

Benchmark Personal Philosophy of Leadership and Advocacy Assignment

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General

As I ponder the style of leadership that resonates with me, I reflect on the material I have learned thus far in class. Leadership, as I have perceived it up until recently, was based upon my perception of professors in my upbringing. The educators that poured into me as an undergraduate student and even graduate student, led through a Path-goal approach. There was a goal in sight, and they laid out the plan for me to reach that goal. They never allowed me to waver or detour from that goal, because they were as invested in me, as I was in myself.

This approach had always been extremely effective for me since I am goal oriented. That all changed when I was obtaining my second master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and goals were no longer enough to get me to the other side of the hurdles before me. During this time, I lost my dad and goals were no longer a driving motivator. This was the first time I was led by a leader who took a Behavioral leadership approach. This Counselor Educator never allowed me to give up on the goals I set for myself, held me to a higher standard than anyone else ever had, while being acutely aware of my feelings and emotions during such a difficult time (Chang & Barrio Minton, 2022). This educator pushed me to believe in myself and she is why I am getting my Doctorate degree today.

This one professor completely changed my outlook on Counselor Educators and on leadership altogether. Looking back, I believe there is a time and place for both the Path-Goal and the Behavioral leadership styles. I gravitate to both styles because they were effective for me personally and I know when dealing with students I will need to walk alongside them and support them in the obtaining their goals. At the same time, since I am person centered in all I do, being empathetic to their needs, feelings, and emotions will be important, if they are going to

trust me to help them reach their goals. They will have to know their goals and well-being are important to me. This is the sign of an effective leader.

Impact and Influence

When I dissect my impact and influence today, I realize that I hold more influence than I have given myself credit for. I have not always been comfortable in this space, but I am learning that as a Counselor Educator I will need to grow more in this area for the sake of my students, and my counseling profession. Though I still have a way to go, I have led by example for my classmates. I have led by helping my fellow Doctoral cohorts and taking on the role as main presenter in Conference presentations. I also have led by helping them forge relationships that will foster a mentor/mentee dynamic when I see there are classmates that can benefit from relationships with one another.

I am leading in my role as a Counselor Educator in training, at Liberty University. I have worked as an ambassador at multiple Conferences to further expand the Liberty University name among other Counselor Educators. This has helped me to lead through service for the profession. Lastly, I have begun to lead within areas of other professional organizations. I am beginning to take on roles and responsibilities within Chi Sigma Iota and even beginning to assist in planning Professional Counseling conferences. This is aiding in my ability to expand my skills of leadership for the Counseling Profession. Even though these roles feel overwhelming at times, I recognize that this is necessary if I am going to continue to grow in my leadership and my advocacy.

I believe that these approaches are teaching people to lead my example. Taking on roles that feel weighty and intimidating are sometimes necessary to grow yourself, and the profession forward. I believe I am giving my fellow cohorts the opportunity to lead alongside me to move the profession in a steady progressive motion.

Future Aspirations

For my future role as a Counselor Educator, I intend on continuing to develop my leadership and advocacy by continuing to stretch myself and finding ways to lead for the Counseling profession. I

have recently taken on a role as Treasurer of my chapter of Chi Sigma Iota. Seeing that this is an esteemed Counseling organization, I would at some point like to take on some leadership roles by serving on committees as well. This affords me the opportunity to serve the profession while continuing to learn how to lead. I know that this will be an endeavor that I continue to grow in throughout my career.

The thing that I most look forward to as a Counselor Educator is continuing to learn along with my students. I look forward to building a rapport which allows them the space to feel free to share their vulnerabilities, and me the freedom to support them and share mine, when needed. I look forward to modeling for them as leadership has been modeled for me. I understand now that I do not need to know all the answers, they may ask me, but being willing to find the answers alongside them. This will aid in building relationships and continuing in my own development.

To be the leader and advocate that I hope to be, I recognize certain skills will need to be present to get me to where I am going. Collaboration, empathy, effective communication, strategic planning, and flexibility are the skills I believe will get me to where I need to be in terms of leadership and advocacy. Having the ability to collaborate with other professionals and with other Counselor Educators will assist me in courses, presentation, and writing opportunities. I hope to collaborate with my students, giving them opportunities to write and present in conferences alongside me, helping them gain experience.

I will need to remain empathetic to my students and their experiences along the way to ensure I am remaining sensitive to where they are on their own journey of becoming a counselor. Effective communicative will aid me in every part of leadership, from teaching, to counseling, to pioneering change in advocacy. Being able to communicate my desires, goals, and expectations leaves nothing to chance. Strategic planning skills will aid me in assisting my students through path-goal leadership. This will also help me to remain targeted and structured with my time and schedule, to better meet the needs of my university, my students, and my advocacy. Lastly, remaining flexible will aid me in being able to pivot should life happen. Things will happen on this journey and being able to remain flexible with myself will help me to learn and grow into this new space of leadership and advocacy. This is not a race, but a marathon. I accept the challenge before me and look forward to what lies ahead.

Reference

Chang, C. Y. & Barrio Minton, C. A. (2022). *Professional counseling excellence through leadership and advocacy*. (2). Routledge.