CHARLES AND LYNN
SCHUSTERMAN
FAMILY FOUNDATION

**Rockwood
Leadership
Institute**

A GUIDE TO BUILDING A **SUCCESSFUL** LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Empower
Change
Transform

Schusterman Fellowship

The Schusterman Fellowship, an initiative of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, is a global leadership development program for individuals who are committed to growing their capacity to exercise leadership in the Jewish community. It is designed to help strengthen a global Jewish ecosystem by investing in exceptional professionals capable of building highly effective organizations and attracting the best and brightest talent at all levels.

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Rockwood Leadership Institute

Rockwood was founded in 2000 to fill a specific niche within the social change movement by providing powerful and effective training in leadership and collaboration to nonprofit and philanthropic leaders, organizations and policy-change networks. Today, Rockwood has more than 6,000 alumni (of which 68% are women and 52% people of color), making it the nation's largest, most diverse provider of multi-day leadership trainings for the nonprofit community.

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Written by Alison Spasser

First Thing's First

The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Rockwood Leadership Institute recently embarked on a journey to learn about the effectiveness of our flagship fellowship programs.

We each independently collaborated with the research firm Learning For Action to take a deep dive into the Schusterman Fellowship and Rockwood's successes and shortcomings.

Naturally, we were a little nervous about what we might discover. Did our program curricula strike the right balance between conceptual and experiential learning? Did our participants feel equipped to make a difference in their fields? Had our efforts paid off in tangible ways?

The findings from both evaluations illuminated the areas in which our programs are succeeding, which you will read more about in this guide.

But the results also forced us to be vulnerable and face, head-on, the areas in which we could improve. Since the evaluation, both the Schusterman and the Rockwood teams have been working to strengthen our programs based on the findings.

As we engaged in this work, we realized that we could learn from each other's experience and from others in the leadership and talent field. In that spirit, we collaborated to find the common threads in our evaluations.

This guide is a collection of five findings supported by both evaluations, along with illustrative stories and examples that we hope make them more concrete and actionable. It is not necessarily a reflection of everything we have gotten right, but rather the most essential elements of what makes our programs effective—a distinction we feel is important to note.

So what improvements have we made since these evaluations?

The Schusterman team is taking significant steps to increase racial, ethnic and geographic diversity within cohorts. We are also developing ways to help Fellows bring their learnings to the workplace and follow through on their real-world plans to bring change to their sectors and communities.

Rockwood Leadership Institute is investing in alum engagement by hosting local gatherings and increasing our presence at conferences and events. We're also exploring new locations and models for our programs to help more people and organizations take advantage of our curriculum.

We certainly don't have everything figured out, but we sincerely hope that you can glean helpful information from our experiences to maximize the effectiveness of your leadership and talent initiatives.

Let's get started!

Empower Leaders. Change Organizations.

Transform Your Sector.

Sounds like a tall order. But if you are looking to build a cutting-edge leadership development program, chances are you already have your eyes set on achieving lasting progress in your field...and you recognize that it all starts with shaping strong, talented leaders.

But what does that actually mean in practice? What will it take in time, resources and people power to spark change in your sector? What curricular components will inspire personal and professional growth in your participants? How can you help these leaders share their struggles and forge meaningful relationships? How can you ensure your program's impact lasts well beyond its conclusion?

Without a solid foundation of research to build on, answering the questions above can be overwhelming. And unfortunately, little evaluation exists in the leadership field to guide your decision-making.

To help fill this void, we decided to assess the leadership programs at our respective organizations—the Rockwood Learning Institute (Rockwood) and the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation—and get to the bottom of what works and what doesn't.

Rockwood and the Schusterman Fellowship are committed to creating leadership development experiences grounded in diversity, equity and inclusion because we believe these values are critical to developing successful leaders. Rockwood has been a pioneer in this space, and Schusterman is learning from Rockwood's deep experience building cohorts that reflect the full spectrum of diversity—including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability—to represent our communities at large. While we do not include strategies for building diverse cohorts and equitable programs in this guide, we provide resources for exploration on page 29.

Now, we want to share the findings with you.
Rockwood and the Schusterman Family Foundation enlisted the help of Learning for Action (LFA), a strategic evaluation group that partners with social change organizations to assess programs, identify areas for growth and chart a course to a longer-term organizational impact. LFA took a deep dive into both Rockwood's leadership programs and the Schusterman Fellowship, gleaning valuable insights from program alumni through comprehensive surveys and wide-ranging interviews.

LFA's in-depth analyses illuminated areas for improvement within our programs—but they also highlighted key successes that demonstrate the effectiveness of the leadership development models employed by the Schusterman and Rockwood Fellowships. According to the program surveys:

- **94%** of Schusterman Fellows report an increase in professional responsibilities, and nearly half have received promotions since the conclusion of the program. Furthermore, **100%** of Fellows say their new peer network is one that supports and enhances their personal and professional growth.[1] **Read More »**

- **98%** of Rockwood Fellows say they now deal more effectively with leadership challenges, and **90%** report that the program had a transformative impact on their lives. LFA also found that **87%** of Rockwood Fellows said they now have a clearer vision for their work.[2] **Read More »**

In this resource, you will find our learnings distilled into **five key recommendations** designed to help you achieve similar success, all while shaping and supporting leaders as they tackle the challenges facing your field.

Key Recommendations

Set the Stage for Vulnerability

Before you can help your participants hone their skills, you have to set the right tone to help them share struggles, illuminate strengths and embrace vulnerability.

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Focus on Emotional Intelligence

For leaders aspiring to make a difference, looking forward requires looking inward—and that means focusing on qualities that rarely get the spotlight in professional development programs: mental, emotional and spiritual awareness.

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Be Intentional About Relationship-Building

Your participants have diverse backgrounds and hectic schedules, which means you will have to be intentional about providing ample opportunities to connect, forge bonds and learn from one another.

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Design the Right Coaching Experience

Most leadership programs use coaching to help participants strengthen their skills. But creating quality coaching experiences can be complicated and costly, and not all approaches are created equal.

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Encourage Sector and Cross-Sector Collaboration

If your program is going to help address the sector-wide challenges that inspired its creation in the first place, you will need to show your participants the value of working together.

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Set the Stage for Vulnerability

Paving the way for growth means breaking down barriers and building up trust.

This may sound familiar: You have taken time out of your busy schedule to attend a professional development event, eager to learn from contemporaries in your field. While you may glean some useful tips and tricks, when the time comes to dive into the issues that matter, you hesitate. Is it safe to challenge someone else's viewpoint? Are you comfortable enough to admit a professional weakness to a room full of experienced peers?

If that scenario rings a bell, you know firsthand the frustration participants feel when a development opportunity fails to deliver. Now that you are building your own program for high potential leaders, it is up to you to ensure that your participants can be vulnerable (and therefore, honest) in discussing their strengths and struggles—with both program faculty and each other.

When building an effective leadership program, it is important to lay the groundwork for participants to forge strong bonds—without it, efforts to engage them on a deeper level will fall short. Devoting organizational resources to creating an environment where it is okay to admit failures, express fears, ask questions and engage in constructive debate is critical to achieving tangible results during and after the program.

Embracing vulnerability can pay dividends. One Schusterman Fellowship participant said, "I am so much more self-aware. I know my strengths and weaknesses, and I am very comfortable speaking about things I am struggling with to my boss. I feel like I can be vulnerable and that vulnerability feels like a source of strength."

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94% of participants in Rockwood leadership trainings said that they are more willing to have a "courageous conversation" as a result of the program. Said one alum, "It was a very vivid experience to see the improvement in confidence and happiness and centeredness among people in my cohort from retreat to retreat. We really opened up to one another and shared our challenges in the first retreat. By the second retreat, at the opening circle, everyone was standing taller and was more confident in their leadership."

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While embracing vulnerability means stripping away barriers and baring insecurities, the intended result is increased confidence in one's abilities and potential. One Schusterman Fellow referred to his increased self-belief as "quieting his imposter," a reference to imposter syndrome, a common phenomenon in which individuals—no matter how much they achieve—fear that they are not as skilled or knowledgeable as others think they are and that any slip-up will expose them as frauds.

Strategies to Encourage Vulnerability

When developing your approach, consider these six strategies to enable vulnerability and build trust:

START EARLY. Dedicate time at the beginning of your program to getting everyone together in person—an especially important undertaking if participants are geographically diverse and cannot meet regularly.

BE ROLE MODELS. Trust starts at the top. If vulnerability is the goal, program faculty should be willing to be vulnerable, too. Join group discussions, address common concerns up front and show participants that it is okay to let their guards down.

SET THE TONE. A little bit of structure goes a long way. Before participants dive into the substance of the gathering, help them establish a mutually agreed-upon set of guidelines, or "agreements," that will steer their interactions—including how to engage in respectful dialogue.

BREAK THE ICE. First-time meetings can be awkward, which means you need to be aggressive in helping participants cut through formality from the start. Guide them through a series of icebreakers designed to set the stage for deeper learning.

PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY. When dividing participants into groups, ensure they contain people of different roles, titles, identities, demographics, interest areas and life experiences. Diversity means exposure to new perspectives and opportunities for people of different backgrounds to find common ground.

ENCOURAGE SKILL SHARING. By allowing participants to open up about their individual strengths and weaknesses, you demonstrate the value of this new peer network as a safe sounding board for ideas and a strong mutual support system when coping with professional challenges. Encourage a culture of candidness, sharing and reciprocity, in which participants coach their fellow network members in their areas of expertise and are unafraid to pursue opportunities to be coached by others.

Vulnerability in Practice

When it comes to breaking the ice, storytelling is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal.

At their initial in-person gathering, new Schusterman Fellows share four photos that they feel represent their leadership progression and narrate their personal journey to their peers. Often, these photos illustrate profound moments of crisis, failure or loss, helping participants become more comfortable with each other—and with being vulnerable—right off the bat.

In another helpful activity, Schusterman Fellows take turns completing the sentence, "If you really knew me, you would know…" As the exercise progresses through multiple rounds, participants become more comfortable in their vulnerability and their responses become deeper and more meaningful.

One popular Rockwood icebreaker activity, called "Who are your people?" asks participants to describe qualities shared by the important people in their lives and those they gravitate toward both personally and professionally. Rather than asking participants to discuss their backgrounds point-blank, which would likely result in them outlining their résumés, this activity allows participants to bypass formality and tap into something much more personal.

Even deeper emotions tend to surface during Rockwood's "How do you lie?" exercise, in which pairs explore all the ways they deceive themselves or the people in their lives—an intense and cathartic experience that participants often remember as a turning point in their journey to embrace vulnerability.

However, it is Rockwood's "vision stands" exercise, during which each participant stands in front of the group and speaks for two minutes, that serves as an even more powerful example of vulnerability in action. Speakers must calmly and confidently accept the applause and cheers they receive from their peers without looking away, hiding their faces, sitting down or deflecting with humor—a more difficult task than it seems!

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"I am so much more self-aware. I know my strengths and weaknesses, and I am very comfortable speaking about things I am struggling with to my boss. I feel like I can be vulnerable and that vulnerability feels like a source of strength."
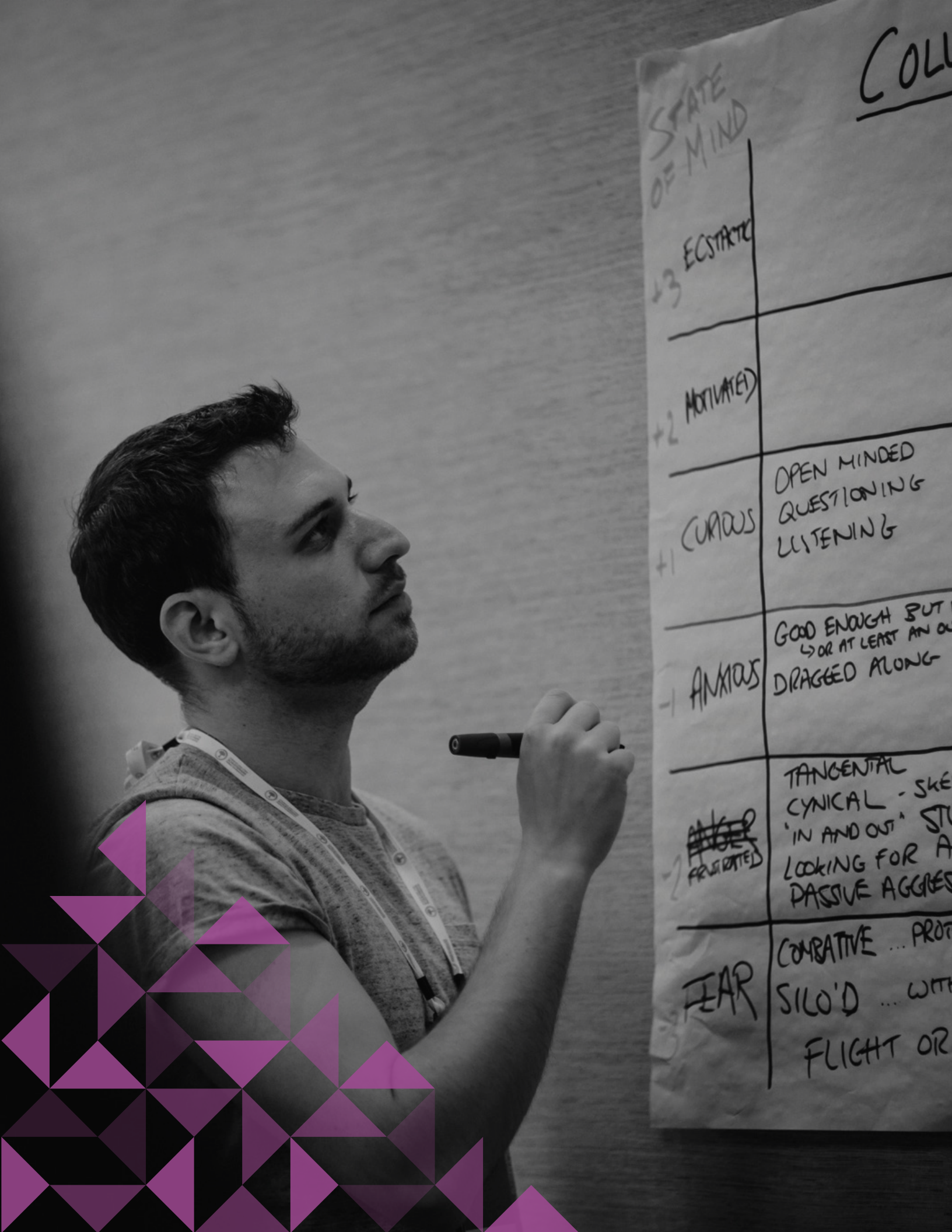
STATE OF MIND | COLL

+3 ECSTATIC

+2 MOTIVATED

+1 CURIOUS | OPEN MINDED
QUESTIONING
LISTENING

-1 ANXIOUS | GOOD ENOUGH BUT
↳ OR AT LEAST AN O
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-2 ~~ANGER~~ FRUSTRATED | TANGENTIAL
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FLIGHT OR

Focus On Emotional Intelligence

Creating strong leaders means helping them understand what drives their actions.

Take a moment to envision a leader you admire. How does this person take charge in a professional setting? What inherent strengths does this person possess? What particular skills does this person have that you value?

Have you painted a mental picture of compelling public speaking, deftly-balanced budgets, technological acumen and other "hard skills" that demonstrate hands-on, practical expertise? Or, does your ideal leader demonstrate qualities that are more intrinsic to their character—and far more personal?

Time and time again, when groups of professionals are asked to describe leaders they admire, qualities associated with emotional intelligence (EQ) —being aware of, harnessing and expressing emotions in constructive ways—are mentioned before hard skills.[3]

Building a comprehensive leadership program demands a focus on what makes effective leadership possible in the first place: mental, emotional, spiritual and physical awareness. Without these core competencies, leaders may struggle to guide staff through crises, get buy-in from stakeholders or highlight their colleagues' strengths.

If you fail to emphasize the underlying emotional responses, beliefs, values and fears that drive behavior, your program's impact will be short-lived.

In addition to more practical skills, effective leaders value what's on the inside. As one Rockwood participant put it, "Rockwood helped me understand what I internally bring to the fight—and how those things can both help and hinder how I want to show up. Through that understanding, I've been able to build stronger relationships, articulate a sharper vision and build more alignment around our shared goals."

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Four out of five Schusterman Fellows reported that as a result of the program, they "feel more fulfilled physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually." One Fellow said, "I am truly a more impactful leader in all aspects. I have deepened my listening skills, expanded my knowledge on subjects of leadership and beyond, and pushed myself personally to take more risks with greater confidence."

Strategies to Encourage Emotional Intelligence

When exploring ways to make emotional intelligence an essential building block of your program, consider these strategies:

HELP THEM LOOK INWARD. Emotional intelligence should be more than just the subject of a single training. It should be the foundation of your curriculum. The emotional and mental components of leadership are often dismissed as "soft skills," so it is up to you to legitimize them by employing clear, consistent terminology from the start.

KEEP THINGS PRACTICAL. Talking about mindfulness and spirituality can get abstract, and their real-world applications can get lost in the ether. Make sure that your participants are taking away concrete strategies to put these concepts to work, at work. For instance, practical strategies can include allotting regular windows during the workday to reflect or identifying ways to best isolate and diffuse workplace scenarios that trigger emotional responses.

SHOW, DON'T TELL. Using emotional intelligence in their professional lives will be a relatively new idea for some and difficult to replicate without witnessing it firsthand. Ensure that coaches and facilitators are not only familiar with the principles of emotional intelligence, but can effectively model it for participants during one-on-one and group sessions.

DIVERSIFY THEIR LEARNING. Everyone absorbs information differently, and opportunities to self-reflect should employ a wide variety of learning styles. Try exercises that involve internal reflection (journaling, meditation or art), performance (improv and role-playing) and informal sharing (paired activities and group discussions).

Emotional Intelligence in Practice

Rockwood participants gain practical experience in navigating complex emotions right away. Immediately after learning about ways to manage triggering situations, they are given the results of their 360-degree leadership evaluations, which highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. Confronted with this multifaceted feedback and constructive critique, participants may experience negative emotional responses and can then put learned concepts to work.

Likewise, Schusterman Fellows undergo a 360-degree leadership assessment, the Leadership Circle, which helps them to understand their greatest gifts as a leader, what gets in their way and how their thought habits translate into productive or unproductive styles of leadership.

Schusterman Fellows are also shown the importance of achieving emotional awareness by participating in an exercise in which they are asked to list "states of mind" on a scale from -3 to +3.[4] For example, -3 might include words like "depressed" or "depleted," and +3 might includes words like "elated" or "euphoric." When they examine domains of leadership such as strategic planning or collaboration through this lens, they discover that +1 and +2 are the states of mind that lead to productivity and effectiveness. They also realize that +3 can be just as detrimental as -3 states of mind. Further, they learn that emotions are not necessarily positive or negative; they are inevitable, constantly changing and can be shifted through a leader's awareness and actions.

"*I am truly a more impactful leader in all aspects. I have deepened my listening skills, expanded my knowledge on subjects of leadership and beyond, and pushed myself personally to take more risks with greater confidence.*"

Be Intentional About Relationship-Building

The more opportunities for discussion and learning, the better.

Does it seem like your calendar is more jam-packed than ever these days? You are not alone. In today's rapidly-evolving work culture, professionals at every level are required to juggle many priorities. Unfortunately, that means your program is just one of many things competing for your participants' attention at any given time. The bottom line: It is not enough to simply sow the seeds of a solid peer network— you have to cultivate it as your program progresses.

A participant network needs consistent engagement to keep relationships flourishing. This is an especially tricky proposition if your participants are scattered geographically.

While in-person gatherings are ideal for fostering intimacy, you cannot rely on a handful of face-to-face meetings to do all the heavy lifting, and you cannot expect participants to forego personal and professional responsibilities for frequent travel. You will have to take advantage of digital communication tools for your network to thrive.

Rockwood participants and alumni enjoy regular check-ins, peer coaching opportunities, online and in-person gatherings within and across cohorts and access to active email listservs. This frequent engagement pays off: 84% of respondents build and maintain stronger interdependent relationships as a result of participation in Rockwood programs. One alum said, "The network of leaders that I am part of—it's like we 'know' one another in very profound ways and are connected at a very deep level."

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Program alumni should be engaged in the program long after it ends—and the transition should be as seamless as possible. For example, alumni of the Schusterman Fellowship are referred to as "Senior Fellows," a manifestation of the program's philosophy that the Fellowship is an ongoing personal and professional community. These Senior Fellows are given regular opportunities to connect, both online and in person.

Strategies to Encourage Relationship-Building

To keep the momentum going during and after the program (while also conserving budget and resources), consider the following strategies:

CONNECT VIRTUALLY. With minimal organizational investment, your program can use powerful online tools like Zoom, Slack and WebEx to regularly bring participants together for group discussions, professional learning and networking. Digital communication can feel impersonal, so make sure that you facilitate smaller group discussions and use video-based technology that lets users see each other.

ENCOURAGE LOCAL LEARNING. Virtual tools are necessary for building a strong network and keeping participants actively engaged, but engagement can—and should—go deeper. Encourage those who live in the same city or region to meet up in person, attend professional events together or lead training sessions.

PRIORITIZE ALUMNI. The network you built should be actively maintained long after participants become alumni. It is simply not enough to leave alumni to their own devices. Without program faculty providing coordination, it can be all too easy for the busy schedules of your alumni to get in the way of preserving their burgeoning peer relationships. Be sure to take the lead in organizing alumni events, especially in the months following your program. For more information about alumni engagement and actionable strategies for developing a comprehensive approach, read the Schusterman Foundation's Alumni Playbook.

PROMOTE CROSS-COHORT SHARING. A great way to keep alumni in the loop is to encourage interaction with your current program cohort. Not only do these experiences keep your alumni engaged with you, but they serve as mutually beneficial learning opportunities for both past and present participants—allowing both groups to gain new perspectives and build valuable professional relationships.

Relationship-Building in Practice

The Schusterman Fellowship includes access to monthly professional learning sessions via Zoom. Faculty keep sessions open after the formal training concludes so participants can discuss ways to put the concepts they just learned to action in their professional lives. Each is led by a Fellow and serves as an effective way to maintain existing peer relationships and facilitate the formation of new ones. In addition, Slack, a digital work collaboration platform, is used for easy communication between and within Fellowship cohorts, allowing participants to share personal news, professional tips and helpful resources.

It is at in-person gatherings, however, when the deepest bonds are formed. At their closing gathering, each Schusterman Fellow uses a "design-thinking approach" to create an award for one of their colleagues, honoring them for the strengths they brought to the group.[5]

Schusterman Fellowship alumni are dubbed "Senior Fellows" when the program concludes and gain access to webinars, book club discussions and "collaboration grants" for those looking to partner with other Fellows to tackle key challenges in their sector. The Fellowship staff also call upon Senior Fellows to serve as mentors and facilitators for new participants—meaning bonds are forged both within and across cohorts.

The Rockwood program nomination process is designed to ensure candidates are ready to become active, valuable members of the participant network. Before the first session, each new Fellow tells Rockwood which of their cohort members they already know. Staff then use this information to pair participants up with people they don't know for icebreaker activities. When the session is complete, a new question is posed: Who do you know now? A map of the cohort's burgeoning network is drawn, demonstrating visually the new connections that were forged during the session.

For Rockwood Fellows, opportunities to build and strengthen relationships are always within reach—whether it is an activity as simple as eating a communal meal or something as intensive as participating in a multi-day residential training specific to their area of the country. Rockwood programs also provide access to highly active listservs that participants across cohorts can use to connect with each other.

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> *"The network of leaders that I am part of – it's like we 'know' one another in very profound ways and are connected at a very deep level."*

Design the Right Coaching Experience

Give your participants the support they need to succeed—and tackle it from multiple angles.

As anyone who has tried (and failed) to uphold even the smallest New Year's resolution will tell you, change is hard. Bettering yourself requires a healthy support system of friends, family and co-workers. As your participants work to expand their leadership potential, it is up to you to provide them access to the guidance and encouragement they need to ensure that the impact of your program is long-term.

That's where coaches come in. Often the bread and butter of leadership development programs, coaching is a partnership between a trained coach and a client with the goal of maximizing the client's potential.[6]

Its efficacy should not surprise you. Coaches serve as key teachers, mentors, motivators, cheerleaders and sounding boards, able to adapt to an individual's unique strengths and weaknesses. And thanks to your curriculum's emphasis on emotional intelligence and the power of vulnerability, the individualized guidance that coaches offer becomes all the more critical.

As you build your program curriculum, the question you should ask yourself is not if you should include coaching elements, but what form they should take, how participants and coaches should interact, and who you will call upon to ensure your participants are getting the most out of their coaching.

But filling in those blanks can get tricky without a clear vision. What balance of accredited coaching and on-the-spot mentorship and guidance should you strike? How do you ensure that diverse participants have access to coaching that is relevant to their experiences and context? How much freedom should participants have to design their own coaching agenda? Chances are, you have options at your disposal that you have not even considered.

Data indicates that coaching's individualized approach works: 91% of Schusterman Fellowship alumni reported that the program's coaching component contributed to their growth as leaders. One participant said, "It's amazing. Coaching for professionals and leaders is a must. It helped me manage my team better and manage my transition to a new job."

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One Rockwood alum said of the program's coaching elements, "The tools and support systems were invaluable in my own transition and serve me every day in helping others."

Strategies to Encourage Coaching

When putting together your coaching game plan, consider the following tactics:

FORGE KEY PARTNERSHIPS. Believe it or not, there are ways to provide individualized leadership coaching without taking your program budget sky-high. There are plenty of accredited coaching programs willing to work pro bono to give their students valuable experience in their field. By joining forces with one, you can offer quality coaching while maximizing your program resources.

START A COACHING PIPELINE. How can you ensure that your participants always have skilled, enthusiastic coaches to guide their leadership development? By cultivating strong coaches yourself. Build trainings designed to hone coaching skills directly within your program—then call upon participants and alumni who can effectively apply coaching practices.

EMPOWER YOUR STAFF. You probably have some highly capable coaches in your midst—people with whom your participants are already comfortable sharing their strengths and struggles. Take a closer look at your program faculty to identify those who can serve as both skilled facilitators and effective leadership coaches.

HARNESS YOUR NETWORK. Not only do you have program faculty and distinguished alumni to lean on—not to mention accredited coaches, should you decide to include them—you also have a network of professional connections, many of whom may be interested in donating their time to support the next generation of leaders. Consider establishing a mentorship program that can serve as an added layer of personal and professional support for participants.

INCENTIVIZE FURTHER LEARNING. Some of your participants might require specialized assistance, have a particular coach in mind or want to take their skills to the next level—but lack the funds to pursue additional coaching. Encourage further learning by offering stipends for participants looking to hire their own coach or take their learning to the next level beyond what your program can offer.

Coaching in Practice

From day one, each Schusterman Fellow is paired with a master-certified executive coach. Across 18 individual sessions, the Fellows come to rely on their respective coaches as a profound source of support and constructive challenge. But the learning doesn't stop there. Instead of relying exclusively on professional coaching, the Schusterman Fellowship promotes a strong culture of peer coaching, as well—providing Fellows with opportunities to share their strengths, while also honing their own skills as coaches. Senior Fellows also have ample opportunities to serve as coaches and mentors to the cohorts that follow.

Schusterman Fellows build coaching skills throughout the program. Each workshop includes elements of "deep listening" and "courageous conversations," and every Fellowship gathering sets aside time to discuss "leadership dilemmas." In these sessions, Fellows actively coach their peers through specific leadership challenges, an exercise that many Fellows say they internalize and apply to their own teams and organizations at the conclusion of the program.

Schusterman Fellows also work with Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey's "Immunity to Change" map, which shows how our individual beliefs—along with the collective mindsets in our organizations—combine to create a powerful immunity to change.[7] Fellows workshop their maps with their colleagues and often with their executive coaches.

Coaching serves as the basis of Rockwood programs, and is integrated at every level and within every stage of the learning process. Even the interview required to get into their programs is its own coaching session! Rockwood also employs a combination of peer and professional coaching. This format allows participants to maintain their momentum in between exercises and trainings, helps establish and strengthen learning habit and offers a stable, consistent support system for Fellows throughout their program and beyond.

Rockwood's professional coaches are either the fellowship's trainers or affiliate coaches knowledgeable about the fellows' movement or sector. Every Fellow receives one coaching session after every general program session, as well as unstructured peer coaching with a fellow cohort member intended to expand upon the curriculum elements they are learning.

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"It's amazing. Coaching for professionals and leaders is a must. It helped me manage my team better and manage my transition to a new job."

Encourage Sector and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Extend your program's impact by emphasizing the benefits of constructive collaboration.

Let's take a quick trip into the future. Your leadership development program was launched successfully and has been running strong for 20 years. Consider the path you and your team took to get where you are. How did you measure your program's influence? What positive change did your participants go on to accomplish? What are some news headlines that demonstrate your participants'—and thus, your program's—impact on your sector and the world around you?

Now, step back into the present. You have likely spent most of your time so far carefully considering the content of your program on the participant level. But helping your participants achieve concrete change, and thus, achieving your larger organizational goals, means re-examining that content through a wider lens, beyond your participants, your program or your field.

And that means acknowledging one fundamental truth: Strong leaders understand the importance of bringing diverse voices to the table.[8] If your objective is to empower people to make a difference, you'll have to show them that they cannot always do it alone.

By providing the tools for constructive collaboration, you will set your program (and your sector) on a trajectory for positive growth.

Data shows us that good things happen when movements align under shared goals. Thanks to Rockwood's emphasis on cross-sector collaboration, 86% of participants felt better equipped to sustain their energy over a lifetime of service. An alum of Rockwood's Fellowship for Gender and Racial Justice Leaders in the HIV/AIDS Movement said, "What is now possible is that I have new strategies for engaging with allies, partners and colleagues when working on really tough issues of intersectionality and inequality with our movements."

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67% of Senior Schusterman Fellows have collaborated in a meaningful way with other Fellows and 75% indicate that the Fellowship has contributed to some form of collaboration between their organization and the organizations of other Fellows.

Strategies to Encourage Collaboration

Extend your program's impact by emphasizing the benefits of constructive collaboration.

CONFRONT CHALLENGES. If your program's ultimate objective is to transform your sector for the better, fomenting change means tackling complex issues head-on. Embolden your participants to face challenges through candid discussions that pinpoint these problems, the factors that contribute to them and key opportunities to address them. In fact, the Fellowship can serve as a laboratory for dealing with difficult inter-group challenges.

SHARE SUCCESS STORIES. Participants should have access to relevant case studies that illuminate the advantages of collaboration. Luckily, you already have a robust network of alumni using their enhanced leadership to make a difference. Canvass them for real-world examples of leaders coming together, and share these stories with your current cohort to demonstrate the power of cooperation.

BROADEN YOUR REACH. Nothing beats a hands-on approach for demonstrating the importance of cross-sector collaboration. Join forces with other leadership development programs—within or outside your field—to provide practical experience, help participants find common ground with unexpected allies and spark opportunities for future collaboration.

MAKE COLLABORATION EASY. Building bridges across sectors should be a core tenet of your program, and emerging leaders with big ideas should have access to tools to take this concept to the next level. Encourage participants to consider ways to incorporate cross-sector collaboration into their own work, and offer micro grants that enable them to make their plans a reality. Even if you do not have the budget or resources to create incentive programs, the simple act of getting leaders in a room together and giving them a platform to communicate can result in meaningful, collaborative projects!

KEEP IT CLOSE TO HOME. While some elements of leadership development are constant, your sector and the social landscape that surrounds it are likely changing rapidly. Your program should reflect the community your participants aim to serve. To ensure maximum relevance, regularly engage key stakeholders, including thought leaders and community members, in the design of your program's approach. This will not only keep your curriculum fresh, but will also equip your participants to use what they have learned to generate real change on the ground.

Collaboration in Practice

The Schusterman Fellowship employs a "Favor Economy" approach, in which Fellows are encouraged to make formalized "requests" and "offers" of each other to solidify their network of support, ensure that everyone is benefitting from their peers' strengths and gain experience passing along their individual skills to others. The program even offers collaboration grants to Senior Fellows to incentivize them to work together to address key challenges and opportunities facing the Jewish community.

Rockwood programs and the Schusterman Fellowship both emphasize the importance of engaging in collaborative dialogue, providing participants with opportunities to dive into topics of their own choosing in small groups. In fact, the Schusterman Fellowship calls on Rockwood staff to lead a session on "courageous conversations" to provide Fellows with practical experience in addressing complex issues head-on and reaching out to colleagues across sectors to workshop solutions.

Rockwood's program emphasizes "collaborative conversations," where Fellows choose topics to discuss during sessions. Trainers are prepared to shift the design of a session to fit in Fellows' requested conversations. The conversations are completely guided by the Fellows and often lead to collaborative projects, partnerships or follow-up gatherings,

During the last few months of the Schusterman Fellowship, Fellows are encouraged to work collaboratively on "capstone" projects. Fellows directly apply what they are learning to either make a positive impact on their organizations or to ask and explore big questions addressing a complex issue in the Jewish community. These projects are intended to sow the mindset of collaboration and give the Fellows space to practice working together to strengthen the community.

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"What is now possible is that I have new strategies for engaging with allies, partners and colleagues when working on really tough issues of intersectionality and inequality with our movements."

A Checklist: Building a Successful Leadership Development Program

Ready to get to work? As you begin to piece together your leadership program, remember your key objectives:

SET THE STAGE FOR VULNERABILITY

Lay the groundwork for participants to forge strong bonds. Devote organizational resources to creating an environment where it is okay to admit failures, express fears, ask questions and engage in constructive debate.

✓ **START EARLY** by getting everyone together in a room at the beginning of your program.

✓ **BE ROLE MODELS** by having faculty join group activities and help participants let their guards down.

✓ **SET THE TONE** by establishing a common set of guidelines to encourage respectful dialogue.

✓ **BREAK THE ICE** by leading a series of "get to know you" activities designed to foster deeper connections.

✓ **PRIORITIZE DIVERSITY** by ensuring that participant groups vary in demographics, interests and experiences.

✓ **ENCOURAGE SKILL SHARING** by giving participants the space to open up about strengths and areas for growth.

FOCUS ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Encourage your participants to harness and express their emotions in constructive ways—getting in tune with the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical sides of their personal leadership style.

✓ **HELP THEM LOOK INWARD** by firmly establishing the importance of "soft skills" from the beginning.

✓ **KEEP THINGS PRACTICAL** by providing concrete, real-world strategies to put concepts to work, at work.

✓ **SHOW, DON'T TELL** by having coaches and faculty demonstrate emotional intelligence during sessions.

✓ **DIVERSIFY THEIR LEARNING** by employing a variety of activities that cater to different learning styles.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP BUILDING.

Help sow the seeds of a solid, long-lasting participant network by providing consistent opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, both in-person and with the assistance of digital communication tools.

✓ **CONNECT VIRTUALLY** by regularly bringing participants together via online tools like Zoom and Slack.

✓ **ENCOURAGE LOCAL LEARNING** by fostering regional gatherings for those who live in close proximity.

✓ **PRIORITIZE ALUMNI** by continuing to engage past participants long after the core program ends.

✓ **PROMOTE CROSS-COHORT SHARING** by encouraging interaction between past and present peer groups.

DESIGN THE RIGHT COACHING EXPERIENCE.

Provide participants with regular individualized learning through partnerships with trained coaches, helping them maximize their leadership potential, build up their unique strengths and address areas for growth.

✓ **FORGE KEY PARTNERSHIPS** by joining forces with coaching program students willing to work pro bono.

✓ **START A COACHING PIPELINE** by helping participants hone their coaching skills and put them to work.

✓ **EMPOWER YOUR STAFF** by identifying those who can effectively apply leadership coaching practices.

✓ **HARNESS YOUR NETWORK** by tapping your own professional connections to serve as mentors.

✓ **INCENTIVIZE FURTHER LEARNING** by offering stipends for those looking to pursue next-level coaching.

ENCOURAGE SECTOR AND CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION.

Set up your participants to achieve concrete change by helping them understand the importance of working together and bringing diverse voices to the table—both within and outside of your sector.

✓ **CONFRONT CHALLENGES** by emboldening your participants to candidly discuss complex issues facing your sector.

✓ **SHARE SUCCESS STORIES** by canvassing alumni for real-world examples of constructive, successful collaboration.

✓ **BROADEN YOUR REACH** by joining forces with other leadership programs to encourage cross-sector teamwork.

✓ **MAKE IT EASY** by helping participants collaborate with others in the program on projects.

✓ **KEEP IT CLOSE TO HOME** by engaging community leaders and other stakeholders when building your curriculum.

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Recommended Resources:
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