Succession Planning Framework Guide

Disability Services Sector

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Introduction

The disability services sector in Calgary and surrounding areas consists of 40 agencies that provide support to thousands of people with developmental, physical, and mental disabilities. A key strategic priority identified by the sector is to develop and implement an intentional, systematic approach to succession planning. The overall objective of this project is to develop a sustainable succession planning resource aimed at providing agencies with a strategic planning framework with resource tools. This framework will strengthen organizational capacity to build up a ready talent pool for different leadership levels, support effective knowledge transfer, and identify potential successors to mission-critical roles.

Components of the Succession Planning Framework

1. **Succession planning framework guide (PDF)**
   This guide should be used in conjunction with the *Succession Planning Dashboard* workbook in Excel. As can be seen in the table of contents, this guide includes:
   - Benefits of succession planning
   - Critical success factors for effective succession planning
   - Succession planning and talent management
   - Knowledge transfer
   - Learning and development strategy to assist with career progression in the sector for the four main leadership levels: executive, senior, mid-level, and frontline supervisor

2. **Succession planning dashboard (Microsoft Excel)**
   The tracking aspect of the succession planning process has been created in Microsoft Excel. Several worksheets have been included in one Excel workbook called *Succession Planning Dashboard*. This workbook should be used in conjunction with the PDF guide.

3. **Resource tools (Microsoft Word)**
   - Tool #1 - Succession planning checklist
   - Tool #2 - Emergency leadership planning template
   - Tool #3 - Mentoring program guidelines
   - Tool #4 - Mentor's Toolkit
   - Tool #5 - Knowledge transfer plan template

Benefits of Effective Succession Planning

There are many benefits for organizations that prioritize and implement effective succession management such as:

- Ensuring a seamless and continuous supply of organizational services with minimal disruptions
- Reducing perceived and actual risk with leadership transitions
- Providing a sense of stability to the staff when a planned or unexpected leadership absence occurs
- Providing meaningful development opportunities for employees at all levels, which in turn, increases retention and enhances employee engagement
- Increasing organizational capacity and bench strength (number of employees ready to fill vacant positions) through leadership development at all levels to better prepare the transition into other roles

An integrated, holistic approach rather than just focusing on replacement planning

Succession planning should be a systematic approach in conjunction with robust talent management to ensure that a continuous supply of the best talent is available at all levels. The ultimate goal is to have the right people in the right jobs at the right time to meet current and future organizational needs. An integrated approach is required to attract and retain employees that will be ready to move into next level positions (leadership or subject-matter experts) as they become available.

Succession management should be flexible. It should constantly evolve as organizational and workforce needs change. It should be oriented towards the development of staff, not just a list of high-potential employees and the slots they might fill.[1] When you move away from the “replacement” mindset, succession planning becomes about moving the right people into the right places at the right time and having bench strength that should be measured over the long-term.[2]

Succession Planning Maturity Model

There are different models that outline the levels of succession-planning maturity with different number of stages. However, in its simplest form, the three main levels are as follows:

Level 1 – Ad hoc replacements

At this level, organizations have no real succession planning in place and positions are filled as they become available. Potential successors may be identified for the executive level, but there is little to no planned leadership development.

Level 2 – Traditional succession planning

At this level, organizations focus on critical senior level positions with a list of high potential successors. Performance of these candidates is monitored, and development plans are in place.

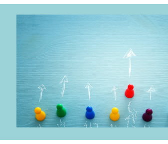
Level 3 – Integrated succession management

At this level, organizations target positions that have been identified as critical positions at all levels. There is alignment with business strategy, integration with other talent management processes, and talent KPIs are established and monitored.

Myths about Succession Planning

1. Succession planning can wait and isn't needed until somebody is ready to retire
2. Succession planning is just for the executive leadership positions
3. Succession planning is only for large organizations
4. Succession planning should be handled on a case-by-case basis
5. Succession planning ends when a successor is identified

Critical Success Factors



A number of critical success factors are necessary for succession planning to be effective and integrated into an organization:

1. Overcoming resistance to change

One of the greatest challenges in implementing succession planning is resistance to change for both the leaders transitioning out and for staff. For leaders that have carried the vision and mission for an organization (and perhaps even ownership) for many years, it can be difficult for them to engage in succession planning. Their identity, worth, and purpose may be closely tied to the work they do, so there is an element of overcoming the psychological barrier of "letting go".

There can also be resistance from staff if a leader that is highly respected is leaving an organization. This is especially the case if the leader has been in their position for a long time. Strong relationships and a sense of loyalty to the current incumbent can result in resistance to change from staff members.

Recommendations:

Effective succession management reduces anxiety and ensures a level of continuity and stability for staff and stakeholders. This helps alleviate some of the resistance staff members may be feeling. The following strategies may also help both the retiring leaders and their organizations:

- **Timing is crucial:** leaders must discern the balance between transitioning out too quickly and holding on too long. When a retirement date has been set, it is important not to prolong it especially if a robust transition plan is in place

- **Leaving a legacy**: focus should be about leaving a legacy and developing multiple leaders through ongoing coaching and mentoring

- **Post-retirement plan**: not enough attention is given to post retirement and the adjustment it requires. Leaders retiring may want to work with a coach to come up with a plan on how life will look post retirement and if they will be involved at an arm's length with the organization

- **Sector network**: it may be beneficial for the sector to set up a network of retired leaders that can mentor and coach not only those in the sector, but also provide support to leaders who are transitioning out

2. Alignment with organizational strategy and direction

Succession planning should be a part of the process when planning the future and strategic direction for organizations. It is also important not to underestimate the changing nature of work and to anticipate future needs. Organizations need to consider how shifting external factors such as political, economic, or technical can impact what is required for particular roles.

Recommendations:

- **Inclusion in the strategic plan:** a strategic plan states the organization's future goals and actions needed to accomplish those goals. The development of staff, especially for identified critical positions, should be an important consideration for an organization's future. By including succession planning as a key goal with concrete activities, this signals to staff that growth, development, and career progression are priorities for the organization as it will be done in a more formalized way.

- **Consider where the organization is at and what it needs for the future:** the organizational culture, stage of growth, and what type of leader is needed should all factor into the decision-making process for a successor. For example, different leadership skill sets are needed if an organization is in a growth phase, needing a major turnaround/being restructured, or is well-established and requires little change for the foreseeable future.

3. Significant involvement and communication of senior leadership

The adage "tone is set at the top" is true if senior leaders want to foster learning and knowledge-transfer cultures that promote growth and development across their organizations. Creating a robust talent pool with integrated succession management is critical even if organizations have no known retirements approaching.

However, if senior leaders of an organization do not see the urgency in taking a proactive approach to succession planning, it is likely not going to work and there will be little buy-in.

Recommendations:

- **Formalize investment of time**: senior leaders should invest their time in developing future leaders and potential successors and include specific goals and activities related to this in their own performance plans

- **Buy-in from all senior leaders:** Succession planning should not be solely on the shoulders of their Human Resources (HR) Department. Although HR plays an important role in succession planning, buy-in and involvement from senior leaders across departments is crucial.

4. Transparent process and communication

As critical roles are identified with lists of potential successors (talent pool), it is imperative for it to be done in a fair, objective, and transparent way.[3] Succession planning should not be viewed as a secretive process behind closed doors where someone is simply chosen as the successor for a role. This will lead to perceptions of favouritism and could affect morale.

Recommendations:

- **Being clear about the process**: to manage perceptions, be clear about the succession planning process, any criteria that the organization will be using in the selection process, and that being part of the list of potential successors doesn't guarantee that they will advance

- **Make information available:** any information pertaining to career advancement and the succession planning process should be made readily available to employees. This will help employees identify their preferred career direction and assist them with setting concrete learning and development goals needed to advance

5. Ensure diversity

The disability services sector is highly diverse, particularly at the frontline level. Yet, this diversity is often not as well represented at leadership levels as it needs to be. When employees from minority backgrounds see a diverse leadership team, it builds the confidence and sense of possibility to advance in their careers because the "glass ceiling" has clearly been removed. Conversely, the lack of role models from a similar ethnic or language backgrounds negatively affects what employees think is possible for people like them.

In addition, individuals who are mentored tend to have better career outcomes than those who are not. This is true for both visible minorities and Caucasian employees; satisfaction levels are as much as 20% higher for employees where companies offer mentoring and networking programs and have transparent career advancement practices.[4]

Recommendations:

- **Data analytics**: track the diversity of your current leaders as well as in the talent pool for succession planning and set goals to increase the diversity
- **Diverse mentors**: ensure that the mentors in your organization come from varying backgrounds

"A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone"

-Sundar Pichia CEO of Google

6. Measure succession planning

Workforce data analytics is becoming more commonplace as employers realize the benefits of how data can help organizations gain insights on employee-related trends and inform workforce planning and strategy. From a succession planning perspective, the ability to understand data about employees' skills, experience, and performance indicators can help organizations identify those who could be part of the talent pool for advancement.[5]

Having this kind of information available will help organizations understand the strength of their talent pipeline.[6] Once a succession planning framework is implemented, data analytics helps in assessing the readiness skill gaps of the talent pool, tracking whether these skill gaps are closing, and monitoring the impact formal succession planning is having on the organization.

Recommended metrics:

- Number of high-potential employees (critical resources) in the talent pool ready for advancement for each mission-critical role
- Number of mission-critical positions filled internally versus externally
- Turnover of critical resources
- Number of critical resources with development plans in place with concrete goals and activities to help them advance
- Number of interviewees for a mission-critical role; ideally most, if not all candidates interviewing for a critical role should be on the critical resource list

Succession Planning and Talent Management

Succession planning is not only about what your talent pool can do now but also what they could potentially do in the future. This is important to keep in mind when thinking about how succession planning should become more integrated with other talent management processes in your organization.

Recruitment

Most leaders understand that recruiting the right people for the right role is paramount. When you attract and hire the person with the right combination of capabilities, attitude, and potential you get to avoid most of the issues that turn performance management into an inconvenience instead of a partnership. For recruitment to be successful and to build organizational bench strength, keep succession planning in mind for the five stages of recruitment: planning, posting, screening, interviewing, and selecting.

1. Planning

Hiring right is a strategic responsibility, not a routine one. Set aside some time to think about who your ideal candidate is. Don't default to the "post the ad and pray" approach no matter how busy you are. The more intentional you are, the less headache down the road and the more time you will end up saving yourself. You are hiring for both the skills match for the role and a cultural fit for your team. This is especially important for critical positions.

Think strategically

Will this hire help advance a long-term strategy for your team? How does this hire connect to succession planning? Are you looking for a future leader? How must this candidate align with the strategic priorities of the organization, your department, and team?

2. Posting

Like attracts like so make sure your job ads stand out from everyone else's ads. You are competing in a competitive market for the best and the brightest. An ad is not just a bio of your organization and a list of the screening criteria, which is how many job ads are posted. It is the primary way of separating your organization from the others so that you can attract the best candidates that will be the right fit for your team and with similar values to your organization.

You want to emphasize how much your organization has a learning culture and the importance you put on providing growth and development opportunities. Potential applicants must see your organization as a place they could potentially have a long-term career. It starts right from the first impression of your job ad.

3. Screening

Studies show that hiring managers on average look at each resume for just 7 to 10 seconds before they decide whether to give it a second review. These split-second decisions are usually made on an unconscious level and are too easily influenced by the recruiter or the supervisor's unconscious biases.

When you are dealing with a high-volume task like screening resumes, you are more susceptible to your personal biases. Our brains are hardwired for these decision-making shortcuts, and no one is immune to them.

Two Canadian bias studies

2008 Canada Study[7] University of British Columbia	Researchers tailored 6,000 mock resumes to meet specific job requirements in 20 occupational categories and sent them to 2,000 online job postings from potential employers.	Resumes with names like Jill Wilson or John Martin received interview call backs 40 percent more often than identical resumes with names like Sana Khan or Lei Li.
2017 Canada Study[8] University of Toronto, and Ryerson University	Researchers sent 12,910 resumes in response to 3,225 job postings.	In organizations with more than 500 employees, Asian-named applicants were 20 percent less likely to receive a callback; in smaller organizations, the disadvantage was nearly 40 percent.

> "Great companies don't hire skilled people and motivate them. They hire already motivated people and inspire them."
>
> -Simon Sinek, author

Disrupt your biases in screening applications and interviews

Succession management processes can easily be impacted by conscious or unconscious biases. Eliminating all bias would be difficult, but having an awareness of what biases people may have will help disrupt and reduce bias. This, in turn, should result in a more diverse talent pool and successors to mission-critical roles.

The following list contain the common biases people may have:

Halo/Horn Effect	Tendency to view someone as consistently good or bad at their job. This may be due to first impressions, the success or failure of a first project, etc.
Recency Effect	Tendency to emphasize recent events over past events in our memories. This may create a bias if an employee's recent performance is very different than their typical performance.
Similarity Bias	Tendency to prefer employees who are similar to oneself both in demographics and personality, and think these employees are better at their jobs than those who are different.
Threat Bias	Tendency for leaders who are insecure to feel threatened by a strong employee's potential, skills, and talent to do their jobs better than themselves
Confirmation Bias	Tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information that is in line with personal beliefs and values

Beauty Bias	Make judgments about a candidate based on how attractive they are
Gender Bias	Preference for a certain gender based on embedded beliefs or various other reasons
Racial Bias	Preference for working with people from certain racial or ethnic backgrounds and/or a bias against one or more groups
Cultural Bias	Preference for working with people from certain cultural backgrounds and a bias against one or more cultural groups
Accent Bias	Holding a bias against hiring candidates with specific accents of English

There are other biases to also consider including language, generational, ability, religion, and the other aspects of diversity that the *Canadian Human Rights Act* defines as protected grounds.

4. Interviewing

Ensure your interview panel is diverse. Build a diverse interview panel that can reflect key dimensions of diversity such as gender, race, culture, and age. Diverse representation works against the pitfalls of unconscious bias and groupthink. A diverse panel sends a strong message to everyone that your leadership team takes diversity and inclusion seriously and your organization's commitment to its diversity and inclusion statements.

Ask the right questions

Avoid questions that merely confirm data on the resume, unless there is something you need to check or are unsure about. Rather maximize the time with questions that enable you to assess the candidate's results, capabilities, capacity to think and problem solve with you, and potential to learn new skills and attributes. This is important not only to assess a candidate's fit for the current competition, but also their potential.

Results vs achievements

Ask questions that uncover results, not just achievements. For example, instead of settling for the achievement of, "I managed a large project" ask, "What was the impact of it at the individual, team and/or organizational levels?"

Capabilities vs experiences

Ask questions that uncover capabilities, not just experiences. For example, instead of asking about the experience of "Have you done X or Y?" ask, "How would you approach X or Y?"

Co-thinking

Ask questions that uncover the ability to co-think. This ability to co-think is critical for any job that requires problem solving, creativity, decision-making, or independent judgment. This is especially the case for critical positions. You want to identify people who understand that your role as a leader is less about solving problems than creating the conditions by which the entire team assumes the role of learning and problem solving. For example, instead of asking the candidate "What would you do", give a scenario and ask, "What is your role, my role, and our role in solving the problem?"

Learning and development

Ask questions that uncover the potential to learn, relearn, and unlearn. For example, ask the candidates how they will approach the learning curve in the new role. Look for how they have been promoted with previous employers and ask them about their desire to advance their careers.

5. Selecting

If the candidate pool is lacking, post the ad again

It is better to suffer in the short-term than to hire people who are more suited to work elsewhere. Hiring them will be a disservice to them, your team, and a drain on your time. As a leader, your time is your most precious commodity. You never have enough of it so build the right team through effective hiring from the start.

If it's a tight race, do second interviews
This is particularly important for leadership or specialized roles. If you have two strong candidates, do a second round of interviews.

Always do the reference checks
A reference check is more than a tick the box activity before offering the job to a candidate. Organizations often do not do reference checking well which can result in a "bad hire" that could have been avoided if this step was done properly. The goal with any reference check is to "go beyond simply verifying facts" on a resume.[9]

Orientation and Onboarding

Effective onboarding is the second stage of the employee journey. It begins at the hiring date and stretches to between 6 and12 months into employment. Orientation and onboarding set the tone for employees, and when done correctly it provides the right tools and experiences. A successful onboarding process increases the likelihood of quicker productivity for new hires, increased engagement, and the long-term success of workers. Moreover, you need to highlight the learning and development available to reinforce the agency's commitment to an employee's success in their current role and growth opportunities for career advancement.

Intensive activities

Research suggests that having "intensive" activities at the early stages are essential to successful onboarding. This would include tasks like completing forms, orientation, and required training; meeting team members and other key personnel; job shadowing and being assigned an informal mentor or buddy; and learning about the organization.

Intentional process

Having a clear process with activities completed at key milestones in the first 6 to12 months will ensure that each person that joins the organization is equipped and engaged. Key milestone activities should be clearly laid out for the first week, first month, half point of probation, 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months.

Diversity lens

Any onboarding material should consider the diversity of the workforce, and all documents should be put into plain language to remove potential barriers for second language speakers.

Performance Management

When performance management is done right, it can be one of the most powerful ways to ensure employees, resources, and systems align to meet strategic goals. However, it is often done poorly and, in some cases, only once a year or sometimes not at all.

Staff require continuous feedback which means that regular check-ins with supervisors should not be underestimated or be a low priority. Research shows that organizations that shift to regular performance discussions including growth and future career aspirations improve engagement and productivity. Supervisors should make regular check-ins, either daily or weekly, one of their top priorities with each team member.

Performance management is built on the foundation of ongoing feedback, recognition, and improvement. It creates a high-performance culture because it leads to an increase in staff confidence and helps people identify areas for improvement. Staff feel cared for and supported to succeed in their current roles and in any future growth opportunities.

Importance of performance planning

It is important for your organization to have robust performance planning processes in place before you engage in succession planning. This is because it is foundational for effective succession planning to occur. Without it, it will be very challenging for your organization to develop and assess your talent pool well.

Performance meetings

There are two types of performance meetings. Depending on time and scheduling demands, the two types of meetings are often held at the same time, usually about 60 to 90 minutes.

1. Performance review (appraisal) meeting

The first is the performance review session, in which the supervisor revisits the employee's goals from the past year. Unless the employee is new to the organization, this usually happens before the performance planning meeting to set goals for the upcoming year. Together, they evaluate to what degree the goals were achieved. This meeting typically lasts between 30 to 60 minutes, depending on how clearly the standards for success were set and how well the performance was documented throughout the year. For the supervisor, this is the chance to provide recognition and to celebrate achievements, even if it means simply celebrating the employee's efforts.

2. Performance planning meeting

The second type of meeting is the performance planning session, in which the supervisor and employee set the employee's new goals for the upcoming year. This meeting typically also lasts between 30 to 60 minutes, depending on how prepared the employee and supervisor are before the meeting, and how long it takes to identify the goals, agree on them, and establish what success will look like a year into the future.

Goals

All goals need to support the overarching strategic goal for the organization, and the goals for the department. This cascading effect down to individual performance goals is important to ensure everyone is “rowing in the same direction” to achieving the organizational vision. There are three types of goals that are mutually reinforcing: performance and learning and development.

1. Performance goals

These relate to the competence of the employee to meet the standards of expectation for specific tasks as listed in the job description. Performance goals usually relate to technical and communication skills, as well as social competencies such as conflict management and collaboration. Performance goals may require specific learning and development goals to support the employee’s growth.

2. Learning and development (L&D) goals

These goals relate to skills needed for employees to do their current jobs successfully and can better equip them to do their jobs better. It could also be about developing expertise in a particular area for their current role. These skills are usually learned online, a classroom setting, or through on-the-job coaching with an experienced peer or from the supervisor.

L&D goals are also meant to help employees think about development for career growth and advancement. This is critical for your succession planning efforts and tracking how your organization is building its pool of critical resources.

Recommendation: Have two different sections for the learning and development goals so it is easier to track who is interested in career advancement and what goals have been set to help employees achieve their goals.

A simple example has been provided on the following page of two sections you can include your performance planning templates if you do not have something similar already. A few example goals have been included.

Learning and Development Goals (Current Role)

Goal	Timeline	Measure	Status
e.g., Medication Administration recertification	By Dec 31, 2022	Complete online course, pass exam and proficiency assessment	Registered for the course September 2022 to complete by the target date

Learning and Development Goals (Career Advancement)

Career Advancement Goal: Become a Frontline Supervisor			
L&D Goals	**Timeline**	**Measure**	**Status**
Take a frontline supervision course	By June 2023	Complete course and meet all course requirements	In progress and on track to complete course by June 2023
Lead team meeting including preparing an agenda	By Oct 2022	Team meeting is planned well including an agenda, and facilitated so that discussion stays on track with input from different team members	Scheduled to lead October team meeting
Take on acting role for when supervisor is away	For upcoming vacation of supervisor in Dec 2022	Successfully execute supervisor duties as noted by the manager	Scheduled to be acting supervisor in Dec 2022
Participate in organization's mentoring program	Program runs from Sept 2022 to May 2023	Meet all program requirements	Applied for the program and awaiting mentor match
Take on an informal mentoring role with new employees that join the team	Ongoing	Good relationships are established, and new employees feel comfortable asking questions and feel included in the team	Currently mentoring two new employees and participated in their orientation

Rewards and Recognition

It is important for organizations to have both rewards and recognition although the terms are often used interchangeably. There are differences between rewards and recognition:

- Rewards are tangible. Recognition is intangible.
- Rewards are transactional (e.g., bonus). Recognition is relational.
- Rewards are usually expected. Recognition can be a surprise.
- Rewards are economical. Recognition is emotional.
- Rewards are outcomes driven. Recognition is focused on behaviours.
- Rewards are fixed. Recognition is flowing.

Therefore, it is important for organizations to strive to have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The organizational development literature supports the fact that in many cases non-monetary recognition can be more powerful than a monetary reward.

Culture of recognition

Creating a recognition culture within teams is vital especially when budgets are limited, and it is challenging to give monetary rewards. Creating a culture of recognition and appreciation is one of the most powerful ways to increase positivity, productivity, and staff retention in an organization. It is one of the main sources of human motivation.

Frederick Herzberg's research into what motivates employees found achievement to be the strongest motivator, followed closely by recognition. Whereas recognition is the acknowledgement of work well done, achievement is the perception that occurs in a person's mind that he or she has done something for the first time or done it better than before.
He stated that people are not motivated by failure, but by achievement.[10] Small achievements act as motivators for a person to go on to try to achieve a little bit more. Achievement and recognition are closely connected. Keep this in mind as you are developing and monitoring your talent pool. Ensure that all your critical resources (employees you want to develop for career advancement) are given opportunities for achievement and growth. And make sure you recognize them along the way.

Ensure that staff are recognized with regular frequency and in timely way, particularly when staff exceed expectations. Recognizing someone for a contribution months after it occurred will seem like an afterthought and disingenuous. It should also be specific. Although a general "good job" or "thank you" is appreciated by most people, specific recognition is far more impactful.

Recognition doesn't always have to be from a supervisor to a subordinate, but also peer to peer. Fostering a culture of recognition and appreciation in a team ensures that the onus doesn't rest purely upon the leader but is a habit that everyone practices. It should be genuine and personalized.

One size does not fit all
Understanding individual motivators and tailoring rewards and recognition would be far more effective in recognizing staff that go above and beyond in their roles. Even for milestone service rewards, this can also be tailored to truly make staff feel valued. In addition, the cultural diversity of staff may affect how they like to be rewarded and recognized.

Gallup study
In one Gallup research survey,[11] respondents were asked what types of rewards and recognition were the most memorable. They emphasized the following methods, and money isn't the only or even the top motivator.

1.	**Public recognition**	Public recognition or acknowledgment could be via an award, certificate, or commendation
2.	**Private recognition**	Private recognition comes from a leader, peer, or client
3.	**Achievement**	Receiving a high level of achievement through evaluations or reviews
4.	**Promotion**	Promotion within the organization
5.	**More responsibility**	Increase in responsibility or scope of work which shows trust
6.	**Monetary award**	Monetary awards such as a trip, prize, or pay increase
7.	**Personal satisfaction**	Personal satisfaction or pride in work

"People work for money but go the extra mile for recognition, praise, and rewards."

-Dale Carnegie, self-improvement pioneer

Workplace Wellness

Due to the nature of the work done by this sector, organizations understand the importance of health and safety and are generally proactive about health and safety protocols. But workplace wellness is more than that. There is a direct connection between the health and well-being of employees and their work environments. When people feel valued, respected, and satisfied in their jobs and work in safe and healthy environments, they are more likely to be more productive and committed to their work. If staff are burnt out and do not have a sense of wellbeing, it will negatively impact job performance and satisfaction. This in turn will lead to increased absenteeism and loss of motivation. The different dimensions of wellness in the workplace are interdependent:

Social	Promote inclusion and a sense of belonging by having the meaningful relationships
Intellectual	Ensure staff are equipped with the right knowledge and tools, and that they have opportunities for growth and development
Physical	Monitor if staff are working too many hours that lead to burnout and ensure that staff have ergonomic equipment and workspaces.
Safety	Ensure that robust health and safety measures are in place particularly where staff are supporting clients with complex or ultra-complex needs.
Emotional	Organizations vary on how they promote and support emotional wellness
Spiritual	Support this among staff as requested in accordance with protected grounds

Organizations in the disability services sector are often faced with high pressure in terms of service delivery, staff shortages, and budgetary constraints. This leads to burnout and leaves, which often occurs at the various leadership levels. Therefore, effective wellness initiatives are key to good talent management, and one of the biggest influences in your organizational culture. If your culture is one of promoting wellness in people, it helps you to retain talent. If your frontline staff only see that your leaders are stressed, unhappy, and overworked, it will deter many from wanting to advance into a leadership role.

If your organization engages in intentional succession planning where there is constant growth and development opportunities, it is a motivator for those wanting to advance and should also translate into leaders being able to delegate work more readily. This hopefully in turn should lead to lessening of workloads and pressure.

The importance of mentoring has already been mentioned and is a key strategy for succession planning. However, it is also one of the most effective ways of promoting social well-being as it fosters relationships between peers across the organization.

But it must be an organizational priority to create that kind of culture of growth and wellness.

Learning and Development

Creating an overarching learning and development plan with clear career paths and required knowledge, skills, and abilities will help staff at all levels in setting specific learning and development goals with timelines. Whether it's for job enrichment or development to move into higher-level positions, a proactive and structured approach is needed. Too often individuals and organizations have an ad hoc or just-in-time approach to learning and development.

For career progression, it is important to look at the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required at different levels. Please see Appendix A for an overarching learning and development strategy with the KSAs needed for career progression. It also includes potential learning and development strategies organizations can use to develop these KSAs. This has been done for the four main levels of leadership: executive, senior, mid-level, and frontline supervisor.

Please find below the following definitions of each:

Knowledge

This is about knowing or having an awareness of facts and concepts. It is theoretical and not practical. Someone may have knowledge about a topic, but no actual experience applying it in the workplace.

Skills

The proficiencies to do something well which are learned or acquired through training or experience. It is the practical application of theoretical knowledge. For example, someone that takes an Excel course gains knowledge, but then needs the hands-on experience to develop the skills.

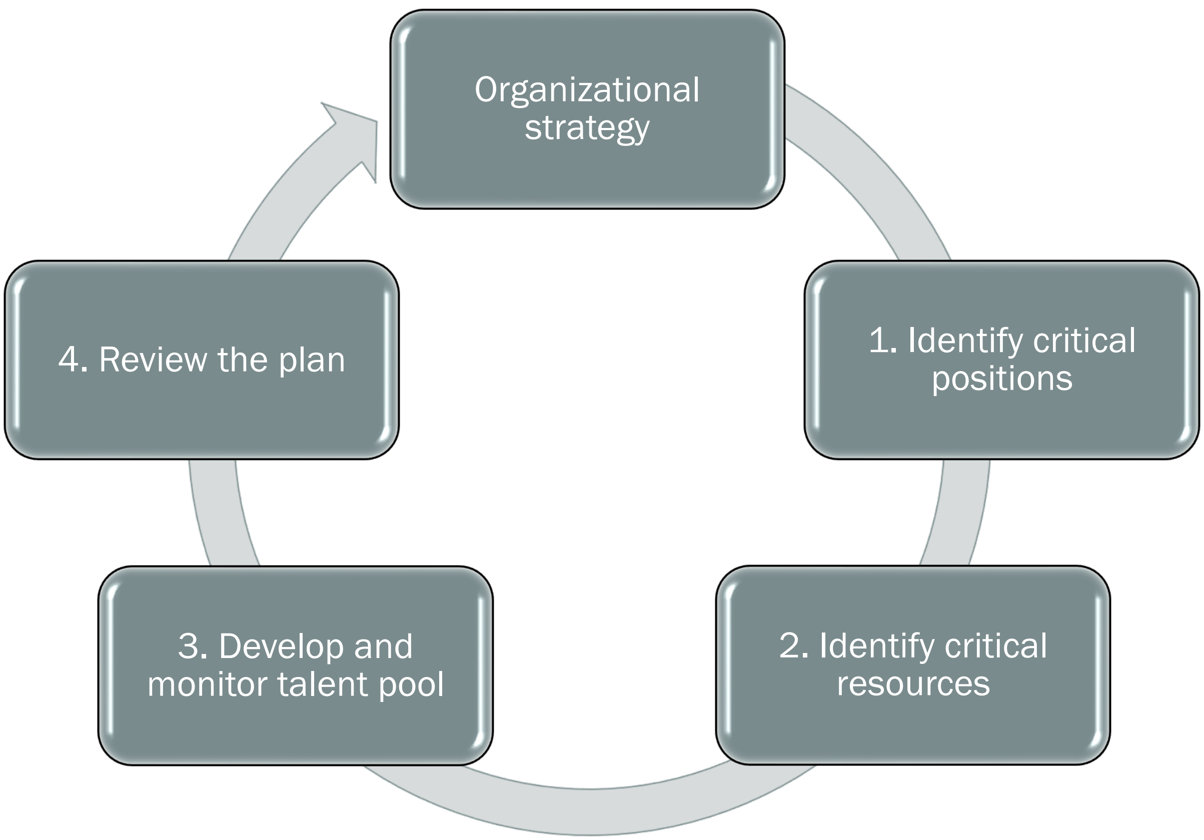
Abilities

An innate capacity to do something that someone brings to a task or situation. Unlike skills that can be learned or acquired through experience, nurturing natural abilities should primarily be done through coaching with opportunities to observe and provide feedback to aid in improvement.[12]

KSAs are interrelated and overlap, so it can be confusing at times to see the distinction, particularly between skills and abilities.[13] These two terms are often used interchangeably because of the nuanced difference as indicated by the research conducted on this topic. Therefore, for simplicity and to avoid confusion, in this framework, skills and abilities will be used interchangeably.

Succession Planning Process

The succession planning process consists of four main steps with organizational strategy being foundational before step 1 begins as shown in the cycle chart below:



Please use the attached Excel workbook, ***Succession Planning Dashboard*** as you go through each step in the process. Before starting the process, ensure that your organization has **up-to-date, well-written job descriptions** that clearly list responsibilities of each role as well as the competencies required.

1. Identify Critical Positions (CPs)

What is a critical position?

A critical position, if left vacant, would have significant impact on the organization's ability to conduct normal business; could create operational, reputational, or financial risks; and compromise the progress of the strategic priorities or organizational performance.

Critical positions are often important to the long-term success of a strategic plan or can be pivotal in the success of a key project or strategic objective. These positions are usually at the executive or senior management level, but can also be other levels of leadership, or a subject matter expert with specialized knowledge and skills.

How to use succession planning dashboard

Please go to the Excel Workbook, *Succession Planning Dashboard,* and go to the first worksheet, *Critical Positions.* When assessing if a position should be considered critical or not, you need to consider the impact of the role, knowledge and skills required, and the replacement difficulty.[14] To help you complete the worksheet, consider the following questions:

Impact

- How involved is the position with developing strategy, and creating new services or growth opportunities?
- How involved is this position with building relationships with external stakeholders?
- Does the position impact the performance or manage other critical positions?
- Does the position play a key role in meeting the organization's goals? If so, what is the unique contribution of the position in meeting those goals?

Skills

- Does the position require specialized or unique skills that may be difficult to replace?
- Does the position require specialized skills and knowledge that can be acquired only through significant sector experience and related post-secondary education?
- Do you foresee the skills and knowledge required of this role changing or becoming more complex to meet future needs and/or changing external factors?

Replacement difficulty

- How difficult is it to replace someone in this role?
- What is the current market value of this position? How has the value changed over time?
- How much competition exists in the marketplace for qualified candidates for this position?

Rule of thumb: although the number of critical positions will vary for organizations, typically no more than 15-20% of its positions are usually identified as critical.

Instructions:

1) For each position, use the following scale when choosing your answer: 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Somewhat Agree, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree

2) Highlight the number on the Likert scale for impact, skills, and replacement difficulty

3) Add up the three numbers you highlighted for the total column – an example has been provided to help you complete the worksheet.

4) Positions with a total of 12 or higher would be considered critical

5) Add up the total number of critical positions and input it into the highlighted cell at the bottom of the table

6) Adjust table as needed (add or delete rows if there are more or less critical positions)

2. Identify Critical Resources (CRs)

The goal for this step is to identify the high performing, high potential employees or critical resources (CRs) that should be part of the talent pool who could move into the critical positions you identified. Your aim is to have organizational bench strength. This means having a talent pool that is ready to move into critical positions immediately, in the short term, and medium term.

When determining who should be identified as a critical resource, an easy way to remember this is the acronym PACE.

Potential – show traits and capacity for growth and advancement
Aspiration – desire to advance in their careers
Competence – ability to perform job functions well
Experience – knowledge and skills gained through on-the-job experience

The following inputs should be used to identify your critical resources:

- Performance ratings and reviews
- Specific accomplishments (e.g., special projects, cross-functional committee work)
- Feedback from other supervisors and managers
- Past work experience related to critical position(s) (e.g., employee was in a leadership role in a different organization or for a charity they volunteer for)
- Related education to critical position(s) (e.g., business or leadership certificate, diploma, or degree)
- Related professional designations to critical position(s)

How to use the succession planning dashboard

Please go to the second Excel worksheet, *Critical Resources.*

This worksheet is broken down into six different tables:

- Executive leaders
- Senior leaders
- Mid-level managers
- Frontline supervisors
- Frontline employees
- Specialized/other roles

Instructions:

To help you complete the tables, you can do the following:

1) Export report(s) from your HRIS using filters that can identify high performers such as performance ratings in annual reviews.

2) Export report(s) from your HRIS that tracks performance goals including L&D goals, and create a report using filters that can identify employees interested in career advancement You may still need to gather some of this data manually to complete the tables.

3) If your organization does not have the systems in place to get reports digitally, you can send out a copy of the worksheet to gather the data from your leaders.
Someone will then have to complete the master worksheet by going through all submissions and populating the tables accordingly.

4) Complete the applicable tables.
An example has been provided to help you complete the worksheet.

5) Adjust tables as needed (add and delete rows if there are more or less employees for each group).

6) Add up the number of total critical resources you have from all the tables and input it at the bottom of the worksheet in the highlighted cell.

7) Add up the total numbers for the other 3 statistics at the bottom of the worksheet.
Example data has been inputted to help you complete the worksheet.

Goal for Talent Pool
Have replacements ready for 80-90% of critical positions. This is particularly important if current incumbents leave unexpectedly. This may seem challenging to achieve, but it should be a mid to long-term organizational goal and included in your strategic plan. If you feel you do not have enough high performers to reach this goal, the next step is to consider those with potential that may not have been noticed yet. They may just need some additional targeted learning and development.

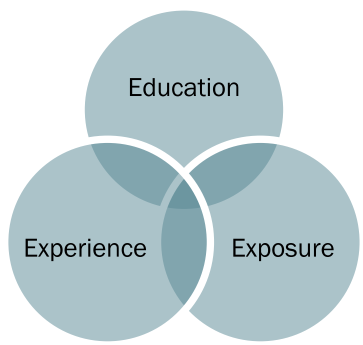
3. Develop and Monitor Talent Pool

After identifying your critical resources, it is important to develop and monitor the talent pool. To help you do this, complete the worksheet, *Develop and Monitor CRs*. It includes five tables by leadership level so that you can easily see the following for each CR:

- Readiness to move into the desired critical position
- Knowledge, skill, and ability (KSAs) gaps to move into the critical role
- Developmental goals to reduce or eliminate the KSA gaps
- Progress on meeting the developmental goals

However, before you complete the worksheet, as mentioned on page 15 and 16, ensure that your organization has robust performance planning in place so that specific learning and development goals are set with timelines. This particular step is especially important for succession planning, and you should take the time needed to complete this worksheet. It will give your organization the ability to see what the KSAs are for each of your critical resources and gauge the readiness of your talent pool.

As your organization thinks about developing its critical resources, keep in mind the 3 E's of talent development[15]:



Make sure that the supervisors of the CRs keep the following in mind as they complete learning and development plans which will then be the data to be included in the worksheet *Develop and Monitor CRs:*

- Give CRs more responsibilities that will help them advance
- Help them broaden and deepen their knowledge, skills, and abilities through targeted training and developmental activities
- Increase their exposure to other leaders, functional areas, and external stakeholders
- Provide them with regular coaching and feedback that is specific and timely
- Use them as mentors for other employees

How to use the succession planning dashboard

Please go to the third Excel worksheet, *Develop and Monitor CRs.*

⋙	**Instructions:**

1) For each CR, enter the information in the table for a snapshot of the readiness of your talent pool for critical positions.
   Please note: the executive-level leaders table is for organizations that have C-suite positions such as COO and CFO.

2) Rate each CR on their readiness to move into their desired critical position within the timeframes by clicking on the dropdown list:

   Now
   In 6-12 months
   In 1-2 years
   In 2-3 years
   In 3+ years
   Is not suitable for this role

   Please note: for the last option, "is not suitable for this role" has been included because an employee may desire to move to a critical position that may not be a good fit. Although unlikely, if this does occur, complete the rest of the table for that employee to develop their KSAs. Since only high-potential, high performing employees are included as critical resources, it is likely that they would be suitable for a different role(s). Have a discussion with the employee about other critical positions that would be a better fit.

3) Identify their knowledge, skill, and ability gaps and list their development goals. Up to 3 knowledge gaps with corresponding development goals and 3 skill and ability gaps with corresponding development goals can be included. Having more than 6 development goals may be overwhelming and potentially unachievable for the employee. Drop down lists have been used for the respective cells to help you complete the tables. These dropdown lists are the KSAs needed to advance into the Critical Position as listed in the overarching L&D strategy in the framework.

   Please note:
   - For specialized/other roles, there are no drop-down lists and will have to be inputted manually as it will vary depending on position
   - Other knowledge, skills, and abilities may be required for each level, but the ones included on the lists were selected because they tend to be the ones that require development for advancement in this sector

4) Adjust tables as needed (add or delete rows if there are more or less employees)

The *Critical Resources* worksheet is used to identify why they have been included on the list. This worksheet however is to be used for identifying the gaps and learning and development goals so the CRs are ready for advancement into a critical position in the future.

4. Review the Plan

Succession planning is never finished. With constantly changing workforce needs, these plans should not be static, but living documents that are adjusted as needed. The data in the Excel Workbook *Succession Planning Dashboard* should also be updated regularly as staff changes occur and the readiness level of your CRs change as they achieve their development goals.

Along with the Excel workbook, your organization should also be reviewing your succession planning strategies and programs annually. For example, if you have implemented a formal mentoring program and specific knowledge transfer strategies, these should be reviewed and adjusted as needed.

Recommendations:

- **Set a firm date**: reviews of succession planning programs/strategies should be done annually. If a firm date is set for the review, it is less likely to be put off to the side and forgotten
- **Review in conjunction with the annual review of the strategic plan**: since strategic plans should also be reviewed annually, it would be a good time to also review succession planning

Succession planning metrics

As part of your review process, you should be tracking data that provide you with metrics that demonstrate how effective your succession planning efforts are.

How to use the succession planning dashboard

Go to the fourth Excel worksheet, *Succession Planning Metrics*.

There are three main tables on this worksheet for your organization to help you to track and measure progress:

1) **Number and percentage of critical resources** ready to advance into critical positions including number of CRs
2) **Recruitment statistics** to show how many critical resources are being interviewed and are successful in competitions for critical positions
3) **Turnover of critical resources** and reasons for their departure

Please feel free to add any other statistics that your organization would like to track to the Succession Planning Metrics worksheet.

Instructions:

1) Use the other worksheets as needed to help complete the tables. Some of the data you inputted into previous worksheets should automatically populate some of the cells in the tables, as per the examples in this worksheet

2) Keep as much information as you can for competitions to fill critical positions so that it is easier to see if successful candidates are:

- Internal (critical resource)
- Internal (not a critical resource)
- External

3) Adjust tables as needed (add or delete rows, format cells)

Keep in mind, if an internal candidate that is not a critical resource is successful, then you need to ask yourself why this person was not included in your list of critical resources.

Please note:

- Certain cells with formulas or data are locked and are automatically populated when data is inputted in other cells in the workbook.

- As noted previously, it is important for organizations to include a few key diversity metrics. The main form of diversity that has been included in the worksheet is the tracking of visible minorities included in the pool of critical resources and how many are advancing.

- Since the sector is so culturally diverse, this is the main form of diversity that has been included in the worksheet as a tracking priority. Each organization may choose to track other forms of diversity and can do so by adjusting the worksheet as needed.

Resource Tools

Four resource tools have been developed to help you in your succession planning efforts. They have been designed to look like a set but have a slightly different colour palette, so it is easier to identify the different documents.

Tool #1 - Succession Planning Checklist

This is an audit tool for you to gauge what succession planning and strategies you have in place already, and where the gaps are to help you plan your workforce strategies for the next 6, 12, and 18 months.

A comprehensive list of succession planning strategies has been included and can easily be checked off in the document. This will make it easier for your organization to see what strategies or processes could be implemented.

The section on the first page, “What is the current strength of your organizational talent pool” can be populated once you have completed the Excel Workbook. Having this data on the checklist as well can give you a quick snapshot of your talent pool readiness for planning purposes.

This tool can be used in conjunction with the Succession Planning Dashboard for the annual review of your organization’s strategic plan.

Tool #2 - Emergency Leadership Planning Template

The emergency leadership planning template should be completed in every organization because of the three kinds of unexpected absences that could occur:

1. Unplanned temporary short-term absence (1-3 months)
2. Unplanned temporary long-term absence (4-12 months)
3. Permanent Change

You should have a plan completed for the CEO/Executive Director position. You may also want to have plan in place for other executive or senior positions. That is up to your organization to decide.

The template for all 3 kinds of absences includes:

- Naming the designate or designates
- Who is responsible for the different key responsibilities
- Location and access to confidential information that only the CEO/ED knows and has access to that is critical for business continuity

- Authority and compensation of acting CEO/ED
- The communications plan
- The succession policy

There are slight variations to the 3 kinds of absences.

For unplanned temporary long-termed absences, your organization should also consider whether recruitment to the temporary position vacant left by the acting CEO/ED is necessary.

For an unplanned permanent change, your organization and/or Board of Directors should decide how the search and replacement process will be conducted.

Tool #3 - Mentoring Program Guidelines

Mentoring is a key component in succession planning. There are several advantages of taking the time to develop and implement a formal mentoring program in your organization:

- Contributes to transferring tacit and institutional knowledge
- Improves careers and contributes to employee growth
- Develops leadership skills in both mentors and mentees
- Impacts employee engagement and retention
- Builds organizational capacity
- Build bridges across generations and departments
- Encourages an organizational culture of learning and development

This resource tool provides steps and tips in developing a formal mentoring program in your organization. A sample mentoring program with application and evaluation templates has also been provided as an appendix in the Word document to assist you set up your own program.

Tool #4 – The Mentor's Toolkit

The mentor's toolkit should be used in conjunction with Resource Tool #3, *Mentoring Program Guidelines*, and given to all of your mentors as a resource.

In this toolkit, there are 3 main sections:

- **Section 1** explores the close relationship between mentoring and coaching and the six modes of mentoring.
- **Section 2** provides a basic mentoring process to follow with your mentee and suggested dos and don'ts
- **Section 3** offers four mentoring tools to draw upon:

  - Tool 1 – The First Meeting Notes

- Tool 2 - Powerful Questions
- Tool 3 – The Grow Model
- Tool 4 – Mentee Questions to Interview Mentor

Tool #5 - Knowledge Transfer Plan Template

An important part of succession planning is ensuring that knowledge transfer is occurring effectively in an organization. Often, when a long-term employee in a key position, with decades of experience and knowledge exits an organization, that knowledge is not transferred appropriately.

Organizations usually scramble right before the employee leaves to capture as much knowledge as possible before they go. Many organizations fail to formalize knowledge transfer processes. According to Forbes, poor knowledge sharing practices cost Fortune 500 companies $31.5 billion and that effective knowledge management increases productivity by up to 40%.[16] Therefore, developing knowledge transfer plans should be a part of an organization's succession planning efforts.

Types of knowledge

There are two types of knowledge that should be transferred: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge.[17]

- **Explicit knowledge** is information easily shared through writing and speaking. This could be through conversations, reading a document, etc.

- **Tacit knowledge** is more difficult to capture because it is developed through a person's experiences and insights. This type of knowledge transfer requires shared activities and more time to impart knowledge such as mentorship.

Creating a knowledge sharing culture

The ultimate goal for effective knowledge transfer is to build and sustain a knowledge sharing culture. This enables the frequent and instinctive transference of knowledge throughout the organization.

Proper messaging is required to create this kind of culture. Without it, certain employees will view knowledge sharing as relinquishing one's power/expertise and thus make them feel less valuable in what they bring. Therefore, there needs to be effective communication about the processes; conveying the goals of the knowledge transfer efforts; identifying the resources and tools; and making it clear that all leaders will be contributing to an end goal that will be beneficial to all.

Four steps in an effective knowledge transfer process

The following are the four steps in the knowledge transfer process.[18] The attached knowledge transfer plan template is a resource tool that can be used in its current form or adjusted as needed for your organization. The template is designed to help your organization develop an overarching knowledge transfer plan to assist with creating a knowledge sharing culture.

Step 1 - Identify the knowledge that you need to gather and from whom

The first step of the process involves identifying what knowledge needs to be gathered and from whom you're collecting information. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are the "go to people" in your organization?
- The "go to people" or "human search engines" are the ones that are often asked questions by fellow employees. They may be formal or informal subject matter experts
- What knowledge do they only know?
- If they left today, would anyone know how to do what they do?
- How available is this information?
- What sort of impact will it have if others do not have this knowledge?

Step 2 – Identify how knowledge will be obtained and transferred

When you need to identify how knowledge will be obtained and transferred, ask yourself the following questions:

- How quickly does this knowledge transfer need to occur (days, weeks, or months)?
- How many people should be involved in the process?
- How much effort and time commitment are required?
- What is the depth and complexity of the knowledge that needs to be transferred?
- Is the knowledge technical, difficult to understand/convey, or multi-faceted?
- Is it explicit or tacit knowledge?
- What is the ability of the experts to articulate their knowledge?

Please find below several different methods to transfer knowledge:

1) Formal mentoring program
2) Informal mentoring
3) Peer mentorship
4) Job shadowing or job rotation
5) Cross training
6) Communities of practice
7) Dedicated time in team meetings to sharing knowledge
8) In-house training (online modules or hands-on staff training)
9) Video recordings of leaders. This could be done in an interview format or just short recordings of different knowledge areas that will help successors
10) Record important information shared at meetings or events
11) Employee handbook(s)
12) Written and verbal communication of success stories
13) Lessons learned from past projects through debriefing(s) or reports
14) Document repositories and archived materials that are easily accessible
15) Flow charts or process documents
16) User guides on how to perform specific functions
17) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents for each mission-critical role

Most organizations will already be doing at least a few if not several of the aforementioned methods. However, formalizing knowledge transfer into an actual document with planned activities to include in an overarching workforce strategy would ensure that it is not just done in an ad hoc fashion.

Step 3 – Execute the knowledge transfer plan

The goal is to ensure that the right information is shared with the right people in the right way. Each organization is different in the way knowledge is most effectively transferred; no one-size fits all. Factors like organizational culture, technical capabilities, size, knowledge repositories, and employee buy-in all play a role. There may even be variation between departments in determining which knowledge transfer methods will best suit their needs.

Organizations may want to execute the plan in phases if time and resources are constraints.

Step 4 – Measure and evaluate

There is no universal measure that indicates success in effective knowledge transfer because each organization's needs are different. However, reviewing the achievement of knowledge transfer goals with specific activities and timelines will help organizations see what goals have been achieved and what gaps still exist. Knowledge transfer is an ongoing endeavor and will continue to evolve over time as your organization grows and changes.

Appendix A - Learning & Development Strategy for Career Progression

Section 1 - Overview

The learning and development strategy explores various training strategies for individuals seeking to build the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to move into more senior level roles in their organizations. This section includes both training and non-training strategies.

1. Non-Training Strategies

Non-training strategies (e.g., mentoring and job shadowing) which have been selected from the Knowledge Transfer Template and the Succession Planning Checklist. These are focused on but shouldn't be limited to: mentoring, job shadowing, stretch assignments, acting assignments, coaching, document repositories and archived materials, and knowledge transfer plan.

2. Training Strategies

Training strategies are either tuition based (e.g., post-secondaries) or freely accessible (e.g., LinkedIn Learning).

Post-Secondary Institutions

The business schools and continuing education departments in the main post-secondary institutes in Calgary and Edmonton offer courses, certificates, diplomas and degrees in leadership and management. These are in-person, online, or blended depending on the programming. Consider the following institutions as a starting point: *University of Calgary*, *Mount Royal University, University of Alberta, MacEwan University*, and *Athabasca University*.

NFP Sector-Specific Programs The following educational institutions offer online certificates and/or diplomas in leadership and management that are designed specifically for the not-for-profit sector.

- *Simon Fraser University* | Certificate in Non-Profit Management
- *Mount Royal University* | Certificate in Non-Profit Management
- *Ontario Tech University* | Certificate in Not-for-Profit Leadership
- *Western University* | Certificate in Not-for-Profit Management
- *Western University* | Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management
- *Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning* | Senior Leadership and Management in the Not-for-Profit Sector
- *University of Toronto* | Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership for Impact
- *Toronto Metropolitan University* | Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Management

None of the links have been included for these programs because the URLs often change as do the program names. To find the programs, it is more effective to do a keyword search on the website of the post-secondary.

Out-Of-Province Post-Secondary
For out-of-province, online/blended learning options consider the following providers:

- **Professional Certificates and Diplomas** *Thompson Rivers University* offers an online Certificate in Management Studies, which can ladder into a graduate diploma, and then into a graduate degree.

- **Graduate Certificates** For an online or blended graduate certificates in leadership or management, look at the following as a starting point: *Athabasca University, Royal Roads University,* and *Thompson Rivers University*.

- **Master's Degrees** For an online or blended Master of Arts in Leadership or Master of Business Administration degrees look at the following as a starting point: *Athabasca University, Royal Roads University, University Canada West, University of Fredericton,* and *Thompson Rivers University*. In addition, *Quantic School of Business and Technology* offers one of the most affordable and most innovative options for an accredited, online MBA or Executive MBA program.

LinkedIn Learning

LinkedIn Learning offers a variety of excellent, self-directed, online training for leaders. The courses are usually between 30 minutes to a few hours. Learning Paths are compiled playlists of related video courses on a specific topic or career track. They include multiple courses by different expert instructors to teach a variety of skills and information associated with that subject or profession.

A LinkedIn Learning membership can be purchased for your organizations, or an individual can access LinkedIn Learning free through their local library. Simply register for a library card with your library, and then access LinkedIn Learning through your library's website using your library card number.

For this Learning and Development Strategy, LinkedIn Learning is the main source of listed courses. Unlike post-secondaries, the LinkedIn Learning course titles and access don't change. Moreover, of all the freely accessible training options, LinkedIn Learning offers some of the best quality of instruction.

MOOCs

There are several massive open online course (MOOC) providers including edX, Coursera, and Get Smarter. Many courses are free while others have a cost attached.
MOOCs have been designed to democratize education by making high-quality learning accessible and affordable across the world.

edX was created by Harvard and MIT. It hosts online university-level courses in a wide range of disciplines to a worldwide student body. edX has several micromasters, professional certificates, and executive programs for leaders. Many of their courses are available at no charge, or learners have the option to upgrade a course, for a small fee, to earn a certificate upon completion.

Alberta Council of Disability Services

ACDS has a variety of trainings on offer for employees in the disability services sector. For more information, visit the Training page on their website at: https://www.acds.ca.

Disability Sector Leadership Series

For online, disability-sector specific training, consider the courses in the Leadership Series. This is an online learning program for leaders that was developed through a two-year funded project from the provincial government with extensive input from the sector. This program would be especially beneficial for individuals desiring to move into a frontline supervisor or manager role. The program includes the following courses:

- Leading Self
- Leading Others
- Leading Systems
- Writing for Leaders

In addition, the following courses are also available for all leaders and staff:

- Intercultural Competence
- Workplace Integration

The Leadership Series and intercultural and Integration courses are available through Vecova Learning at: https://vecovaelearning.com

These courses are also freely available for any organization with a learning management system (LMS) in the disability services sector. Please contact Anthony & Holmes Consulting Ltd. (lydia@anthonyandholmes.com) for information on how to transfer and download these courses.

Training Grants

Please note that both private and government training grants may be available to help employers build KSAs for eligible employees (e.g., Canada Alberta Job Grant).

Section 2 – KSAs Required for Each Leadership Level

The following sections will focus on what knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are required for career advancement. Since agencies use different job titles and have various leadership layers, the four common leadership levels will be used: executive (C-suite), senior (director), mid-level, and frontline supervisor.

The KSAs included in the framework is a combination of certain KSAs in the *ACDS Workforce Classification System* document, findings from research, and the framework developer's expertise and experience with the sector. There are up to 12 knowledge areas and 12 skills and abilities for each level. Although each leadership level could include a longer and more comprehensive list of KSAs as outlined in the job profiles of the *ACDS Workforce Classification System*, this framework will focus on the KSAs that typically are the most important for career progression to the next level and likely requires the most learning and development.

You will notice that some of these KSAs carry through two or more levels because the requirement of these KSAs does not change regardless of leadership level such as performance management. However, for other KSAs that carry through two or more levels, the depth of understanding for a knowledge area or the complexity of the same skill changes. For the skills and abilities tables, please note that the word "stronger" is used when it is assumed that the skill has already been developed to a certain extent at the current level. For example, moving from a mid to senior leader requires development of strategic thinking skills. To advance from a senior to executive role, stronger strategic thinking skills are required.

Distinguishing requirement for each level

Each leadership level also has a distinguishing requirement that is usually the most significant learning curve for employees that want to move up to that level as shown in the following table.

Leadership Level	Distinguishing Requirement
Senior to Executive Level (C-Suite/ED)	Organizational Governance
Mid to Senior Level (Director)	Strategic Thinking
Frontline Supervisor to Mid-level	Program Management, Systems, and Processes
Frontline Staff to Frontline Supervisor	People Management

Senior to Executive-Level Positions

Preferred education and experience requirements

The ACDS Workforce Classification System includes job profiles only up to the senior-level. For the executive level, similar requirements have been used:

- *An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline (a graduate degree is preferred)*
- *At least 10 years of growing experience up to an executive or senior leadership level*

In most organizations, the CEO/ED has a senior leadership team that consists of other C-suite positions and/or directors. Therefore, advancing from a senior-level position to an executive-level position requires a deeper understanding and further development of many skills that senior-level leaders likely already have to some extent. However, a CEO/ED has different pressures and challenges as the top position and as the ultimate decision-maker.

Organizational Governance

The distinguishing requirement for the executive level is organizational governance. This is especially important if your organization has a board. Executives need to fully understand the board's role and authority. Since the executive-level positions are the ones that interface the most with the board, senior-level leaders often need to grow in this area.

Governance encompasses the structure, processes, and standards by which organizations are controlled and governed. Executive positions ensure that their organizations are underpinned by good governance including fiscal management and accountability, integrity, transparency, stakeholder relationships, risk management, monitoring organizational performance, and strong leadership. The executive level has the ultimate responsibility for the organization's adherence to PDD funding requirements, CET standards, and applicable legislation.

Why good governance is important

- Preserves and strengthens stakeholder confidence
- Provides the foundation for a high-performing organization with the appropriate organizational culture
- Improves decision-making across all levels of the organization
- Improves strategic alignment and ensures the right strategic objectives are set
- Positions the organization better to respond to a changing external environment

Other priority KSAs for executives

Executive-level positions are also more outward facing; therefore, an increase in sector knowledge and involvement is required as well as a more extensive understanding of external factors that may affect business continuity and service delivery. The business acumen needed for sound decision making at this level will also likely be a focus area for development. The following two tables list the KSAs required to progress from the senior to executive level.

Knowledge Needed for Executive-Level Roles	
Organizational governance	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of organizational governance including role of the board (if applicable) • Extensive knowledge and understanding of funding contracts, fiscal responsibility, budgets, and financial reporting
Sector issues and trends	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of sector issues and trends
External factors	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of external factors including the political environment that could affect business continuity and service delivery
Organizational risk	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of organizational risk and mitigation strategies
Broader community disability field and resources	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of the broader community disability field, including children, youth, and adult support services • Extensive knowledge and understanding of the broader range of community resources available and how and when they can be accessed
Applicable legislation, regulations, standards, and contract terms	• Extensive understanding of applicable legislation, code of ethics, contract terms and conditions, and other practice guidelines, as well as the principles behind them • Good working knowledge and understanding of employment standards, human rights, and common law obligations
Organizational policies, procedures, protocols, and systems	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of relevant general and organization-specific policies, procedures, and operational protocols • Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational digital systems and processes • Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational human resource processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, and performance planning)

Skills and Abilities to Develop Further for Executive-Level Roles	
Strategic Thinking	• Develop stronger strategic thinking skills to better anticipate future needs and direction of the organization while considering changing external factors and sector trends and issues • Develop stronger strategic thinking skills to consider how changes or decisions impact the entire organization rather than just specific departments/programs
Business Acumen	• Develop stronger skills in financial literacy, budget management, and workforce planning and strategies • Develop stronger skills and ability to better promote and expand community reach and engagement • Develop stronger skills and ability to adapt to changing environmental factors and organizational needs, and lead people through change effectively • Develop skills and ability to manage the tension between risk, room for failure, growth, and innovation, and provide guidance on organizational risk
Communication	• Develop stronger communication skills to motivate, inspire, and influence all levels of a diverse organization and wider range of external stakeholders more effectively • Develop stronger communication skills to communicate complex or sensitive messages and have difficult conversations more effectively • Develop stronger communication skills and ability to speak publicly more effectively and with confidence • Develop stronger communication skills to write complex documents more effectively and persuasively
Decision Making	• Develop stronger decision-making skills so that all inputs and relevant information is considered, and a sector perspective is taken when needed • Develop stronger decision-making skills and ability to be decisive when needed to move initiatives and the organization forward

How to develop KSAs for executive roles

Consider the following recommendations as a starting point to develop the organizational governance, strategic thinking, business acumen, communication, and decision-making skills to transition confidently from senior to executive-level positions:

1. Non-training strategies

- **Mentoring**: Meet regularly with a particular executive leader, or various leaders, with a focus on acquiring tacit knowledge of organizational governance within the agency through questioning, storytelling, and discussing issues
- **Job shadowing**: Observe one or more executive leaders on the job to experience various scenarios, and debrief together during mentoring sessions, discussing the consequences of actions and decisions, not just behaviors observed
- **Stretch assignments**: Sit on one or more governance-related committees
- **Acting assignments**: Take on an acting role while an executive is on leave
- **Coaching**: Meet with an external executive coach to increase self-awareness, clarify goals, achieve development objectives, unlock unrealized potential, and act as a sounding board
- **Document repositories and archived materials**: Review past plans, budgets, reports, or minutes related to structure, processes, and standards and specific governance issues such as stakeholder relationships, risk management, and organizational performance
- **Knowledge transfer plan**: Support an executive leader in creating a knowledge transfer plan for their position, for future or acting leaders, as it relates to governance and the knowledge, skills, and abilities for this level of leadership

2. Tuition-based training

See Section 1 – Overview for more information

Training strategies for governance

Consider the following formal learning opportunities to develop KSAs in organizational governance:

- **ICD-Rotman NFP Program**
  The *Institute of Corporate Directors*, in partnership with the *Rotman School of Management* at the University of Toronto, is a leading governance education program for directors and senior executives in the not-for-profit sector. The program focuses on key accountabilities and responsibilities for NFP leaders through extensive use of team-based learning. The Institute also offers the ICD.D designation for directors and senior level executives. For more information on the *ICD-Rotman NFP Program*, go to: https://www.icd.ca.
- **Post-secondary**
  The following educational institutes offer a governance course in their online non-profit management certificates: *Simon Fraser University, Mount Royal University, Ontario Tech*

University, Western University, and *Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.* The governance courses can be taken independently or as part of the professional certificate/diploma in non-profit management.

3. Freely accessible training

LinkedIn Learning

Access LinkedIn Learning freely online through your local library portal. Consider the following Learning Paths and Short Courses as a starting point:

Learning Paths

- Develop Your Strategic Planning Skills
- Drive Organizational Change for DEI
- Become a Thought Leader

Short Courses

- Executive Leadership I *John Ullmen*
- Developing Executive Presence I *John Ullmen*
- Jeff Weiner on Leading Like a CEO I *Jeff Weiner*
- 20 Habits of Executive Leadership I *Madecraft and Aaron Marshall*
- Business Development I *Meredith Powell*
- Critical Thinking for Better Judgement and Decision-Making I *Becki Saltzman*
- Critical Thinking for Better Communication I *Becki Saltzman*
- Removing Noise and Bias from Strategic Decision-Making I *Becki Saltzman*

Developing finance and accounting skills

It is essential that executive leaders have the financial and accounting skills required for this level. The following are examples of the courses that leaders can take on LinkedIn learning to develop these skills further:

- Corporate Financial Statement Analysis
- Financial Modeling Foundations
- Applying Managerial Accounting
- Accounting Foundations
- Finance for Non-Financial Managers

This list is by no means exhaustive, and LinkedIn Learning is only one of various options for self-directed learning. The finance department in an agency may be a good source to build these skills in leaders in-house. In some cases, leaders would be better taking in-person classes through a local post-secondary to build these skills.

Mid to Senior-Level Positions

Preferred education and experience requirements

As per the ACDS Workforce Classification System, for senior-level leadership roles, the following are the preferred education and experience requirements:

- *An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline (a graduate degree is preferred)*
- *At least 10 years of growing experience up to a senior leadership level*

As with the senior-level leaders desiring to move into an executive role, mid-level managers wanting to advance into a senior role will already have some of the KSAs to a certain extent. However, there will likely be KSAs where more development is required.

Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking is the distinguishing trait for senior leadership and is the most significant transition that a mid-level leader needs to make to move into a senior role. The scope, responsibilities, and expectations are different at the senior level with broader organizational impact. Positions operating at the senior level are expected to be strategic thinkers.

1. Seeing the big picture

Senior and executive leaders are the ones who focus on the overall direction of the organization, whereas the main priority for mid-level managers is to ensure that their departments or programs run effectively and efficiently. Because senior leaders operate at a higher level, they are better positioned to see things more applicable to the entire organization rather than just a specific functional area. Big picture thinkers consider the wide-ranging impact of their decisions. They understand they do not operate in a vacuum or as a silo, and that there is often a ripple effect to their decisions.

2. Long-term perspective

Although mid-level managers sometimes take a longer-term perspective for different projects or planning, the main thrust of their work is typically shorter-term: day-to-day operational management. Conversely, senior leaders do deal with short-terms issues, but they are expected to focus more on the longer-term view about achieving organizational objectives and success. This means having the capacity to anticipate scenarios, gather information continuously, challenge assumptions, and look for differing points of view. [19] This is necessary to better prepare the organization for the future and any challenges it may bring.

Other priority KSAs for senior leaders

Those wanting to advance into a senior role need to increase their sector knowledge and knowledge of external factors that may affect business continuity and service delivery. The business acumen needed at this level will also likely be a focus area for development. The following two tables list the KSAs required to move from the mid to senior level

Knowledge Needed for Senior-Level Roles	
Organizational governance	• Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational governance including role of the board (if applicable) • Good working knowledge and understanding of funding contracts, fiscal responsibility, budgets, and financial reporting
Sector issues and trends	• Good working knowledge and understanding of sector issues and trends
External factors	• Good working knowledge and understanding of external factors including the political environment that could affect business continuity and service delivery
Organizational risk	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of organizational risk and mitigation strategies
Broader community disability field and resources	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of the broader community disability field, including children, youth, and adult support services • Extensive knowledge and understanding of the broader range of community resources and opportunities available and how and when they can be accessed
Applicable legislation, regulations, standards, and contract terms	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of applicable legislation, code of ethics, contract terms and conditions, and other practice guidelines, as well as the principles behind them • Good working knowledge and understanding of employment standards, human rights, and common law obligation
Organizational policies, processes, procedures, and systems	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of relevant general and organization-specific policies, procedures, and operational protocols • Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational digital systems and processes • Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational human resource processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, and performance planning)

Skills and Abilities to Develop Further for Senior-Level Roles	
Strategic Thinking	• Develop strategic thinking skills to anticipate future needs and overall direction of the organization while considering changing external factors • Develop strategic thinking skills to consider how changes or decisions impact the entire organization rather than just specific departments/areas
Business Acumen	• Develop skills in financial literacy, budget management, and workforce strategies • Develop skills and ability to better promote and expand community reach and engagement • Develop skills and ability to adapt to changing environmental factors and organizational needs, and lead people through change effectively
Communication	• Develop communication skills to motivate, inspire, and influence all levels of a diverse organization and stakeholders more effectively • Develop stronger communication skills to communicate complex or sensitive messages and have difficult conversations more effectively • Develop stronger communication skills to write complex documents more effectively and persuasively
Decision Making and Problem Solving	• Develop stronger decision-making skills so that all inputs and relevant information is considered and to be more decisive when needed • Develop stronger problem-solving skills to solve complex problems more effectively by weighing pros and cons of possible solutions for all affected parties
People Management	• Develop stronger teamwork and collaboration skills to build bridges between teams and facilitate collaboration across the organization to achieve goals • Develop stronger performance management skills to lead, empower, coach, and mentor to bring out the best in a diverse team, and hold staff accountable when needed

How to develop KSAs required for senior roles

Consider the following recommendations as a starting point to develop the strategic thinking, business acumen, communication, decision-making and problem solving, and people management skills to transition confidently from manager to senior-level positions:

1. Non-training strategies

- **Mentoring**: Meet regularly with a specific director, or various senior or executive leaders, to talk about agency strategy (past, present, future) practicing decision making through discussion and role-playing, incorporating tools such as SWOT analysis, Porter's 5 forces, or VUCA
- **Job shadowing**: Observe one or more senior leaders on the job to experience various scenarios, and debrief together during mentoring sessions, discussing the consequences of actions and decisions, not just behaviors observed
- **Stretch assignments**: Lead one or more strategic projects or initiatives in the agency
- **Acting assignments**: Take on an acting role while a senior leader is on leave
- **Coaching**: Meet with an external executive coach to increase capacity to change, adapt, and manage personal and team wellness
- **Document repositories and archived materials**: Review past strategic plans, budgets, or other reports
- **Knowledge transfer plan**: Support a senior leader in creating a knowledge transfer plan for their position, for future or acting leaders, as it relates to strategy and the knowledge, skills, and abilities for this level of leadership

2. Tuition-based training

See Section 1 – Overview for more information

3. Freely accessible training

LinkedIn Learning

Access LinkedIn Learning freely online through your local library portal. Consider the following Learning Paths and Short Courses as a starting point:

Learning Paths

- Become a Senior Manager
- Become a Leader
- Leading Others Effectively
- Improve your Business Analysis Skills
- Lead Inclusive Teams and Organizations
- Grow Your Impact as a Mentor
- Develop Your Creative Thinking and Innovation Skills
- Leading During Times of Change

Short Courses

- Strategic Thinking I *Dorie Clark*
- How to Make Strategic Thinking a Habit I *Dorie Clark*
- Acting Your Strategy: A Human Approach to Successful Business Planning I *Russell Cullingworth and ProDio Audio Learning Inc.*
- Strategic Planning Foundations I *Mike Figliuolo*
- Assessing and Improving Strategic Plans I *Mike Figliuolo*
- Strategic Planning: Case Studies I *Mike Figliuolo*
- Leading Strategically I *Eric Zackrison and Madecraft*
- Risk Taking for Leaders I *Deborah Perry Piscione*
- Navigating Politics as a Senior Leader I *Mike Figliuolo*

Developing finance and accounting skills

It is essential that senior leaders have the financial and accounting skills required for this level. The following are examples of the courses that leaders can take on LinkedIn learning to develop these skills further:

- Corporate Financial Statement Analysis
- Financial Modeling Foundations
- Applying Managerial Accounting
- Accounting Foundations
- Finance for Non-Financial Managers

This list is by no means exhaustive, and LinkedIn Learning is only one of various options for self-directed learning. The finance department in an agency may be a good source to build these skills in leaders in-house. In some cases, leaders would be better taking in-person classes through a local post-secondary to build these skills.

Frontline Supervisor to Mid-level Leader

Preferred education and experience requirements

As per the ACDS Workforce Classification System, for mid-level leadership roles, the following are the preferred education and experience requirements:

- *An undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline (a graduate degree is preferred)*
- *At least 5 years of growing experience at a middle management/administrative level*

Mid-level leaders are the operational engine of an organization and are responsible for the day-to-day running of departments/programs. They must figure out the most effective ways to implement strategy by developing and implementing activities and timelines to make the organizational strategic objectives reality. They also need to be able to manage up and down the hierarchy at the same time. This means interpreting and communicating strategy of top-level management and understanding and communicating to upper management the issues happening on the frontline. It requires balancing organizational issues from both sides, which can sometimes be opposing viewpoints.

Program management, systems, and processes

Mid-level managers need to effectively manage people and systems in their department or program(s) to optimize service delivery. They ensure that systems are running smoothly and look for innovative ways to develop or improve processes and procedures. Mid-level leaders typically oversee a portfolio and need to ensure that these processes and procedures can be used effectively across their different teams.

Other priority KSAs for mid-level leaders

Along with the systems thinking required, mid-level leaders need to be highly organized with exceptional planning skills to ensure that the day-to-day operations run smoothly and efficiently. Another likely growth area may be developing stronger writing skills as the writing requirements at this level are more complex than at the frontline supervisor level.

The following two tables list the main KSAs required to move from the frontline supervisor level to mid-level manager.

Knowledge Needed for Mid-Level Manager Roles	
Organizational governance	• Basic knowledge and understanding of funding contracts, fiscal responsibility, budgets, and financial reporting
Sector trends and issues	• Basic knowledge and understanding of sector trends and issues
External factors	• Basic knowledge and understanding of external factors including the political environment that could affect business continuity and service delivery
Organizational risk	• Good working knowledge and understanding of organizational risk and mitigation strategies including health and safety issues
Broader community disability field resources and opportunities available	• Good working knowledge and understanding of the broader community disability field, including children, youth, and adult support services • Good working knowledge and understanding of the broader range of community resources and opportunities available and how and when they can be accessed
Applicable legislation, regulations, standards, and contract terms	• Good working knowledge and understanding of relevant general and applicable legislation, code of ethics and guidelines, contract terms and conditions, and other practice guidelines • Good working knowledge and understanding of employment standards, human rights, and common law obligation
Organizational policies, processes, procedures, and systems	• Extensive knowledge and understanding of relevant general and organization-specific policies, procedures, and operational protocols • Extensive knowledge and understanding of organizational digital systems and processes • Extensive knowledge and understanding of human resource processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, and performance planning)

Skills and Abilities to Develop Further for Mid-Level Manager Roles	
Program Management	• Develop planning and analytical skills to monitor and evaluate services, coordinate service delivery, and make adjustments as needed • Develop stronger organizational and time management skills to create efficiencies and maximize productivity and performance • Develop stronger skills and ability to build more community connections and opportunities
People Management	• Develop performance management skills to lead, empower, coach, and mentor to bring out the best in a diverse team, and hold staff accountable when needed • Develop stronger teamwork and collaboration skills to build bridges between teams • Develop stronger conflict resolution and mediation skills
Business Operations	• Develop stronger systems skills to develop and implement efficient processes and procedures that can be used across different teams • Develop stronger business skills pertaining to budget management and human resources
Communication	• Develop stronger writing skills to meet more complicated writing requirements • Develop stronger communication skills to share ideas and information more clearly and have difficult conversations more effectively
Decision Making and Problem Solving	• Develop stronger skills and more confidence to make timely and well-informed decisions rather then look to their direct supervisor to make them • Develop stronger problem-solving skills by understanding all viewpoints and being open to creative solutions and multiple options to solve an issue

How to develop KSAs for mid-level manager roles

Consider the following recommendations as a starting point to develop the program management, people management, business operations, communication, and decision-making and problem-solving skills to transition confidently from frontline supervisor to mid-level positions:

1. Non-training strategies

- **Mentoring**: Meet regularly with a specific manager, or various managers, to discuss programs and systems management, and to troubleshoot issues together, and role play scenarios, and discuss the five general functions of management: planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling
- **Job shadowing**: Observe one or more managers on the job to experience various scenarios, and debrief together during mentoring sessions, discussing the consequences of actions and decisions, not just behaviors observed
- **Stretch assignments**: Lead the design and implementation of one or more systems or program improvements in the agency
- **Acting assignments**: Take on an acting role while a manager is on leave
- **Coaching**: Meet with an external leadership coach to develop skills and habits that help avoid burnout, maintain wellness and resilience, at the manager level such as
- **Document repositories and archived materials**: Review past system improvement or implementation plans, budgets, flow charts or process documents, user guides on how to perform specific functions, and related reports
- **Knowledge transfer plan**: Support a manager in creating a knowledge transfer plan for their position, for future or acting leaders, as it relates to program and systems management and the related knowledge, skills, and abilities for this level of leadership

2. Tuition-based training

See Section 1 – Overview for more information

3. Freely accessible training

LinkedIn Learning

Access LinkedIn Learning freely online through your local library portal. Consider the following Learning Paths and Short Courses as a starting point:

Learning Paths

- Advance Your Skills as a Manager
- How to Cultivate Work-Life Balance
- Develop Your Communication Skills and Interpersonal Influence
- Develop Your Writing Skills
- Building Trust and Collaboration with Others

- Improve Your Coaching Skills as a Manager
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging for All
- Improve Your Problem-Solving Skills

Short Courses

- Systems Thinking I *Derek Cabrera*
- Project Management Foundations: Risk I *Bob McGannon*
- Writing Formal Business Letters and Emails I *Tom Geller*
- Excel 2019 Essential Training I *Dennis Taylor*
- Excel: Avoiding Common Mistakes (Office 365/Excel 2019) I *Dennis Taylor*

Developing finance and accounting skills

Managers should have some KSAs pertaining to finance and accounting to assist them with budget management. The following are examples of the courses that leaders can take on LinkedIn learning to develop these skills further:

- Corporate Financial Statement Analysis
- Financial Modeling Foundations
- Applying Managerial Accounting
- Accounting Foundations
- Finance for Non-Financial Managers

This list is by no means exhaustive, and LinkedIn Learning is only one of various options for self-directed learning. The finance department in an agency may be a good source to build these skills in leaders in-house. In some cases, leaders would be better taking in-person classes through a local post-secondary to build these skills.

Frontline Staff to Frontline Supervisors

Preferred education and experience requirements

As per the ACDS Workforce Classification System, for frontline supervisor roles, the following are the preferred education and experience requirements:

- *A diploma (undergraduate degree preferred) in a relevant discipline from a recognized institution*
- *At least 2 years of direct service experience at a practitioner level*

Frontline supervisors manage all aspects of frontline activity and service delivery. They directly oversee frontline workers and usually report to middle management. Frontline leaders supervise most staff in an organization. Moreover, when it comes to translating strategy into reality, frontline supervisors are key to organizational success and performance.

People Management

The most significant shift for a frontline worker to make when moving into a supervisory role is becoming effective in the intricacies of people management. This is especially challenging if they were a frontline employee that has been moved into a leadership position on the same team. Mental shifts need to occur for both the new supervisor and the team members. Remember that although a frontline worker might be good at their job, it does not necessarily mean they will be an effective supervisor. Therefore, it is imperative that the right sort of questions are asked in the interviewing process as mentioned on page 13, and the interview panel acknowledges and addresses the biases they may have about internal candidates.

Performance management becomes especially important for this level as frontline leaders are constantly dealing with staff performance. Being an effective supervisor requires the skills to empower and equip team members, so they can deliver the best client services possible. Having difficult conversations is a real challenge for many people and knowing how to bring out the potential and best in a range of performers is not an easy feat. This will likely be the most significant development area required for staff wanting to move into frontline leadership.

Other priority KSAs for frontline supervisors

Along with people management skills, another likely growth area is problem solving and decision making. As a frontline supervisor, being able to constantly deal with urgent matters and find solutions to issues that regularly emerge may be a stretch for some. Having the confidence to make decisions using strong critical thinking skills rather than regularly deferring issues to their supervisor may need some development.

Another likely area of focus may be developing stronger verbal and written skills. Frontline supervisors need to be able to facilitate team meetings, communicate with a wider network than at the frontline, and complete more complicated documentation. The following two tables list the most significant KSAs required to move from a frontline practitioner to supervisor.

Knowledge Needed for Frontline Supervisor Roles	
Organizational risk and mitigation strategies	• Basic knowledge and understanding of basic rules and guidelines for health and safety, as appropriate
Broader community disability field resources and opportunities available	• Good working knowledge and understanding of the broader community disability field, including children, youth, and adult support services • Good working knowledge and understanding of the broader range of community resources and opportunities available and how and when they can be accessed
Applicable legislation, regulations, standards, and contract terms	• Basic knowledge and understanding of relevant general and applicable legislation, code of ethics, contract terms and conditions, and other practice guidelines • Basic knowledge and understanding of employment standards, human rights, and common law obligation
Organizational policies, processes, procedures, and systems	• Good working knowledge and understanding of relevant general and organization-specific policies, procedures, and operational protocols • Extensive knowledge and understanding of organizational digital systems and processes • Extensive knowledge and understanding of human resource processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, and performance planning)

Skills and Abilities to Develop Further for Frontline Supervisor Roles	
People Management	• Develop performance management skills to lead, empower, coach, mentor a diverse team in ways that bring out the best in the range of performers • Develop skills and confidence to hold staff accountable and have difficult conversations effectively when improvement is required in someone's performance • Develop stronger teamwork and collaboration skills to achieve common goals and positive results, build morale, and encourage others' contributions to the team • Develop conflict resolution and mediation skills
Business Operations	• Develop systems skills to develop and implement processes and procedures needed at the team level • Develop skills pertaining to human resource processes (e.g., recruitment, onboarding, and performance planning) • Develop stronger computer/digital skills to meet all reporting requirements and use basic financial/budget management, databases, and analysis tools • Develop skills and ability to build more community connections and opportunities
Communication	• Develop stronger writing skills so that all documentation is clear, concise, and consistent to meet writing requirements for this level • Develop stronger communication skills to share ideas and information more clearly and facilitate meetings effectively
Decision Making and Problem Solving	• Develop stronger skills and more confidence to make timely and well-informed decisions rather then look to their supervisor to make them • Develop stronger problem-solving skills by taking a practical approach, being open to new ideas or creative solutions, and consider multiple options to solve an issue
Organizational and time management	• Develop stronger organizational and time management skills to create efficiencies and maximize productivity and performance

How to develop the KSAs for frontline supervisor roles

Consider the following recommendations as a starting point to develop in people management, business operations, communication, decision-making and problem solving, and organizational and time management skills to transition confidently to a frontline supervisor role:

1. Non-training strategies

Consider the following non-training strategies to strengthen KSAs in people management as well as other KSAs required for the frontline supervisor level:

- **Mentoring**: Meet regularly with a specific frontline supervisor, or various supervisors, to discuss team development and motivation, performance management, conflict management, and related knowledge and skills
- **Job shadowing**: Observe one or more frontline leaders on the job to experience various scenarios, and debrief together during mentoring sessions, discussing the consequences of actions and decisions, not just behaviors observed
- **Stretch assignments**: Lead team meetings, team building, and goal setting for team
- **Acting assignments**: Take on an acting role while a frontline supervisor is on leave
- **Coaching**: Meet with an external leadership coach to focus on the development of critical skills such as conflict resolution and performance management
- **Document repositories and archived materials**: Review employee handbooks, user guides on how to perform specific functions, and related reports
- **Knowledge transfer plan**: Support a manager or supervisor in creating a knowledge transfer plan for their position, for future or acting leaders, as it relates to leading their team and the related knowledge, skills, and abilities for this level of leadership

2. Tuition-based training

See Section 1 – Overview for more information

3. Freely accessible training

LinkedIn Learning

Access LinkedIn Learning freely online through your local library portal. Consider the following Learning Paths as a starting point:

Learning Paths

- Professional Soft Skills Learning Pathway
- Growing Your Skills as a Leader
- Become a Leader People Love
- Improve Your Organizational Skills
- Build Your Attention-to-Detail Skills
- Build and Manage Effective Teams

- Managing Others Effectively
- Managing Performance
- Develop Conflict Management and Resolution Skills
- Manage Diverse and Inclusive Teams
- Develop Decision-Making, Critical-Thinking, and Problem-Solving Skills

Summary of knowledge required by leadership level

The following table provides a summary of the knowledge required for each leadership level so that it is easier to compare the career progression requirements at a glance.

	Knowledge Area	Executive	Senior	Mid-level	Frontline
1.	**Organizational governance**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding		
2.	**Organizational governance** Funding contracts, fiscal responsibility, budgets, and financial statements	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding	
3.	**Sector trends and issues**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding	
4.	**External factors that could affect business continuity and service delivery**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding	
5.	**Organizational risk and mitigation strategies**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding
6.	**Broader community disability field including children, youth, and adult support services**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding
7.	**Knowing how and when to access a broader range of community resources**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding
8.	**Applicable legislation, code of ethics, contract terms and conditions, and other practice guidelines**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding
9.	**Employment standards, human rights, and common law obligations**	Good working knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Basic knowledge and understanding
10.	**Organizational policies, procedures, and operational protocols**	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding
11.	**Organizational digital systems and processes**	Good working knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding
12.	**Organizational human resource processes**	Good working knowledge and understanding	Good working knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding	Extensive knowledge and understanding

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