



Mobilizing Talent

"This Deep Dive draws from one of the Areas of Competence in the [Career Development Manager/Leader Competency Framework](#). Through reflection, analysis of real situations, and practical activities, you'll explore how this part of the framework shapes your leadership practice."

The Challenge Ahead

Human service organizations achieve success through their people. The team, rather than just the services, embodies core values, fosters trust, and manages vital organizational change. However, many leaders find it challenging to mobilize this talent effectively. Staff may feel disconnected, underutilized, or unsupported, often resulting in reactive development and fragmented teams.

The strategic shift is this: mobilizing talent goes beyond simple hiring or training. It involves creating the optimal conditions for people to perform and grow. This means recognizing individual strengths, aligning goals intentionally, and establishing a culture that promotes growth, clear feedback, and a unified sense of purpose.

This capsule is designed to help you lead with clear intention. It provides the framework for building teams that are resilient, motivated, and equipped to meet both current demands and future opportunities.

The Leader's Role in Mobilizing Talent

You are positioned to be the driving catalyst for accelerated growth and total alignment. That means:

- Attracting and retaining diverse, mission-driven talent
- Creating development pathways that build capacity and confidence
- Fostering a culture of appreciation, feedback, and shared purpose
- Managing workload and relationships with clarity and care
- Empowering people to stretch, learn, and lead

Mobilizing talent effectively means you're not just building a team; you're generating powerful, forward-moving momentum.

Three of the exercises in this resource will use a model developed by Dennis C. Kinlaw.



Leadership Insight: Kinlaw's Four Pillars of Commitment

Purpose

This framework helps you understand what people need in order to commit fully to a team, a goal, or a change effort. Dennis C. Kinlaw's model identifies four core conditions that foster meaningful engagement: clarity of purpose, competence, influence, and appreciation. As a leader, you can use these pillars to strengthen trust, motivation, and shared ownership across your team.

Clarity of Purpose

People commit when they understand *why* something matters. Your role is to make the purpose visible and compelling. This means clearly articulating the goal, the reason behind it, and how each person's role contributes to the bigger picture. When purpose is vague, commitment falters. When purpose is clear, people lean in.

Ask yourself:

- Have I clearly stated the objective or desired outcome?
- Do team members understand how their work connects to our mission or strategy?
- Have I invited questions to ensure shared understanding?

Competence

People commit when they feel capable and prepared. Your role is to ensure that team members have the tools, information, and confidence they need to contribute effectively. This includes training, access to resources, and space to ask for help. When competence is supported, people feel empowered—not overwhelmed.

Ask yourself:

- Does each person have what they need to succeed in their role?
- Have I checked for gaps in knowledge, skill, or confidence?
- Am I creating a culture where learning and growth are encouraged?

Influence

People commit when they have a voice. Your role is to invite input, listen actively, and share decision-making where appropriate. Influence doesn't mean everyone decides everything—it means people feel heard, respected, and involved. When influence is absent, disengagement grows. When it's present, ownership deepens.

Ask yourself:

- Have I created space for input before decisions are made?
- Do I listen with curiosity, not just efficiency?
- Are people able to shape the work they're responsible for?





Appreciation

People commit when their contributions are seen and valued. Your role is to recognize effort, celebrate progress, and affirm the unique strengths each person brings. Appreciation isn't just about praise—it's about respect, acknowledgment, and human connection. When appreciation is consistent, commitment becomes sustainable.

Ask yourself:

- Have I acknowledged both outcomes and effort?
- Do I recognize contributions in ways that feel meaningful to the individual?
- Am I building a culture where people feel respected and valued?

Pro Tips

You can also use Kinlaw's pillars as a diagnostic tool. When commitment feels low, ask: – Is the purpose unclear? – Is competence unsupported? – Is influence missing? – Is appreciation absent?

You can also use the pillars proactively—when planning a meeting, launching a project, or coaching a team member. They help you lead with intention and build the conditions where people choose to commit, not just comply.

In this resource you'll find five exercises you can use with your team.

1. Mapping Team Capacity to Future Vision
2. Co-Creating a Behavioural Charter
3. Delegation
4. Leading Effective Meetings
5. Feedback

Together, these five practices form a powerful foundation. Mapping team capacity to a future vision ensures that each individual's strengths and growth areas are aligned with strategic direction. Co-creating a behavioural charter establishes shared expectations for how the team will work together, reinforcing trust and clarity. Delegation, when guided by Kinlaw's pillars, empowers employees with purpose, autonomy, and support. Leading effective meetings transforms collaboration into a disciplined, outcome-driven experience that respects time and fosters alignment. And feedback—structured with care and courage—sustains learning, reinforces contribution, and deepens commitment. When practiced together, these elements create a culture where people are clear on where they're going, confident in how they'll get there, and connected to one another in the process.





Exercise 1: Mapping Team Capacity to Future Vision



Purpose

This exercise helps leaders and teams assess current strengths, identify capacity gaps, and set development goals aligned with a shared vision or future state. It supports strategic alignment, role clarity, and personalized growth planning across the team.



Preparation

- Set aside 60 to 90 minutes for this session.
- Let participants know that the goal is to reflect on where the team is now, where it's headed, and what each person needs to grow into that future.
- Provide printed or digital copies of the Team Capacity Mapping worksheet.
- You may also want to bring a visual representation of the team's future vision—such as a strategic goal, service model, or organizational roadmap.



How to Use It

Step-by-Step

1. Begin by framing the conversation. Explain that this exercise is about aligning individual strengths and development with the team's evolving purpose. It's not about evaluation—it's about growth, clarity, and shared commitment.
2. Start by reviewing the future vision together. This might include a new service model, expanded responsibilities, or a cultural shift the team is working toward. Invite discussion around questions like:
 - What does success look like in this future state?
 - What skills, mindsets, or capacities will be essential?
 - What will be different from how we operate today?
3. Next, invite each team member to reflect on their current role and contributions. Ask them to consider:





- What are my current strengths and areas of confidence?
 - What parts of the future vision feel aligned with my skills?
 - Where do I see gaps or areas for growth?
 - What support or development would help me move forward?
4. After 15 to 20 minutes of individual reflection, guide the team through a mapping activity. For each person, identify three key elements:
- Current strengths and contributions
 - Gaps or stretch areas in relation to the future vision
 - Development goals or support needs

Encourage participants to share their reflections in pairs or small groups, then bring insights back to the full team. Use open-ended questions like:

- What patterns are we noticing across the team?
- Where do we have strong coverage—and where might we need to build capacity?
- What kinds of development (training, coaching, mentoring, experience) would help us grow?

Capture the team's insights visually or verbally. Reinforce that this map is a living tool—it can be revisited as the team evolves. Consider using it to inform professional development plans, peer coaching, or future hiring decisions.

Close the session by inviting each team member to name one personal development goal they'll focus on over the next quarter. Encourage the team to support one another in tracking progress and celebrating growth.



Pro Tips for Success

- Create a tone of curiosity and openness.
- Normalize the idea that collaboration is dynamic and requires ongoing attention.
- Encourage the team to look beyond formal roles and consider the human dimensions of partnership—trust, empathy, and shared purpose.





Exercise 1:

Mapping Team Capacity to Future Vision (Sample)

Context

A nonprofit agency is expanding its trauma-informed care model across all programs. The future vision includes stronger cross-team coordination, deeper client engagement, and consistent use of trauma-informed practices in supervision, documentation, and service delivery.

Team Member: Jordan – Case Manager

Jordan brings strong relational skills and deep empathy to client work. They are confident in building trust and navigating complex emotional dynamics. In the future vision, Jordan's role will require more structured documentation aligned with trauma-informed principles and increased collaboration across departments. Jordan identifies a gap in their comfort with formal documentation and interdepartmental coordination. Their development goal is to strengthen their documentation skills and participate in a cross-team learning cohort focused on trauma-informed supervision.

Team Member: Amina – Intake Coordinator

Amina is highly organized and efficient in managing client flow and initial assessments. Her strengths include clear communication and attention to detail. In the future vision, Amina's role will expand to include more trauma-informed engagement during intake and a stronger role in shaping client pathways. She notes a gap in her confidence with trauma-informed language and emotional attunement. Her development goal is to attend trauma-informed care training and shadow a peer who models strong client-centered engagement.

Team Member: Leo – Program Supervisor

Leo is a strategic thinker with a strong leadership presence. He's confident in coaching staff and managing operations. In the future vision, Leo will be responsible for embedding trauma-informed principles into team culture and supervision. He identifies a gap in his ability to model vulnerability and emotional safety in team settings. His development goal is to work with a coach on trauma-informed leadership behaviours and facilitate monthly reflective practice sessions with his team.

Team Member: Priya – Community Liaison

Priya excels in external partnerships and advocacy. She's confident in public speaking and relationship-building. In the future vision, Priya's role will include co-designing trauma-informed outreach strategies with community partners. She identifies a gap in translating internal trauma-informed practices into external messaging. Her development goal is to collaborate with the





communications team to build a shared language toolkit and pilot a trauma-informed outreach campaign.

Team Reflection

The team has strong relational capacity and shared commitment to the trauma-informed vision. Current strengths include empathy, organization, and leadership. Gaps include documentation alignment, emotional safety in supervision, and translating trauma-informed principles across roles. Development goals are focused on training, coaching, peer learning, and cross-functional collaboration.





Exercise 2: Co-Creating a Team Behaviour Charter



Purpose

This exercise helps leaders and teams define the specific behaviours that support their shared success. It invites each team member to contribute, reflect, and commit to practices that stretch their leadership and strengthen collaboration. The resulting charter becomes a living agreement that can be used to build positive team dynamics, reinforce accountability, guide feedback, and sustain team culture.



Preparation

- Set aside 60 to 90 minutes for this session.
- Let participants know that the goal is to co-create a set of clear, observable behaviours that reflect how the team wants to show up together—not just what they do, but how they do it.
- You may also want to bring markers, sticky notes, or a shared digital canvas for visual synthesis.



How to Use It

Step-by-Step

1. Begin by framing the conversation. Explain that every team has a culture, whether intentional or accidental. This exercise is about naming and shaping that culture through behaviours that build trust, clarity, and shared success. Emphasize that the charter is not a list of values or platitudes—it's a set of stretch behaviours that can be practiced, observed, and reinforced.
2. Start with individual reflection. Invite each team member to consider the following prompts:
 - a. When is this team at its best? What behaviours make that possible?
 - b. What behaviours do I personally want to commit to—even if they stretch me?
 - c. What actions build trust, clarity, and momentum in our work?
 - d. What behaviours do we need to name and normalize to support our future goals?





3. After 15 to 20 minutes of reflection, invite a small group or full group discussion. Encourage participants to share examples of behaviours they've seen or aspire to. Use open-ended questions like:
 - a. What does "respect" or "accountability" look like in action?
 - b. How do we want to handle disagreement or feedback?
 - c. What behaviours help us stay aligned and energized?
4. As behaviours are shared, capture them in specific, observable language. For example: – *"We give feedback within 48 hours of noticing a concern."* – *"We name assumptions before making decisions."* – *"We ask clarifying questions before reacting."* – *"We acknowledge contributions in team meetings."* – *"We follow through on commitments or renegotiate them transparently."*
5. Once the list is generated, guide the team in clustering behaviours into 4 to 6 core commitments. These become the backbone of the charter. Invite the team to wordsmith together, ensuring each behaviour is clear, actionable, and meaningful.
6. Close the session by inviting each team member to endorse the charter and choose one behaviour they will personally focus on in the coming month. Encourage the team to revisit the charter regularly, use it during onboarding, and refer to it during feedback or reflection conversations.

**Pro Tips**

- Create a tone of honesty and aspiration.
- Normalize the idea that stretch behaviours require practice and support.
- Reinforce that the charter is a living agreement—not a static document.
- Celebrate the team's courage in naming what matters and committing to how they want to lead together.





Exercise 2:

Team Behaviour Charter (Sample)

Context

A multidisciplinary team in a human service agency working to strengthen trauma-informed care, cross-role collaboration, and shared accountability.

Our Commitment

As a team, we commit to showing up in ways that build trust, clarity, and shared purpose. These behaviours reflect how we want to lead together—not just what we do, but how we do it. We hold ourselves and each other accountable to these practices, knowing they support our mission and our relationships.

1. **We communicate with clarity and care.**

We name expectations, decisions, and changes directly and respectfully. We avoid vague language and passive messaging. When something is unclear, we ask for clarification rather than making assumptions. We follow up within two business days when someone requests information or support.

2. **We give and receive feedback with courage and respect.**

We offer feedback within 48 hours of noticing a concern or opportunity. We use specific examples and focus on impact, not intention. We receive feedback with openness, even when it's uncomfortable, and we thank the person for their honesty. We do not gossip or triangulate concerns.

3. **We take responsibility for our impact.**

When we make a mistake or miss a commitment, we name it, repair it, and recommit. We do not deflect, minimize, or blame. We recognize that our tone, timing, and presence affect others, and we adjust when needed.

4. **We practice inclusive collaboration.**

We invite input from all voices, especially those closest to the work. We pause to ask, "Who else needs to be part of this?" before making decisions. We rotate facilitation and note-taking roles to share power. We do not interrupt or dominate discussions.

5. **We honor boundaries and sustainability.**





We start and end meetings on time. We do not send non-urgent messages outside of work hours. We check in with each other before diving into emotionally charged topics. We name when we're at capacity and ask for help or renegotiation.

6. **We celebrate effort and progress.**

We acknowledge contributions in real time—verbally, in writing, or in meetings. We name what's working, not just what needs fixing. We celebrate small wins and personal growth, not just outcomes.

7. **Living the Charter:**

Each team member chooses one behaviour to focus on each month and reflects on their progress during team check-ins. The charter is revisited quarterly and adjusted as the team evolves. When tensions arise, we use the charter as a reference point—not to punish, but to realign.





Exercise 3: Delegating for Commitment



Purpose

This exercise helps you delegate goals and objectives in a way that supports engagement, empowerment, and accountability. It uses Kinlaw's Four Pillars—Clarity, Competence, Influence, and Appreciation—to guide the delegation process, ensuring that employees understand what they're working toward, feel equipped to succeed, and remain connected to the broader purpose of the organization.



Preparation

Set aside 45 to 60 minutes to work through this exercise with each employee or team member. The goal is to move beyond task assignment and into meaningful delegation—where goals are clear, objectives are co-created, and ownership is shared. Bring a draft of the goal or initiative you intend to delegate, and be ready to explore it together.



How to Use It

Step-by-Step

1. **Start with Clarity:** Begin by clearly stating the goal. This should be broad but specific enough to be meaningful. Then articulate the purpose behind it—why it matters to the organization, how it connects to vision and values, and what success looks like. Even if the task is tactical, link it to the strategic context. Complete the sentence: "By achieving this goal, we will..." and invite the employee to reflect on how their role contributes.
2. **Build Competence through Co-Creation:** Next, shift into defining objectives. These are the specific, measurable actions that support the goal. Rather than prescribing every detail, invite the employee into a planning conversation. Ask:
 - What needs to happen to achieve this goal?
 - What resources, time, or support will you need?





- How does this fit with your other responsibilities?
- Who else is involved, and how will communication flow?

Use this dialogue to co-create a realistic, actionable plan. This builds clarity, but also supports competence—ensuring the employee feels equipped and confident.

3. **Invite Influence and Ownership** Now clarify the scope of decision-making and autonomy. Define what level of authority the employee has, and where collaboration or approval is needed. Use open-ended questions to deepen engagement:

- How will you approach this?
- What risks or challenges do you anticipate?
- What support do you need from me?
- What feedback would be most helpful?
- What's important to you about this objective?

This step reinforces that the employee is not just executing—they're influencing outcomes and shaping the work.

4. **Close with Appreciation and Accountability** Finally, define how progress will be measured and how feedback will be provided. Be specific about timelines, check-ins, and recognition. Ask:

- What does success look like to you?
- How will we know we're on track?
- How would you like to receive feedback?
- How will we celebrate progress?

Follow through consistently. Appreciation isn't just praise—it's attention, responsiveness, and acknowledgment of effort and expertise.



Pro Tips for Success

- Approach delegation as a conversation, not a transaction.
- Use Kinlaw's pillars to guide your tone and structure.
- Be clear, but also curious.
- Co-create objectives to build ownership.





- Define influence to build confidence and follow through to build trust.





Exercise 4: Leading Effective Meetings



Purpose

This guide supports you in designing and leading meetings that are intentional, well-managed, and deeply collaborative. It integrates Martin Farrell's 40:20:40 model with Kinlaw's engagement pillars—clarity, competence, influence, and appreciation—to help you create meetings that energize your team and produce tangible results.



Preparation

Before the Meeting: Preparation (40%)

- Effective meetings begin long before anyone enters the room. Devote time to preparing with precision and purpose.
- Start by asking yourself: "Why are we meeting?" Complete the sentence, "By the end of this meeting, we will..." to clarify the objective. Then determine whether a meeting is truly the best format to achieve that goal.
- Identify who needs to be there. Invite only those whose presence is essential to the purpose—fewer participants often lead to better outcomes.
 - Build a focused agenda. For each item, define:
 - The topic
 - The desired outcome (e.g., decision, action, understanding)
 - The time required to reach that outcome
 - Any advance materials participants need to review
- Distribute the agenda and materials with enough lead time for participants to prepare. Be explicit: let them know what outcomes are expected and that preparation is part of their role.
 - Assign roles in advance:
 - Chair (you or a delegate)
 - Timekeeper
 - Note taker
 - Content contributors





- Participation monitor (someone who ensures balanced engagement)
- Communicate these roles clearly so everyone arrives ready to contribute.

During the Meeting: Engagement (20%)

- Start on time. Begin each agenda item by naming the desired outcome. Keep discussion focused—don't allow drift or repetition.
- Use the timekeeper to stay on track. When an outcome is achieved, move on promptly. Avoid lingering in discussion once resolution is reached.
- Record decisions, action assignments, and timelines. Anticipate barriers to follow-through and engage the group in solving them proactively.
- If an item is informational, check for understanding before moving on. Don't assume clarity—confirm it.
- For updates, ask participants to preview the week ahead rather than review the past. This supports proactive problem-solving and forward momentum.
- Close the meeting with a brief evaluation. Ask: Did we achieve what we set out to do? Was the process effective? Release participants early when possible—it's a sign of respect and efficiency.

After the Meeting: Follow-Through (40%)

- Distribute minutes promptly. Ensure action items are clear, specific, and time-bound.
- Carry forward any outstanding items to future agendas. Don't let commitments fade—track them visibly.
- Follow through relentlessly. This is where leadership is most visible. When you model consistency and accountability, others will follow.
- Use Kinlaw's four pillars to guide how you lead the meeting:
 - **Clarity:** Define the issue and purpose.
 - **Competence:** Explore options and resources.
 - **Influence:** Make decisions and assign actions.
 - **Appreciation:** Evaluate and affirm contributions.





- You can structure your meeting around these components. Begin with clarity, expand into exploration, narrow toward decisions, and close with appreciation and evaluation.



Pro Tips for Success

- After each meeting, take a moment to reflect:
 - Did the meeting reflect strong leadership and management?
 - Were participants engaged, clear, and accountable?
 - What will I adjust next time to improve the experience and outcomes?
- Meetings are not just logistical—they're cultural. When led well, they become a powerful expression of collaboration, purpose, and shared leadership.





Exercise 5: Giving Feedback That Builds Commitment



Purpose

This exercise helps you give feedback that is clear, respectful, and growth-oriented—and that leads to meaningful next steps. It blends Kinlaw's Four Pillars of Commitment with the two-part descriptive feedback model, guiding you to move beyond observation and impact into shared ownership, follow-through, and accountability.



Preparation

Leadership Insight: The Two-Part Descriptive Feedback Model

Purpose

This model helps you give feedback that is specific, respectful, and actionable—grounded in observable facts rather than assumptions or judgments. Especially in human service environments, where trust and emotional safety are essential, fact-based feedback allows leaders to address behaviour without triggering defensiveness or confusion. It becomes a tool for learning and growth, not correction or critique.

Why Fact-Based Feedback Matters

Many feedback conversations falter because they rely on vague impressions, emotional tone, or inferred intent. Statements like “You weren't very engaged” or “That didn't land well” can feel personal, unclear, and difficult to act on. The two-part descriptive model avoids this by anchoring feedback in what was actually seen or heard—making it specific, neutral, and easier to receive.

This approach supports Kinlaw's pillar of **Clarity** by helping the employee understand exactly what the feedback refers to. It also lays the foundation for **Competence**, because the feedback becomes a springboard for skill-building rather than a critique of character.

The Two Parts

- **Part 1. “I noticed...”** This phrase introduces a specific, observable behaviour. It focuses on facts—what you saw, heard, or experienced directly. It avoids interpretation, assumption, or emotional labeling.



*Examples:*

- “I noticed that you paused to check in with the client before continuing the intake.”
- “I noticed that the report was submitted two days after the deadline.”
- “I noticed that you asked a clarifying question during the team meeting.”

This helps the employee locate the moment clearly and understand what's being addressed.

- **Part 2. “The impact was...”** This phrase explains how the behaviour affected others, the work, or the outcome. It's still fact-based, but it connects the dots—helping the employee understand why the behaviour matters.

Examples:

- “The impact was that the client felt more at ease and opened up more quickly.”
- “The impact was that the team had to delay the next step in the project.”
- “The impact was that the discussion stayed focused and everyone felt heard.”

This builds insight and reinforces the connection between individual behaviour and collective success.

Putting It into Practice

When you use this model, you're not evaluating the person—you're describing the behaviour and its effect. This creates space for reflection, dialogue, and growth. It also supports Kinlaw's other pillars:

- **Influence:** Invite the employee to shape their response and next steps.
- **Appreciation:** Acknowledge effort and progress, not just outcomes.

Choose a moment that warrants feedback—whether affirming or developmental—and prepare using the structure below. Set aside 30 to 45 minutes for a focused conversation. Bring a journal or worksheet to organize your thoughts before the conversation.





Step-by-Step

1. **Start with Clarity** Begin by describing the specific behaviour or moment using the first part of the descriptive feedback model: – “*I noticed...*” followed by a clear, observable action. Then explain why it matters. Connect the behaviour to team goals, values, or strategic priorities. This reinforces Kinlaw’s clarity pillar and helps the employee understand the purpose behind the feedback.
2. **Support Competence** Next, describe the impact using the second part of the model: – “*The impact was...*” followed by how the behaviour affected others, outcomes, or the work. Then explore what support or development might be needed. Ask: – What would help you feel more confident in this area? – Are there tools, training, or time constraints we should address?

This builds competence and ensures the feedback leads to capability, not just correction.

3. **Invite Influence** Shift into dialogue. Ask open-ended questions to invite ownership and insight:
 - What’s your perspective on this moment?
 - What do you think worked well—or could be improved?
 - What would you like to do differently going forward?
 - What support do you need from me?

This reinforces Kinlaw’s influence pillar and helps the employee shape their own path forward.

4. **Close with Appreciation:** Affirm the employee’s effort, intention, or growth. Appreciation might sound like:
 - “I really value your openness in this conversation.”
 - “Your work on this project made a real difference.”
 - “Thank you for your commitment to improving this.”

This reinforces Kinlaw’s appreciation pillar and strengthens the relationship.

Driving Toward Commitments and Next Steps

To ensure the feedback leads to action, guide the conversation toward a clear commitment. Use prompts like:





- “What’s one thing you’ll do differently or continue doing as a result of this conversation?”
- “What timeline feels realistic for that change or follow-up?”
- “How would you like me to support you or check in?”
- “Let’s agree on a time to revisit this—how about next week’s check-in?”

Capture the commitment in writing if appropriate, and follow through. This turns feedback into a shared agreement, reinforcing accountability and growth.



Pro Tips for Success

- Treat feedback as a leadership practice, not a performance event.
- Be specific, curious, and kind.
- Use Kinlaw’s pillars to guide tone and structure.
- Always end with a commitment—because feedback without follow-through is just commentary.

