

Prosocial Leadership

Understanding Ourselves, Understanding Others, and Working Together

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Prosocial Leadership Description

A society that is unequal and inequitable does not live up to the American ideal. Lawyers hold leadership positions in the legal system, government, business, media, education, and philanthropy. We owe society a higher standard of care because of our power, privilege, and responsibilities. Legal education is a training program based on sorting people which can create, support, and intensify the hierarchies that have resulted in systemic oppression based on demographics such as race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and ability, as well as the systematic exploitation of animals and the environment.

Humans are facing unprecedented challenges and lawyers are leaders in all fields. When they are trained in a zero-sum culture, they may carry that leadership style with them into the organizations that they lead. An individualistic warrior culture will not help us address social justice, environmental degradation, or animal welfare problems. A significant culture shift is required to educate the lawyer leaders of the future.

Prosocial Leadership is a Unit of adoptable or adaptable Course Materials that leverage the literature from Socially Intelligent Leadership (social intelligence, responsibility, cooperation, camaraderie, and trust); Social Aikido (converting adversaries into allies, and shifting the objective from zero-sum to win-win); and Positive Education, which focuses on:

- Social Connectedness (positive relationships),
- Diverse Citizenship (openness, cultural curiosity, respect for multiple perspectives, and desire to contribute to the community), and
- Positive Perspective (optimism, satisfaction, and well-being).

Unit Goal

This unit is designed to help students explore their own identity, their privilege, their intersectional identity, implicit bias, shared identity, and bridging differences, and why these topics may be important personally, as well as to their work.

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Connect lawyer professionalism skills to the professional behavior required when working with others in the legal system ([American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#), Rules 1.1 through 1.4 and [Foundations for Practice Skills](#))
- Articulate how they gain self-awareness, and how various components of their identity and privilege can shape perception
- Identify many aspects of their identity
- Consider how an intersectional framework of identity can promote discrimination
- Identify many aspects of their privilege
- Determine shared identity with a person that is seemingly different than them
- Consider why bridging differences is important to themselves and their work
- Reflect on what knowing more about themselves and others means to their work and personal lives.