



UnLeading invites us to challenge common-sense assumptions and center often-silenced approaches to leadership, allowing us to re/imagine possibilities for leading, learning, and being in relation to ourselves, each other, and the more than human world.

<https://www.yorku.ca/edu/unleading/>

Facilitator Guide

“UnLeading asks us to engage in the praxis of leadership, a continual interplay of action towards systemic change and deep, inner reflection. In this way, it is a process of becoming, with no predetermined destination or finite goal.” (The UnLeading Project, York University)

UnLeading also asks us to look for leadership in unfamiliar places and challenge the notion of the individual leader.

This podcast series will highlight voices of leaders in classrooms, communities, homes, schools, school districts, and beyond.

The series asks how might we:

- Trouble taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership and learning that reinforce the status quo?
- Engage conceptions of leadership that disrupt, challenge and work against the status quo?
- Center the experiences, knowledge systems, and leadership approaches

- of the global majority, including Indigenous people, Black and African diasporic people, and people of colour as well as people with multiple and intersecting marginalized identities?
- Redefine leadership to be responsive to the socio-political realities of local, regional, and global contexts in service to historically and systemically underserved students?
- Reclaim and imagine future possibilities for leadership that create radically different possibilities for schooling?

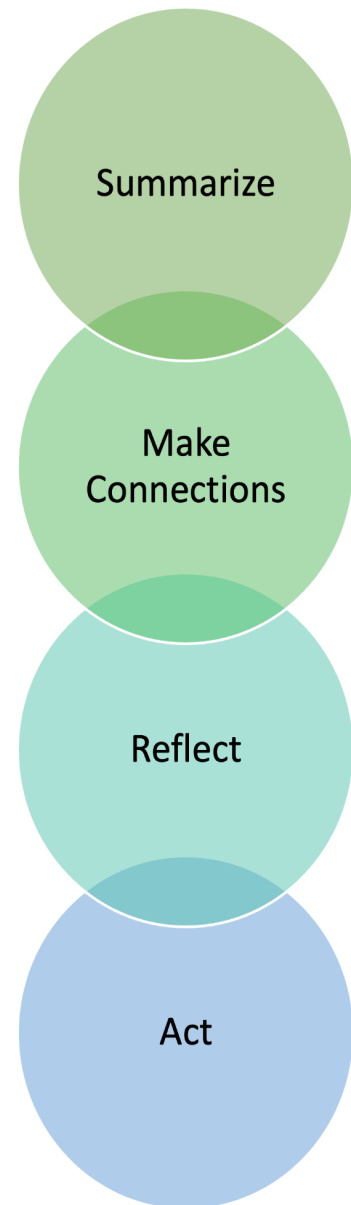
— **A**s you listen to the podcast, we ask that you actively engage in learning and unlearning with yourself and others to deepen your understandings. We offer the following format in support of your journey in unlearning:

SUMMARIZE by identifying several themes/concepts that arise in this conversation with the guest speakers. Note similarities, differences, tensions, connections, and possible contradictions between and among them. Additionally, note the perspectives, ideas, and voices that might be missing as well in this conversation. You are also invited to draw out compelling quotes from the speakers and comment on them

MAKE CONNECTIONS to your experiences in/with communities and to larger socio-political and historic contexts. Think about and comment on how the thoughts and ideas presented by the speakers connect to similar themes/concepts in other contexts of leadership.

REFLECT on how the conversation with the speakers informs your understandings of leadership outside of familiar frameworks using the guided reflection questions posed below.

ACT by committing to possible actions (immediate and long-term) that you will engage in to disrupt the status quo, which will steadfastly guide you in actualizing the type of leader you hope to be in and with communities.





— The Four I's: From Thinking to Actions in the 4 Domains:

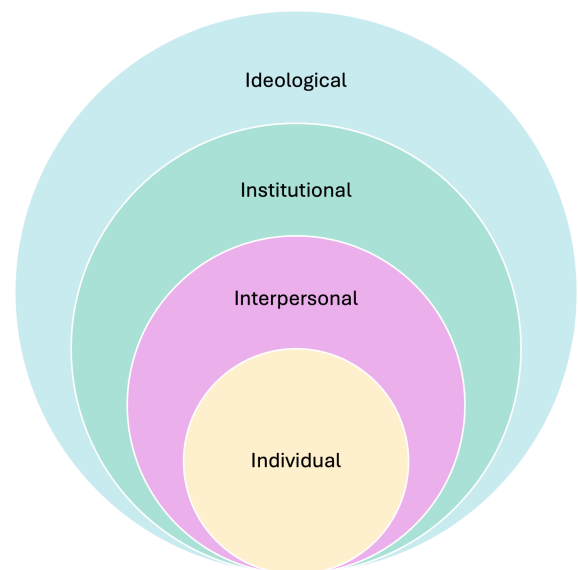
This is a journey towards building new insights and frames of reference while sitting with questions and wonderings that lead to changes in our thinking and meaningful actions in our practices. It is an invitation to recognize the limitations and biases we may have in our understanding of leadership across 4 domains

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.



Season 1

LEADING TOWARD DISABILITY JUSTICE

(Click image to listen)



Guiding Reflection Questions:

How do we imagine and rebuild an education system that is relevant and responsive to the communities that we serve through centering the experiences, knowledge systems, and leadership approaches of the global majority?

Reflection Questions:

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges for disabled people and highlighted the urgent need for disability justice?
2. What does it mean to center disability justice in our thinking, in our practice, in our relations, in our structures?
3. What would schools and communities look like if they were designed around principles of disability and transformative justice?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead for disability justice?
5. How might we apply this understanding to the work we do in communities, schools, and academies?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

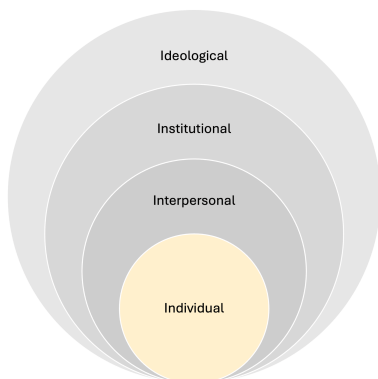
“Whether students are successful or unsuccessful, good, bad, non-disabled, disabled—we use a logic where we locate the blame within the student, and we find medical, psychological, and other proof to then supposedly verify the fact that the problem lies within the child.” (Nirmala Erevelles)

“It’s important for educators to really see their role also as advocates...see yourself as being part of a system and having more power, more social power than the children that you work with. And making it also part of your practice to be an advocate, and to actually be able to look at those macro level systems that result in poor educational outcomes for the children that you’re working with. When you shift in that way, I think it can be really empowering.” (Yasmine Gray)

“(I) recognize how my own historical internal ableism has been shaped as well.” (Jeff Hall)

Reflection:

How do these statements resonate with you in terms of how you see yourself leading for disability justice?



Action:

- Spend some time journaling about the way ableism has been implicated in your path to leadership.
- Consider how your achievements are directly connected to ableist values.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

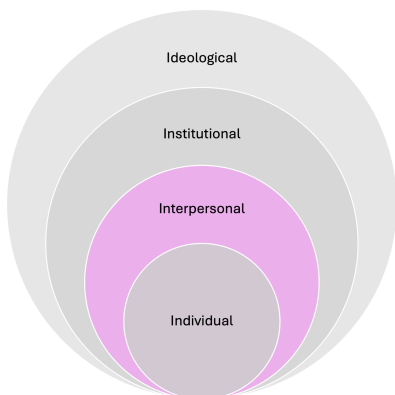
“Centering the experience of disability and promoting opportunities for students to consider what disability identity means and what could be possible in schools if we adopted notions of disability pride.” (Gillian Parekh)

“One of the core things about disability justice is about building community, building communities of care, building communities of interdependence, building communities that resist the actual violence that gets reproduced on a day to day basis in schools and outside schools.” (Nirmala Erevelles)

“There needs to be more of an openness around disabled educators and specifically disabled education leaders too, because I think students need to see those perspectives. Students need to see disabled students often, They never see themselves represented in schools.” (Jeff Hall)

Reflection:

How might we collectively center the experiences of disability and work towards disability justice?



Action:

- Consider the ways you have internalized ableism and how that has created barriers for those around you.
- Challenge yourself to consider the ways you have centered and celebrated ableist logics within leadership roles.

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

“And we know that disabled people are disproportionately vulnerable to multiple forms of incarceration as scholars who investigate the implications of schooling on the trajectories and futures of disabled students, we really need to be asking schools to consider and address how their policies and practices may be contributing and reproducing these hierarchies that end up impacting students' futures, you know, well beyond graduation.” (Gillian Parekh)

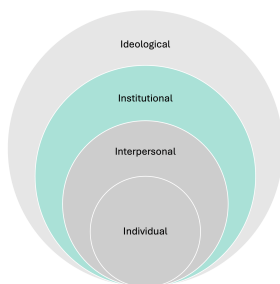
“I wasn't always working with children who were explicitly identified as disabled, but were actually moving through the world and moving through the education system while experiencing extreme levels of violence as a result of anti-black racism and ableism and how those two things intertwine and overlap onto each other.” (Yasmine Gray)

“When we use the word access, access, then puts responsibility on the people who are in power in that particular space. It is their responsibility to make the space (accessible), and the space could be the physical space, the intellectual space, I mean, any kind of space.” (Nirmala Erevelles)

“If we had the slight spin of disability justice in our schools, we would be uprooting so many different aspects of our education system from assessment practices to the discipline practices.” (Jeff Hall)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions make space for disability justice and support anti-ableist leadership approaches?



- Choose one or two policies/practices in your workplace and look for ways they contribute to reproducing hierarchies based on ableism.
- List several ways your institution/organization supports disabled leaders through a pathologizing approach. Consider the actions necessary to disrupt these practices?

Action:

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

“These ideas of normal, what is normal, who is normal, are all based in white supremacy. They make whiteness the standard, they make the white cisgender non-disabled body, the norm, and then anyone who's different from that gets labeled and gets separated out and gets excluded in a subject to, to different forms of, of violence and disability.” (Yasmine Gray)

“One of the structures of schooling is that we are supposed to break down difference. In other words, we say celebrate, we have, you know, diversity, equity, and inclusion committees, but the whole logic of schools is to produce a kind of conformity to rules. And for most disabled students, particularly what's most dangerous is this logic of the conditional acceptance into the mainstream. And this hurts particularly students of color, but actually most disabled students too.” (Nirmala Erevelles)

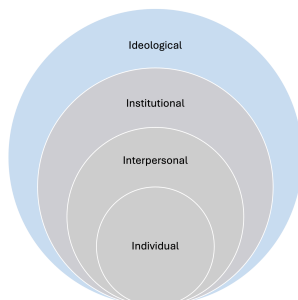
“Students and their families have to navigate a system that often positions students through a deficit lens, and that recurring message can be really harmful.” (Gillian Parekh)

“Anti-racist, queer, feminist movements of like people who do those kinds of pedagogies are also very adept at reproducing ableism. And then of course Gillian had pointed out in an introduction, the disability rights movement also, or people who are like, who have successfully been able to, or even if they've struggled through, (get) through school systems, most of them are being predominantly white, upper class English speaking.” (Nirmala Erevelles)

Reflection:

What might it mean to undo and unlearn ableist leadership ideologies and practices and lead towards disability justice?

- The myth of normal stands as a barrier to disability pride that centers the experience of disability. Challenge yourself to recognize the way the myth of normal shows up in everyday leadership experiences.



Action: