



GIVING TO THE GROUP

Shared Leadership

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS



Everyone Has Something Meaningful to Contribute

When we think about leadership, we often imagine someone standing at the front of a room, giving instructions, organizing activities, or making decisions.

But leadership can take many forms

Sometimes leadership looks like:

- welcoming someone new
- offering encouragement
- sharing an idea
- helping set up equipment
- inviting someone into a conversation
- noticing when someone is being left out
- helping everyone have a chance to participate

These contributions may seem small, but they help shape the entire experience. Movement communities do not thrive because of one leader. They thrive because many people contribute. Every participant brings something of value. You do not need special skills, experience, or authority to influence a group in positive ways.

Every time you:

- encourage another person
- share a smile
- offer support
- help someone participate
- contribute an idea
- make space for others

you are helping create an environment where people feel welcome and included



Everyone Has Something Meaningful to Contribute

As Leon, one participant in our InterActive for Life research shared:

I like to play. And I encourage people to play. I try and get people not to hit it directly back. It is a much better game when people are paying attention. Every 20 minutes I try to get people to move around because the ball basically stays in the center. People on the edges don't get so much action, so every 20 minutes people on the edge sit in the centre and people in the front sit in the back. It's more interesting to be playing than watching.

Leon was not simply participating in the game.
He was helping others participate too.

InterActive for Life Reflection

Giving to the group does not mean taking over.

It means contributing.

Sometimes we lead.

Sometimes we support.

Sometimes we encourage.

Sometimes we simply show up consistently.

The question is not:

"Am I the leader?"

The question is:

"What can I contribute?"

Challenge

The next time you participate in a movement activity, ask yourself:

"What can I give to this group today?"

And remember:

It could be as simple as a smile, a greeting, an encouraging word, or helping someone feel included.

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

1

Notice Who Already Leads

Leadership appears in many forms.

Observe:

- Who welcomes newcomers?
- Who encourages others?
- Who helps with setup?
- Who shares ideas?
- Who supports group participation?

Reflection

How can these contributions be recognized?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

2 Share Responsibility

Look for opportunities to involve participants.

Examples:

- choosing music
- leading a warm-up
- demonstrating movements
- helping organize equipment
- welcoming newcomers
- facilitating small group discussions

Challenge

Create one new opportunity for participant leadership this week.



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

3 Rotate Opportunities and Roles

Sometimes the same individuals always participate in the same way. A healthy group creates opportunities for people to contribute in different ways.

Challenge

Ask yourself:

"What roles are available in this activity?"

For example, participants might contribute as:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ a question asker | ☐ a safety checker |
| ☐ a listener | ☐ an equipment manager |
| ☐ an encourager | ☐ a partner |
| ☐ a problem-solver | ☐ a team leader |
| ☐ a demonstrator | ☐ a note taker |
| ☐ an observer | ☐ a rule reminder |
| ☐ a coach | ☐ a scorekeeper |
| ☐ a helper | ☐ a referee |

Not everyone needs to contribute by speaking the most or leading the group.

Different roles allow different strengths to emerge.

TIP

For example:

- ☐ one person asks questions
- ☐ one person shares examples
- ☐ one person builds on ideas
- ☐ one person challenges thinking respectfully
- ☐ one person summarizes key points



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

3 Rotate Opportunities and Roles

In movement activities, participants might rotate helping with:

- ☐ setup
- ☐ demonstrations
- ☐ encouragement
- ☐ equipment
- ☐ safety checks
- ☐ welcoming newcomers

Rotating roles helps more people feel valued, capable, and involved.

Reflection

- Which roles appeared naturally in today's activity?
- Whose contribution did I notice that might otherwise have been overlooked?
- What role would I like to try next time?



InterActive for Life Reminder

Participation is more than speaking.

People contribute through their actions, attention, encouragement, ideas, leadership, curiosity, and support. The goal is not for everyone to participate in the same way.

The goal is for everyone to have a meaningful way to contribute.

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

4

Celebrate Contribution, Not Just Performance

Pay attention to what gets recognized.

Do participants only receive praise for:

- skill?
- effort?
- performance?

Or do they also receive recognition for:

- welcoming others?
- helping the group?
- sharing ideas?
- supporting participation?
- creating inclusion?

Inclusive Praise Examples:

- ✓ "Thank you for helping everyone feel welcome."
- ✓ "That was a thoughtful idea."
- ✓ "I appreciate how you supported your partner."
- ✓ "You helped create a positive experience."
- ✓ "Thank you for sharing your leadership."
- ✓ "Your contribution made a difference today."

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

5

Create Multiple Leadership Roles

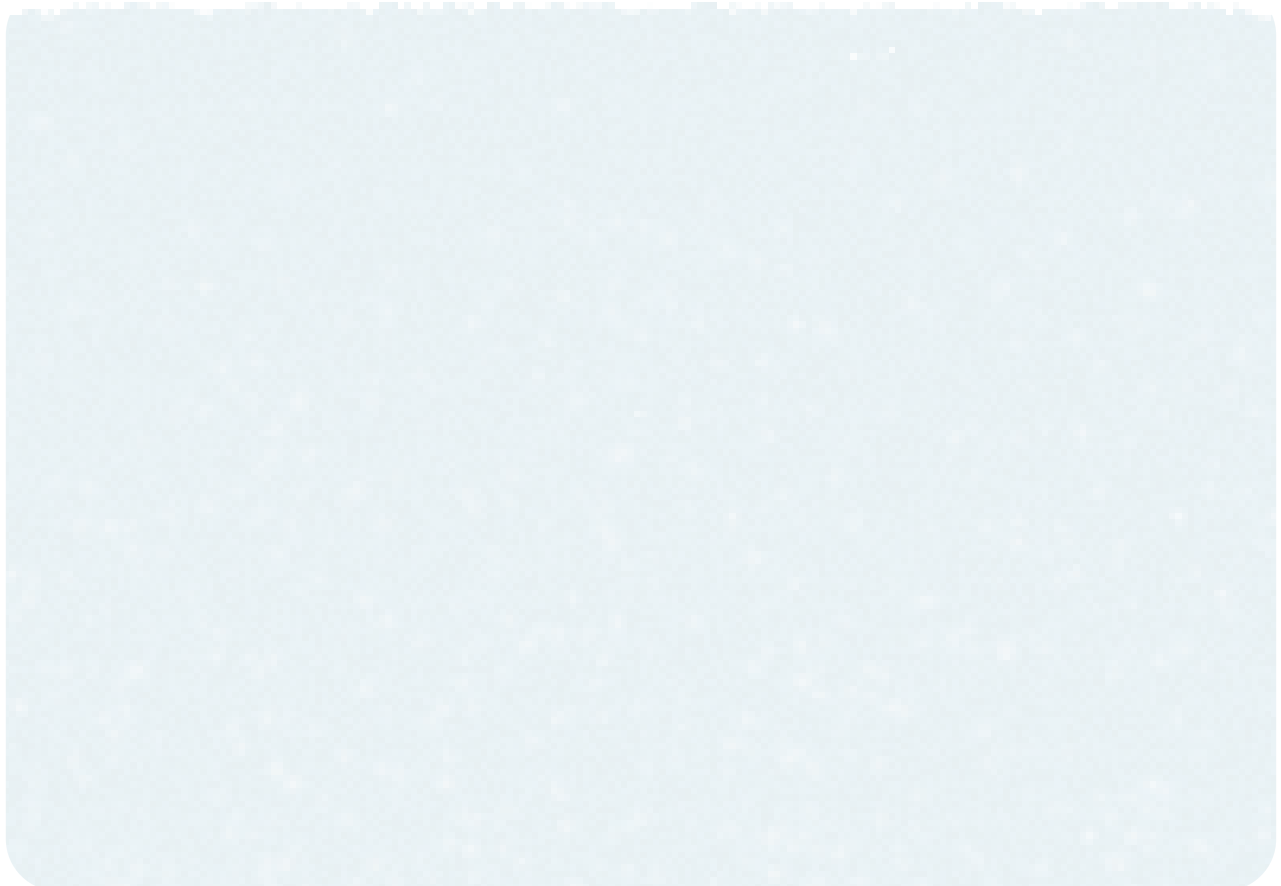
Not everyone wants to lead in the same way.

Offer opportunities for:

- organizing
- supporting
- teaching
- mentoring
- welcoming
- problem-solving
- encouraging

Reflection

Can every participant find a meaningful way to contribute?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE SHARED LEADERSHIP

6 Shared Leadership Audit

Observe your next session.

Ask:

- Who contributes?
- How do they contribute?
- Who feels ownership?
- Who remains passive?
- What barriers prevent participation?

Reflection

How can more people experience contributing?

7 My Role in the Group

Often small contributions have large impacts.

Ask participants:

"Who helped make today's experience enjoyable?"

Challenge

Pay attention to how often the answer involves another participant.



Instructor Tips

FOR SHARED LEADERSHIP

Tip #1: Leadership Is a Skill That Can Be Developed

Most people grow into leadership through opportunities and encouragement.

Tip #2: Contribution Creates Ownership

People are more likely to care about experiences they help shape.

Tip #3: There Are Many Ways to Lead

Leadership can be visible or quiet, formal or informal.

Tip #4: Shared Leadership Strengthens Groups

The more people contribute, the more resilient and connected a community becomes.

Tip #5: Recognize Contributions Often

People repeat behaviours that are noticed and appreciated.



InterActive For Life

REMINDER

Every movement community is built through contributions.
 Every welcoming gesture.
 Every encouraging word.
 Every shared idea.
 Every act of support.
 These are movements of leadership.

Key Takeaway

Leadership is not about being in charge.

Leadership is about helping others belong, participate, and succeed.

When people contribute to a group, movement becomes more than an individual experience.
 It becomes something we build together.

Congratulations!

You have explored ways to:

- ✓ Contribute to the success of a group
- ✓ Recognize your own leadership strengths
- ✓ Support and encourage others
- ✓ Create opportunities for belonging
- ✓ Share responsibility and ownership
- ✓ Strengthen movement communities

InterActive for Life Reminder

NOTICE. CONTRIBUTE. BELONG.

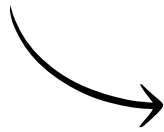
Share your strengths.
 Welcome others.
 Offer encouragement.
 Help people participate.
 Build the experience together.
 Everyone has something valuable to give.





Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity participants](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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