

## Characteristics of a Community Leader

### What is a community leader?

A community leader's role is not to take on all the problems of the world themselves and fix everything, but rather to work together with everyone in the community, to mobilise and guide others, to facilitate solutions and think about the long-term health of the community and its people.

### Who can be a community leader?

Anyone can be a community leader, regardless of whether you're part of a community group or a community-minded individual. Either way, being an effective leader is essential to making positive change in the community. While there are many ways to successfully lead, there are a few common characteristics amongst the most successful community leaders. These are summarised below.

Skill	What this looks like
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to mediate and negotiate.</li> <li>• Active listening.</li> <li>• Able to work comfortably with other leaders and different types of people to create a productive space.</li> <li>• Ability to effectively convey what needs to be done effectively and why.</li> <li>• Persuade others to work with you and address a range of opinions and personalities.</li> </ul>
<b>Empathy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to sense other people's feelings without them being openly articulated.</li> <li>• People feel cared for, supported, and valued.</li> <li>• Able to effectively motivate and inspire individuals.</li> <li>• Validation of viewpoints of all parties involved in a situation.</li> </ul>
<b>Honesty and integrity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People view you as trustworthy.</li> <li>• Mutual respect.</li> <li>• Easier to inspire and engage others.</li> <li>• Creates a productive space to facilitate discussions and make change.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Work as a team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to get people to work together toward a common goal.</li> <li>• Recognise that one person can't do it all.</li> <li>• Leverage the unique skills and expertise of people.</li> <li>• Able to mediate conflict.</li> <li>• People feel that they are making a meaningful contribution.</li> <li>• Where possible involve others in decisions that will affect them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lead by example</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work alongside people, not from above (top-down).</li> <li>• Demonstrates your expectations for other's behaviour.</li> <li>• Wherever possible participate in any tasks that you ask others to do.</li> <li>• Behave and contribute in the way you expect others to.</li> <li>• Don't take special privileges that others don't already get.</li> <li>• Occasionally take part in some of the tasks that others are usually responsible for.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adaptable</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware of external factors that might influence the group.</li> <li>• Proactively consider ways to adapt operations.</li> <li>• Find the positives in change.</li> <li>• Acknowledge that adapting to change can be challenging for many people.</li> <li>• Clearly communicate what adapting will involve.</li> <li>• Check-in with people to see how they're coping.</li> </ul>

## Additional support

The Wanneroo Community Toolkit ([www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/communitytoolkit](http://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/communitytoolkit)) contains a range of templates, information, and resources to help your community group to thrive.