



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/>

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## Season 1: Facilitator Guide

“UnLeading requires a commitment to holding multiple truths, troubling common-sense assumptions, living the inquiries and sitting in the ambiguities of complex ideas such as leadership, schooling, and society. 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. UnLeading asks us to look for leadership in unfamiliar places and challenge the notion of the individual leader.” (The UnLeading Project, York University)

**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 conversations with the speakers inform your understanding 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: Embracing Fractals as Possibilities for Leadership

“A fractal is a never-ending pattern. Fractals are infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop.

How we are at the small scale is how we are at the large scale. The patterns of the universe repeat at scale. There is a structural echo that suggests...that what we practice at a small scale can reverberate to the largest scale.

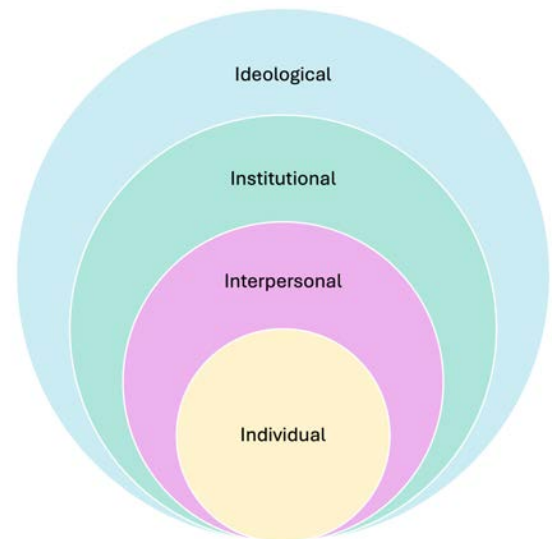
These patterns emerge at the local, regional, state, and global level—basically wherever two or more social change agents are gathered. And this may be the most important element to understand—that what we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.” (adrienne maree brown)

**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

### COMMUNITY CENTERED LEADERSHIP

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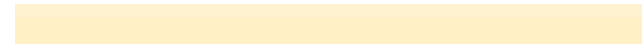


#### Guiding Reflection Questions:

What might educators and administrators learn from studying the knowledge and leadership practices of parents, community groups, and students?

1. What experiences and realities of activism, advocacy, and engagement by community groups are rendered as problematic by our educational institutions?
2. How might we challenge our understanding of educational leadership and create spaces for shared leadership practices that center the voices of the communities?
3. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead centring communities?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead centring communities?
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.



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

“Leadership is centered around people who are putting their loyalty to the system, or career-based decisions as opposed to community-based decisions.” (Neethan Shan)

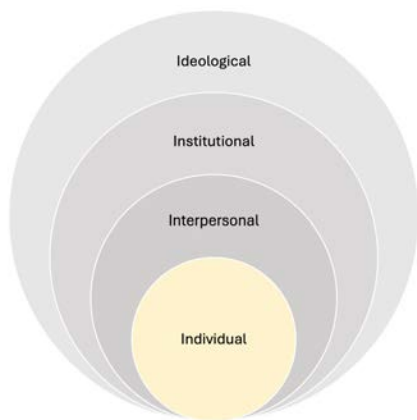
“When I look at leaders or so-called leaders, I'd want them to understand that leadership isn't really real, and that it's a construct. In that, what is real is community, what is real is love and what is real is the experiences of Black and Indigenous students and that needs to be what the priority is” (Ahona Mehdi)

“For my everyday practice of community centered leadership, it means being in community, learning to heal and liberate myself and challenging myself to deconstruct my beliefs based on how I was taught in school” (LeRoi Newbold)



**Reflection:**

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



**Action:**

- Engage in reflecting upon your reasons for taking on leadership role(s)
- Connect with various communities (within and outside of school)
- Write down at least 3 ways you can commit to centering leadership around community-based decisions

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

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

“Lots of the behaviours that we've learned have destroyed some of our matriarchs. We want to see a re-matriation occur.” (Sylvia Maracle)

“It's when I think about community and the importance of the work that we do, it's to another level because for us, it's survival.” (Charline Grant)

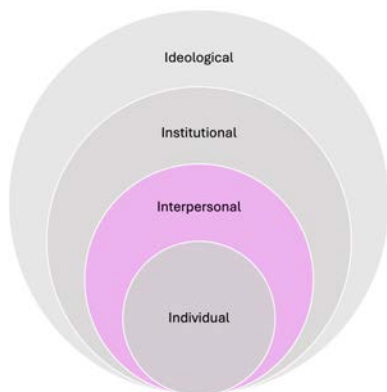
“People of colour who often put their own communities down to feel like they're closer to White privilege- those are harmful leaders. Non-Black, non-Indigenous folks who fall into that trap of model minority, trying to please the colonizers and their power brokering are harmful leaders” (Neethan Shan)

“Community leadership looks like co-learning, it looks like creating spaces of healing among one another” (Ahona Mehdi)

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### Reflection:

How might we bring people together to locate leadership in spaces between people, structures, and ideas committed to racial and other forms of social justice?



### Action:

- Create collaborative spaces where different community members can come together to share their experiences and stories
- Open school spaces outside of school times for community members, especially those who have been historically excluded and offer variety of times for families to communicate with school
- How might you create spaces in which different ideas, especially those you find challenging and disruptive, can be voiced and shared with others?

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

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

“We want our children to experience education, free from oppression, free from harassment, free from abuse, free from racism. We want educators to see our children.” (Charline Grant)

“We have to recognize that there is a lot of trauma within the every day.” (Ahona Mehdi)

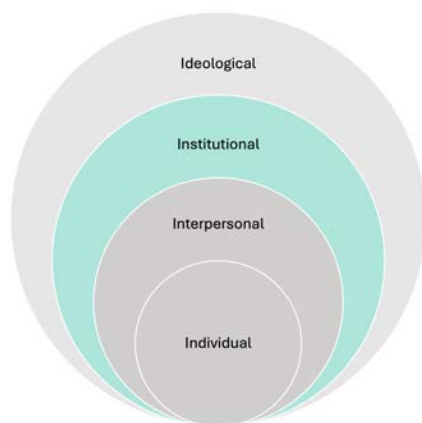
“Community centered leadership is being able to bring the voices of those people that are often forgotten.” (Diana Grimaldos)

“You're talking about what are the oldest colonial structures from wherever in the world you came from, there were certain groups that went out and decided certain things and that's the issue.” (Sylvia Maracle)

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### Reflection:

How can educational institutions provide support for leaders and ensure they show actionable care?



### Action:

- Make a list of the structures in your school/district that prevent or quiet the voices of families and communities. How can you interrupt these patterns as a leader?
- Make a list of the everyday practices that privilege the voices of families and communities with more social power (on the basis of race, religion, sexuality, etc.) over families and communities with less social power. How can you interrupt these patterns as a leader?

**Ideological** Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

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

“I think community leadership, it's not very much recognized. It's not something that's seen as real. I think it's something that's very much romanticized. It's kind of like community leaders are invisible in a lot of ways.” (Ahona Mehdi)

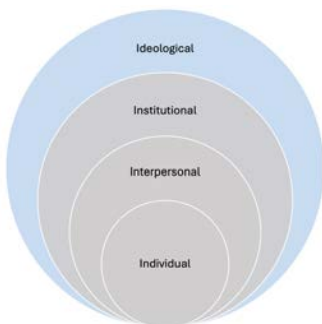
“Community centered leadership means that Black kids and Black parents are the leaders of Black education because community centered leadership is connected to the idea that communities should have control and agency over our own education.” (LeRoi Newbold)

“The people that have collective accountability, the people who are here will not be able to break away from their principle because they have this strong sense of collective responsibility and credibility within them, that's part of who they are. They're not doing this for a job. They're not doing it for loyalty to a system. They're doing it for the purpose of grounded in people.” (Neethan Shan)

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**Reflection:**

Why isn't parent advocacy, activism, and resistance considered leadership in common conceptions of educational leadership, especially when parent and community efforts have led to transformative changes in racial and other forms of justice?



**Action:**

- Consider the students, families, community partners, and educators who you think are more resistant and difficult to work with. What do they care about and value? What are the leadership qualities they possess? How might these reflections invite you to think about their actions differently?
- What does leadership look like that is motivated by service to community and what does leadership look like that is motivated by service to self?

## SEASON 1

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### CRITICAL SPIRITUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

(Click image to listen)



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#### Guiding Reflection Questions:

As educational leaders, what if each of us deeply reflected on the question posed by Paul Kivel “What do I stand for” (Helfand & Zimbardo, 2021) in connection to and with all our relations?

#### Reflection Questions:

1. What are the ways in which we continuously examine how we are showing up as educational leaders with the critical awareness of ourselves in relation to others and our environment?
2. Within our current educational settings, what do secularism and pluralism offer and foreclose?
3. How might acknowledging spiritual and faith-based leadership practices disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions of neutrality that mask Christian hegemony, settler colonialism and white supremacy?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead in critically spiritual ways?
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.

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

“When I think about critical spirituality in leadership, I really think about the whole in self, right? With a "W" and with a "h"” (Ixchel Bennett)

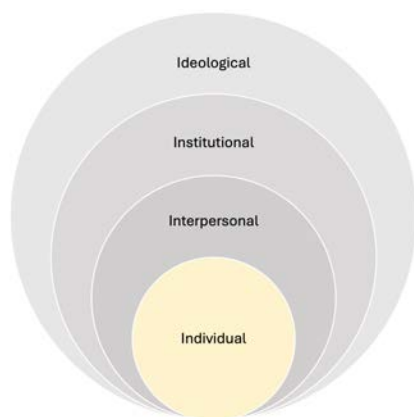
“This idea of multiplicity of truths, right- that people come to the world as they are. And as they see and they understand who they are in the context of that. For me, there was this deep question about who am I?” (jeewan chanicka)

“Spirituality for me does not often equate to that notion of pious platitudes or pious piffle, but calls us more to that sense of being attentive to the experiences of the divine in our life.” (Bruce Rodriques)

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#### Reflection:

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



#### Action:

- Consider the quotes that you find yourself drawn to and drawing away from. Investigate your response to them.
- Take a few moments to write down a self-description. What does the description tell you about your values, your long held beliefs, and the actions that spring from them?
- What parts of yourself do you see as separate from your role as a leader? Consider how the various parts of yourself directly influence how you lead.

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

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

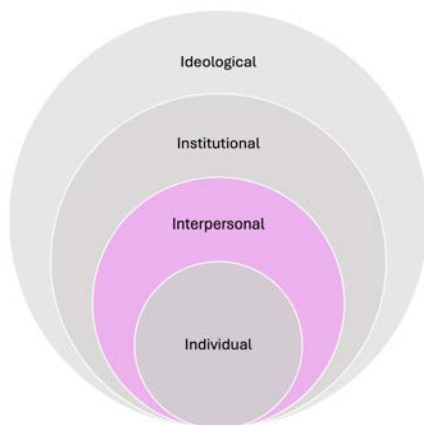
“I was sitting with an Elder, his name is Dave Cusheen, out at Turtle Lodge. I said to him, I don't know how to keep doing this work without being angry all of the time because I get people coming to me with all the trauma and the really, really tragic ways that the system doesn't support them. And he asked me this one question, and I would say that it's been one of the most profound questions that I've been asked in many years. He was like, well, how can you come at it from a place of love?” (jeewan chanicka)

“People come to share their stories, their stories of pain, their stories of joy, of confusion, of discernment and we need to be with them through their experience.” (Bruce Rodrigues)

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### Reflection:

How might we approach leadership rooted in love and implement actions that uphold our core values which are influenced by our differing conceptions of knowing and being?



### Action:

- Practice deepening truth and integrity in your relationships. What emerges as supports and barriers in acting this way?
- What prevents you from opening your heart in relation to others? What supports you in opening your heart in relation to others? What steps are you willing to take towards heart opening as a practice?
- What is your relationship to the more-than-human world (e.g., the two legged world, the four legged world, the lands and waters, etc.)? How might you deepen these relations?

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

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

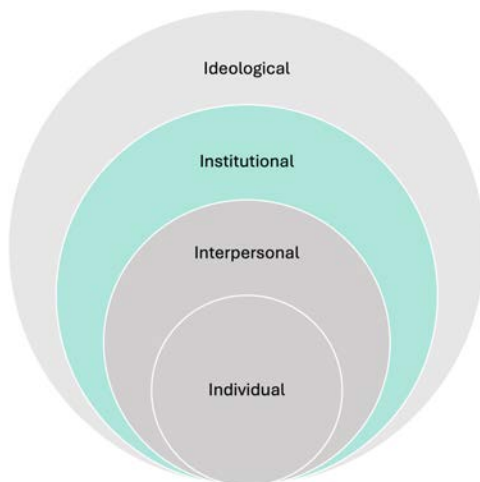
“Neoliberal logics, mindfulness, yoga and the consumption of holistic practices as programs for self-improvement, empowerment, borrowing from Hinduism, Buddhism, Indigenous ways of knowing, in Kabbalah have proliferated in and out of educational spaces.” (Hiren Mistry)

“How can I not make the kinds of assumptions that might be getting in the way for myself and to other people, but also looking at what are the assumptions that are part of how the organization operates and how that is influenced by the general culture, the social structures in which we are all operating.” (Fiona Gardner)

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### Reflection:

How can educational institutions hold leaders accountable from a critically spiritual space and ensure that they show actionable care?



### Action:

- How do students from various faith traditions experience schooling in my school/district? How might they feel about themselves and about their school? How do I know and what can I do to address their concerns?
- Consider creating curricular or professional learning opportunities that invite multiple and contradictory truths, that value multiple worldviews, beliefs and practices. What guiding principles might be required to create this space with care and intentionality?

**Ideological** Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

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

“The increased presence of non-Christian students and families throughout the GTA continue to demonstrate the tension of the secular and the presence of Christian norms and values in schools. Colonialism continues to cast a shadow on Indigenous cultures and ways of being throughout the world.” (Hiren Mistry)

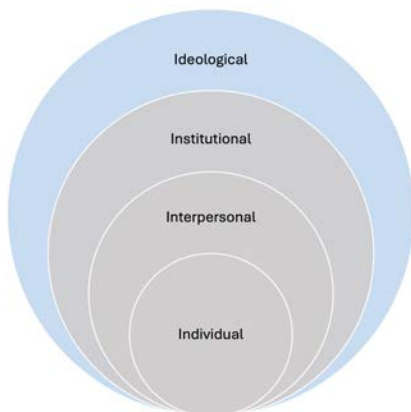
“I always have to come from an assumption or belief that change is possible. I think for me, that's part of my personal self, as well as my professional self to say, if we're really looking for what's meaningful for people, if we're really valuing each person and their sense of possibility, then we have to act in ways that are looking for socially just change. That's part of my way of working with critical spirituality.” (Fiona Gardner)

“Interrogate systemic practices and ways of knowing that we take for granted. We sometimes identify them as status quo, things like, positioning our points of entry to conversation and leadership in a Judeo-Christian, White centered manner.” (Bruce Rodrigues)

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**Reflection:**

How might critical spirituality invite us into holding multiple and contradictory truths, simultaneously?



**Action:**

- In what ways does my understanding of spirituality support or inhibit human rights and equity for all?
- Which truths, perspectives, and experiences do I reject about myself and others? If I were to soften this gaze, what might be “true” in what I deem to be “untrue”? What does this reflection teach me about my edges of growth?

## SEASON 1

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### CULTURALLY RELEVANT & ANTI-RACIST LEADERSHIP

(Click image to listen)



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#### 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. What does culturally relevant and responsive leadership and anti-racist leadership look like within the educational spaces that we take up?
2. How might we create leadership practices that disrupt White supremacy in education?
3. How do silences, denial, projections, protections, stalling, and other in/actions maintain White power in the institution of schooling?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead in culturally responsive and anti-racist ways?
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.

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

“I am a motivational, instructional leader and team builder who will work collaboratively to improve the educational life outcomes of underserved students. I will expect and only accept greatness.” (Ramon San Vicente)

“Leaders come in, all forms, all sizes and you know what? Those of us who are deep into Critical Race Theory belong just as much as those who don't even see race because sometimes we have to take their spaces. Many times we have to take that space.” (Karen Murray)

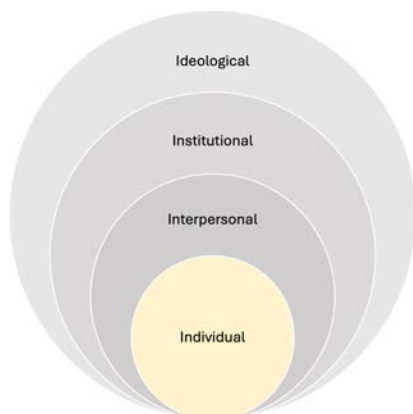
“No matter how much research and theory and findings are produced by Black people, White education systems continue to ignore it and refuse to center this research. This obvious refusal to learn from Black educational leaders has allowed racism to persist in education and we can now see that culturalism hasn't worked.” (Melissa Wilson)

“We need to really consider and take inventory of what has been missing in terms of their own learning and how we can then be able to change the way that we perceive what is important, what is necessary, what is possible.” (Shernett Martin)

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### Reflection:

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



### Action:

- What theories guide your practice as a leader? If you find this question difficult to answer, what might you do? What learning might you engage in?
- We are all complicit in violating human rights. What does this look like for you? We are all committed to upholding human rights. What does this look like for you?
- In what ways are your actions performative? In what ways are your actions genuine? What does this reflection teach you about yourself?

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

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

“If we were to be true to this whole idea of critical anti-racism or culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, it is to actually challenge hierarchy, to look at our students and the communities we work with and the educators in our systems as peers and partners.” (Alice Te)

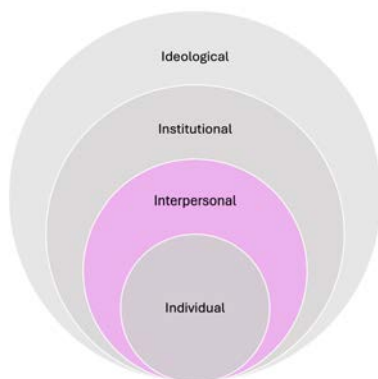
“Culturally responsive teaching, and just understanding that the importance of seeing our students for who they are, their capabilities, understand the underlying systems that are present, that are making our racialized students feel inadequate, feel that they cannot achieve the systems that are there that have been oppressing them for all of these years.” (Shernett Martin)

“We are in a system that we all know is corrupt and violent and so many other things and at the same time, we build relationships, even with those who are perpetuating the violence. That’s because in the spaces that we work in, to have the impact that we need to have, I think we have to work in dynamic ways that bring people into the conversation and be able to have the impact that we need to have and that we want to have.” (Ramon San Vicente)

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### Reflection:

How might we put relationships and humanity at the center of leading? How do we practice being more human with each day, each year?



### Action:

- When are you seeing entire groups of people as a monolith or through a single story? Write down that single story and look for evidence to challenge that single story.
- Make a list of the skills you use to bring people into conversations about equity and anti-racism. In what ways do people avoid or give up on speaking to people who are not committed to equity? In what ways do people explore different ideas, stay in dialogue, and commit to strengthening relationships across different experiences?

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

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“Anti-racist education leadership reminds us about representation. It reminds us that those who are most impacted by the educational system that we’re working in right now need to be centered within that work.” (Karen Murray)

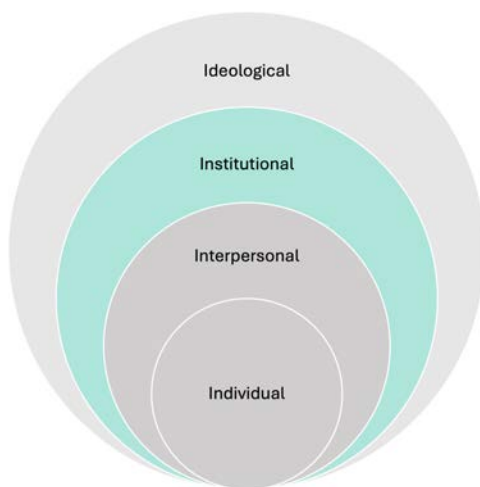
“But unfortunately, this work is done by people who share the identities of those who are oppressed within the system. It’s this vicious cycle where it really falls on our shoulders and it has a real impact on our mental health, on our physical health. Yet, we’re the ones that have to keep going and keep doing this work.” (Nora Hindy)

“Once we acknowledge that oppression exists in every space that we operate, are we going to uphold the current system in our actions and our thoughts and our words? Or are we going to continually fight to disrupt it so that education is a political act? It’s a spiritual commitment, it’s mind, body, spirit, it’s everything that we are.” (Ramon San Vicente)

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**Reflection:**

How can educational institutions make space for culturally relevant and anti-racist leaders and support anti-racist leadership approaches?



**Action:**

- Choose 1 long-standing practice in your school/district. Make a list of the groups that are more served by this practice and the groups that are less served. How can you change the practice such that the voices with the least positional or social power are centered in the practice? How does this shift benefit *all*?
- Consider the difficult work involved in creating more equitable spaces, such as having difficult conversations, calling people in, teaching and leading in ways that go against the grain and challenge the status quo,



addressing human rights complaints, speaking with families and community members who are experiencing harm in school, etc.

- Make a list of the people in your school/district that take on most of this work. What patterns do you notice in the gender, race,

age, and position of the people taking on the burdens associated with this work. How might you interrupt these patterns?

## Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

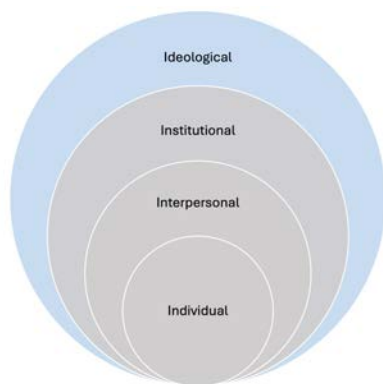
“Instead of having them riddled with this belief system that we live in this fair and equitable society and that if you just try hard and work hard and do all your homework and study hard that you're going to graduate and the world is going to be yours, that's a big lie. It takes much more than just trying hard.” (Shernett Martin)

“Honestly, the whole connotation of leader as a noun, I've always rejected. There are more provocative verbs for me, not so much as lead...It is about engaging. It is about advocating. It is about partnering, disrupting, challenging, questioning, reflecting.” (Alice Te)

“The performative pieces are very obvious and people stealing and taking credit for other people, mainly White people taking credit for the work of Black, Indigenous and people of colour, it just keeps growing and growing.” (Nora Hindy)

### Reflection:

What might it mean to undo and unlearn practices and ideas that promote and maintain status quo, hierarchy, individualism, and compliance?



### Action:

- Look for examples of surface-level equity for optics rather than deep-equity for change in anti-racism and equity work. Choose one action you can take to interrupt any one of these patterns. What happens?
- The myth of meritocracy ignores the many structural barriers that different groups of students face because of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and more. Commit to learning about what these barriers look like in your school/district. Edit your Board Improvement and Equity Plan or School Improvement Plans to acknowledge and address these barriers

# Season 1

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## DECOLONIZING & UNCOLONIZING LEADERSHIP

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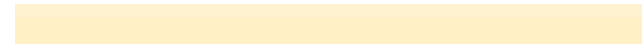
### Guiding Reflection Questions:

How do we undo and disrupt coloniality and engage in decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership?

If these terms are new to you, this is the place for you to be!

1. How might understandings of interconnectedness and relationality influence leadership practices?
2. How might we unpack, unsettle, and sift through current educational leadership competencies to decolonize and uncolonize?
3. How do we lead with love and humility, honouring all our humanity through relational accountability?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead in ways that disrupt coloniality?
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.



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

“When I think about decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership, the first thing that comes to me is liberation. You know, the possibility of true liberation. What will emerge from this way of leadership is freedom and love and ultimately peace.” (Aina-Nia Ayo'dele)

“One of our elders talked to me about leadership. And what he said was this. He said, ‘A leader does not stand above the people; a leader in true fact stands underneath the people.’” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“It is so important to bring in the knowledge that was already there of our ancestors that was passed down through the stories. The colonizers made us feel as if we are without knowledge.” (Ann Lopez)

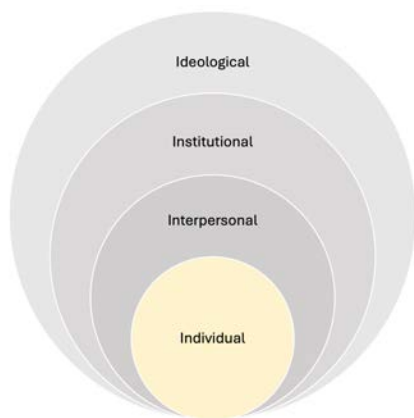


**Reflection:**

How do these statements resonate with you in terms of how you see yourself as a leader? What might be some decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership practices that we should engage in?

**Action:**

- What does liberation mean to you? What does it feel like in your body? What grows this feeling of liberation? How does your liberation influence the liberation of others?
- What is the wisdom of your ancestors? How does that wisdom live in you?
- Discomfort is a precursor for transformational change. What is your relationship to discomfort? How might you build your capacity to stay in discomfort?



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

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

“It’s so important to think about our connections to community. How do educational leaders honour that space? What must be dislodged, revoked, what must be reclaimed as we begin to think through decolonizing, and uncolonizing educational leadership?” (Ann Lopez)

“And until we, as human family, make that sacred connection to the land, and understand that all of those beings, whether it’s animal life, plant life, the winds, the waters, the bird life, the living beings that are in the waters. They are sentient beings. There’s a language of spirit that can communicate with them.” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

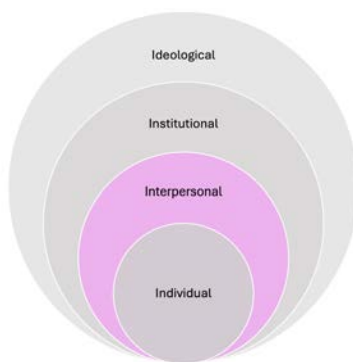
“If we think about relational accountability, what that means is that at all levels of the system, all across what is education, we need to invest the time to authentically build relationships.” (Nick Bertrand)

“I want to also remind us that we are thinking about our relationship to not only each other, but also to the land that we walk on every day and the relationship that we’re in with all aspects of all living beings.” (Pam Agawa)

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### Reflection:

How might we bring people together to locate leadership in spaces between people, structures, and ideas committed to racial and other forms of social justice?



### Action:

- Look for opportunities to practice relational accountability in the next week. Relational accountability could include apologizing, owning up to a mistake, acknowledging someone else’s contribution, standing up for someone publicly, and more. What comes up for you as you consider this? What stands in the way of relational accountability for you?

- What is your relationship to the lands, the water, and the more-than-human life? What might it mean to deepen your relationships here? What does it mean to be responsible to the more-than-human world?
- Try giving up some of your power in your relationships with colleagues, students, and families. What happens? How do you change? How do the relationships change?

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

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

“What I would hope for in education is that it'd become a place of absolute love and safety for our children. Then when our children go into that school, they just adore their teachers who are more like aunties to them, that they respect the teachers, and the teachers respect them.”  
(Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

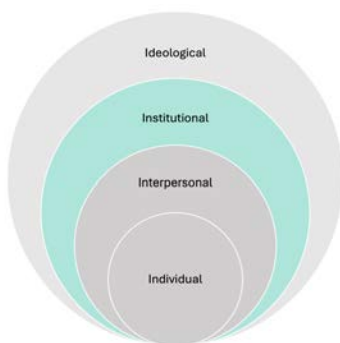
“In a decolonized system, kids need to be at the table and not in a tokenized way where we have one voice and it's a position and we check the box, but that they're there in a way where there are structures of advocacy behind them to gather up their voices and to bring a united voice.” (Nick Bertrand)

“I remember Dr. Alan Luke said to really facilitate change or lead change, you need to lead for anywhere from seven to eight years. Well, when we're moving administrators in the system every three to four years, how can we really have change in that particular school building?”  
(Pam Agawa)

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### Reflection:

How can educational institutions decenter the human and open possibilities for leading and learning from the land as decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership approaches?



### Action:

- Create professional learning opportunities to share Canada's history and present from the perspective of multiple Indigenous Elders, authors, scholars, artists, and poets. Challenge yourself to speak about settler colonialism, manifest destiny, residential schooling, and the Indian Act.
- Create opportunities for authentic student voice, in which students are not simply sharing what we want them to share, or what makes the school/district look good, but are involved in important decision-making practices in the school.

**Ideological** Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

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

“Leadership has always been wrapped up in systems of power that has often reinforced ideologies and practices of the status quo and also in many ways perpetuated coloniality.” (Ann Lopez)

“Could you imagine a system that treated one another like family and that positioned love at the core of everything that we do?” (Nick Bertrand)

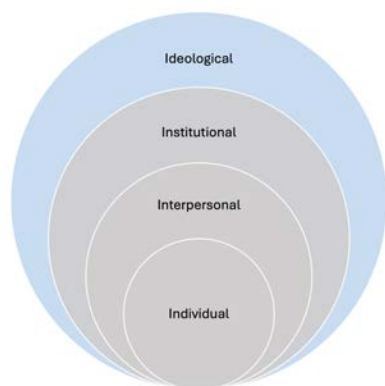
“Compassionate leadership...And that is, a natural human being with a good mind, sharing a real sense of consciousness, of relationship to all the beings in creation, equitably across all creation, being inclusive and embracing the richness of diversity.” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“Remove the idea of saviourism because nobody needs you to save them.” (Aina-Nia Ayo'dele)

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**Reflection:**

What might it mean to undo and unlearn educational leadership ideologies and practices that are rooted in colonialism, settler colonialism, and coloniality?



**Action:**

- Look for examples of saviourism around you. How might you interrupt this thinking in yourself and among those around you?
- The status quo is a term that speaks to how things are or the existing state of affairs. What approaches to leadership challenge the status quo? What approaches to leadership uphold the status quo?



# Season 1

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## QUEERING LEADERSHIP

(Click image to listen)



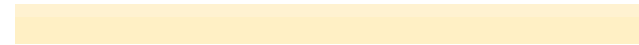
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### Guiding Reflection Questions:

How do we envision new possibilities for schooling and resist rigid frameworks of leadership by questioning and challenging what has become normalized in schooling and society?

1. How might we lead with our whole body and self, challenging institutional norms and heterogendered cultures?
2. How might we center queer identities in leadership practices?
3. What are the ways in which we build purposeful community and create inclusive spaces?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead with the understanding of queer theories?
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.



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

“Queering leadership is just trying to find my space to feel like I am understood in the entirety of my being without having to chop myself up, to make it work.” (Beyhan Farhadi)

“It feels very much like a reciprocal, relational responsibility that I have as a being to all my relations.” (Margaret Alexander)

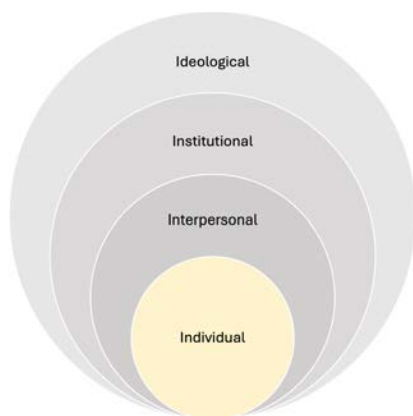
“I guess the thing I'd say is I hope what it [queering leadership] does for leaders is it just creates as many questions as it does certainties. I think that's part of what the legacy of queering leadership should be: possibilities and questions.” (Lance McCreedy)

“I lead with my whole body, practice being right-sized, and consider how I take up space. I honour the messy, the uncategorizable, and the vulnerable. I feel into accountability and interdependence. I lead in service of surviving, thriving and collective liberation.” (Zena Sharman)



### Reflection:

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



### Action:

- What parts of yourself do you allow to be seen in your leadership? What parts of yourself do you hide in your leadership?
- What do you hold to be “certain” about leadership? How can you challenge this certainty by considering different possibilities and asking different questions?
- How do you lead in ways that honour the messy, the uncategorizable and the vulnerable? In what ways do you lead in opposition to this?

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

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

“I've been thinking a lot about what it would mean to practice a kind of engaged pedagogy, as bell hooks encourages us to do and to sort of imagine the kind of reciprocal relationship.” (Syrus Marcus Ware)

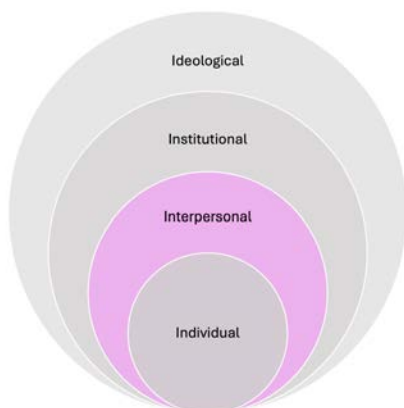
“Students are entirely coded from the minute they walk through kindergarten in that door, they are coded and shaped. By the time I'm encountering them, trying to sort of build different ways of relating.” (Beyhan Farhadi)

“I understood leadership in this kind of Euro-Western construct...it was this binary of some people are legitimized as leaders, which then means there are followers. It calls into question the idea of power.” (Margaret Alexander)

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### Reflection:

How might we lean into vulnerability, humility, interdependence, and love as we lead for change?



### Action:

- Practice reciprocal relations in which there is a give and take with clear and respected boundaries. What do you find difficult in this process? How might you work through these difficulties?
- There are many examples of binaries in leadership (good vs. bad, pure vs. evil, leader vs. follower). Practice challenging the binary between being a leader or a follower. Notice and name what becomes possible beyond these opposite understandings of leadership that maintain clear power structures.

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

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

“It was interesting to think about this formalized learning about leadership in a school setting because it reflects a particular construct of what leadership looks like. It made me wonder who now is seen to have leadership, "potential", and who gets chosen to lead in ways that are often circumscribed by institutional power structures.” (Zena Sharman)

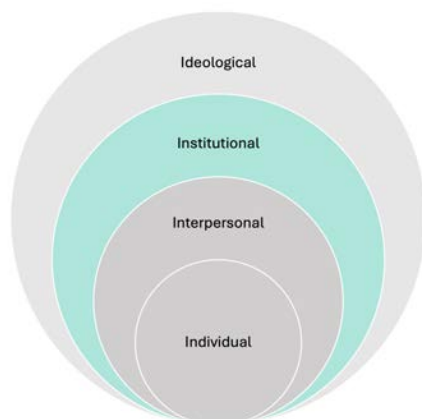
“I think that that is what queer folks have always done in institutions, is question, is make space, is prop doors open, is create liminal space, do all of these things that sort of make new things possible.” (Syrus Marcus Ware)

“Queerness to me is this imagination of possibilities that are much more than what's in front of you and the ability to think about something different or be different or imagine something different.” (Margaret Alexander)

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### Reflection:

How can educational institutions center queer identities and support queering leadership approaches?



### Action:

- Make a list of the possibilities that you open up in your leadership. Make a list of the possibilities that you have abandoned over the years. Choose 1 possibility to work towards in the next month.
- Choose 1 way in which you can take collective action in the next few months. This might mean getting involved in an established movement or cause or it may mean creating community around a cause you have identified as needing your attention and activism.

**Ideological** Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

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

“My hope is that queering leadership might offer us ways to resist assimilation in service of building something more nurturing and liberatory.” (Zena Sharman)

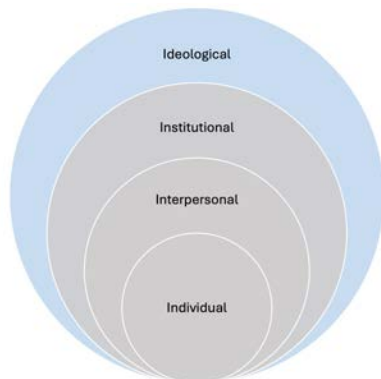
“Queering leadership is thinking about pleasure differently. I feel like that doesn't even land. I feel like there's not even space for that for thinking about pleasure outside of such a narrow, restrictive disciplinary framework.” (Beyhan Farhadi)

“It will look much more like webs, like networks, like collective groupings, like shared knowledge, like reciprocal learning, like shared leadership, like all boats rising.” (Syrus Marcus Ware)

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**Reflection:**

How have you been assimilated as a leader? What have you been assimilated into? How have you resisted assimilation?



**Action:**

- Look for examples of pleasure in leadership both in your experiences and in the experiences of others? What might it look like if leaders were to see pleasure and foster experiences of pleasure in their everyday work?
- Practice leading as part of a web, part of a network, and part of a larger collective. What does this mean about your influence and importance? What might this mean about possibilities for transformative change?

