communication in the Workplace
- Building Personal Confidence



#### *Activity 6: So what's your plan?*

Make a plan to improve your leadership skills and help others improve their leadership skills.

