

## 20 Ways for Advocacy Staff to Develop Leadership Skills

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*Whether or not there is a formal career ladder within your community sexual assault agency, there are ways that executive directors and program managers can help other staff members to develop their leadership skills, for the benefit of the agency and the individual. Start by meeting individually with the staff member to discuss his or her strengths, challenges, and professional development goals. Then together, you can decide on some of the following activities or create other opportunities that work in your setting. These activities cover a range of difficulty and some will work for either advocates or administrative staff members. As people choose an activity, have them write a description of their role in the style of a resume item, so they can see how the activity enhances their experience and skill set. Most of these activities require buy-in and support from you and the agency, but few of them have costs other than staff time, and most of them will enhance the services you are able to provide. These activities are written as action steps which staff members can complete.*

1. Conduct a “brown bag” lunch training for other staff members, at which you share information from a training you have recently attended.
2. Take a turn facilitating an internal meeting, such as a staff meeting or a case conference. Work with your supervisor on developing facilitation skills.
3. Represent the agency at an external meeting or become the agency representative on a committee or task force in the community.
4. Lead a project or part of a project:
  - a. Coordinate some aspects of accreditation preparation
  - b. Develop a draft social media policy for the agency
  - c. Maintain the agency Facebook page or Twitter account
  - d. Conduct an assessment of the accessibility of the agency’s premises for individuals with various accessibility challenges, in consultation with community partners
5. Create a resource for the agency (such as a prevention curriculum) and a plan for how to use the resource.
6. Conduct a needs assessment regarding a particular topic with community members, service providers, or clients, as appropriate. Use online education sources or supervision to learn the necessary skills for to conduct a needs assessment.
7. Take on the leadership for implementing a specific item on the agency’s strategic plan.
8. Search for an appropriate grant, coordinate the grant application project, and work with community partners on applying for the grant.
9. Supervise another staff member on a specific project such as conducting a support group, or supervise interns or volunteers for the agency. Receive guidance from your own supervisor on these supervision activities.

10. Revamp and organize a process, resource, or system that is not working well for the agency or is outdated, such as a filing system, intake forms, agency handouts or brochures, or the agency resource list.
11. Develop a cross-training with one or more community system partners, such as law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or Adult Protective Services.
12. Attend “train-the-trainer” training on a particular topic and then offer a workshop to other staff members or service providers.
13. Make an agency priority list with the whole staff, and then have each staff member choose one priority, brainstorm ways to advance that issue, and lead certain activities to make progress.
14. Organize and participate in a regular inservice leadership training group, which can be an informal self-study and discussion group or a more formalized training group with guest speakers and a curriculum.
15. Participate in leadership training within the community, through other nonprofits or university programs, if available.
16. Identify topics on which you have expertise through personal experience, cultural affiliation, or professional training) and develop a plan to share that expertise within your agency.
17. Identify a topic on which you would like to develop expertise, and work with your supervisor to create a step-by-step plan for obtaining skills and knowledge.
18. Take a leadership role regarding the often-ignored self-care needs within the agency. You can chair a Fun Committee, look up self-care strategies and share them with other staff members, or advocate for self-care resources such as a quiet area for staff to sit and de-stress.
19. Serve as a liaison to another agency (such as community mental health) by visiting with them on a quarterly basis, providing agency information to them, and bringing information about their staff and services back to your agency.
20. Formalize your role as the “go-to” person on a particular topic by asking for an informal title such as “technology coordinator” or “resource specialist,” if your agency has this flexibility.