SACRS FALL CONFERENCE

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LEADING BEYOND THE WORK

Strengthening Communication, Connection, and Accountability

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The work matters. So do the people.

- When deadlines tighten, what happens to our communication?
- What happens to our relationships?
- What happens to the way we lead?

What leaders are navigating

- Complex cases, tight deadlines, competing priorities
- Changing technology and expectations
- Different schedules, different communication habits
- Less time for mentoring and informal collaboration

Three commitments of intentional leadership

- COMMUNICATION • Make understanding possible
- CONNECTION • Make relationships intentional
- ACCOUNTABILITY • Make expectations mutual and clear

Communication is more than sending information

- What did I intend to communicate?
- What did the other person actually hear?
- What assumptions are we each making?
- What needs to be clarified before we move forward?

ACCORDING TO RESEARCH,

OUR ASSUMPTIONS ARE CORRECT

12%
OF THE TIME



Assumptions limit accuracy.
Curiosity drives results.

Don’t rely on assumptions.
Ask. Listen. Understand. Then decide.

Emotional intelligence in action

- **Self-Awareness** - NOTICE your own emotion, tone and demeanor
- **Self-Management** - PAUSE before reacting or making assumptions
- **Social-Awareness** - ASK with curiosity: “Help me understand…”
- **Social Skills** - RESPOND with clarity, empathy and positive intent

PRACTICAL TOOL

Delivering unpopular news

1. Prepare the facts and your purpose
2. Deliver the message directly and respectfully
3. Acknowledge impact without reversing the message
4. Listen and invite questions
5. Clarify next steps and follow through

From transactional to relational

- “I only hear from you when something is needed.”
- What connection disappears when hallway conversations disappear?
- How do we recreate peer learning without requiring identical schedules?

Hybrid leadership: design the connection

- Use purposeful check-ins—not only status requests
- Create regular case consultations and peer learning
- Choose the channel to match the conversation
- Use onsite time intentionally; include remote colleagues equitably

Accountability begins with clarity

- What outcome is expected—and by when?
- Who owns the next step and the handoff?
- What support, authority and resources are needed?
- How will we check progress and address obstacles?

Scenario: the difficult conversation

- An internal applicant was not selected for a position.
- The manager anticipates disappointment and feels uneasy.
- How can the manager communicate the decision with empathy, clarity and accountability?

A second scenario: hybrid friction

- A complex case stalls between teams on different schedules.
- Messages are exchanged, but no one has a shared understanding of ownership.
- What would you change about the conversation, connection and next step?

Your next leadership conversation

- One conversation I need to approach differently…
- One connection I can strengthen intentionally…
- One expectation I can make clearer this week…

Questions & discussion

- Where does communication break down most often?
- What is working across hybrid and onsite teams?
- Which difficult conversation deserves a different approach?

LEAD BEYOND THE WORK

Be clear without being harsh.

Be empathetic without avoiding accountability.

Be connected without micromanaging.

EXPECT GREAT THINGS TO HAPPEN