

Servant Leadership 101

Human-centered health is about focusing patient care towards personalization and prevention and increasing patient engagement and empowerment. To effectively practice this model of care in our communities, an organization might need to consider the engagement and empowerment of their internal teams and develop an organizational culture ripe to empower their patients. This module is meant to provide a basic understanding of the background and advantages of servant leadership, and to illustrate to health center leaders, at all levels of the organization, the benefits of a serving mindset for ensuring the success of their teams. Learners will discover the role servant leadership has in encouraging innovation and tending to the well-being of employees and in turn, their patients.

Anticipated duration: 10 - 12 min.

Outline

1. Task vs. people-oriented leaders
2. Role of servant leaders
3. Servant leadership in health care
4. Characteristics of servant leaders
5. Web Links/Supplemental Resources
 - [Servant Leadership in the Medical Practice](#)
 - [Leadership Models in Health Care—A Case for Servant Leadership](#)
 - [The Art of Servant Leadership](#)

SUMMARY

Key Points:

- Task-oriented leadership styles focus on the technical or process aspects of the job.
 - Task-oriented leaders tend to use a more directing, controlling, or even autocratic approach.
- People-oriented styles are focused on relationships and how people are working together.
 - With these styles, leaders are concerned about employee welfare and engagement, and they tend to use a more participatory approach.
- Servant leadership focuses neither on a leader's position in a hierarchy nor on his or her rank, authority, or control.
 - It is a leadership philosophy that puts the leader's main emphasis on being of service to others.
- Instead of leaders being at the top of the organizational pyramid, the pyramid is upside down, with those being served at the top by the leaders below.
 - By hearing and responding to (serving) the needs of frontline workers, leaders encourage innovation and support overall employee well-being.
- One of the first modern proponents of leaders serving their subordinates was Robert K. Greenleaf, author of Servant Leadership.
 - He says that a "servant leader is a servant first."
 - He provides test questions for servant leadership:
 - Do those served grow as persons?
 - Do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?
 - What is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?
- The best place to start to grow as a Servant Leader is to develop the core characteristics of a servant leader.
 - Listening
 - Empathy
 - Foresight
 - Stewardship
 - Healing
 - Awareness
 - Growth
 - Community
 - Persuasion
 - Conceptualization

What kind of a leader do you need or want to become? What do you need to adjust to create the impact that you want to see? What do you need to change in yourself? Where do you want to start your journey? Take a moment and jot down some notes about your role as a leader and where you would like to develop to talk to your supervisor about at your next meeting.

Personal Session Notes:

Citations

1. Greenleaf RK. *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York, NY: Paulist Press; 1977.
2. Spears LC. Character and servant leadership: ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues and Leadership*. 2010; 1(1): 25-30.
3. Covey SL. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 1989.

The project listed is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$6,625,000 with 0 percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).