



**LEADERSHIP IN ACTION PROGRAM:
AN EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE
APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT**

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OVERVIEW

- Theory of Aligned Contribution: background and development
- Central hypotheses: Development, data collection, analysis, application to practice
- Approaches to testing the hypothesis: what we are learning, how we are learning it, and how we are applying learnings to improve practice
- Challenges and Opportunities
- What's next



THE PROBLEM:

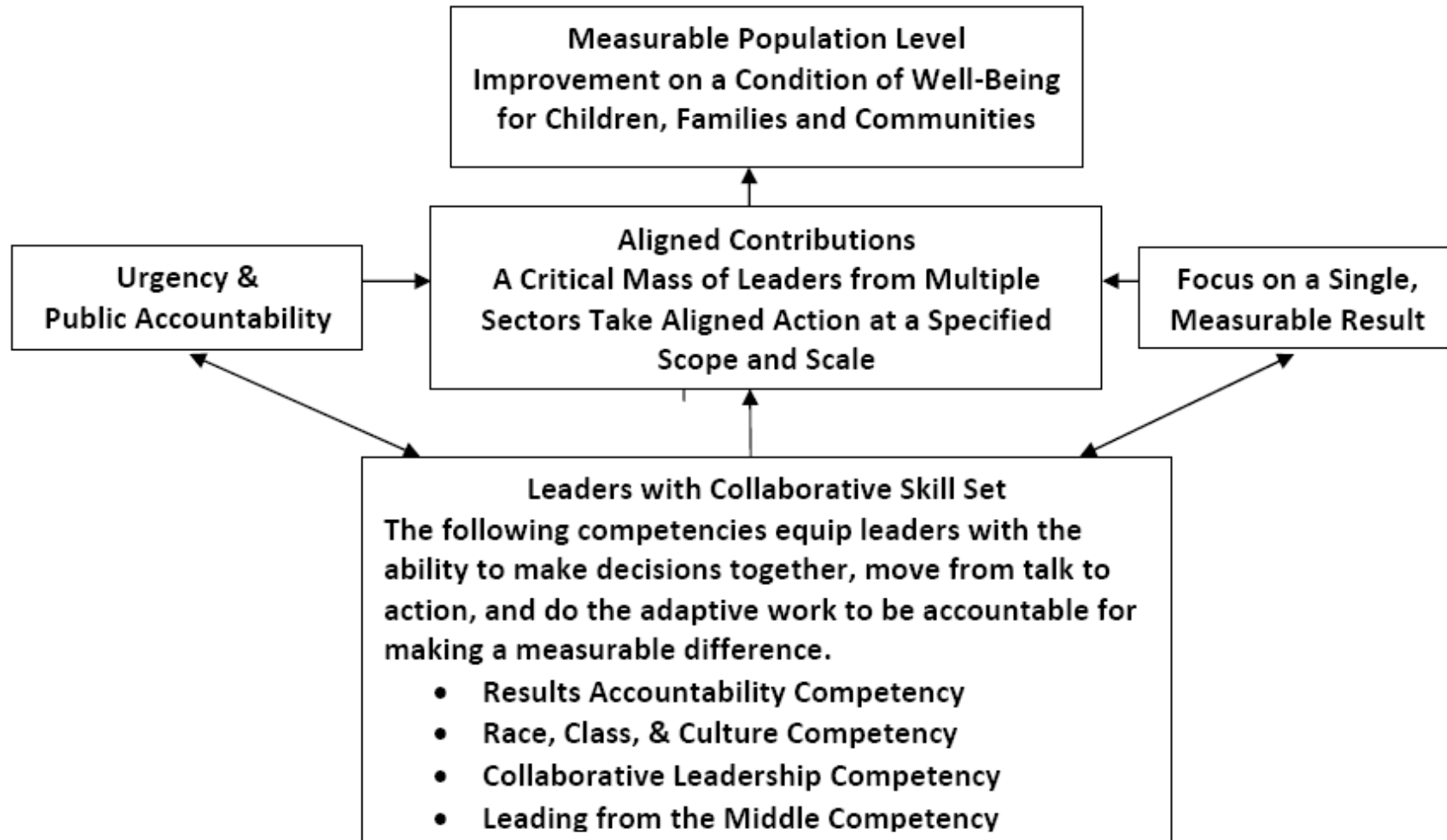
- So many dollars, so many plans, and so many committed people—and still poor outcomes for children, families and communities
- The Theory of Aligned Contributions attempts to articulate the necessary conditions needed to bridge the gap between desired results and current reality in complex adaptive systems.



AN EMERGING THEORY OF CHANGE

JOLIE BAIN PILLSBURY, 2009

Illustration of the Theory of Aligned Contributions



SUPPORTING ASSUMPTIONS

1. Population level changes cannot be made by a single agency but must be part of a multi-sector, public and private movement
2. Outcomes for children, families and communities are unsatisfactory in part because key stakeholders are engaged in unaligned action
3. Leaders lack a sense of urgency to take action because of the seemingly intractable nature of problems, social conditions, systems and challenges
4. Public accountability can increase urgency and create a personal sense of accountability for taking action and making an aligned contribution

Shorr, Lisbeth, *Common Purpose*, 1997.

Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. 2002

Argyris, Chris, *On Organizational Learning*, 1997.

Heifetz, Ronald A., & Linsky, Martin, *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, 2002.



THEORY ELEMENTS

A call to action

- An invitation from a credible source to join and be publicly accountable
- A legitimizing force recognized by leaders from public & private sectors
- A call to action to make a measurable difference for a specific population, common result, indicator within one measurement period

A container

- A place, time, materials and support structure that creates a meeting environment to work together.
- A holding environment creates a non-hierarchical, structured environment that allows decision making process to address power imbalances while dealing with conflict

A capacity to collaborate

- Results Based Accountability Competency
- Race, Class & Culture Competency
- Leading from the Middle Competency
- Collaborative Leadership Competency



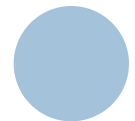
EXAMPLE: LEADERSHIP IN ACTION PROGRAM (LAP)

Result:

All adult offenders in Marion County are successfully reintegrated into their Community.

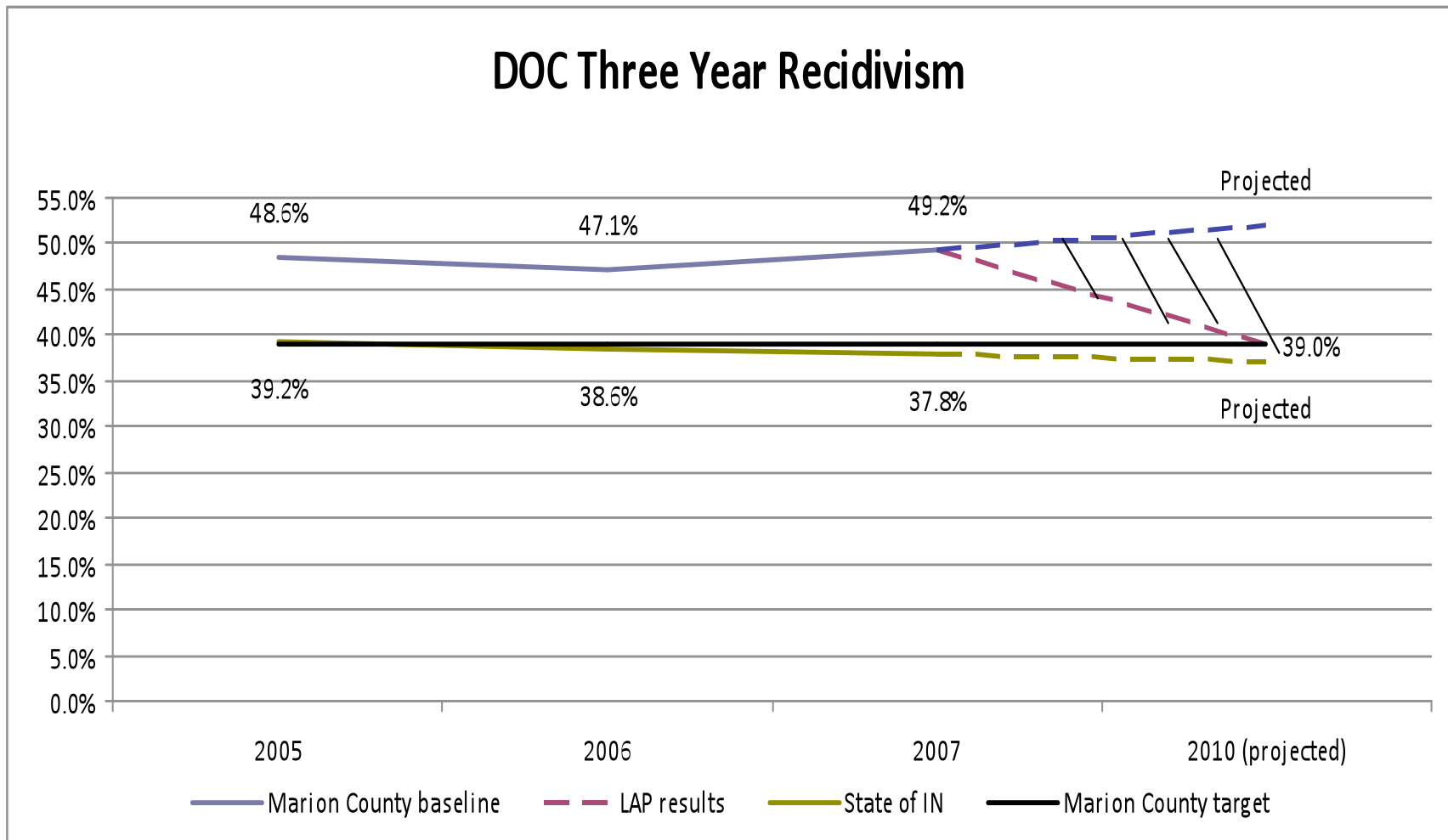
Population:

55,000 ex-offenders residing in Marion County
5,600 offenders released to Marion County each year:
63% African American
36% Caucasian
1% Hispanic



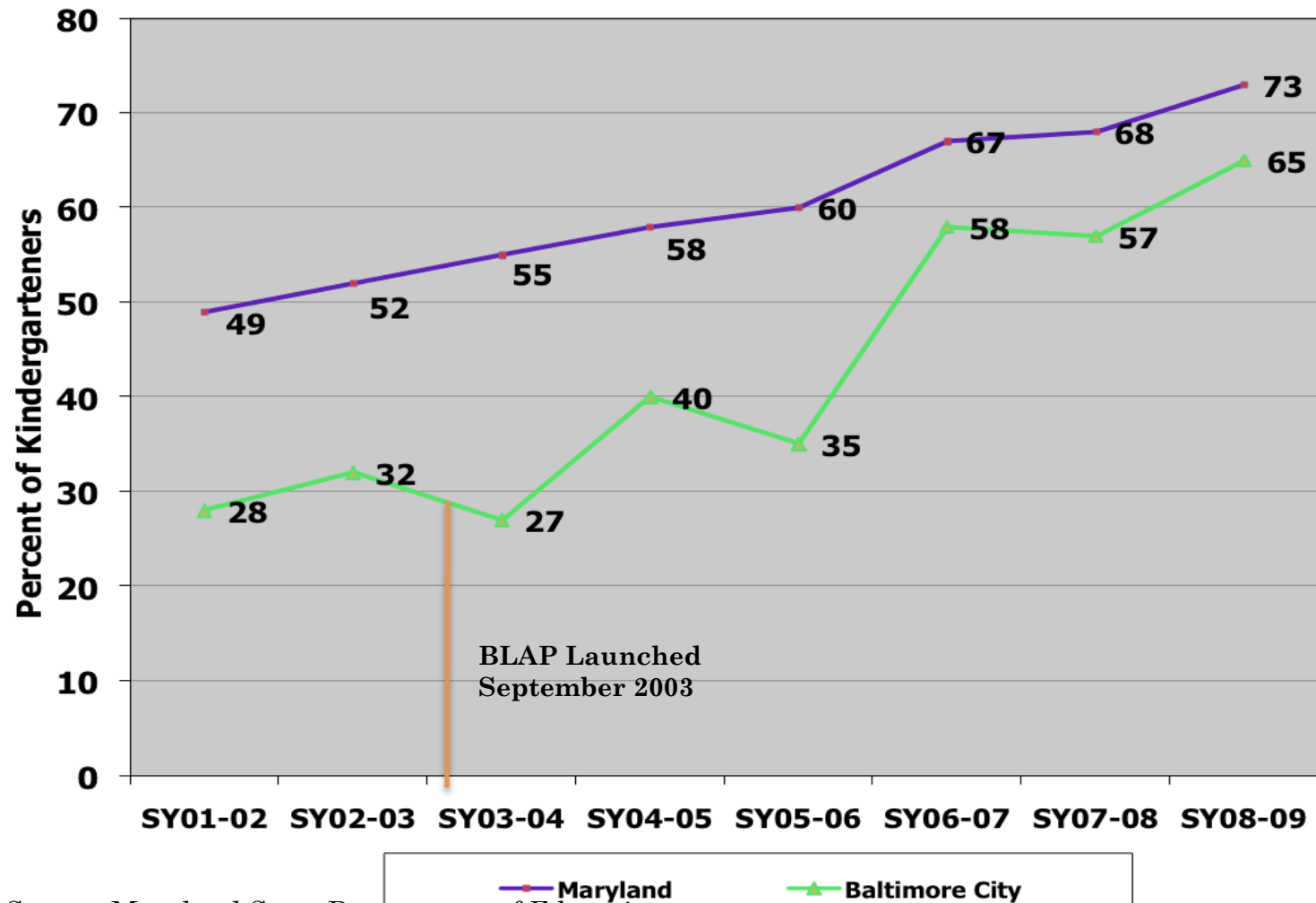
DOC RECIDIVISM

TARGET: 12% REDUCTION BY 2010 (600 CASES)



RESULT: ALL STUDENTS IN BALTIMORE CITY ENTER SCHOOL READY TO SUCCEED

Maryland and Baltimore City
Students Assessed "Fully Ready"
2002 - 2009



Source: Maryland State Department of Education



MULTI-SECTOR LEADERS

- Example County Level
LAP Leaders:
 - Public sector (12)
 - Private, non-profit sectors (13)
 - Private, for profit (1)
 - Funders (2)
- Result: All children in the
County enter school ready to
learn
Population Indicator-CRCT
- Accountability Partner:
County Early Learning and
School Readiness
Commission







THE CAPACITY TO COLLABORATE

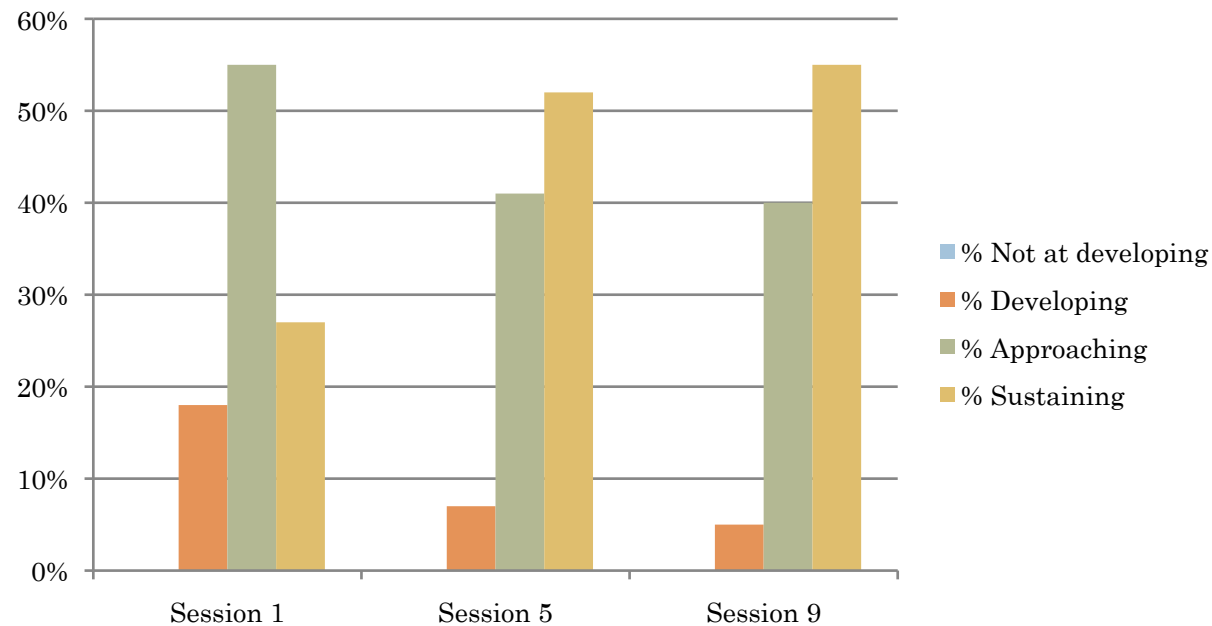
- Four Competencies
 - Assessment and Feedback
 - Modeling, Application, Coaching
- Results Based Leadership Tools and Methods



Collaborative Leadership Competency: The ability to make decisions and take action together in service of the result.

Skill 2: Takes up leadership role in the group	<i>I understand the concepts of boundaries of authority, role and task.</i>	<i>I consciously take a collaborative leadership role in the group.</i>	<i>I help group move forward by taking up a collaborative leadership role between LAP meetings to accelerate progress.</i>
	Developing	Approaching	Sustaining

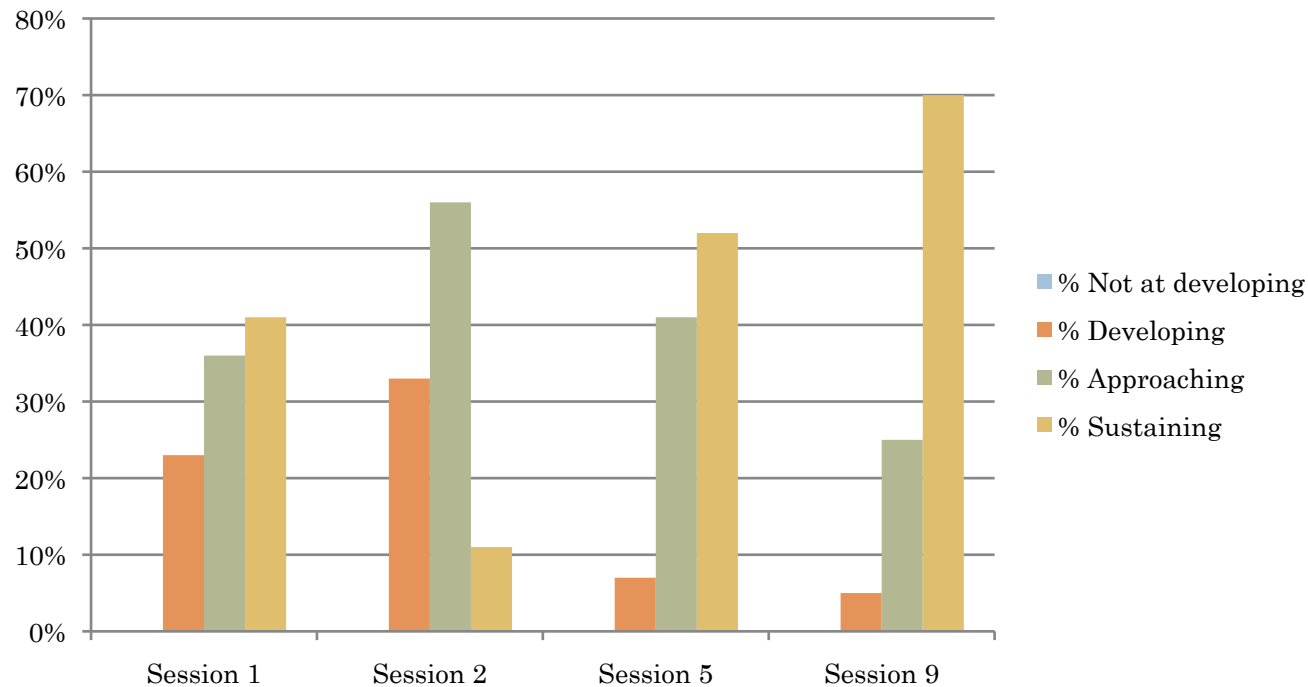
CL Skill 2



Race, Class, Culture Competency: The ability to have constructive dialogue about race, class, and culture that enables leaders to take action to address race, class, and culture disparities.




Skill 1: Ability to have honest conversations about race, class, and culture effects.	<i>I share my own race, class, culture experiences and actively listen to experiences of others to deepen understanding and to clarify assumptions.</i>	<i>I understand the interaction of race, class, and culture and use awareness to address race, class, and culture effects in my interactions.</i>	<i>I use race, class, culture awareness to explore interests, take risks, and to develop deeper, more trusting relationships.</i>
	Developing	Approaching	Sustaining

RCC Skill 1

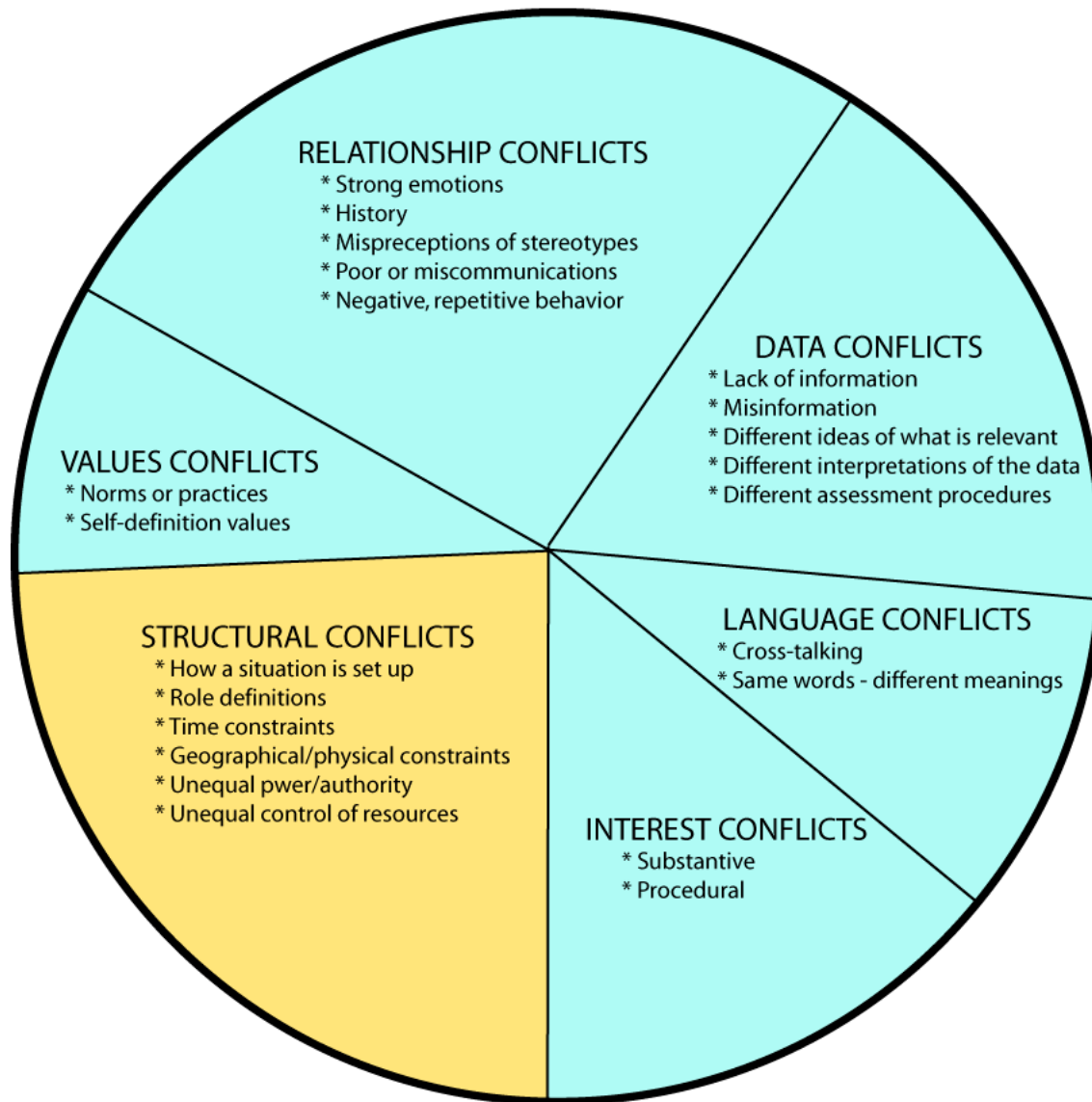


RBL TOOL: PROPOSAL BASED DECISION MAKING

- Consensus is finding a proposal everyone can support/no one opposes.
- Use proposals to make decisions/seek reactions by using rule of thumb.

	<i>Agree (thumbs up)</i>
	<i>Not sure (thumbs sideways)</i>
	<i>Disagree (thumbs down)</i>

RBL TOOL: CIRCLE OF CONFLICT



FOUR QUADRANTS OF ALIGNED ACTIONS FOR RESULTS

	Low Alignment	High Alignment
High Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High action that contributes to results• Does not work to be in alignment with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High action that contributes to results• Works to be in alignment with others
Low Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low action that does not contribute to results• Does not work to be in alignment with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low action that does not contribute to results• Works to be in alignment with others




CENTRAL HYPOTHESIS


- **If leaders become accountable for their work and have a set of competencies as outlined in the TOAC, then they are more likely to take aligned actions at scope and scale in service of a common result.**
- **Improvements in program or population results are more likely to occur if a cadre of multi-sector leaders take aligned action at scope and scale.**



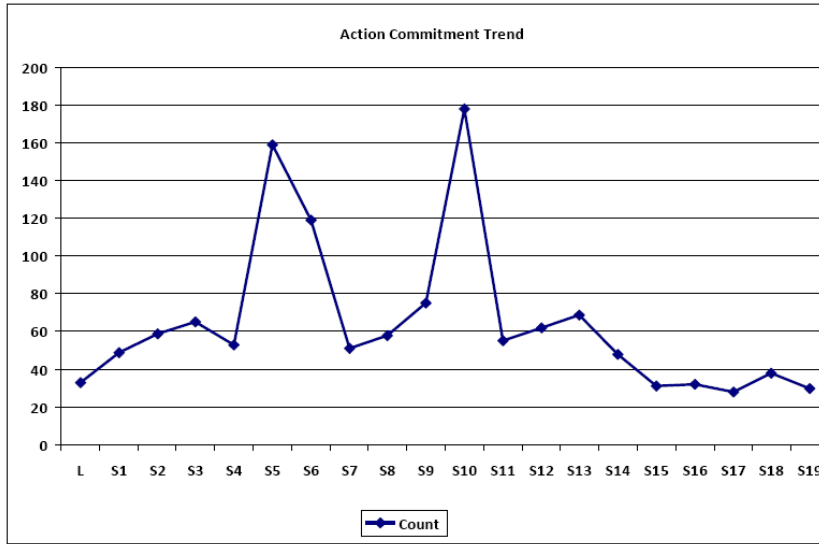
CHRONOLOGY: DEVELOPING AND TESTING HYPOTHESES

- Year 1
 - Development of Quality Improvement and Research Agenda
 - Identification of prioritized questions and unit of analysis
 - Collection of data
 - Development of test database in ACCESS
 - Coding scheme and inter-rater reliability
 - Coding of data and preliminary graphic displays
 - Review of literature
 - Year 2
 - Coding of select sites
 - Refinement of coding and data base
 - Identification of trends using graphic displays and tables
 - Use of findings for quality improvement of new LAPs
 - Development of statistical database in SPSS
 - Development of hypotheses
 - Review of literature
 - Begin identifying descriptive and inferential statistical methods to test hypotheses
 - Year 3
 - Continue refining questions and using data for quality improvement
 - Review of literature
 - Test hypotheses
 - Crowd source data for external testing of data
 - Make available toolkit for community based programs to use to assess action commitments
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SAMPLE RESEARCH AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT QUESTIONS ORGANIZED BY TASK

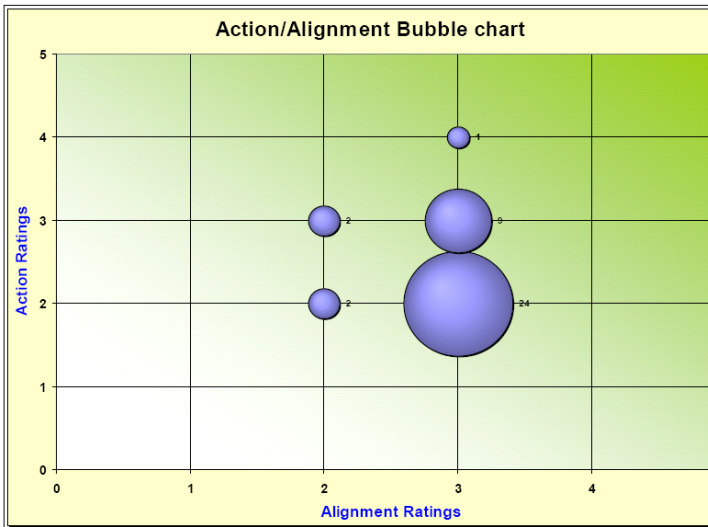
- Implementation
 - Is the program implemented with fidelity to the model?
 - What tools and methods are creating the predicted effects?
 - Leader Outcomes
 - Do RBL programs support leaders to develop or strengthen relationships in a way that facilitates collaboration. . .?
 - Are leaders making and keeping commitments to take high action and high alignment?
 - Are they using the skills – developing the competencies – does that support movement to ha/ha?
 - Program Population and Whole population Impact
 - Are there changes in behavior, attitude, condition, knowledge or skills of program population that improve well being ?
 - Are improved results at program or strategy level contributing to whole population improvement?
 - Return on Investment
 - Improved results
 - Do RBL programs influence the field of leadership, public management and community development by spreading a evidence based practice – an approach involving aligned contributions framework?
- 

Action Commitment Trend line



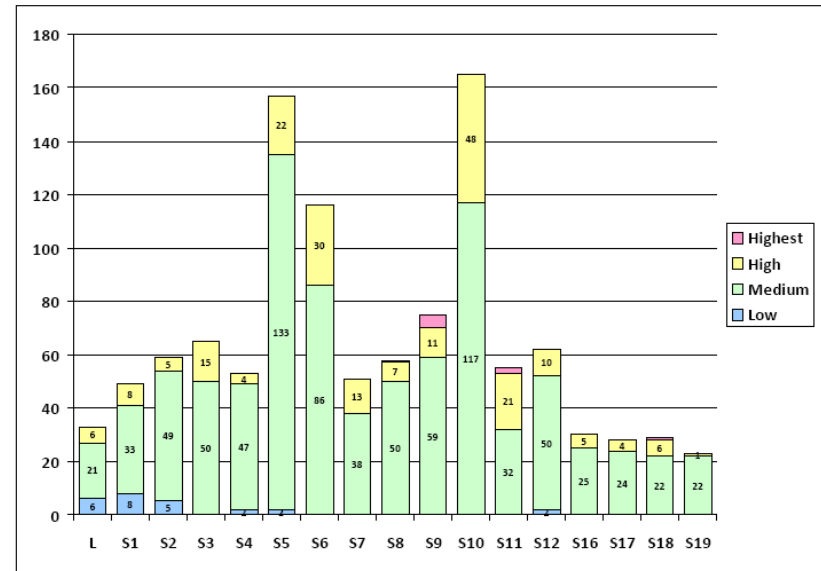
Action by Alignment Bubble Charts

RBL: INDY Session: 518

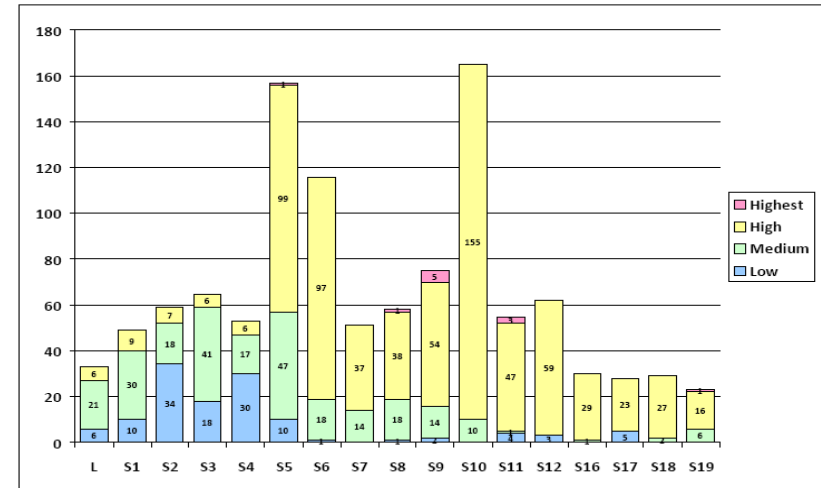


Action and Alignment

ACTION RATING BY SESSION
INDY



ALIGNMENT RATING BY SESSION
INDY



LITERATURE REVIEW OF RELATED CONCEPTS THAT SUPPORT OR CHALLENGE TOAC CONSTRUCTS

Connects to collaborative leadership competency and constant focus on building relationships as a foundation for taking aligned actions that get results.

Trust and open, honest dialog within collaboratives are often cited as necessary ingredients for strong cohesion and relationship building. Strong cohesion in turn translates into a greater feeling of accountability between group members (Bardach, 1998; García-Canal et al., 2003; Wohlstetter et al., 2005). Chaskin (2003) mentions the need to cultivate a sense of ownership among stakeholders in order to establish accountability; however, he notes several challenges in doing so. The LAP program is designed to promote trust and open communication so that members are more committed to the success of the group and are able to take ownership in the group's work. ¹

¹ *Littlefield, J. and O'Brien, J (2010). Policymaking Through Collaborative Networks: Issues of Accountability and Performance, to be presented r Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Conference, November 2010*



EXAMPLE OF HYPOTHESES

DELINEATING WHAT WE WANT TO STUDY AND DEFINING LIMITATIONS

Notice how building relationships is the foundational assumption, followed by number of action commitments, alignment of commitments, followed by accountability to those commitments.

- *Hypothesis 1a:* As participants attend more sessions, they should become more structurally connected to other participants through working relationships.
- *Hypothesis 1b:* As participants attend more sessions, they should commit to more actions on average.
- *Hypothesis 1c:* As participants attend more sessions, they will be more likely to commit to actions that are more highly aligned with the group's strategies
- *Hypothesis 1d :* As participants attend more sessions, they should become more accountable.



EXAMPLE OF HOW WE ARE TESTING HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	Data Source	Data Analysis
<i>Hypothesis 1a:</i> As participants attend more sessions, they should become more structurally connected to other participants through working relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Session notes •Interviews 	<i>Social Network Analysis</i>
<i>Hypothesis 1b:</i> As participants attend more sessions, they should commit to more actions on average.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attendance •Action Commitment Forms 	Regression Analysis
<i>Hypothesis 1c:</i> As participants attend more sessions, they will be more likely to commit to actions that are more highly aligned with the group's strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Action Commitment Forms •Attendance 	Regression Analysis
<i>Hypothesis 1d :</i> As participants attend more sessions, they should become more accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Action Commitment Forms •Notes •Attendance 	Regression Analysis

WHAT WE LEARNED: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Action commitments increase between S4-S5 when leaders have joined and created ownership around strategies and concrete work plans
- While high alignment can be predicted with time on task and attendance, actions that were coded as high ranged from moderate to high
- Attendance appears to be associated with leaders making aligned of commitments
- Attendance was not positively correlated to accountability (measured by #/% of commitments kept)
- There was a significant difference between accountability ratings of action commitments made formally and informally especially those recorded through the group action commitment process. Public/formal accountability strengthened aligned action commitments being kept.
- The measure of group members connectedness to (directly or indirectly) predicts alignment and action ratings



CHALLENGES

- Disseminating from very rich evidence base where the practices do have evidence – at early stages of developing evidence based practice – and analysis and application of evidence to improve practice “ahead” of dissemination.
- Traditionally, use of non-experimental approaches are deemed not a strong, robust
- The balance of collecting data with the primacy of leaders focusing on tasks
- Data base “glitches”
- The challenge of consistently focusing on developing evidence that is relevant, credible and probative
- The need for outside thinking about and testing of TOAC



LEARNING EDGE

- Creating practitioner's pieces to disseminate emerging evidence based practices
- Expanding data analysis – other units of analysis and using data to explore “differential impact”
- More intentional invitation of LAP leaders earlier to learn and use the practices and use the information themselves as it is produced , thus creating action learning
- Creating a more participatory research frame. We have begun providing some data especially around high action/high alignment to the leaders. Preliminary observations suggest that when leaders are not satisfied with the percent of group in high action/high alignment that creates positive energy and forward movement
- Exploring desirability and feasibility for others to test TOAC
- Addressing meaning of underlying assumptions – such as is there evidence about “critical mass” of leaders in context of the size of the program and/or whole population



NEXT STEPS

- Strengthening data analysis
- Opening for others to test TOAC
- Practitioner's Application Guides
- Using data to analyze “value proposition” of varying levels of time on task, intensity, strength of the container and call to action on the return on investment of leaders capacity to take aligned action.
- Multi-disciplinary review and input (such as this gathering!)

