



## Aspiring Leaders Lab

### Episode 3

### **Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Collaboration Within Programs Addressing Intimate Partner Violence**

#### **Summary Notes, Resources and Goal Planning**

This podcast features a conversation with Zenebia Law, Senior Director of Community Services, at The Center for Women and Families, who shares practices that have transformed staff communication and collaboration through her leadership. Below are strategies, resources, tools, and a worksheet on collaborative leadership, mutual feedback, conflict resolution, and professional building.

#### **Leadership Attributes and Practices**

- Clear values and principles related to your work can help with communication, decision making, partnerships, and in preventing conflict.
- Familiarize yourself with the organization's programs and what it means for advocates and staff to be in different situations. Adapt and engage in services, not just overseeing or delegating, this fosters collaboration.
- Hold a comprehensive perspective of the organization or projects and how these should be running. Focus on the overarching goals.
- Set goals aligned with the mission, vision and values of the organization.
- Take risks, learn from experiences and make adaptations.
- Navigate conflict strategically, adopt a mindset of curiosity, resilience, prioritization, and relationship care.

- Develop skills and use tools, including reading books, to help understand different techniques. See resources below.
- Reach out to peers in the movement and have conversations.
- Learn from others. Ask for coaching. Ask for feedback. Ask your team: What am I currently doing that you need me to keep doing, because I am doing it right? What do you want me to stop?
- Share about your work with the community, to help them embrace the good work of your organization.

## Communication

1. Onboarding: Set the foundation for advocacy skills and provide quality training to lay the foundation on what it means to work at your organization.
2. Clarify Roles: Provide clear information on role expectations and information and tools on what it means to be in a specific position and role. For example, as case manager, this is how we operate, what is expected of you, and these are the tools that we use.
3. Practice Accountability: When you set the foundation, it makes it easier to provide feedback through conversations and to emphasize expectations.
4. Clarify and coach through: Mistakes are opportunities to bring back and connect to the past provided training. Work with the person to help understand a better way to do things. Example: “This is what we mean by de-escalation when I'm talking about deescalating a client, this is what we mean by that.”
5. Balanced decision-making process: Consider input from others, support independent decision-making.
6. Encourage transparent communication and provide spaces or tools for sharing ideas, feedback, and updates.
7. Practice structured **One-on-One coaching meetings**. [Sample 1-on-1](#).

## Shadowing

**Promote and build a system of coaching up practices, staff shadowing and peer feedback.**

- a) Concrete **staff shadowing procedures** support and empower staff to be successful in their work to support survivors. [Sample Shadowing Form](#).
- b) Create a clear expectation with all staff that supervisors will shadow staff interactions with clients/participants. For example, The Center for Women and Families practice staff shadowing in client sessions, group, walk-in, child enrichment, calls, prevention, and education, etc.

- c) Review the Staff Shadowing Form with staff to ensure they understand the expectations of what should occur during the interactions. Ensure that staff have access to the document before shadowing. (sample attached)
- d) Use the Staff Shadowing Form during shadowing or while reviewing the recording. Document what went well and what could improve.
- e) Give timely feedback and coaching, (within 24hrs).

## **Benefits of Shadowing**

- Helps staff build skills and capacity, beyond the orientation and training process.
- Connect to programs and understand services. Identify positive strategies, what is going well and successful, and evaluate possible needed adjustments.
- Align programs / services to funding, based on community needs and practices.

## **Collaborative Culture and Staff Engagement /Retention Strategies:**

- Get buy-in from staff.
- Emphasize that everyone's work is valued.
- As a supervisor and leader, set the tone for the culture of the organization.
- Everyone in the team is a leader, push them to be a leader in their capacity.
- Stay connected to staff and their experiences.
- Participate in team meetings intentionally.
- Express curiosity and be open to learning from others.
- Create psychological safety and include team building activities. This helps foster collaboration among the team and build trust to come forward with questions, issues, or feedback.
- Support staff well-being. [Sample well-being committee procedures.](#)
- Organize activities. [Sample well-being activities planning.](#)

## **Recommendations for mid managers and advocates:**

- Maintain a leadership mentality and figure out what type of leader you would like to be and then work on developing your skills. As part of a team, you are a leader in your own and beyond your capacity.
- Consider leadership in different areas, as an advocate, supervisor, or director.
- Build connections within your organization, find people that you like their style of doing specific things and meet with them. Ask questions and consider if mentorship is an option.
- Read books to increase knowledge in a different capacity.
- Participate in capacity building programs like the [SOS Institute.](#)
- Reach out and find programs that align with your goals.

## **Advice for women of color on overcoming challenges and disparities in leadership**

- Surround yourself with other people that look like you, for example, participate in a BIPOC (Black Indigenous, People of Color) affinity group.
- Connect with other BIPOC people and have conversations that include peer sharing of experiences and challenges that you face, so you don't feel isolated and identify trends.
- Ensure that the groups that you participate in are forward thinking, and don't get stuck in problems. Work together to identify strategies to overcome issues.
- Support and reach out to other BIPOC people in the movement, to help them succeed and reach their full capacity. If you see someone attempting to be in leadership, reach back and reach out to support them. Because we are a community and need each other to be successful.

### **Call to Action and Personal Learning**

A. What are three lessons you learned through this podcast that you can apply to yourself, work, and/or your organization?

B. What can you do as a leader to intentionally: a) devote time to develop your leadership and b) support the leadership of others in your organization?

C. What is your top commitment to engage with staff members, maintain communication, and provide feedback to others in your organization? Consider shadowing strategies listed above and using the attached tools.

D. What approach can you use to gather feedback from your team, board, community, and other stakeholders, about your leadership style and strategies? Consider surveys, direct questions in meetings, and evaluations.

## Resources:

- [Ten Strategies to Enhance Employee Resilience and Engagement Within Survivor-Serving Organizations](#)
- [Mission and Core Values Toolkit](#)
- [Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Organizations](#)
- [Sample Wellbeing Committee Procedures](#)
- [Staff Wellbeing Committee Activities Planning](#)
- [Sample 1-on-1 Form](#)
- [Sample Staff Shadowing Form](#)

## Webinars with Resources

- [Living Our Values: Supervision and Feedback for Survivor-Serving Organizations](#)
- [Shared Leadership in Survivor-Serving Organizations \(3-part Series\)](#)
- [Compassion Fatigue & Self-Care for Individuals and Organizations](#)

## Good Starter Books:

- *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, Maxwell, John C.
- *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*, Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila.
- *How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, Wiseman, Liz; McKeown, Greg. *Multipliers*
- *Good to Great*, Collins, Jim
- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Lencioni, Patrick.
- *Start with Your People*, Dixon, Brian
- *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, Switzler, Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Emily Gregory

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## **Zenebia Law**

Senior Director of Community Services  
The Center for Women and Families

### **My Personal Mission:**

My mission is to promote human development through education, encouragement, and motivation to uncover an individual's best version of themselves.

### **Biography**

Zenebia Law began her professional career in the banking industry. During this time, she honed her professional skills and worked with clients at some of their most vulnerable points.

In pursuit of her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology as an intern, Zenebia was able to pursue her passion for helping individuals learn and grow by working with children diagnosed with Autism.

In 2012, Zenebia earned her degree focusing on Applied Behavioral Analysis. Zenebia then began her career working with survivors of trauma at The Center for Women and Families. As a certified Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Victims' Advocate, Zenebia has worked with survivors in a variety of roles. Currently, she is the Director of the Southern Indiana Programs at The Center where she takes pride in programmatic and staff development. Zenebia uses her experience and knowledge to provide professional training to the community and The Center's staff. She also cultivates deep relationships with community partners that enhance services to survivors. For example, being a member of the Indiana 211 Advisory Board helps foster change at a community level.