Values & Competencies

Prepared for Communities In Schools of Central Texas

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Norms

- Your presence makes a difference
- Intent to build
- Grace to grow, with accountability for intentionality and impact
- The broccoli in your teeth rule (Melanieism)
  - Assume it's there, whether you feel it or not (esp. if you walk in more privileged identities and power)
- Make space, take space
- Expect and accept non-closure (@DBP)

Welcome & Connect (5 minutes)

- In chat, please share:
  - What you do at CIS Central TX
  - How important is building and keeping relationships to success in your role? Why?

Relationships:

Cultivating Relationships That Work.

Relationships >> All-Staff Competencies

➔ **Collaborating Well:** We create the conditions for ourselves and our colleagues to achieve exceptional results in service of our mission through strong collaboration, keeping our commitments, and communicating transparently and openly with peers and leaders about the work.

➔ **Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference:** We use our lens on racial justice, equity, inclusion and belonging, and strong emotional intelligence and empathy to build authentic and high-trust relationships across lines of race, gender, and other meaningful dimensions of identity difference.

➔ **Partnering on our Growth.** We accept responsibility for partnering with our leaders and colleagues to grow our skills to better meet the mission. We proactively seek out growth opportunities to stretch our skills, peer and leader feedback to strengthen our performance, and learning opportunities that will help us improve.

➔ **Demonstrating High-Trust Behaviors:** Most days, we demonstrate open communication, effectively give and receive feedback, follow through on commitments, and show integrity in our words and actions. Where we struggle, we work to intentionally grow our capabilities in relating well to others, especially across lines of difference and levels of power within the organization.

➔ **Taking Power and Responsibility:** We accept power and responsibility for our work and areas of accountability, and work with our manager to build skills and expertise to solve larger problems and make more complex decisions in(ter)dependently over time.

1. Collaborating Well

Collaborating Well

We create the conditions for ourselves and our colleagues to achieve exceptional results in service of our mission through **strong collaboration, keeping our commitments, and communicating transparently and openly** with peers and leaders about the work.

<u>Chat me:</u> **What behaviors demonstrate that you are collaborating well with colleagues?**

Keeping Our Commitments

Be realistic about what you can do by when and what constraints are in your way. Better to disappoint upfront with your honesty than to break trust later by not performing.

Chat me: how effective are you at keeping your commitments (10 = very, 1 = not effective at all)

Communicating Transparently

In a collaborative context, we communicate transparently when:

- We're honest about concerns or barriers to project success
- We raise issues or conflicts to the person directly - not to others who can't help
- We are clear about timelines, and when they shift
- We tell the truth plainly to approvers or others influencing the project
- We're honest about how much input someone will have in the final decision

What am I missing?

2. Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference

Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference

We use our lens on racial justice, equity, inclusion and belonging, and strong emotional intelligence and empathy to build authentic and high-trust relationships across lines of race, gender, and other meaningful dimensions of identity difference.

Headline: Trust is Easier to Break; Sometimes Harder to Build or Rebuild - So Don't Go On Cruise-Control.

Particularly across lines of difference and positional power, especially when we hold more dominant identities, it's easy to assume we have deeper trust with someone than we really do.

So we can't become reckless/haphazard in our relationships, especially across lines of race, gender, or other dimensions of difference.

*This means being thoughtful about high-stakes communications, tricky feedback, etc. **every single time** - no "winging it."*

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Never Assume Sameness; Gather Perspective.

We are not all in the same boat.
We are all in the same storm.
Some are on super-yachts.
Some have just the one oar.
-Damian Barr (image @Barbara Kelly)

What are some ways we as colleagues can assume sameness on our teams?

What's the impact of that?

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Identity (Yours and Theirs) Can Be a Filter That Impacts Meaning.

Because of the racial context and equity context in the U.S., intentions and meaning - whether of an email exchange, a behavior or mistake, or even a pattern of communication can be *racialized* - ascribed meaning based on the racial identity of the giver/receiver that may be different than what would be ascribed if both parties shared identities.

Having the self and others-awareness to understand what stories your actions and words might tell can save you and your colleagues a lot of unnecessary interpersonal conflict.

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Anticipate and Normalize Missteps; Build Strong Practices to Recover the Ball and Prevent Recurrence.

Across race, ethnicity, and culture, we're going to make mistakes - especially if we possess more dominant/mainstream identities. The more we can anticipate mistakes (to avoid them) and build skills in receiving and responding to feedback about our mistakes non-defensively (and not repeating them), the healthier our relationships will be.

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Quick Scenario: Let's Discuss

Jenny is an East Asian team member that's worked in a program role for about 2 years. Because she's so effective at building relationships at her school, especially with Asian students and families, she's been asked to join a taskforce to improve onboarding for new program staff around building relationships with students and families across lines of difference. The team is led by a more senior colleague, Suzanne, that's frequently mixed Jenny up for another Asian colleague on the finance team, so truthfully, she's a little apprehensive about the collaboration. In the first meeting, while doing an icebreaker with 12 colleagues, Suzanne puts Jenny on the spot by asking where she's *really from* (Jenny had originally answered Baltimore, MD). When Jenny firmly responded, "as I mentioned before, BALTIMORE, MD" the room got quiet and afterward Jenny received feedback from Suzanne about feeling disrespected by her in the meeting. Jenny wants the relationship to work, but also wants to protect herself from other microaggressions. What's a possible next move for Jenny?

3. Partnering on our Growth

Partnering on Our Growth

We accept responsibility for partnering with our leaders and colleagues to grow our skills to better meet the mission. We proactively seek out growth opportunities to stretch our skills, peer and leader feedback to strengthen our performance, and learning opportunities that will help us improve.

We are in the driver's seat of our career advancement and skills development. Managers help, but we're the owners.

4. Taking Power and Responsibility

Taking Power and Responsibility

We accept power and responsibility for our work and areas of accountability, and work with our manager to build skills and expertise to solve larger problems and make more complex decisions in(ter)dependently over time.

Ownership vs. Passive/Transactional Work

	Ownership	Passive/Transactional
Orientation	Proactive; goals-driven	Reactive; responsive to requests
With decisions	Makes proposals based on expertise	Asks for a decision from manager
Learning and mistakes	Creates opportunites to discuss mistakes /lessons learned and shift for the future	Only raises lessons learned if asked or invited to a debrief meeting
Problem-solving	Focuses on solving the problem, not who is to blame (that can come later, if needed)	Seeks to find "who is responsible" first, then solve the problem
Patterns and risk	Looks for upcoming risks or current patterns that could harm the work and makes a plan + communicates it	Focuses on the now; if patterns are noticed, waits until there's "more [time, money, people]" to solve them."

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5. Modeling High-Trust Behaviors

Modeling High-Trust Behaviors

Most days, we demonstrate open communication, effectively give and receive feedback, follow through on commitments, and show integrity in our words and actions. Where we struggle, we work to intentionally grow our capabilities in relating well to others, especially across lines of difference and levels of power within the organization.

Activity: The Trust-Breaking MVP (10 minutes)

Imagine that you and your team are creating the ultimate trust-breaking avatar: a person who (without being criminal) could epicly break trust with you. **What 3 behaviors would this individual need to take consistently to have zero chance of your group trusting them?**

Please share your group's top three behaviors and have an explanation as to why. (If needed, you can have an honorable mention 4th behavior.)

The Four Cs of Trust

Competence *Do you deliver well for our team, make good decisions, and understand the work?*	**Character** *Do you keep your promises, hold confidences, act with warmth and high integrity?*
Consideration *Do you think about the implications of your work on me and my team? Do you see me as a person, in my identities?*	**Common Focus** *Do you and I have the same picture of our mission and what we're trying to do? Are we on the same page?*

Deep Dive on *Consideration*

esp. across lines of power, race, gender, and other dimensions of difference, missed expectations around what management can and should look like can break trust. Be especially careful about:

- how criticism happens (public vs. private; sharp disparagement and disrespect vs. warm-firm criticism; volatility or perceived unfairness/bias)
- back-channeling and broken promises (talking about and not to people; breaking confidences; breaking commitments)
- not owning mistakes/gas-lighting (passive voice; not apologizing - especially for REIB-related slights; double-standards)
- inability to hear critical feedback (reads as insecurity and defensiveness, which harms credibility; if backlash is expected, hits at character as well

Tying It All Together - Being Intentional

It's easy to assume that because people work on the same team or care about the mission, working relationships can or should be easy.

Especially across lines of race, gender, or personality and work style differences, building relationships can feel slower or more challenging and takes **intentional effort**. Rebuilding them can be even more challenging.

For most roles, building relationships isn't a nice-to-have addition to your job, it is an integral part of doing your job well.

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Close out question:
What is one step you can take in the next two weeks to improve a current client or partner relationship at CIS?