

How can you be a leader of social change?

Leading positive social change has never been more challenging, or more important.

Social change leadership requires **specific** and **unique** ways of working in order to lead towards a **brighter**, more just and more **equitable** future for all.



Here is some of WRKWLL's learning about how leaders can best affect positive social change. It has grown from our work in the social change sector, our diverse lived experiences, and our professional expertise in delivering leadership development programmes.

It can, and should, come from us all (not just those whose job titles give them official leadership responsibilities).

Positive social change can – and should – happen everywhere, not just in the charity sector.

- How we behave as **individuals**
- How we behave with the **teams** of people around us
- How we behave within the **systems and contexts** which impact the progress towards positive social change, recognising that these can be inherently flawed and based on years of historical inequality.

Collaborative

- Lead with humility and a willingness to learn
- Be clear about your expertise, values, and ways of working so people know how to best work with you
- Be transparent, sharing when you don't know and when things are ambiguous
- Care for and support one another
- Value diverse lived experience and expertise
- Build deep, trust-based relationships
- Choose collaboration over competition

Equitable

- Start with an awareness of self. What privilege and power do you bring with you? How does this impact on the work and on others? What might you miss as a result?
- Build healthy and inclusive team cultures which allow everyone to thrive and feel welcome and safe
- Empower and inspire others without savior leadership
- Proactively seek out different perspectives
- Call out the systemic oppression around you and work hard to overcome it

Explorative

- Engage with curiosity, humility and eagerness to learn
- Seek feedback and strive to improve
- Openly share your own challenges and learning goals
- Encourage supported risk-taking and learning
- Bring a coaching approach to your work, listening and questioning to support positive progress in an empowering and respectful way
- Make room for challenge, move through disagreement collectively, and emerge into a better space for all
- Build systems which encourage diverse approaches, ideas and new ways of doing things
- Seek awareness of context and external factors, both now and looking to the future
- Seek out learning from others operating in a similar system

Joyful

- Find joy in your work
- Work with a trauma-sensitive approach
- Prioritise self-care and care for others
- Regularly share and celebrate successes
- Acknowledge and learn from failure
- Balance the heavy nature of the work with optimism and creative solutions

Impactful

- Be bold and intentional about making the difference you want to achieve
- Build diverse, healthy teams
- Focus on long-term, strategic goals
- Inspire others to turn vision into practical action
- Recognise that traditional methods to measure success can be extractive and can inadvertently feed into unhealthy power dynamics. Work hard to recognise and overcome this risk
- Recognise that many forms of inequity underpin the social challenges in today's world. Seek to understand and centre this

Colour key

Individuals

Teams

Systems and contexts

How can WRKWLL help?

If you'd like to explore how you're feeling about **social change leadership**, or seek help identifying what **support you need**, please **book a chat** with us or email **info@wrkwll.org**

