



Leading from the ground up

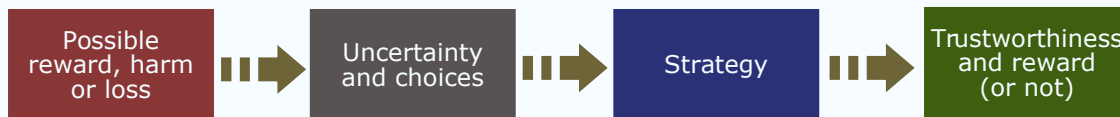


For new or renewing leaders

Building and sustaining trust

Trust is choosing to believe that the capability, good will, and integrity of another person, group, or institution, will lead them to act in a way that is beneficial to you rather than harmful. Trusting relationships can grow or be lost, so the challenge for leaders is to act and guide others to nurture trust.

Dynamics of trust



The option to trust arises when there is a possible reward or harm from trusting another. The uncertainty about what might happen implies a risk. Trust requires a strategy that matches how trustworthy the other person or group is. This strategy can lead to the reward and increased trust in the other, or it can result in a harm and a downgrading of trust.

Building on and repairing the foundations of trust

Researchers identify various foundations that trust is built on. Here are three of the most common. For each of them, some ways to build trust are noted. Also, since trust is frequently injured, there are some options for repairing it. Repair efforts are helped if you know which trust foundations were harmed so you can develop matching repair pathways.

Ability

To trust someone we need confidence that they have the ability to do what is expected.

Trust building

Create opportunities for people to develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills and capability in the areas that need trust.

Trust repair

Acknowledge the shortfall. Work to repair the harm. Work with people to identify the competency issues. Set up a path to develop the competency. Provide a safety mechanism for when this competency is next used. Check results, help the learning process, and give praise for the change.

Benevolence

Trust requires confidence that people are motivated to act positively towards us, not harmfully.

Trust building

Encourage people to provide support to others, giving time and attention to help each other along. Uphold positive values.

Trust repair

Acknowledge the hurt and disappointment. Work to help people recover. Explore with people the motivations and mistaken assumptions. Create opportunities to demonstrate ongoing positive regard and care. Provide a feedback process to ensure actions have a positive effect.

Integrity

Confidence in people's reliability, honesty and willingness to treat us fairly is needed for trust.

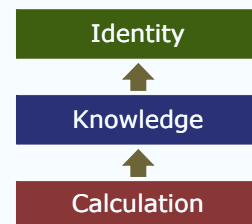
Trust building

Build a culture where it is normal to match words with actions. Ensure there are ethical practices in processes and decisions.

Trust repair

Integrity is the hardest foundation to repair. Acknowledge the lapse and resulting mistrust. Identify how things stand. Work together to clarify the values involved and how they can be restored. Implement a transparent action path to restore the values and confirm that this is happening.

Choosing to trust



When we are unfamiliar with the other or the situation, we make calculations about the benefits and risks of trusting.

As we gain experience of them, we use our knowledge of their trustworthiness.

Once we have built up sufficient confidence in them, we identify them as trustworthy.

Reputation matters. Nurses are one of the most trusted occupations. It has become part of their identity.

If the experience of working in your organisation is positive, you may find you trust other people simply because of their identity as part of the same organisation.

Trust levels vary within a team. Focus not only on the level of trust but also how widely it is shared.

The neural impacts of happiness and stress



Positive experiences help produce oxytocin, which promotes trusting behaviour. Show care, give recognition, and engage in achievable challenges.



Stressful experiences trigger testosterone, which promotes mistrusting behaviour. Avoid domineering and threatening practices.

