

# **Fostering a Public Service Mindset**



# MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

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Printed in the United States of America.

*Fostering a Public Service Mindset*  
*Course #4710/MCFPS*  
*Version: 22-05-27*

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# Syllabus

# SYLLABUS

## COURSE OVERVIEW

Supervisors are the linchpin between strategy and execution, and the top determinant of employee satisfaction in federal agencies. Yet, they are often unprepared for the demands of their role. This course equips participants with the foundational concepts and skills that allow government supervisors to be successful and enable those they manage to perform to their highest potential.

## Who Takes This Course

This course is designed for professionals seeking to expand their leadership capabilities.

## Learning Objectives

- Analyze the importance of cultivating a public service mindset

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Required Texts

The following required materials will be issued to each participant and will be used throughout the course.

Management Concepts®, *Fostering a Public Service Mindset* © [Includes text, appendices, and handouts.]

Access electronic course materials on Student Central at <https://managementconcepts.csod.com>.

### PARTICIPANT GUIDE ICON KEY



**Discussion**



**Example**



**Refer to Resource**



### Refer to Website



### Tip

These icons are used throughout your Participant Guide. Words that are bolded and italicized appear as terms in the Glossary.

Please note that the page numbers of this Participant Guide differ from the page numbers of the Course Delivery Guide used to conduct this class. This is because the Course Delivery Guide contains additional notes and solutions to exercises. Therefore, section numbers are provided along with topic titles to help navigate the course text.

## Requirements for Successful Completion

### ***Attendance and Participation***

Full (100%) attendance is expected and required. Successful completion of the course depends on full class attendance and active participation in individual and group exercises.

## PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS

Many Management Concepts courses are designed to meet the standards and requirements of leading industry organizations. Participants seeking information regarding earned credentials or recognition, such as college and continuing education credit and professional certification, should refer to the certificate of completion issued at the end of the course.



### Refer to Website

For additional information about credits and certifications available for Management Concepts courses, please visit:

<https://www.managementconcepts.com/Certifications/Professional-Certifications-Training/Certifications-Training>



# Fostering a Public Service Mindset



# MODULE 1

## FOSTERING A PUBLIC SERVICE MINDSET

### Module Objective

- Analyze the importance of cultivating a public service mindset

Unlike the private sector, where the focus is on generating profits and maximizing shareholder value, public-sector organizations maximize the value of taxpayer dollars by providing outstanding service to the American people. For this reason, government employees need a more externally focused mentality when approaching their careers. This commitment to the greater good is at the heart of the public service mindset. This frame of mind allows employees to better execute essential programs and provide necessary assistance to their communities. This mindset also has personal benefits, as public servants feel increased job satisfaction and engagement.



### Discussion

Before starting a career in the federal government, employees are asked to take this Oath of Office:

*I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.*

- Why do federal employees take this oath?
- What does the oath mean to you?
- How does the oath impact your day-to-day activities?

### Lessons

1. Introduction to the Public Service Mindset
2. Maintaining Momentum for Public Service

# LESSON 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE MINDSET

### Lesson Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- 1.1.1 Describe the qualities of effective public servants and how they contribute to the public good

What does it take to be a successful public servant? Effective government employees are able to understand how their roles influence the public good. Selflessness and compassion are inherent in working toward a common interest. These characteristics form the foundation of the public service mindset. When employees are able to commit to this mental framework, they realize personal and professional benefits while better serving the American people.

### 1.1 DEFINING THE PUBLIC SERVICE MINDSET

Many skills, such as critical thinking, effective communication, and time management, are transferable to any professional setting. However, working in a public service role requires additional skills to be successful due to inherent differences between the ultimate goals of private- and public-sector organizations. Instead of maximizing revenue, public-sector organizations try to efficiently spend taxpayer dollars to provide outstanding service to the American people. Instead of answering to shareholders or a board of directors, civil servants are accountable to the general public. For these reasons, public servants need a different mindset when approaching their roles.

To understand what drives success in the public sector, consider these descriptions or definitions of public service motivation or a public service mindset.

James L. Perry, a leader of public administration research, wrote, "Public service motivation is what motivates individuals to choose career paths within the public sector as opposed to the private."<sup>1</sup>

Ryan Undercoffer, author of *The Citizen Guidebook* blog, wrote:<sup>2</sup>

*A person with a public service mindset attaches their well-being to the well-being of their community. In other words, a public servant maintains the mindset that when their community does well, they do well. This means approaching their compensation and job performance from the perspective that success means an improved community.*

Joana O'Riordan, a Research Officer with the Institute of Public Administration (Ireland), wrote:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Perry 1996

<sup>2</sup> Undercoffer 2017

<sup>3</sup> O'Riordan 2013

*The notion that people are motivated to work in the public service as a result of altruism, a desire to serve, or a wish to have an impact on society is a long-standing one. It is closely associated with the idea of public service ethos, which is rooted in an understanding that the public service is different from the private sector, both because of the tasks it performs and the behaviours it expects of its employees.*

These statements provide insight into what is meant by a public service mindset. For the purposes of this module, we will define this term as a professional outlook that taps into the public servant's altruistic motivations and draws strength from living in alignment with their values while producing tangible public benefits.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) uses an Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ) Leadership Model to provide guidance on skills and professional development for aspiring leaders in the federal government. OPM defines Public Service Motivation, one of the six fundamental competencies in the ECQ model, as, "Shows a commitment to serve the public. Ensures that actions meet public needs; aligns organizational objectives and practices with public interests."



#### Refer to Website

For more information on how Public Service Motivation fits into the OPM ECQ model, visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/executive-core-qualifications/#url=Fundamental-Competencies>.

## 1.2 ELEMENTS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE MINDSET

Significant research on the reasons why people choose to pursue public service careers has revealed consistent themes about what attracts people to this line of work. In his model on Public Service Motivation, James Perry outlined six common reasons for working for the federal government:<sup>4</sup>

- **Attraction to policy making.** The ability to shape how laws are created and ethically enforced.
- **Commitment to the public interest.** The desire to contribute to the community and make it a better place.
- **Social justice.** The ability to create a fairer society that provides opportunities to those who lack resources.
- **Civic duty.** A moral commitment to ensuring the rights of the American public.
- **Compassion.** The desire to improve the well-being of others, particularly those who are underprivileged.
- **Self-sacrifice.** The willingness to put societal needs above personal aspirations.



Having an awareness of the Constitution is an important element of the public service mindset

<sup>4</sup> Perry 1996



### Refer to Website

To view Table 1 of a research paper summarizing statements used to measure the different dimensions of Perry's model, visit: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Public-Service-Motivation-Measurement-%3A-A-Test-for-Gan-Li/88e7e5e08298566d8b0677c05925de9a83fa201d>.

## 1.2.1 Mission Valence

### MISSION VALENCE



Mission valence increases when organizational goals are clearly communicated and employees see them as beneficial and achievable

Many people enter public service because of the inherent value they find in doing a job that is socially useful. This concept is known as **mission valence**. Mission valence occurs when an individual's personal values align with the mission and purpose of the organization. When you believe your organization provides benefits to society, you are likely to get more satisfaction out of your individual contributions to these shared outcomes.

## 1.3 BENEFITS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE MINDSET

In "The Professional Public Service Mindset," Ryan Undercoffer wrote:<sup>5</sup>

*There is a simple truth that when we can live one life, rather than compartmentalizing different parts of our day, we experience a peace, clarity, and level of motivation that is absent when we are one person at home and another at work.*

<sup>5</sup> Undercoffer 2017

Incorporating a strong public service mindset:

- Promotes alignment between actions and values
- Increases job satisfaction
- Improves job performance and use of resources
- Produces higher task significance
- Creates a principled framework for making important decisions
- Strengthens commitment to the goals of the organization
- Strengthens sense of belonging with coworkers and the organization

## 1.4 EXERCISE: PUBLIC SERVICE IN THREE WORDS

### Directions

1. Working individually, think of a public servant from your experience for whom you would go the extra mile. Identify a few qualities this person has that influenced your decision.
2. Working in your group, take turns discussing the qualities you identified and determine common characteristics.
3. Choose three words that best describe your exemplar public servants. For each word, provide a definition of what this concept means in practice.
4. Be prepared to share your words and definitions with the class.

### Characteristics of Public Servants

1. What three words and definitions describe your exemplar public servant? What do these concepts mean in practice?

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## 1.5 EXERCISE: PUBLIC SERVICE VIGNETTES

### Directions

1. Watch the vignettes of successful public servants.
2. As you watch, consider:
  - How do these public servants embody the descriptors highlighted in *Exercise: Public Service in Three Words*?
  - Which elements most resonate with your personal motivation for joining the public sector?
3. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

### Notes on Speakers

1. Meroe Park, former Executive Director of the CIA

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2. Felícita Solá-Carter, coach in the Excellence in Government Fellows program

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3. Sally Jewell, former secretary of the Department of Interior

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### Refer to Websites

To access the videos from the Partnership for Public Service, visit:

- Meroe Park: <https://vimeo.com/342122191>
- Felícita Solá-Carter: <https://vimeo.com/238953015>
- Sally Jewell: <https://vimeo.com/317285460>

# LESSON 2

## MAINTAINING MOMENTUM FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

### Lesson Objective

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

#### 1.2.1 Identify leadership strategies that cultivate greater commitment to public service

Working in the federal government can be an immensely rewarding experience, but it can also challenge our resilience. We may have difficulty keeping our broader aspirations in mind when changes in leadership, policies, budgets, and public needs cause priorities to shift. To maintain momentum with the public service mindset, we need to tap into the shared affiliations with fellow public servants. Practicing self-care can help us sustain our commitment to altruism.

### 2.1 SOCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

Our sense of self has both personal and social components. In associating with a certain social group, we define ourselves by the attributes and values of that group. For example, a passionate Red Sox fan might form an immediate bond when meeting another Boston fan, while treating a Yankees fan more coldly. This innate desire to categorize people into groups and develop a sense of attachment is the essence of social identity theory.

Social identity theory is comprised of three basic elements:

- Categorizing people into distinct groups
- Identifying with the characteristics of one specific group
- Comparing the social standing of different groups

Just as we define ourselves by our social groups, we form a similar dynamic with the organizations we work for. When we relate strongly with the mission of an organization, our jobs become who we are rather than what we do. This is known as *organizational identity theory*. The norms, culture, processes, and hierarchies within an organization have a profound impact on how closely we associate it with our personal identities.

People with a high degree of organizational identity:

- Believe the work is important
- Have aligned personal and professional values
- See the organization's success or failure as part of their own
- Stay at an organization for longer periods of time
- Make greater investments of time and attention
- Work more productively and efficiently



## 2.2 INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Just as our behaviors are informed by social and organizational norms, our actions also influence those we work with. Even if you lack formal authority, your commitment to a public service mindset can be inspirational to your colleagues. Reflecting on the question "Who do I want to be at work?" allows us to maximize our impact and align our motivations to those of a community-focused organization.

To be an inspirational public service leader:

- **Walk your talk.** Inspiration is born from consistency of words and actions. Staying true to your commitments and living your espoused values builds trust with your coworkers.
- **Be a role model.** When you first started at your organization, you likely looked around for guidance on how to best fit in. This process of emulation is important to building organizational identity. Be the person that others want to emulate because you do things the right way.
- **Be an active creator of your workplace experience.** Developing a strong organizational identity does not mean blindly accepting everything that occurs in the organization at face value. Many people who employ the "fake it till you make it" approach end up dissatisfied because values are difficult to pretend. Instead, find ways to manifest your values in the work that you do. This can be more easily done in the public sector, where the focus is already on the betterment of society.
- **Stoke the fires of motivation in others.** Find out what motivates those you work with closely by asking them directly. Look for opportunities to build relationships through shared motivations. When others are motivated and engaged, the entire organization benefits.



When others emulate your behavior, you have a greater impact on personal and organizational goals

## 2.3 BUILDING CULTURAL AFFILIATION

Culture is comprised of the often unwritten and unspoken norms that demonstrate the organization's values and beliefs. Culture includes everything from the language people use when interacting to expectations of what to wear to work. The commitment to public service needs to be consistently embedded throughout an organization's culture.

Cultural elements that can be used to create shared affiliation in support of public service include:

- **Unifying symbols and artifacts.** Common images or items that convey meaning or express a shared past.
- **Language.** How employees communicate with one another, both formally and informally.
- **Onboarding procedures.** How employees are introduced to the organization, its processes, and values. This includes informal conversations between employees and social proof of how work is completed.
- **Rituals.** How people congregate, go about their day, celebrate, and use shared space.
- **Recognition.** How employees are acknowledged for their contributions.
- **Mentorship.** How experienced employees provide continuing professional development and guidance.



The onboarding process allows an organization to share its values and mission, and gives experienced employees the chance to model cultural norms

## 2.4 REMAINING RESILIENT

**Resilience** refers to the ability to recover quickly from challenges or adversity. This goes beyond simply weathering the storm or navigating difficult conditions. Resilient leaders are able to thrive and persevere by limiting stress and engaging in practices that focus on long-term success.

Remaining resilient comes down to our ability to find personal balance and maintain a strategic view. Balance prevents us from succumbing to ongoing stress and fatigue by finding ways to replenish our energy levels. A strategic view allows us to keep our composure when individual setbacks derail our plans. Combined, these abilities provide the perspective and forward-thinking approach we need to focus on what is most important to us.

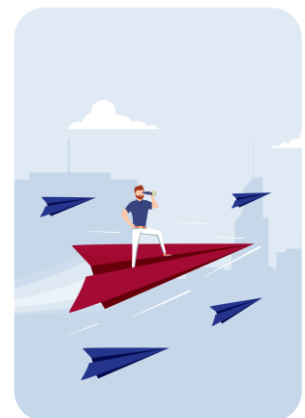
To remain resilient in the face of public sector challenges, consider these strategies.

To maintain balance:

- Practice mindfulness during moments of stress
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle with diet and exercise
- Create a *to be* wishlist with personal aspirations
- Focus on your sense of purpose
- Adapt and be flexible
- Lean on others for support
- Focus on hope
- Address rumination or negative thinking when it first happens
- Build in short mental breaks throughout the day

To take a strategic view:

- Create a list of long-term personal and professional goals and regularly revisit it
- Identify small tasks to create *short-term* wins
- Reflect on what is working and what isn't
- Identify warning signs you may have missed



Taking a strategic view while maintaining your balance will allow you to remain resilient.

- Find partnerships based on shared goals
- Establish what is within your control and focus your attention there

### 2.4.1 Altruism Maintenance

Though many factors can test our resilience, one that frequently appears in the federal government is the Sacrifice Syndrome. According to Boyatzis and McKee, the Sacrifice Syndrome is a challenge that employees face when prioritizing the needs of others over taking care of themselves.<sup>1</sup> Though adopting a service attitude is part of the draw of the public sector, some take on more than they can realistically handle. This leads to feelings of exhaustion, resentment, and cynicism.

**Altruism**, the selfless concern for the well-being of others, is an important principle of the public service mindset. In fact, the commitment to altruism is why many people join the federal government in the first place. Research has consistently shown that despite the selfless nature of altruism, it can be immensely rewarding and motivating to the individual. There is an energizing feeling associated with helping others without expecting anything in return. However, having an external focus does not mean you should ignore your personal and professional needs.

To maintain a healthy focus on altruism in your public service role, consider these strategies:

- Keep sight of your personal values
- Distinguish between interpersonal altruism (helping family, friends, and coworkers) and the mission to serve the public
- Bring others along with you
- Build in personal wellness check-ins



#### Tip: Key Takeaway

Even when circumstances lead to suboptimal results or force you to make difficult decisions, there is power in remaining true to your values. When workplace situations challenge your resilience, the public service mindset keeps you focused on what you want to achieve and why.

<sup>1</sup> Boyatzis and McKee 2005

## 2.5 EXERCISE: KEEPING MOMENTUM FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

### Directions

1. Working in your group, review your assigned scenario.
2. Answer the following questions:
  - What elements of the public service mindset are most relevant to this scenario?
  - How can you apply your values and maintain momentum, both personally and within the organization, to create better public service outcomes?
3. Be prepared to discuss your responses with the class.



#### Scenario 1

Isabella, an experienced public servant who is new to your functional group, has received an inquiry from the agency director regarding policies that guide the work of your team. She asks for guidance from other team members before replying because she feels that the inquiry suggests an opportunity to better address services in the community. You overhear your peers dismissively tell her that "it isn't how things work around here."



#### Scenario 2

Clark, your supervisor, forwards a solicitation to all members of your team. He is looking for a volunteer to work on a cross-functional team that will create policies for a new program you are passionate about. However, this work will be in addition to your normal responsibilities, and Clark has repeatedly mentioned in team meetings that everyone is under a microscope to meet quarterly goals. You feel like this work would be a great opportunity, but you already feel overworked with your current projects.



#### Scenario 3

Your division just received its budget for the new fiscal year and funding was reduced for a program that you administer. This program is very important to the public and provides essential services to some of the community's most disadvantaged people. Unfortunately, the new budget seems destined to reduce the effectiveness of your program.

### Questions

1. What elements of the public service mindset are most relevant to this scenario?

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2. How can you apply your values and maintain momentum, both personally and within the organization, to create better public service outcomes?

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## Action Planning

Refer to the Action Plan and record ideas to implement from this module.



# Action Plan

# RESOURCE A

## ACTION PLAN

### OVERVIEW

Participating in a training course is only the first step to mastering a discipline. In order for your learning to continue, it is important that you put the tools and techniques presented in this course into action.

### PART I: KEY LEARNING POINTS

At the end of each module or lesson, time is allotted for you to document ideas that you want to remember.

Module/Lesson Title	Key Learning Points



Module/Lesson Title	Key Learning Points

Module/Lesson Title	Key Learning Points

## PART II: ON THE JOB

Review your key learning points and select three to five that you want to implement when you return to your job.

Use the table provided on the next page to:

- Prioritize your implementation items
- Write a **SMART** objective for each item
  - **S**pecific
  - **M**easurable
  - **A**ttainable
  - **R**ealistic
  - **T**ime-bound
- Identify the content that supports your objectives
- Document your strategy to achieve your objective
- Set a due date for achievement

Once back on the job, post this action plan in a visible location to remain focused on the completion of these goals.

## ACTION PLAN

Priority	Objective	Supporting Content	Strategy	Due
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				



# Presentation Slides

# **RESOURCE B**

## **PRESENTATION SLIDES**

## Fostering a Public Service Mindset

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## Course Objective

- ✓ Analyze the importance of cultivating a public service mindset

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## Fostering a Public Service Mindset

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Module Objective

✓ Analyze the importance of cultivating a public service mindset

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Discussion

Before starting a career in the federal government, employees are asked to take this Oath of Office:

*I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.*

- Why do federal employees take this oath?
- What does the oath mean to you?
- How does the oath impact your day-to-day activities?

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Introduction to the Public Service Mindset

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

✓ Describe the qualities of effective public servants and how they contribute to the public good

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## Defining the Public Service Mindset

- James L. Perry, leader of public administration research: "Public service motivation is what motivates individuals to choose career paths within the public sector as opposed to the private"
- Ryan Undercoffer, author of *The Citizen Guidebook* blog: "A person with a public service mindset attaches their well-being to the well-being of their community ..."
- Joana O'Riordan, Institute of Public Administration (Ireland): "The notion that people are motivated to work in the public service as a result of altruism, a desire to serve, or a wish to have an impact on society is a long-standing one"
- Our definition: A professional outlook that taps into the public servant's altruistic motivations and draws strength from living in alignment with their values while producing tangible public benefits

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## Our Definition of Public Service Mindset

Professional outlook that taps into the public servant's altruistic motivations and draws strength from living in alignment with their values while producing tangible public benefits

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## Elements of the Public Service Mindset

- Attraction to policy making
- Commitment to the public interest
- Social justice
- Civic duty
- Compassion
- Self-sacrifice



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## Mission Valence



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## Benefits of the Public Service Mindset

- Promotes alignment between actions and values
- Increases job satisfaction
- Improves job performance and use of resources
- Produces higher task significance
- Creates a principled framework for making important decisions
- Strengthens commitment to the goals of the organization
- Strengthens sense of belonging

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## Exercise: Public Service in Three Words

### Directions

1. Working individually, think of a public servant from your experience for whom you would go the extra mile. Identify a few qualities this person has that influenced your decision.
2. Working in your group, take turns discussing the qualities you identified and determine common characteristics.
3. Choose three words that best describe your exemplar public servants. For each word, provide a definition of what this concept means in practice.
4. Be prepared to share your words and definitions with the class.

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### Exercise: Public Service Vignettes

#### Directions

1. Watch the vignettes of successful public servants.
2. As you watch, consider:
  - How do these public servants embody the descriptors highlighted in *Exercise: Public Service in Three Words*?
  - Which elements most resonate with your personal motivation for joining the public sector?
3. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

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### Maintaining Momentum for Public Service

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ✓ Identify leadership strategies that cultivate greater commitment to public service

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### Social and Organizational Identity

People with a high degree of organizational identity:

- Believe the work is important
- Have aligned personal and professional values
- See the organization's success or failure as part of their own
- Stay at an organization for longer periods of time
- Make greater investments of time and attention
- Work more productively and efficiently

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### Social Identity Theory

Comprised of three basic elements:

- 1. Categorizing** people into distinct groups
- 2. Identifying** with the characteristics of one specific group
- 3. Comparing** the social standing of different groups

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### Inspirational Leadership Qualities

- Walk your talk
- Be a role model
- Be an active creator of your workplace experience
- Stoke the fires of motivation in others



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### Building Cultural Affiliation

- Unifying symbols and artifacts
- Language
- Onboarding procedures
- Rituals
- Recognition
- Mentorship



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### Maintaining Balance

- Practice mindfulness
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Create a *to be* wishlist
- Focus on your sense of purpose
- Adapt and be flexible
- Lean on others for support
- Focus on hope
- Address rumination or negative thinking
- Build in short mental breaks throughout the day

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### Taking a Strategic View

- Create a list of long-term goals and regularly revisit it
- Identify small tasks to create *short-term* wins
- Reflect on what is working and what isn't
- Identify warning signs you may have missed
- Find partnerships based on shared goals
- Establish what is within your control and focus your attention there

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### Altruism Maintenance



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**Exercise: Keeping Momentum for Public Service**

**Directions**

1. Working in your group, review your assigned scenario.
2. Answer the following questions:
  - What elements of the public service mindset are most relevant to this scenario?
  - How can you apply your values and maintain momentum, both personally and within the organization, to create better public service outcomes?
3. Be prepared to discuss your responses with the class.

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