

CONNECTION PIVOT | BELONGING DURING TOUGH TIMES

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following scenario, then answer the discussion questions.

Setting & Context

The organization was facing financial difficulties, and a meeting was called to discuss potential layoffs and downsizing. Two leaders, Alexia and Jordan, were chosen to co-facilitate this crucial strategy meeting with their team.

The Meeting Begins

Alexia stepped forward first, radiating warmth and empathy. "Welcome everyone. I know this is a difficult time for all of us, and I'm here to listen and support you. Let's make sure everyone has a chance to share their thoughts and concerns," Alexia said.

Jordan, on the other hand, was all business. "Good afternoon. We have a lot to cover, so let's get straight to the agenda. We need to finalize tasks and deadlines," Jordan announced.

Encouraging Contributions

As the discussion progressed, Alexia made a point to invite input from all team members. "I know we have a lot of expertise in this room. I'd love to hear from each of you about how we can navigate these challenges together. Let's start with some brainstorming," Alexia encouraged, ensuring that even the quieter members felt comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Jordan, however, focused on efficiency. "James, you're in charge of data analysis. Make sure it's done by next Friday. Everyone else, follow the instructions in the email I sent," Jordan directed, assigning tasks without seeking input or feedback.

Supporting the Team

Alexia noticed the unique skills of team members and highlighted them. "I noticed that some of you have unique skills that could really benefit us during this time. For example, James, your experience with data analysis could be crucial. How do you feel about leading that part?" Alexia asked.

Jordan, meanwhile, stressed the importance of sticking to the plan. "We need to be efficient and stick to the plan. If you have any issues, let me know, but let's keep things moving," Jordan said.

Ensuring Fairness

Alexia promoted fairness by asking if anyone needed additional support or resources. "Let's make sure everyone has equal access to resources and opportunities. If anyone feels they need additional support or tools, please let me know," Alexia offered.

Jordan offered limited interaction. "I'll be checking in periodically to ensure progress. If you need anything, send me an email. Let's stay focused on our goals," Jordan instructed.

Sharing Decisions

Finally, Alexia involved the team in decision-making processes. "I'd like us to make decisions together. Let's vote on the key milestones and timelines. Your input is valuable and will shape our approach," Alexia proposed.

Jordan, however, outlined the key milestones and timelines without involving the team. "I've already outlined the key milestones and timelines. Follow the plan and report back with updates," Jordan directed.

Demonstrating Vulnerability

Alexia took a deep breath and shared their own concerns. "I want to be honest with you all. I'm worried about the impact these layoffs might have on our team and our morale. I've made mistakes in the past, and I'm committed to learning from them and supporting each of you through this process. Please share your thoughts and feelings with me," Alexia said.

Jordan, however, maintained a transactional approach. "We need to focus on the tasks at hand. If you have any concerns, address them after the meeting. Let's stay on track," Jordan said.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How was a sense of belonging demonstrated by Alexia and/or Jordan?
2. How did Alexia vs Jordan's approach impact the team's motivation and engagement during a difficult time?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of Jordan's leadership style in this context?
4. How might the team dynamics change if both leaders adopted transformative relationship practices?
5. What specific actions can leaders take to balance efficiency with belonging and vulnerability?
6. If you and a colleague were to be given the task to co-facilitate this crucial strategy meeting with their team amid companywide layoffs and downsizing, how would you structure and approach the meeting? When, where, and why would you engage in transformative vs transactional practices?