

A close-up photograph of a biodegradable seedling tray filled with dark soil. Several small green seedlings with two leaves are growing in the compartments. The tray is placed on a light-colored wooden surface.

Joan Kirner emerging leaders program

Flexible working policies & the Four-Day Work Week

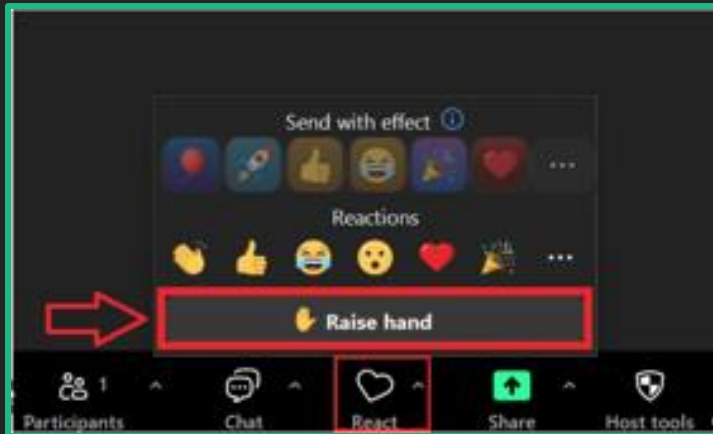
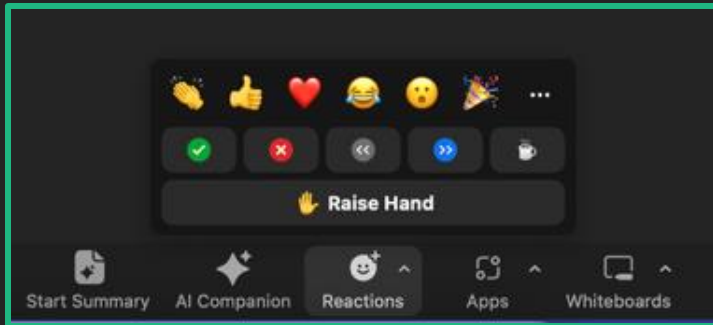


Join via chat

*'Hi I'm Kate from
Community Directors
and I am joining today
from Wurrundjeri
woi-wurrung country in
Melbourne ...'*

Acknowledgement of Country

Housekeeping



- Joining the conversation:

 *Raise hand*

 *Chat*

 *Mute*

- Slides and recording will be shared
- Please don't use AI to summarise or record this session

Your facilitator



Kate James

- Bachelor of Arts, Master of Laws (Juris Doctor)
- Trained mediator
- Experience working with community organisations as a solicitor, consultant and private investigator

Today's webinar

Purpose

To explore flexible work as a practical lever for gender inclusion

Learning outcomes

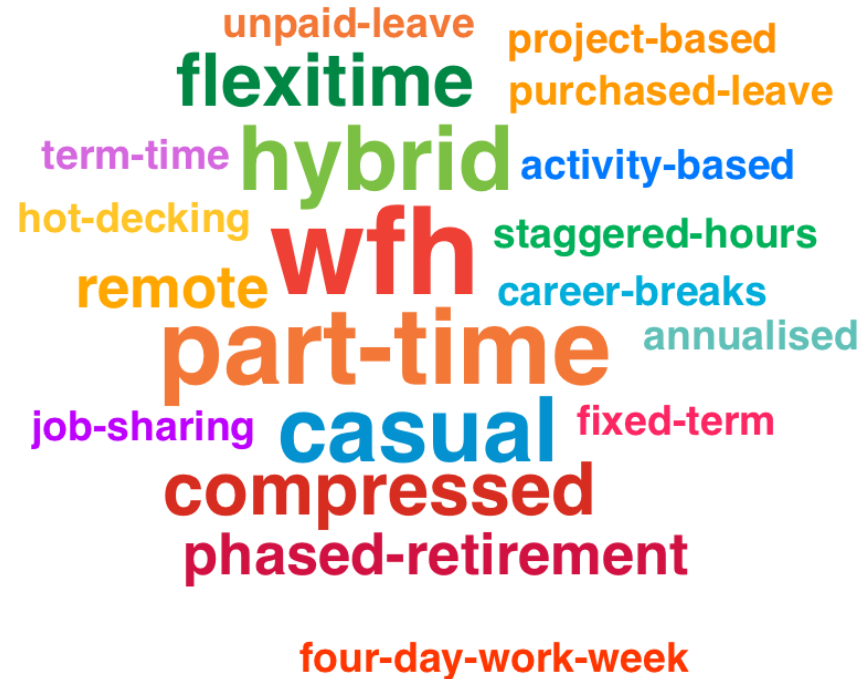
By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Explain the link between flexible work and gender equity in leadership pipelines
- Know which leadership style to adopt to drive gender inclusion through flexible work
- Apply a simple tool to design or advocate for flexible arrangements in your team



Flexible work

What is flexible work?



A word cloud of various flexible work arrangements. The words are in different colors and sizes, arranged in a roughly circular shape. The most prominent words are 'wfh' (work from home) in large red letters, 'part-time' in large orange letters, 'casual' in large blue letters, and 'hybrid' in large green letters. Other words include 'flexitime' (green), 'unpaid-leave' (orange), 'project-based' (orange), 'purchased-leave' (orange), 'term-time' (purple), 'activity-based' (blue), 'staggered-hours' (green), 'career-breaks' (blue), 'annualised' (teal), 'fixed-term' (pink), 'compressed' (red), 'phased-retirement' (pink), 'four-day-work-week' (orange), 'remote' (orange), 'job-sharing' (purple), 'hot-decking' (yellow), and 'staggered-hours' (green).

Flexible work

Variations to when, where or how much someone works, including hours, location, job-sharing and leave

Flexibility stigma

Assumption that flexible workers are less committed or capable

Proximity bias

Tendency to favour people who are physically present

Flexibility as a lever for gender inclusion

Flexible work enables:

1. **Narrowing the gender pay gap**
2. **Caregiving**
3. **Career continuity**
4. **Support for those experiencing gender-based violence**
5. **Workforce entry**
6. **Retention**
7. **Health & wellbeing**
8. **Cultural & behavioural change**
9. **Gender-affirming healthcare**
10. **Reduction in geographic & safety barriers**



Benefits: The case for flexible work



Individuals

- Work that fits your actual life
- Greater financial security
- Room to grow
- Better for your health
- Stronger sense of belonging



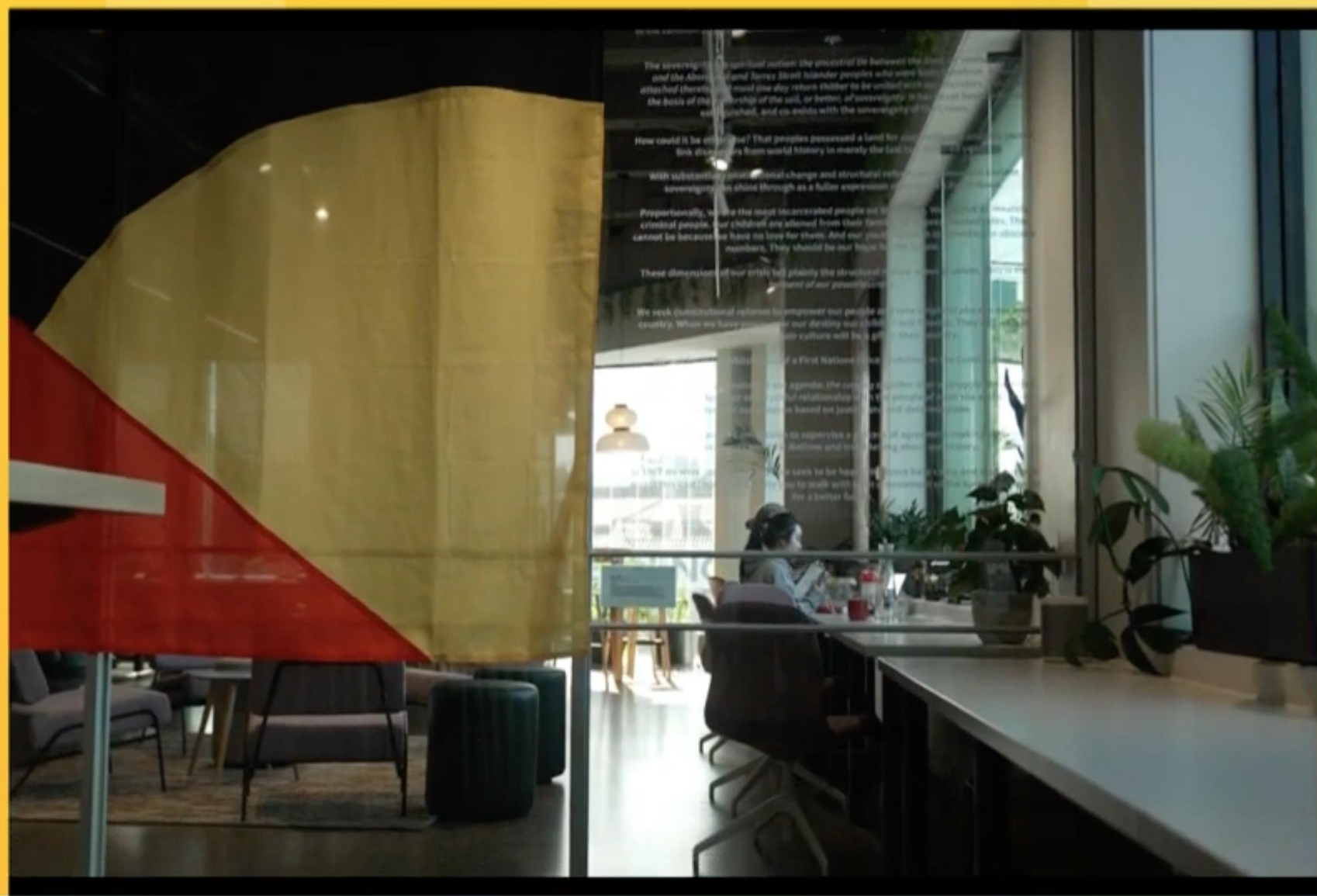
Our workplaces

- Access to wider talent pool
- Better quality work
- Reduced turnover
- Stronger culture & reputation
- Closing the gender pay gap



Our communities

- Stronger economy
- Distribution of unpaid labour
- Reduced gender-based poverty
- Healthier communities
- A more inclusive economy



Spotlight on the 4-day work week (4DWW)



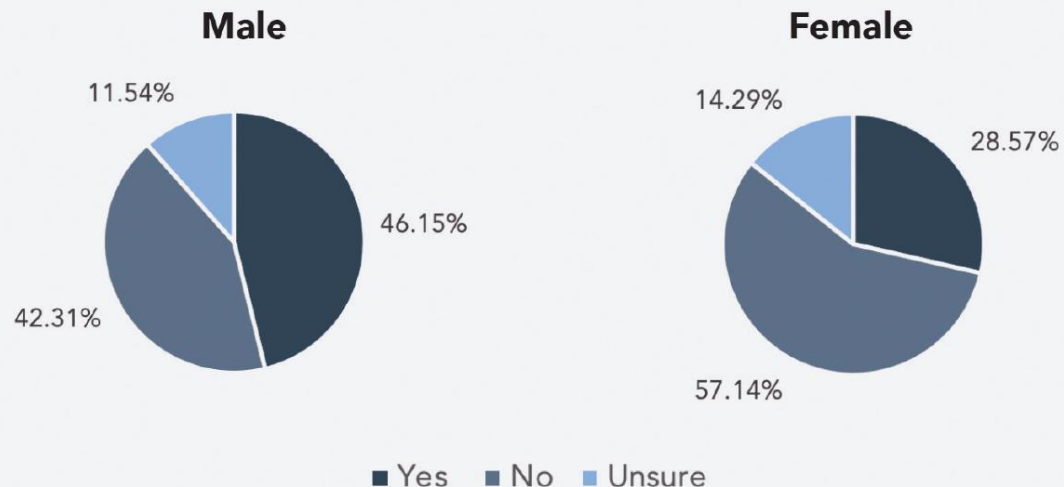
What is it?

A global movement reimagining work...

- 80% time | 100% pay | 100% productivity
- Piloted in the UK, Iceland, New Zealand, Australia and beyond
- Adopted by Our Community (Melbourne) since November 2022

Why does it matter for gender equity?

Has the amount of time you spent caring for children changed during this trial?



- Women still do ~75% of unpaid domestic labour
- Career interruptions drive the gender pay gap
- Less time at work = more equal sharing at home

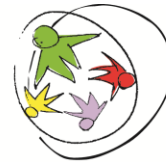
“The capacity of reduced paid working hours to distribute unpaid domestic labour more evenly... is clearly demonstrated from these results”
Per Capita report 2023

What are we learning?



Our people

- *"My private life has oxygen now"*
- *"No Sunday dread"*
- *"I am more focused, more enthusiastic, feel sharper"*



Our organisation

- Income up 15%
- Sick leave down 32%
- One resignation within the first 12 months

Success factors & myths

"How do we know people are working?"

Output, not hours

"How do we track productivity?"

Revenue ↑ · Sick leave ↓ · Retention ↑

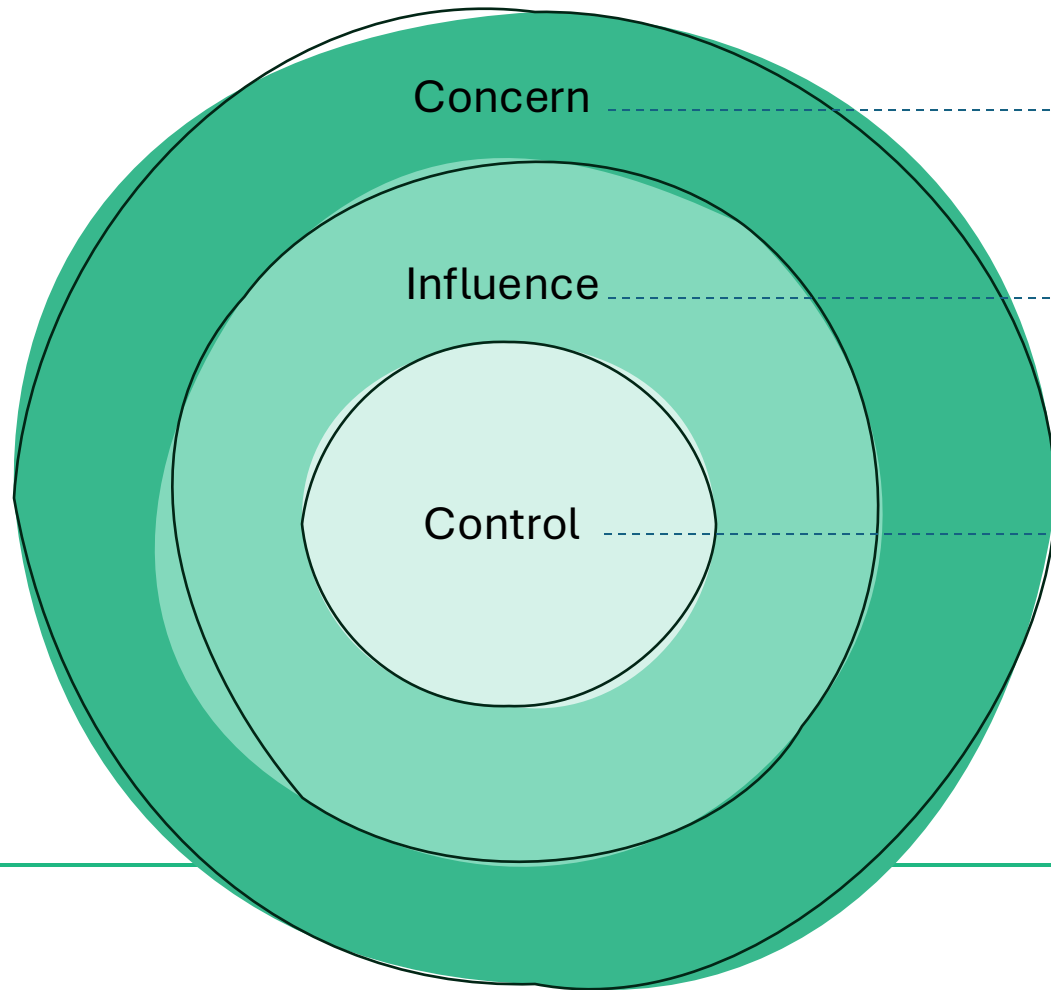
What were the leadership levers that made it happen?

- Leader conviction (Denis Moriarty, CEO)
- Staff voice and co-design
- Culture of trust
(as individuals, within teams, as an organisation)

The Our Community team



Review: Covey's circles



Systemic and cultural barriers to flexible work
(e.g. stigma, biases, systems inc. policy gaps)

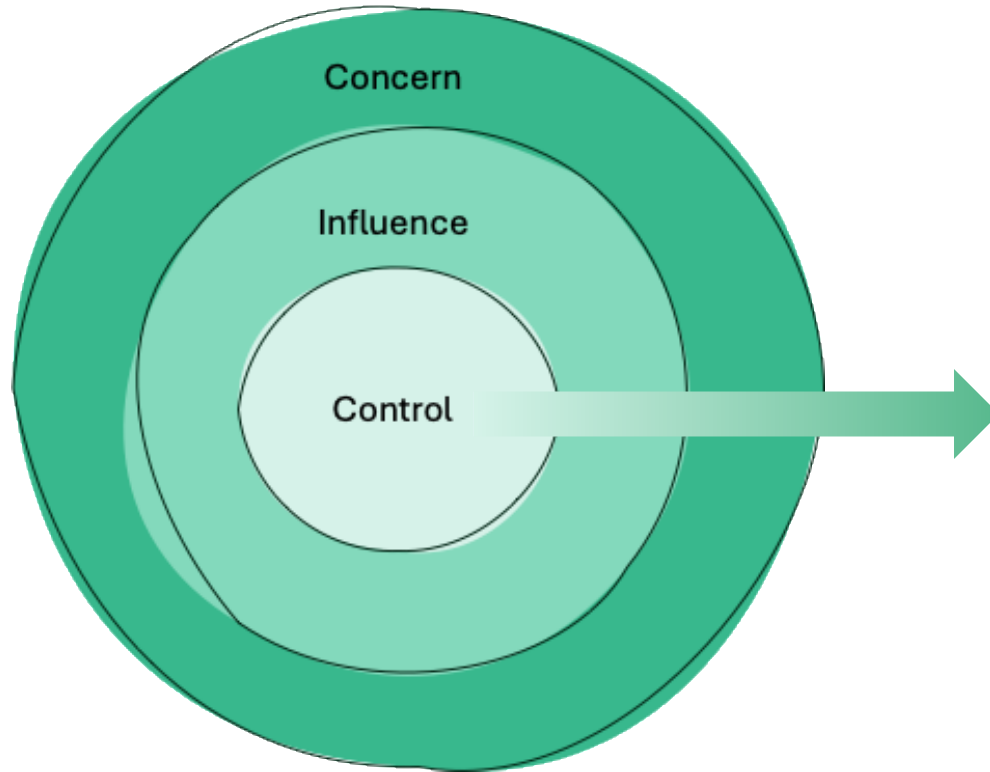
Organisational culture, behavioural norms,
peer conversations, change efforts

How you lead your own team right now

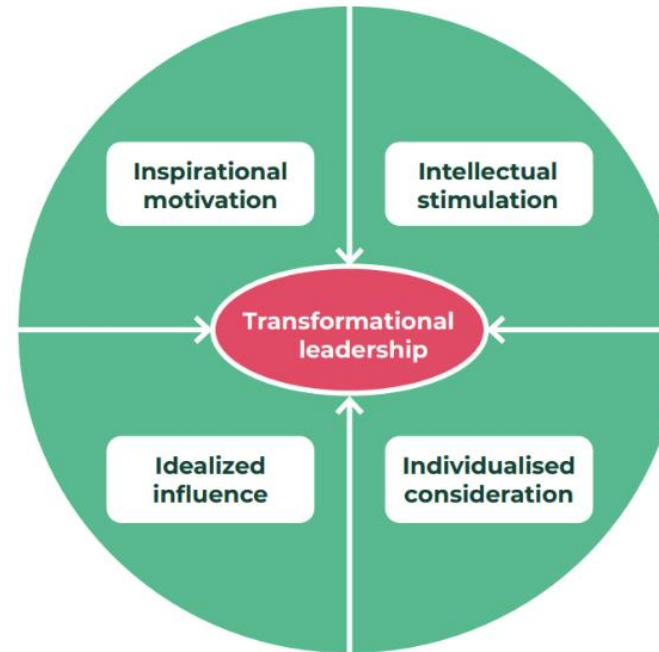
Review: Leadership types

Leadership type	Description	Looks like	When to use	When not to use
Charismatic	Leading through personal magnetism and the ability to inspire emotion and loyalty	Energising speeches, a compelling vision, people rallying behind a personality	Crisis moments, launching change, mobilising a disengaged team	When the leader leaves and takes all the momentum with them; when it masks poor decisions
Authentic	Leading from a place of self-awareness, consistent values and genuine connection	Sharing your own story, admitting uncertainty, leading in a way that feels true to who you are	Building trust, creating psychological safety, challenging dominant norms about what leadership "looks like"	When radical honesty isn't appropriate to context; when self-disclosure becomes oversharing
Adaptive	Helping people navigate complex, shifting challenges without clear-cut solutions	Asking hard questions, redistributing problem-solving to the team, tolerating productive discomfort	Deep cultural or structural change; systemic problems with no obvious fix	When a quick, technical solution will do; when the team is already overwhelmed
Transactional	Leading through clear expectations, reward and accountability structures	KPIs, performance reviews, contracts, clear incentives for delivery	Embedding new standards (e.g. gender equity targets), supporting people through defined milestones	When creativity or intrinsic motivation matters most; when it becomes purely punitive
Transformational	Inspiring people toward a shared vision that changes how they think and act	Articulating a compelling future, connecting individual work to bigger purpose, modelling the change	Long-term cultural shifts, rallying people around inclusion goals	When short-term delivery is the priority; when the vision isn't grounded in reality
Servant	Prioritising the needs, growth and wellbeing of others above personal power or status	Asking "what do you need?", removing obstacles, advocating for your team	Empowering people, supporting underrepresented voices, building inclusive teams	When servant leaders neglect their own needs; when it prevents necessary challenge of unfair structures
Followerhip	Recognising that how we follow — critically, actively, ethically — is itself a form of leadership	Speaking up, choosing who to support deliberately, holding leaders to account	When you're not (yet) in a formal leadership role; influencing from within	When critical followerhip tips into passive resistance or cynicism

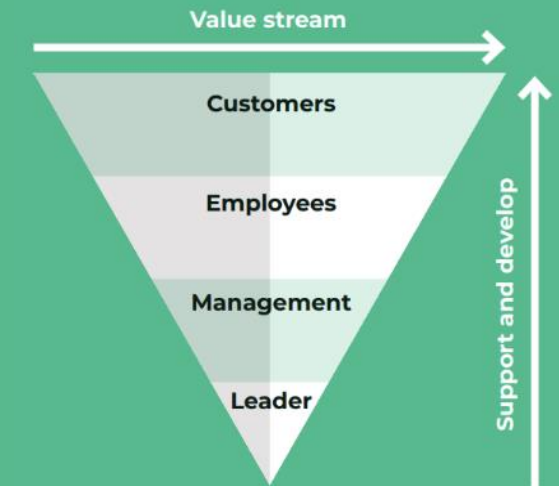
Activity: Today's approach



Transformational leadership



Servant leadership



Unlocking your team's potential



Understand constraints

- Flexible work policy
- Leadership views



Talk to your team

- Why this, why now
- Current flexible work options
- Co-create a shared vision
- Flag individual conversations
- Revisit every few months



Have individual conversations

- 1 UNDERSTAND NEEDS**
When do you feel like you're doing your best work?
- 2 SPOT THE BLOCKERS**
What gets in your way? If you could change one thing to improve your experience at work, what would it be?
- 3 CO-DESIGN**
What's one thing we can try that you think would make a positive difference?
- 4 AGREE & COMMIT**
What are we each going to do, and when should we check back in? (check back in regularly – say each quarter)

Group activity



Individual conversations - a framework

1

UNDERSTAND NEEDS

When do you feel like you're doing your best work?

2

SPOT THE BLOCKERS

What gets in your way? If you could change one thing to improve your experience at work, what would it be?

3

CO-DESIGN

What's one thing we can try that you think would make a positive difference?

4

AGREE & COMMIT

What are we each going to do, and when should we check back in?

Thinking about your team, discuss in breakout groups:

- **What are you already doing?**
(e.g. walking meetings, encouraging people to move away from desks etc.)
- **Which of the four questions feel most natural to you? Why?**
- **Which might feel difficult? What might get in the way?**
- **What is one small, concrete change you could make to how your team works that would improve inclusion?**

Next steps

In the chat...

“One thing I will do differently with my team in the next two weeks”

Share your thoughts



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025JK-webinar>

Further reading

- Per Capita's report on the Our Community 4DWW pilot
[*Sharing the Spoils: A gender lens analysis of the four-day week trial at Our Community* \(April 2023\)](#)
- Diversity Council Australia, [*She's Price\(d\)less 2025*](#)
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), [*Employer of Choice for Gender Equality checklist* \(2022\)](#)
- Plan International: [*Moving the Middle – a guide to communicating about gender equality* \(2025\)](#)
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), [*workforce participation barriers*](#)
- Safe Work Australia, [*Preventing work-related violence & aggression guide* \(2022\)](#)
- Our Watch, [*Workplace Equality and Respect Standards* \(2022\)](#)
- TransHub, [*resources for employers*](#)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, [*Guideline: LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplaces*](#)

Community Directors resources

Help sheets:

- [10 tips for leading cultural change in an organization](#)
- [Embedding gender equity into organizational documents](#)
- [Qualities of good leadership](#)
- [Leadership styles](#)
- [10 questions women should ask about joining a board](#)
- [Ten questions every board director needs to ask about diversity](#)

Tools

- [Workplace gender equity policy checklist](#)

Reports & articles

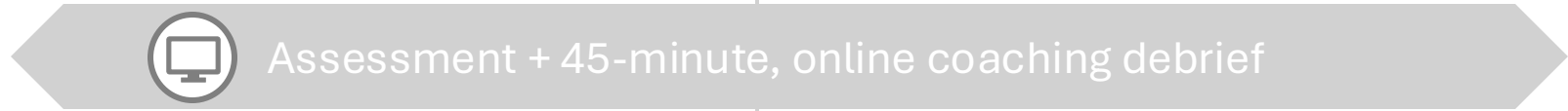
- [ICDA leadership white paper](#)
- [Great change needs good leadership](#)

Tomorrow: Strengthening representation on boards and executive leadership teams

5 x full-day workshops
(3 in-person, 2 online)



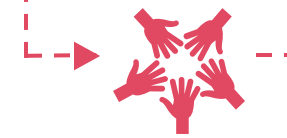
Leadership strengths assessment



4 x 1-hour webinars



Mentoring circle
(60-minutes, online)



Graduation
(2-hours, in person)

