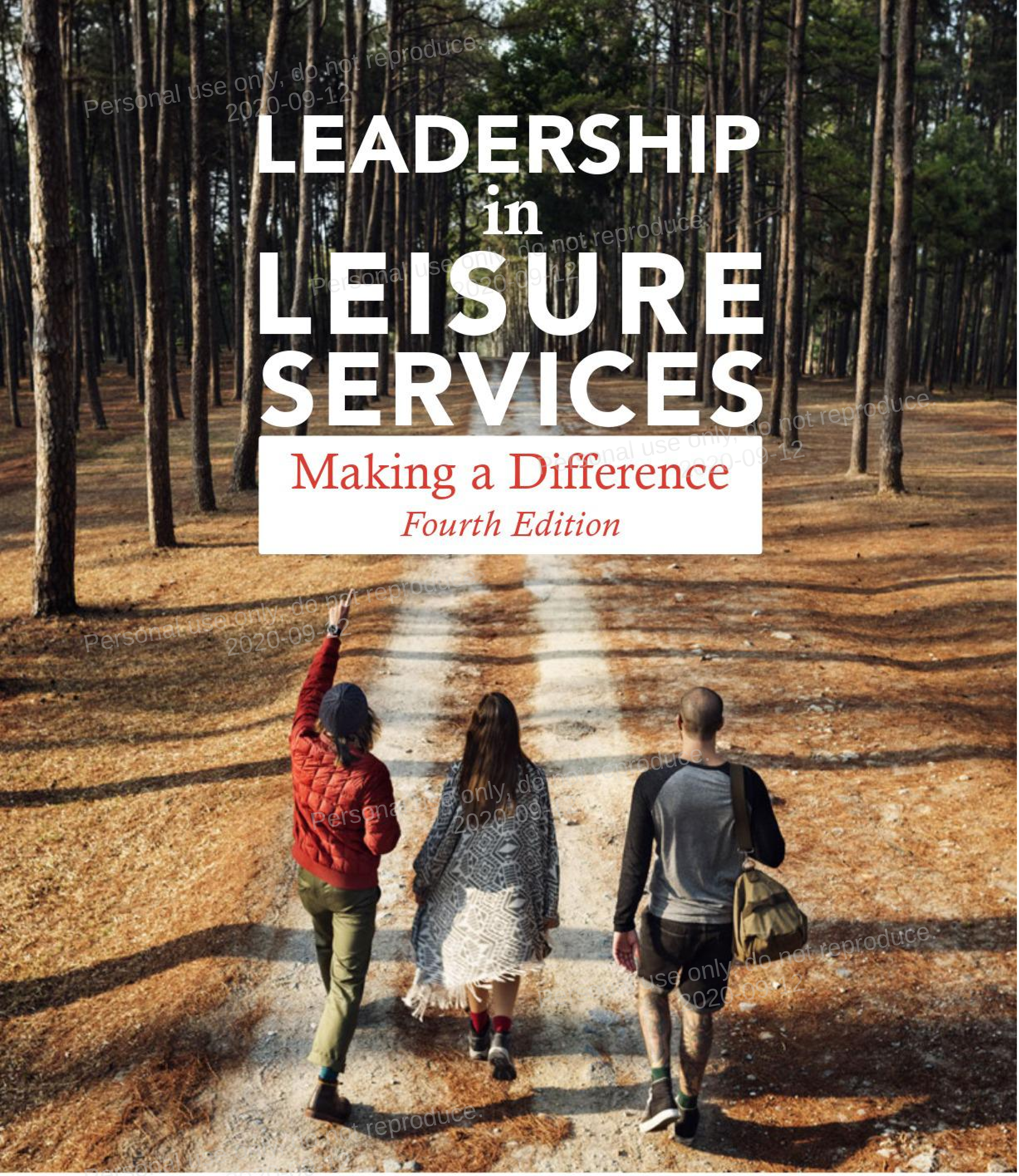

LEADERSHIP in LEISURE SERVICES

Making a Difference

Fourth Edition

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Debra J. Jordan
Ronald Ramsing

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LEADERSHIP
in
LEISURE
SERVICES

Making a Difference

Fourth Edition

Debra J. Jordan
East Carolina University

Ronald Ramsing
Western Kentucky University

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Publishers: Joseph J. Bannon and Peter L. Bannon
Sales and Marketing Manager: Misti Gilles
Marketing Assistant: Kimberly Vecchio
Director of Development and Production: Susan M. Davis
Technology Manager: Mark Atkinson
Production Coordinator: Amy S. Dagit
Cover Design: Marissa Willison

ISBN print edition: 978-1-57167-855-3
ISBN e-book: 978-1-57167-856-0
Library of Congress Control Number: 2017942033

Printed in the United States

SAGAMORE VENTURE

1807 N. Federal Dr.
Urbana, IL 61801
www.sagamorepublishing.com

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For Teo and Pax – who express the joy of living in the moment every day.
–Deb Jordan–

For Lisa and "Bean" – leaders whose passion makes a difference in the lives of others every day.
–Ron Ramsing–

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Preface

We all recognize exemplary leaders when we see them. They tend to be kind yet assertive, organized yet flexible, skilled and highly ethical, and distinctly self-aware. The process of developing into such a leader takes aspiration, knowledge, skills, and the ability to understand people. This text is designed to provide a basic understanding of leadership, what it is, and how to use it in parks and recreation settings.

There are many facets of the leadership construct and we address many of them in this text. The chapters are written in a way to facilitate knowledge acquisition about leadership and leaders and to encourage discussion and dialogue. We also hope that the information will be intriguing enough to encourage ongoing learning and engagement.

The text begins with information that we consider to be the foundation on which other information is built. Thus, early chapters set the stage to understand the concept of leadership as well as the complexities of people. And, because leadership is about human relationships, the early chapters focus on development across the lifespan and diversity among, between, and within people. Knowing about ourselves and others as we grow and evolve is an important underpinning for becoming an exemplary leader.

Parks, recreation, tourism, and related professions are hands-on types of occupations; thus, several chapters in the text focus on skill-based material. Topics such as communication, group dynamics, behavior management, conflict resolution, and risk management provide introductory knowledge for expertise that leaders use on a regular basis. Readers are encouraged to continue to explore these constructs and what they mean to them as individual leaders-in-development.

Finally, later chapters address topics that affect the profession on many levels. Values, ethics, and a range of professional issues speak to who we are as individuals as well as professionals. People rely on parks and recreation practitioners to have integrity and be highly principled—this is how they come to trust us and what we do in enhancing quality of life. And, as the business of parks, recreation, and tourism is a microcosm of society, we face the same issues as citizens across the globe—issues such as the need for increased health and wellness, bullying and violence, and child and elder abuse.

Finally, parks and recreation leaders define the profession; thus, gaining an understanding of credentialing, mentorship, and possibilities for roles in professional associations is important. Accordingly, we offer introductory information that can serve as a "jump start" to a leader-in-development.

Leadership is best developed and refined through experience. Thus, during the studying process associated with this text, readers are encouraged to seek out as many opportunities for leadership practice as possible. Practice public communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and expand self-awareness. Learn about and stay current on social issues and how they affect the profession. And, as much as possible, practice, reflect on personal experiences, seek out mentors, and practice some more. Leadership is a never-ending journey.

—DJJ, 2017

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Acknowledgments

Leadership is not something any one of us can develop in a vacuum and we owe a debt of gratitude to the many teachers in our lives for what they have shared intentionally and through living their lives. Because it is impossible to fully recognize the contributions of each person who has influenced our leadership development over the course of time, we ask forgiveness from those individuals we have not named. Please know that you have had an impact and are greatly appreciated.

Deb wishes to specifically acknowledge several individuals who have contributed to the writing and editing process in various ways: Geof Godbey (who has also served as an inspiration for my leadership development), Amy Dagit, Misti Gilles, and Peter Bannon (another individual who models the type of leadership to which I aspire). On a personal level, colleagues to whom I owe a good deal of appreciation include Lowell Caneday, Michal Anne Lord, Don DeGraaf, Michelle Wells, and Alison Dancer. My students and the groups with which I work are also wonderful teachers about leadership—theirs and mine.

Ron wishes to express his appreciation to so many organizations and individuals who have profoundly influenced him in his pursuits: I am indebted to Deb Jordan for the opportunity to assist with this book and her patience through the course of this project—I have learned so much from you. Special thanks to Don DeGraaf, Packy Longfellow, Linda Janulis, Mrs. Downey, Bowling Green Parks and Recreation, and Camp Adventure. Thank you to my colleagues from around the country, too numerous to name, who influenced the writing of this book. I would like to thank the next generation of recreation experience leaders whom I have led and learned so much from while in the classroom and in the field. Finally, without the support from friends and family, this endeavor would never have come to fruition—thank you!

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About the Authors

Deb Jordan is a professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at East Carolina University. She has published in several journals and authored or co-authored three textbooks (leadership, programming, and an introductory text) and several book chapters. Deb has been involved in leadership positions in several state and national professional associations. Further, she has worked as a naturalist in parks, outdoor trip leader, outdoor programmer for adjudicated youth, and as a director of leadership camps as well as camps for dependents of active duty service members. Personally, Deb has been fortunate to travel internationally to many countries. Her most recent adventures include a trek to the base camp of Mount Everest, and cage diving with great white sharks off the coast of Mexico. In addition to international travel, Deb enjoys reading, kayaking, and visiting state and national parks.

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Chapter 1

Exploring and Discovering Meanings

Photo courtesy of Savanna Elkins.

We know it when we see it, but it is hard to define. That is because leadership is a complex process. Leaders and followers are people who fill roles within the leadership process; to understand the people and process, we must keep in mind that culture influences the ways leadership is enacted. Different people see and expect leadership to look, sound, and feel a certain way. The same holds true for how we view leaders and followers. Depending on a person's cultural background, expectations for who fills which roles when, for what, and how may be distinctly different.

Recreation services professionals participate in leadership with diverse people: women and men, older adults and children, those with disabilities and those without, people with low incomes and people with high incomes, people who are members of diverse racioethnic backgrounds—people with rich and complex demographic traits. They do this when they provide recreation experiences and services in the out-of-doors, hospitals, resorts, recreation centers, elder-care facilities, tourist destinations, schools, military bases, and other settings. As one might imagine, being a leader of recreation and parks is often a demanding yet highly enjoyable task. It is all about connecting with people.

Those who work in the field of parks, recreation, and tourism services directly affect the health, well-being, and quality of life of the people they serve in many ways. People engage in formal and informal recreation activities and enjoy open spaces; they might want to learn new skills, relax and rejuvenate, and/or be in fellowship with friends and family. For most people, recreation experiences are important elements of their lives. As such, at some time or another everyone engages in self-initiated activities as well as those provided by recreation experience practitioners.

In the delivery of recreation experiences, professionals interact with participants in ways that may enhance or detract from their experience of leisure. A quality recreation experience results in positive feelings and a variety of physical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual benefits. On the other hand, a poor recreation experience may leave a participant with discouraging feelings that negatively affect her or his quality of life and engender a desire to avoid similar events and encounters.

> **“Being a leader of recreation and parks is often a demanding yet highly enjoyable task. It is all about connecting with people.”**

The difference between quality and poor recreation experiences can be traced back to the people involved. In particular, the leadership provided at an event has a tremendous influence on its success or failure; clearly parks, recreation, and tourism services professionals strive for the former. Because leadership is an inherent factor in structured recreation experiences, all professionals should be well skilled in its practice. Examples of leadership in recreation services are everywhere: a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) facilitating a leisure education session, a lifeguard providing informal feedback about a swimmer's stroke, an executive director making a presentation to a board, and an event coordinator giving out assignments to volunteers. In each of these settings, someone engages in particular behaviors and exudes certain qualities that result in others identifying her or him as a leader.

What's Coming

In this chapter, we will explore many basic ideas and practices related to the construct of leadership. As you will quickly learn, leadership comprises many concepts, theories, knowledge, and practical skills. We will start by looking at leadership competencies that researchers have found to be necessary for success in the parks and recreation business. Because of the breadth of the parks, recreation, and tourism services profession, we will identify examples of settings where recreation experience leaders work. Finally, because a person cannot be a leader without followers, we will present ideas about leaders, followers, and the leadership relationship to help you understand this complex phenomenon.

Professional Leadership Competencies

Leadership positions might be different within an agency or organization, but the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful at all levels are similar; someone working in a frontline position needs the same skills as someone at the very top of the organizational chart. Typically, frontline staff have direct contact with participants, guests, customers, clients, and/or patients in providing recreation experiences. Those in mid-management or supervisory leadership positions typically have responsibility for staff, programs, facilities, and other aspects of entire units within an agency or organization. And those at the top have responsibility for the operation of an entire recreation business. At this level, organizational leaders work with supervisory staff, board members, city or county officials, and CEOs of other related agencies. In all cases, achieving proficiency in a wide range of skills is necessary to be a successful leader. Knowing and having the ability to work with people, understanding processes, and anticipating outcomes are some of the needed leadership skills no matter a person's position on the organizational chart.

All leaders need to develop professional competencies. Photo courtesy of Deb Jordan.

Other common competencies for recreation experience professionals relate to being able to understand people, effective communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and mediation, risk management; ethics, knowledge, and understanding the profession; and the ability to respond to a range of ever changing professional issues. In addition to these knowledge and skill areas, researchers have identified specific leader competencies for those working in the parks, recreation, and tourism services professions: planning and evaluation, professionalism, knowledge of the field and constituent groups, and public relations (Barcelona, Hurd, & Bruggeman, 2011). Suh, West, and Shin (2012) added to the list of required leadership competencies identifying problem solving, emo-

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tional intelligence, tolerance for change, knowledge of cultural differences, and personal integrity as necessary competencies.

Creating one more list of mandatory skills for successful leadership in parks, recreation, and tourism services professions, Fulthorp and D'Eloia (2015) noted the top 10 competencies needed for successful leadership:

1. ability to make ethical decisions,
2. ability to act professionally,
3. ability to work well with people,
4. ability to communicate clearly with customers,
5. ability to deal with the public,
6. ability to listen to staff and customers,
7. enthusiasm and a positive attitude,
8. ability to communicate clearly with staff,
9. demonstrate openness to serving all members of the community, and
10. ability to work in team environments.

In these lists of leader competencies, we draw your attention to the need for a leader to *know* about something as well as have the *ability* to perform that skill. Knowledge without demonstrated abilities is insufficient for leadership success. Activities such as reading, observing, listening, and studying facilitate a person's learning about a concept; practice is necessary to attain proficiency in implementing that knowledge. Thus, being able to demonstrate knowledge of professional competencies as well as the ability to engage in related tasks is an important trait for a professional.

One avenue open to parks, recreation, and tourism services professionals to do so is through obtaining and maintaining professional certifications. These credentials do not guarantee a particular level of knowledge, skills, or abilities (KSAs), but they do serve as an external validation of a particular level of proficiency. Some of the more common professional certifications include Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS), Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE), Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP), Accredited Hospitality Professional (AHP), and Certified Tour Guide (CTG). Leaders in specific fields within the parks, recreation, and tourism services professions also have opportunities to earn skill-based certifications such as Wilderness First Responder (WFR), Water Safety Instructor (WSI), aquatic therapy instructor, health and fitness specialist, Special Olympics Certified Coach, Certified Military Fitness Specialist, and others.

Professional Leadership Settings

Everyone who works in the recreation services profession, which includes related disciplines such as tourism, therapeutic recreation, parks management, sports management, athletics, and special event management, needs to be knowledgeable and experienced with leadership to be effective. Across the breadth of the recreation experience profession, leaders have a myriad of opportunities in which to practice leadership. Several types of settings in which recreation experience professionals serve as leaders are described below.

Community (Municipal, County, State, Federal Government)

Many parks and recreation professionals work in some type of community-based parks and recreation setting. Most towns and cities have parks and recreation departments in which recreation professionals work. In regions where local populations are small, a county parks and recreation department might serve the area. At the state level, recreation experience leaders might work in state parks, at statewide recreation resource centers, in a zoo, or for a statewide community-based sports league. The federal level of community-based recreation offers leadership positions at national parks, seashores, monuments, and memorials as well as on military installations, in museums, and in federal prisons.

In all levels of community-based parks, recreation, and tourism services settings, professionals may serve as leaders and instructors in areas such as the arts, music, fitness, playground leadership, cheerleading, water-based activities, inclusive recreation services, youth and adult sports, special events, nature activities, library and museum services, and gardening programs. Common leader positions in park settings include environmental educator, interpreter, maintenance staff, docent, and park ranger. If serving as a civilian employee on a military installation, a recreation experience professional might work with families, reservists, and/or active duty personnel. An often overlooked yet important opportunity for recreation experience leaders is providing and leading recreation services for youth in detention centers and adults in prison.

Nonprofit Agencies

A common arena through which parks, recreation, and tourism services professionals provide leadership is nonprofit agencies and organizations. These include agencies that provide programs and services for a diverse clientele as well as those that specialize in serving specific elements of the population. Some of the well-known nonprofit agencies that provide recreation services and experiences include the YMCA and YWCA, Scouting (girls and boys), Jewish Community Centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, Camp Fire for Boys and Girls, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and community aging and senior centers. Some nonprofit agencies specialize in providing recreation services for people with disabilities such as Paralyzed Veterans of America, The Arc (for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities), Easter Seals, and Special Olympics. The opportunities for recreation experience leadership provided in nonprofit settings are similar to those offered in community-based recreation programs.

Universities and Colleges

Two- and 4-year colleges and universities offer multiple opportunities for leadership development in the recreation experience professions. Student activities, the Panhellenic system (sororities and fraternities), alumni activities and events, campus recreation, residential life, first year experiences, and volunteer services are common on-campus opportunities to practice recreation leadership. Activities that parks, recreation, and tourism services professionals might facilitate include off-campus trips, movie programs, leadership development programs, conference and event planning, officiating recreational sports, instructing personal fitness programs, and facilitating challenge course experiences.

For-Profit Recreation and Tourism Businesses

For-profit recreation (commercial recreation) agencies and organizations include leadership opportunities in employee morale and recreation services, outdoor adventure outfitters, sports clubs, resorts, theme parks, fitness centers, concert promotion, and hospitality settings such as corporate hotel guest services and resorts. Tourism-based leadership opportunities include providing a wide range of recreation experiences on cruise ships, guiding sustainable tourism trips, hosting festivals and special events, leading volunteer tourism programs, and providing a variety of guest services. These types of leadership opportunities are found in the U.S. and abroad.

Clinical/Therapeutic Settings

Clinical settings are sites where people who have short- or long-term disabilities are located as they strive to restore their health, increase functional abilities, and improve their quality of living in all life domains (e.g., physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, spiritual). Common clinical settings in which qualified (certified, licensed) leaders use recreation experiences as a medium for healing include hospitals, substance abuse centers, mental health facilities, and long-term care facilities, among others. Working in a clinical or therapeutic setting typically requires the leader to hold the Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential; a license to practice is also required in several states. CTRSs design specific activities and programs to facilitate improved functional abilities of clients through recreation experiences; the aim is to enhance physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and leisure abilities of participants. Participants who achieve a level of functionality that enables them to transition from the clinical setting into a community setting often participate in inclusive or adapted recreation experiences when in their home community.

Leaders who work in clinical settings might work with therapy dogs. Photo courtesy of David Loy.

Community-based recreation experience professionals (often called inclusion specialists) may provide leadership to people with disabilities or physical and psychological challenges in settings such as community centers, schools, senior centers, adult day care programs, fine arts programs, and public parks and recreation departments. In addition to community-based settings, many commercial, nonprofit, university, and commercial recreation experience providers offer specialized and inclusion programs to those with disabling conditions. Program focus is varied and includes sports, outdoor recreation, travel and tourism, drama and the arts, personal fitness, and others. Although not required in every state or community, inclusion specialists who hold national certification as a CTRS are highly desired as employees in these types of settings.

Professional Leadership Skills

Clearly, those in the recreation experience business have many opportunities to lead others in pursuit of enhanced quality of life. To do so, it is most important for recreation experience professionals to continue to develop leadership skills. Leadership scholars have identified three categories of leadership skills—all of which are necessary for successful leadership: conceptual, interpersonal, and technical.

Conceptual skills include the ability to see the big picture, analyze, anticipate, and use sound judgment. When activating conceptual skills, a leader scans, observes, makes note of subtleties, compares what is understood with prior knowledge and experience, and uses her or his judgment to act proactively and reactively. Skilled leaders have long-range vision and continually look for what is best to ensure success for others and the organization. Critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and being able to handle ambiguity are also considered conceptual skills. Being able to articulate a philosophy of recreation and how it guides the use of leadership styles, actively contributing to meet follower and agency goals, and striving to better society are other competencies that fit within this skill group. In addition, conceptual skills comprise following the organizational mission through actions and decisions, adhering to internal values, and understanding their role in promoting the parks, recreation, and tourism services profession. Without conceptual skills, it would be difficult to integrate interpersonal and technical skills into leadership processes and relationships.

Interpersonal skills are those skills and leadership techniques that involve relationships with people. Understanding group dynamics, facilitating cooperation and trust building among participants, and being a good communicator all fit within the interpersonal domain of leadership. Understanding and being able to resolve conflicts and helping people to feel welcomed, valued, and respected also fit within the interpersonal component. Success in parks, recreation, and tourism services requires strong interpersonal skills. Recreation experience leaders relate to others in roles as leader to participant, peer to colleague, employee to supervisor, and leader to the broader organization and the profession. Thus, these skills must become well honed for successful leadership in parks, recreation, and tourism services. In addition to conceptual and interpersonal competencies, being able to "do the work" is another important skill set for successful leadership.

Technical skills relate specifically to accomplishing tasks; they enable a person to do a particular assignment or task. Among other duties in the recreation experience professions, leaders plan, implement, and evaluate programs and services. Leaders also develop logistics, engage in risk management activities, and complete office tasks. Other technical skills used by parks and recreation practitioners in direct leadership positions include leading songs, games, and activities in a variety of settings. Technical skills are readily taught to most leaders-to-be. It should be noted that a person who is successful at technical tasks may be an excellent technician, yet a poor leader. Successful leaders are able to integrate strong interpersonal and conceptual skills into their technical skill domain.

> **Leadership is an active relational process that leaders and followers create together.**

In addition to being able to articulate these general skill sets, successful leaders demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of a situation as well as an ability to do, analyze, evaluate, and create needed actions and responses to that situation. Effective leadership clearly requires much more than simply being able to talk about successful leadership—this is one reason that thriving leaders participate in lifelong learning and ongoing personal development.

Making Sense of Leadership

Making sense of any new concept generally begins with a definition. The challenge with defining leadership is that there is no one universally accepted definition. Early on, leadership was defined as "getting people to do something." Others believed a leader to be a person who filled a leadership role or who looked and acted like a leader. Leadership also has been defined as a process whereby a leader motivates and influences other people; others have described the leadership process as a system of authority in which the leader has a responsibility and the power to move a group of people toward a particular goal. Some have used the terms *leadership* and *power* interchangeably, and others have done the same with *leadership* and *management*.

At this time, most researchers have come to agree that *leadership is an active relational process that leaders and followers create together* (Hudea, 2014; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Leaders and followers are entwined—one does not exist without the other. Thus, after a brief introduction to the concept of followership, the two constructs will be discussed conjointly throughout the text.

Making Sense of Followership

As one might suspect, defining followership is no easier a task than explaining leadership. Some have tried to distinguish the two by simply saying that leaders engage in leader behaviors and followers engage in follower behaviors—a somewhat unsatisfactory explanation because there is no agreement about the nature of these behaviors. Others have characterized followership as being the opposite of leadership, a direct or indirect influential activity, or as a role or group noun for those influenced by a leader (Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Recall that the definition of leadership highlights a *relational* process. This means that leaders and followers are active partners who work together through a mutually satisfying process to reach an agreed upon goal. For many, the distinguishing factor between leaders and followers is that leaders enact leadership thoughts, words, and deeds—they take on an influencing role. Likewise, followers enact followership thoughts, words, and deeds—they allow themselves to be influenced by another.

Followership and leadership have much in common—they are dynamic, require give-and-take, and demand commitment from those involved. And because the relationship is between people, the leadership–followership process can be enhanced by effective behaviors and hindered by unproductive behaviors. People who are effective in the leader role have the vision to set broad goals and strategies, interpersonal skills to achieve consensus, verbal capacity to communicate enthusiasm to large and diverse groups of individuals, organizational talent to coordinate disparate efforts, and the desire to lead. As partners in the relationship, ideal followers demonstrate initiative and work cooperatively with the leader and other followers; through their efforts, they strive to achieve a shared goal.

Scholars who study followership have reported that effective and desirable followers are independent—they do not follow a leader blindly, rather they think for themselves and use their judgment and skills to enhance progress. In addition, followers manage themselves well by actively participating and contributing their strengths as appropriate. Successful followers commit to the leader, organization, and overall purpose of the group effort. Furthermore, effective followers know and build upon their own competencies and apply their talents for the good of the group or organization. Effective followers make conscious contributions to the central purpose and good of the organization (Blom & Alvesson, 2014; Oc & Bashshur, 2013). Clearly, if a group consists of one or more effective leaders and one or more effective followers, together they can have a tremendous effect and really make a difference.

> **“Followership and leadership have much in common—they are dynamic, require give-and-take, and demand commitment from those involved.”**

Over the years, many authors have characterized effective and ineffective followers into distinct types, which differentiated between preferred (activist) and undesirable (sheep) follower. Some of these typologies have been instructive, but we prefer the succinct listing of positive follower behaviors presented by Chaleff (1995), who characterized the most capable follower as a *courageous follower.* Courageous followers…

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Leaders and followers must work together to successfully achieve goals. Photo courtesy of Eddie Hill.

1. *Assume responsibility*—for themselves, the task at hand, and the organization. Courageous followers discover and create opportunities to fulfill their personal potential, initiate action, ask how they can best contribute, and hold themselves accountable for their role in the group efforts.
2. *Serve*—Courageous followers are not afraid of hard work and freely assume hands-on tasks in which they are skilled to best serve the group and the end goal. They have and maintain an awareness of the people or person they are serving; they are humble and emanate a helpful attitude.
3. *Challenge*—Courageous followers speak up (when and as suitable) when something goes against their values and principles. They are willing to stand up, stand out, risk rejection, and initiate conflict when appropriate—they do so with a great deal of professionalism. Courageous followers value and understand the need for group harmony and participate in such, but not at the expense of the common purpose, dignity, and integrity.
4. *Participate in transformation*—Courageous followers recognize the need for change, growth, and progress. They champion the need for transformation and are active participants in the process. They look for opportunities to enhance and positively affect others, tasks, and goals; they make contributions according to their strengths.
5. *Leave*—Courageous followers know when it is time to step back and step out. When leaders are ineffective, followers are destructive, ethics are questionable, or group activities interfere with achieving the common purpose, courageous followers are prepared to withdraw their support and leave the group despite personal risk (e.g., to reputation, opportunities for advancement).

Capable leaders and followers share many traits, skills, and competencies, and each accepts and fills different roles. Leaders typically possess stronger conceptual, relationship-building, and initiative skills than do followers, and these are the ingredients that help groups to function well. Because followers must recognize and accept an individual in a leadership role—grant legitimacy to the individual in that position—it may prove helpful to consider common ways through which groups grant the leader role to a particular individual. Groups recognize and grant leadership to individuals in several ways.

How Leaders Are Recognized

The roles of leader and follower are enacted within groups—to be a leader requires a person to have followers. The process or mechanism of deciding who will fill what role is different for every group, and sometimes it changes each time the group meets. Individuals become recognized and reinforced as leaders by the group in several ways. A leader might be appointed or elected, she or he might emerge from the group, the person's charisma might cause others to follow, or leadership might be attributed to the halo effect. Followers are deeply involved in the process of recognizing leaders within a group—in all cases, followers must in some respect *grant* (accept or allow another to fill the leader role) leadership to one or more individuals. Without follower approval, leadership efforts will be ineffective. In addition to followers granting leadership to an individual, that individual must *claim* that role—agree to be the leader. These granting and claiming behaviors tend to be subconscious rather than intentional; nonetheless, the actions are necessary for a leader–follower relationship to exist (see Figure 1.1). Figure 1.2 depicts ways people identify a leader.

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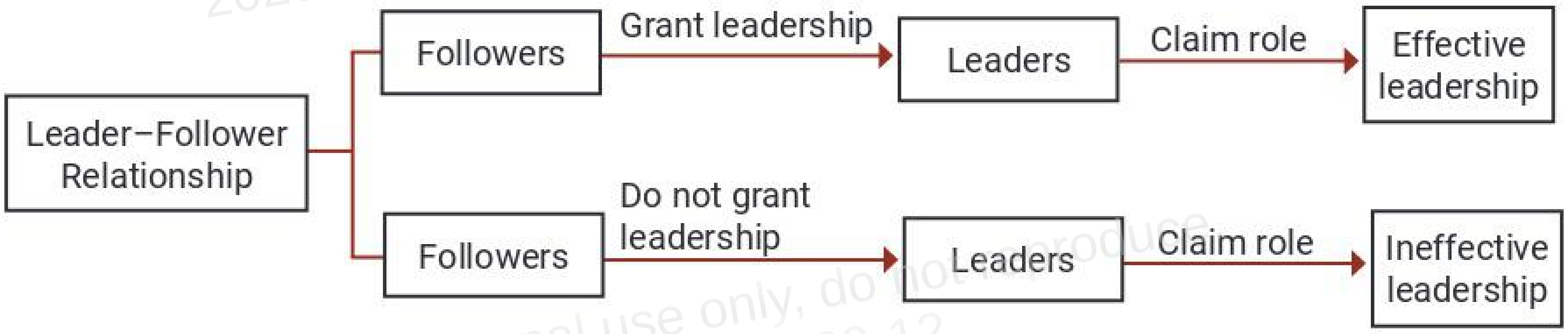

Figure 1.1. Leader–follower relationship.

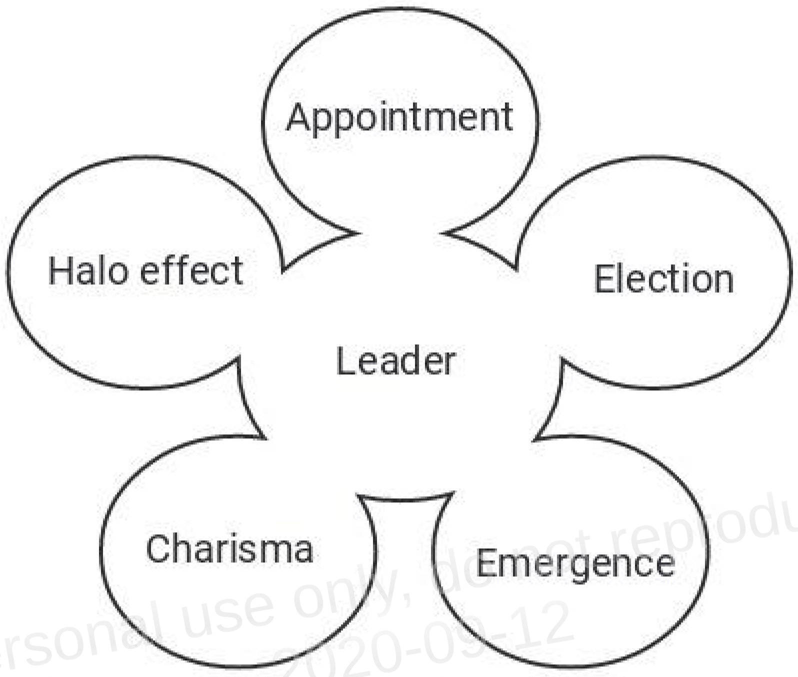

Figure 1.2. Leaders are identified in five ways.

Appointment

Leaders may be appointed to a titled position that identifies them as such. This may occur from the administrative level within an agency or from within a group. The agency director, for instance, may hire (appoint) a person to be a leader in the position of head lifeguard. In another case, the group might appoint a leader (e.g., chairperson) to facilitate completion of a task. Once appointed, that individual will need to fulfill the expected roles and responsibilities of a leader; she or he will also need to use leadership skills and techniques to the best of her or his ability to retain the leadership position. If the leader is ineffective, the appointer may withdraw the appointment and identify someone else to fill the leader role.

Election

Many groups elect individuals to fill leadership positions—you might think of election as a formal process of appointment, even if it is done in an informal setting. A leader who is appointed is one to whom the group essentially says, “You be the leader.” In an election, an identifiable process is used to select a person to be the leader. In many recreational sport programs, for instance, a team will elect a team captain. Team captains are expected to guide team members, set the tone for the team, and serve as a motivating energy. These are common expectations of all leaders. People may be elected to fill a leader role for a variety of reasons, which can be positive (the individual is the most experienced), neutral (the individual is the most popular), or negative (the individual is the most intimidating).

Emergence

Groups sometimes develop organically when more than one person shares a goal, for instance, when several people decide they wish to take a trip together. In this type of situation, the group typically does not formally identify a leader. During the course of coming together to make the trip happen, however, an individual emerges as the leader; that person “rises to the top” in terms of leadership. Group members may recognize the individual as the leader because she or he is the most influential, has the most knowledge or skills, can clearly communicate what needs to occur, or for other reasons. A leader who emerges from a group often has the respect of the group members because she or he was first a group member and then became the leader.

Charisma

Charisma is defined as personal magnetism or charm and is a component of most depictions of an ideal leader. Leaders with charisma easily persuade group members to follow them and have a great deal of influence. Charismatic leaders arouse enthusiasm and loyalty from within the group; they exude an energy that draws others to them. Followers often work hard to be noticed by a charismatic leader and tend to respect such a person out of a sense of loyalty and sometimes, awe. As with elected leaders, people with charisma may be positive role models and leaders (e.g., Teddy Roosevelt) or individuals who use their personal allure to the detriment of others (e.g., Adolf Hitler). Care must be taken in the accolades given a leader selected based solely on personal charisma.

The Halo Effect

It is a natural sense-making process that people carry over what they think about a person (through personal experience or others' shared opinions) into multiple situations. For instance, if an individual worked with a particular person on a project and that person did poor quality work and inconsistently attended meetings, the individual might apply the halo effect and assume that this person would continue to do poor quality work and be unreliable in all future group work. The individual's attitudes and behaviors toward that person will reflect that perception until she or he receives consistent information that negates her or his perception. As it relates to leadership, the halo effect is demonstrated when leadership is granted to a person who has been a leader in other situations; others expect and perhaps encourage that person to be the leader in a variety of settings.

No matter how leaders are identified—by position, election, or personal attributes—to be effective, those in leadership roles must continually demonstrate the aptitude and demeanor to be successful. As recreation leaders develop their leadership skills, they become increasingly proficient in working with followers to a desired end. As leaders' competence grows, so too does others' confidence in their abilities, enabling them to enact leadership in positive ways. Having a basic understanding of leadership as a relationship between leaders and followers and how leaders are recognized in groups is helpful to create a generalized picture of the leadership construct. Knowing a bit about how contemporary views of leadership have evolved further enhances a person's understanding of leadership and followership.

Trying to Capture the Essence of Leadership

When trying to make sense of complex phenomena, people create models or theories and engage in research to verify their ideas. Toward that end, a great number of people have developed theories about what leadership is and how it works. By extension, of course, they have also articulated models about followership. In their observations of how people interact, early investigators noticed that particular individuals seemed to have influence over others. Group members listened to their ideas, deferred to their suggestions, acted as requested and/or expected, and so on. These observations and perceptions led to the development of early theories that tried to explain the nature of leadership.

Initial thoughts suggested that "great men" were born into leadership roles and authority. This early European view suggested that having the right heritage (powerful, high status male relatives such as royalty) set the stage for a (white) man to become a leader as he matured. At that time in history, of course, people of color were deemed to be less than human and girls and women were considered to be property; thus, people who represented these and other demographics were not perceived as leaders regardless of their lineage.

Next, early thinkers explained leadership by suggesting that leaders displayed particular physical and personality traits and characteristics. The various traits attributed to leaders included physical characteristics such as gender (male), height (a few inches taller than most men), attractiveness (based on cultural mores), skin color (white), and the size and shape of one's nose (straight and somewhat elongated). In addition, cognitive and personality traits such as intelligence, emotional control, dominance, and openness helped to define a leader. The valued and leader-identified traits were culturally specific. For instance, if physical traits such as hair or eye color, foot size, handedness (left- or right-handed), or personality traits such as confidence, extraversion, and intuition were deemed valuable to a cultural group, then leaders were those who demonstrated those attributes. A commonly researched contemporary leadership theory reflects this underlying trait theory—the implicit leadership theory (ILT), which we will examine later in this chapter.

At about the same time that people were trying to explain leadership by individual traits, others noted that influential group members, those who were perceived as leaders by their peers, engaged in similar behaviors that caused others to follow them. Thus, a new theory suggested that leaders were those who acted like leaders (as leaders were expected to act). Leaders walked with confidence, told others what to do; they were directive and controlling. As research became more sophisticated, leader behaviors were identified as engaging in planning, organizing, directing, implementing, and evaluating (controlling) people and events. Other terms and models that seemed to capture the concept of leadership identified two behavioral factors: *consideration* and *initiation of structure* (Landis, Hill, & Harvey, 2014; Nicholson, 2013).

Consideration refers to interpersonal skills such as communication, trust, and respect between leaders and followers. It also includes follower participation in decision making and other behaviors that enhance and maintain interpersonal relations within a group. These are sometimes called people skills, and leaders who have strengths in this area are often referred to as being people oriented. Initiation of structure refers to leader behaviors focused on a task. These behaviors might include setting rules, assigning tasks, giving directions, being assertive, and setting goals; another term for this factor is *agency*—leaders are expected to be agentic as they take the initiative to act. A leader who is strong in these skills is often called task oriented (Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Thus, initiating structure describes the extent to which a leader shapes and organizes work roles, provides clear channels of communication, and is goal oriented.

> **"Today, effective leadership requires an individual skilled in consideration and agentic behaviors."**

The idea that leadership consists of these two factors—consideration and agency—continues to be studied. For example, current day researchers have been trying to learn how consideration and agency are related to societal views of gender and leadership. Among many others, Rhee and Sigler (2015) noted that in the dominant U.S. culture women are perceived to be stronger in interpersonal (consideration) skills and men are thought to be stronger in task (agentic) skills. Thus, consideration is considered to be a feminine trait and agency is thought of as a masculine trait. In general, people believe that leaders are task oriented; they make things happen; they are agentic. With this underlying cultural assumption, leadership falls within the masculine domain; it is linked to what is presumed to be male. As you might imagine, this perception can lead to challenges for female leaders. Females are expected to be warm, caring, and helpful, which are perceived as feminine and nonleader traits; thus, when they step outside of the caring realm and demonstrate masculine-linked attributes such as being independent, rational, and decisive, they can face anger or resentment from others (Williams & Tiedens, 2016). Today, effective leadership requires an individual skilled in consideration and agentic behaviors (see Figure 1.3), but the stereotype that leaders exhibit more masculine traits than interpersonal traits continues to permeate society (Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015).

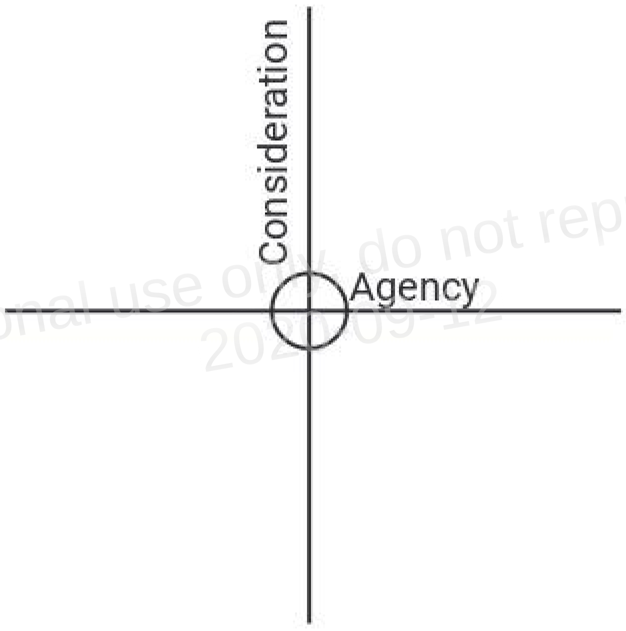

Figure 1.3. Balancing agency and consideration.

Leadership Styles

In addition to examining two broad categories of leader behaviors, scholars began exploring the ways or styles people enact leadership. Based on experiments conducted in the 1940s, investigators identified three primary behavioral leadership styles, which they named autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Some modifications have been suggested over the years, but a common understanding of these styles remains.

Autocratic

Autocratic leaders are characterized as being forthright, directive, and assertive (Rast, Hogg, & Giessner, 2013). Most of those who study leadership styles talk about four general qualities of autocratic leaders: Autocratic leaders make all the important decisions, they are more concerned with accomplishing a task than with the satisfaction of followers, they tend to maintain considerable social distance from followers (autocratic leaders rarely become friends with followers), and they motivate followers by threat of punishment rather than by reward.

These features of an autocratic leader suggest that a person using this style demonstrates little trust or faith in group members and expects them to comply with given directions. Autocratic leaders present themselves as authority figures and as the only people with the right answers. In autocratic relationships, follower responsibility tends to be low and people merely do what they are told. Given this, sometimes when the leader is gone followers cut loose and act out. In addition, feelings of anger, hostility, and aggression among group members may increase when a person uses this leadership style.

This characterization of autocratic leadership may leave a person wondering if there is ever an appropriate use of this leadership style. Indeed, research has demonstrated that there are situations when an autocratic (sometimes called authoritarian) approach to leadership is fitting—it is referred to as a benevolent autocratic style when a leader acts as an authoritarian for the welfare of others. Lifeguards who shout at people or blow whistles to demand that people get out of the water when danger arises demonstrate a benevolent autocratic leadership style. A similar situation that calls for an autocratic leader is when a quick, sharp, immediate response is necessary to protect someone or something from harm. A leader might command followers to action or direct the most competent group member to act. No questions from participants are expected, and if the (dangerous) situation is understood, group members readily comply. Under such circumstances, once the safety concern has passed a leader concerned with group feelings would share her or his reasons for being autocratic with the group.

Another circumstance that may call for an autocratic leadership style is when group members are highly uncertain about a situation (no one really has any idea of what to do or what is happening); they tend to desire and respond favorably to a strong autocratic leader (Karp, 2013). Having a strong leader who takes control in these situations helps followers to feel emotionally safe and secure. Followers often willingly do as asked as they work toward fully grasping the situation and their role in it. When leaders explain their reasons for using an autocratic style and treat participants with respect, participants learn about leadership, safety issues, judgment, and responsibility.

Similar to the information related to the gender-linked behaviors of consideration and agency, people often respond differently to autocratic behaviors by females and males. Williams and Tiedens (2016) found that followers respond more positively to a male who demonstrates an autocratic leadership style than they respond to a female who does so. Autocratic leadership is perceived to be associated with power, and because of continuing stereotypes, men are believed and expected to be more powerful than women. Power falls within the masculine domain of behaviors. Thus, male leaders who engage in authoritarian behaviors tend to be accepted, whereas women leaders who demonstrate similar behaviors are commonly denigrated.

> “**When leaders explains their reasons for using an autocratic style and treat participants with respect, participants learn about leadership, safety issues, judgment, and responsibility.**”

Democratic

The second approach to this trio of leadership styles is referred to as democratic leadership. Using this style, democratic leaders make the final decision, but prior to doing so they invite group members to participate in the decision-making process. Depending on the level of involvement in making decisions, a leader might consult with group members (called consultative leadership) or they might invite their full participation (participative leadership).

Involving group members in the decision-making process takes time, so this approach may slow the process of achieving group goals. In many situations, a leader who invites and genuinely listens to follower input can be effective. Transparency as to how the input is used is an important aspect of using a democratic leadership style. Decisions to act should clearly reflect what was learned through the group process—in this way, a trusting and respectful relationship develops between the leader and followers. Groups may resist the leader in the future if they perceive that the leader disregarded their thoughts and feelings in earlier decision processes.

As with all potential leadership behaviors, circumstances determine the effectiveness and efficiency of using a democratic leadership style. Democratic leadership behaviors are often effective in situations in which followers are skilled and mature and the leader wishes to facilitate developing group cohesion and follower decision-making skills. However, if a group is underskilled and immature (new to one another, have not yet engaged in meaningful group activities) or has little knowledge about a situation, using a leadership style that places decision making in the group's hands may be detrimental. For instance, if a newly formed group is participating on a white-water rafting trip and is not familiar with river markers that indicate safe and unsafe passage, it would be unwise for the skilled raft guide to engage the group in a discussion about which route they should take through the rapids. This type of leader decision making could apply to any situation in which a group of ill-equipped followers have task responsibilities—to plan a special event, create an inclusion program, or put on a community theater production.

Laissez-Faire

The laissez-faire leadership style involves a noninterference policy in which the leader gives the group members free rein to do their work and figure out how best to reach their goals (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012). *Laissez-faire* is French for "*let it be,*" which captures the hands-off essence of this leadership style. A laissez-faire leader tends to shy away from group members and tasks, and she or he avoids decision-making responsibilities. The leader provides information or materials when asked, but otherwise stays out of the group process and the workflow. Some describe this style of leadership as an absence of leadership or nonleadership.

As one might imagine, laissez-faire leadership is often viewed as a weak form of leadership because the leader has little involvement in facilitating the group working toward a goal. However, when intentionally used, this style can be highly effective in helping a group mature and grow in its decision-making abilities. Leaders who are purposeful in activating a laissez-faire approach are available to the group and are attentive to the group's needs (e.g., to provide direction, materials, conflict resolution guidance). This hands-off leadership style enables a group to struggle through decision making and task accomplishments knowing that they have access to support, if needed. Group members often feel empowered and group dynamics can be extremely strong when facilitated with an intentional laissez-faire approach to leadership.

How Is Leadership Perceived Today?

Research and study have evolved a great deal over the years and have led to several contemporary views of leadership, all of which continue to be investigated. These models portray leadership as a skill that develops over time through a person's personal journey of growth and development. Most of the following theories of leadership emphasize leader values and worldviews and the effects those perspectives have on followers. Scholars have identified three primary theories to explain the leadership–followership process: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership.

Transactional Leadership

Antonakis and House (2014) suggest that the most commonly used type of leadership across a variety of settings is viewed as an exchange—a transaction—between a leader and followers. The exchange is based on a subtle agreement between leaders and followers: If followers will acknowledge and validate the leader (usually by performing well), the leader will give the followers recognition and status for their efforts (e.g., reward them with a paycheck, public accolades, increased responsibilities). In this way, leaders and followers influence one another and benefit from the transaction.

With an eye toward achieving efficiency, transactional leaders tend to focus on goals and objectives, problem solving, making decisions, and following policies and procedures. One of the most common transactional theories that continues to be studied is the leader–member exchange (LMX) model. Along with other researchers, Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, and McKenna (2014) explained the LMX theory as one in which the leader (L) develops relationships with followers (members; M) based on expectations of one another. Those expectations relate to the exchange (X) between leaders and followers in which they meet one another's expectations to contribute positively to the group and end goal.

It is clear that follower contributions to group tasks vary; some group members fully participate and provide excellent and timely information, and others engage as little as possible. In response, the relationships between leader and individual followers differ. Leaders value and favor hardworking, productive followers who are fully involved in the group's work; this subset of followers is referred to as the *in-group.* In this situation, the L–M relationship is strong; in-group members receive more resources (e.g., leader attention and assistance, materials, financial rewards) from the leader than do members of the out-group; thus, the in-group members continue to thrive. Followers who are disengaged and make limited contributions to group efforts face lower quality relationships with the leader and have lower quality experiences. Leaders may withhold and/or withdraw resources from out-group members, which typically has a negative effect on out-group follower success (see Figure 1.4).

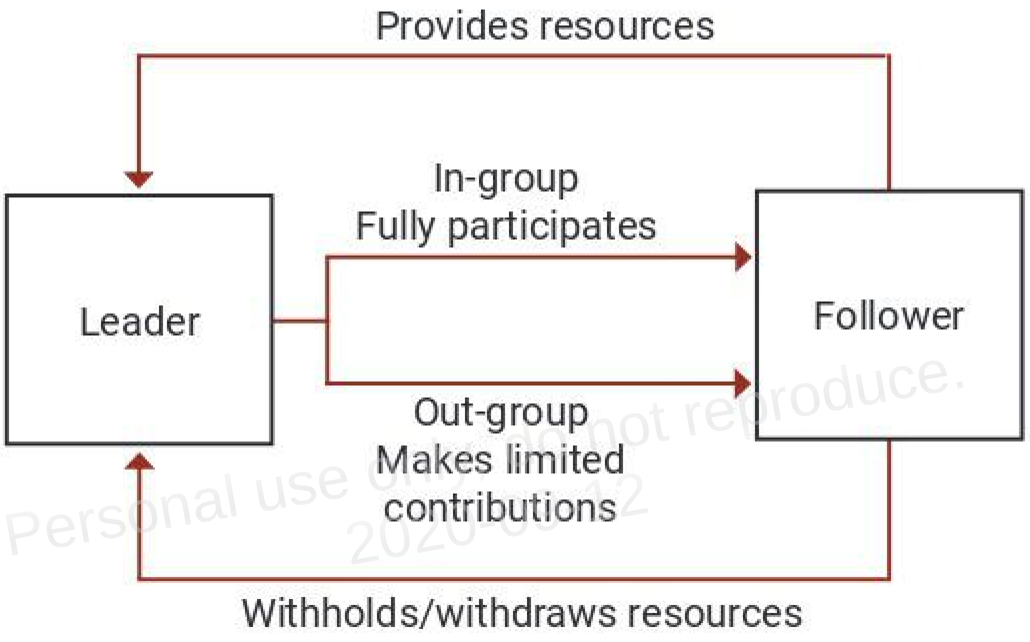

Figure 1.4. Transactional leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Another contemporary view of leadership, *transformational leadership,* has also received much attention in the last 15 to 20 years. To transform means to change the nature, function, or condition of something. In terms of transformational leadership, the term describes a model of leadership that explains how strong leaders can change the nature or function of followers in such a way that individual followers become more concerned with group rather than personal interests.

Transformational leadership describes an approach in which the leader inspires others to commit to a common value-supported purpose when working toward a particular objective. Transformational leaders promote nontraditional thinking, full engagement in the group process, and follower empowerment. Successful transformational leaders influence followers to act in the best interest of the group and to share that approach with others. As such, followers help to communicate the leader's ideals, values, and convictions through their efforts. This model of leadership includes four components: *leader charisma, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration,* and *intellectual stimulation* (Antonakis & House, 2014).

> **“Leaders value and favor hardworking, productive followers who are fully involved in the group's work.”**

Leader charisma. Charisma is defined as a “rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm” and as “personal magnetism or charm” (“Charisma,” 2011). As an element of transformational leadership, leader charisma serves as an outlet for visionary and inspirational abilities of the leader. Leaders who are considered a visionary, who see the big picture, who take risks, and who generate enthusiasm, emotion, and confidence in their followers are considered transformational leaders. These leaders are sensitive to the needs of the group, are masters of social skills, and develop emotional bonds with followers. It is common for followers to want to be like the leader. Sometimes participants even start dressing, acting, and talking like the leader. In recreation settings, leaders with charisma seem to electrify the room. Everyone is well behaved, participant enthusiasm is high, and followers seem to gravitate toward the charismatic leader.

Inspirational motivation. Leaders act in ways to motivate and inspire others by providing meaning and challenge in their work. Transformational leaders are excellent communicators and instill high ethical standards among group members. Team spirit, enthusiasm, and optimism run high in groups that are led by a transformational leader. These leaders help others to envision the future, clearly communicate their expectations to followers, and demonstrate commitment to goals and the shared vision. Vision and the ability to get others “fired up” are hallmarks of a transformational leader.

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> **Transformational leaders promote nontraditional thinking, full engagement in the group process, and follower empowerment.**

Individualized consideration. Transformational leaders appeal to ideological values of followers. This means that they can connect with followers at a "heart" level. While appealing to these common values and ideals, transformational leaders treat followers as individuals, generating a great deal of follower confidence. Leaders empower followers to engage in a variety of tasks and they celebrate individual accomplishments and growth. Transformational leaders believe in and work toward personal and professional development of their followers—they help others to grow and develop their potential. Recreation leaders who allow for individual consideration make each person genuinely feel special. Furthermore, leaders hold each person to high expectations and let them know that they have great confidence in follower abilities to meet those challenges.

Intellectual stimulation. Visionary and transforming leaders challenge existing thinking about the way things have been done. They encourage new ways of looking at things, generate innovative ideas, ask many questions, and give followers opportunities to participate in discoveries. Intellectual stimulation tends to make a transforming leader exciting to be around; they are not afraid to take risks. By challenging people to think differently than they are used to thinking, transformational leaders stimulate follower intellectual and cognitive development. Elements ranging from activity rules to social policy are challenged, and the intellectual excitement is high among group members.

Researchers have found that leaders who engage in transformational behaviors are viewed as effective leaders and have satisfied and highly motivated followers. It is certainly easy to see how someone with charisma, who treats people as though they are special and unique, and who challenges and encourages people to think would be well liked and well respected. Transformational leaders exhibit a philosophy that influences leadership tasks and people. Using a variety of leadership styles, a transformational leader is involved in several tasks: visioning, valuing, coaching, motivating, team building, and promoting quality work. In addition, scholars have reported that transformational leaders are more compassionate, flexible, insightful, pragmatic, and less forceful and tough than nontransformational leaders (Gardner et al., 2011; Landis et al., 2014).

Recreation leaders who allow for individual consideration make each person genuinely feel special. Photo courtesy of Ron Ramsing.

Servant Leadership

Similar to the transformational leadership model (in philosophy and approach) is the theory of servant leadership. The two views focus on the growth and development of followers. Because it has proven to be difficult to test, some theorists consider servant leadership to be a philosophy rather than a theory that describes a special relationship between leaders and followers; nonetheless, it continues to receive a lot of attention in the leadership literature.

Servant leadership is based on strong moral, ethical, and spiritual values. This approach focuses on developing others to their fullest potential in the areas of task effectiveness, community stewardship, self-motivation, and future leadership capabilities. Servant leaders are excellent communicators and deeply believe in the value of active listening. Like transformational leaders, servant leaders make followers feel significant and celebrate what each person brings to the group. Further, servant leaders have charisma, challenge old ways of doing things, and have a great deal of influence over followers. The primary distinction between transformational and servant leadership is the focus of the leader. The overriding focus or drive of a servant leader is on service to followers as well as to the broader society, and transformational leaders tend to focus on helping followers to achieve group goals (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Greenleaf (1991), who coined the phrase servant leadership, articulated the essence of servant leadership when he stated,

> The servant leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or, at least, not be further deprived? (p. 7)

In attempts to make the concept of servant leadership more concrete, several authors have created lists of qualities that describe someone who demonstrates servant leadership (see Table 1.1). Spears (1998) identified an initial list of 10 servant leader qualities: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. Researchers began scientifically examining the validity of those traits, resulting in slightly different lists. In a review of the research on servant leadership conducted up to 2011, Van Dierendonck (2011) identified six distinct characteristics of servant leaders: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. Shortly after that report, Mittal and Dorfman (2012) identified six factors that make up servant leadership: altruism, egalitarianism, emotional dimension, managerial skills, human skills, and commitment to community. More recently, Hunter, Neubert, Perry, and Witt (2013) summarized existing research and identified seven common dimensions of servant leadership: relationships, empowerment, help others to grow as persons, ethics and morals, conceptual skills, put followers first, and community service.

Table 1.1

Qualities of Servant Leaders

Author	Traits
Spears (1998)	listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community
Van Dierendonck (2011)	empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship
Dorfman (2012)	altruism, egalitarianism, emotional dimension, managerial skills, human skills, and commitment to community
Hunter, Neubert, Perry, & Witt (2013)	relationships, empowerment, help others to grow as persons, ethics and morals, conceptual skills, put followers first, and community service

Scholars have created lists of servant leader characteristics that differ in some respects, but the underlying belief of this leadership theory is that a leader serves others, strives to help others to grow and develop, and focuses on how group actions benefit individuals and society. A servant leader believes in the power of each individual to enhance society. As an example, in discussions about future development of a park or greenway, a servant leader would encourage those in the decision-making process to consider the effects on individuals who might be displaced, the environment and its flora and fauna, the spirit of the community, and the driving force of the intended development—elements beyond the potential economic development of such an enterprise.

> **“Like transformational leaders, servant leaders make followers feel significant and celebrate what each person brings to the group.”**

Agile and Authentic Leadership

In the early 2000s, several business leaders promoted the concept of agile/adaptive/flexible leadership as a distinct leadership theory. These terms were intended to capture the idea that to be effective in a fast moving, information-based society, leaders have to be able to make quick adjustments in their approach to leadership, leadership styles, and related behaviors. It is certainly true that successful leaders can adapt to new and increasingly complex situations and do so quickly—particularly in parks, recreation, and tourism services, in which situations change minute by minute. It has been difficult, however, for researchers to find support for this idea as a stand-alone leadership theory.

Scholars continue to try to discern the essence of leadership and its specific components. One method of doing so involves examining major societal events and pulling out the factors for successful leadership. Reflecting events occurring in society, business, education, and other settings, scholars have filtered out an important leader quality: *authenticity.* Being authentic means being true to oneself—staying true to one's principles, values, and approaches to relationships and tasks—no matter the situation. Further, an authentic leader is consistently ethical, self-aware, and appreciative of the life experiences of others (Gardner et al., 2011).

> **“It is certainly true that successful leaders can adapt to new and increasingly complex situations and do so quickly—particularly in parks, recreation, and tourism services, in which situations change minute by minute.”**

Nyberg and Sveningsson (2014) identified four dimensions of authentic leadership: self-awareness, transparency, ethics and morals, and balanced processing (see Figure 1.5). Knowing and acknowledging strengths and weaknesses and engaging in ongoing efforts to enhance development reflect a leader's self-awareness. Transparency happens when leaders are genuine, stand on their principles, and are clear and open about personal values. The third dimension, ethics and morals, builds on transparency and is evident when leaders are consistently guided by internal moral standards. Last, Nyberg and Sveningsson described balanced processing as leaders being objective, seeking and analyzing extensive information (including from those who may or may not agree with their views), and then using that knowledge in guiding their behaviors, decision making, and goal attainment. Being authentic facilitates leader–follower trust and provides a stable base for relating to people and tasks, which leads to effective leadership.

Self-awareness	**Transparency**
Ethics and morals	**Balanced processing**

Figure 1.5. Four dimensions of authentic leadership.

Shared Leadership

Another view of leadership that has been deliberated is shared leadership, in which the capacity for leadership is spread among group members. Rather than one individual serving in a leadership role in all situations, the role and its associated responsibilities are shared among group members. Rather than focusing primarily on the leader when exploring the process of leadership —the leader's behaviors, styles, qualities, and so on—this theory describes the nature of leadership in ways that clearly encompass the relationships between leaders and followers, the interrelationships among leaders and followers, and the effects and influence of followers on leaders and leadership. Also known as distributed, collaborative, or collective leadership, this perspective on leadership is described as a dynamic process that occurs among several group members (DeAngelis, Penney, & Scully, 2014; Wilson, 2013).

Shared leadership is fluid and dynamic. In one circumstance a person might fill a leader role and in another serve in a follower role. The role of leader floats among group members; the most appropriate (knowledgeable, agreeable) person serves as leader in a situation in which her or his traits and skills will be most valuable. The relationship among all group members, leaders and followers, can be thought of as horizontal (group members share authority and responsibility) rather than vertical (the leader has the most authority and responsibility). Followers and leaders complement one another; leadership is a group effort in which group members join for the benefit of all.

Successful shared leadership requires a mature and skilled group in which all group members share an understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve the objectives. In addition, team members need to have some idea about which group members have the related expertise for successful completion of various group processes. Hoffman and Lord (2013) wrote about how in a shared leadership situation group members alternately grant and claim the leadership role. Granting and claiming leadership reflects the idea that someone cannot be a leader until and unless the rest of the group *grants* or allows that person to assume the leadership role. Likewise, an individual will not fill a leadership role unless they *claim* it. The granting–claiming process occurs at a subconscious level and is necessary for effective leadership.

> **“The role of leader floats among group members; the most appropriate (knowledgeable, agreeable) person serves as leader in a situation in which her or his traits and skills will be most valuable.”**

The final theory of leadership that we will present considers some of the unconscious assumptions, reactions, and responses people have to those who are (or are expected to be) leaders, as well as to those who are followers. Called the implicit leadership theory (ILT), it describes the processes that occur within each person wherever her or his concept of leadership is activated. A corresponding theory, the implicit followership theory (IFT), describes the other half of the leadership–followership dynamic.

Implicit Leadership Theory

Something that is implicit goes without saying; the process or characteristic being described is inherent in the event or activity in which people are engaged. In this case, implicit refers to the underlying assumptions, perceptions, and realities that occur whenever people act as leaders and followers. Thus, the ILT explains how people make use of subconscious interpretations to help explain leadership.

Hoption (2016) explained that all people have a preconceived notion or picture in their minds about what a leader looks and acts like and what a follower looks and acts like. These subconscious pictures about what they consider a leader is called a schema; schemas help make sense of what people observe and instructs them about how they should interact with others. People learn and develop these underlying mental pictures from childhood based on experiences with leadership and followership within their particular culture. When they see or are involved in situations in which leader and follower roles are acted out, their brains spontaneously (within nanoseconds) bring up mental images of what they think a leader looks like and does. They then compare what is in front of them with their expectations for leaders.

The image of leader and follower that comes to mind in the way described is called a prototype; it is a mental model of what and who a leader is and how leadership is supposed to happen. Van Quaquebeke, Graf, and Eckloff (2014) noted that prototypes of leader can be based on two frameworks. One is the concept of central tendency, in which people merge the traits and behaviors of all the leaders they have known and from that information create a generalized notion of what a leader is—this is considered a *typical* prototype. The other implicit model people hold is one of an exemplar—the notion of what an *ideal* leader is and does. People are apt to attribute leadership to those who most accurately match their prototype for leader. Conversely, individuals are unlikely to recognize the leadership capabilities of those who do not fit their leader prototype (Carnes, Houghton, & Ellison, 2015).

Influence of gender and race. Researchers have identified several traits that are associated with a prototypical leader. Carnes et al. (2015) found that common traits ascribed to leader prototypes include intelligence, dedication, sensitivity (to others), and dynamism (charisma). Cairns-Lee (2015) added competence, assertiveness, confidence, directiveness, and being task oriented to that list. The first list of leader traits fits people's views of any type of person—female or male, Black or White, aged or young. The second list is more defined and includes characteristics that are generally ascribed to males more than to females. These gender-based expectations are called gender roles, and gender roles are reinforced in every aspect of life. Because the traits that define leadership are commonly attributed to the male gender role, leadership is perceived to be more suitable for men than for women (Rhee & Sigler, 2015; Williams & Tiedens, 2016).

> **All people have a preconceived notion or picture in their minds about what a leader looks and acts like and what a follower looks and acts like.**

Women are expected to be nurturing, caring, gentle, and empathetic. Thus, females generally do not meet the expected leader prototype. This gender role mis-fit affects both female and male leaders. Initially, women are perceived to be less capable leaders than men are, and once they take on leadership roles, they often face backlash for their competence (Rhee & Sigler, 2015). Other researchers have found that men, who are assumed to be competent leaders, face penalties if they ask for help because needing help is antithetical to being a leader and to being male (Rosette, Mueller, & Lebel, 2015).

Nelson, Bronstein, Shacham, and Ben-Ari (2015) found that when women in leadership positions demonstrated prototypical leader behaviors, they were not seen as leaders. Further, because women leaders act in ways that are considered masculine and inconsistent with female gender role expectations such as nurturing and caring, followers evaluated them negatively as leaders. On the contrary, the investigators found that when males exhibited feminine traits such as being caring, they received positive evaluations.

In terms of exploring the relationship between race and the leader prototype, Rosette et al. (2015) found that Black female leaders were more harshly treated than were Black male and White female leaders when they made a mistake. This is due to a perception that Black women do not meet the typical prototype that society holds for Black (which is male) nor woman (which is White) nor leader (which is White male). Thus, Black women can be thought of as being twice removed from the schema of a leader. Black males who exhibited behaviors such as directiveness and assertiveness, which are prototypical of males and leaders, received negative leadership evaluations because of their race. People cannot change their race or gender, but being aware that others' subconscious and spontaneous assessment of gender and race may clash with the common prototype of leader can facilitate their own leadership development and roles as followers. Acting on this awareness may help people recognize, seek out, and thrive on the leadership potential in others as well as in themselves.

Implicit Followership Theory

The ILT speaks to conceptualization of a leader—one factor in the leadership process. The other primary component to leader is follower; thus, a counterpart to the ILT has been articulated as the Implicit Followership Theory (IFT). Like the ILT, the IFT followership theory speaks to subconscious mental images and expectations people hold for who is a follower and what a follower looks like and does. Again, as with the ILT, the prototypes people hold for follower might be a mix of all the followers they have ever encountered or of the ideal follower.

Followers are typically thought of in relation to a leader; conversations about followers rarely arise unless the discussion is about leaders and leadership. This holds true in the research that has been conducted around the IFT, as well. Researchers have examined the prototypes that leaders hold for followers and the effects of those schema on the leader–follower relationship and overall group effectiveness. As with the ILT, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) emphasized that follower prototypes are strongly affected by culture. In the U.S., leaders hold typical prototypes of followers that include industry (how hardworking followers are), competence and skills, conformity (whether followers are easily influenced by others or trends), enthusiasm, and good citizenship (followers are loyal, reliable, and team players). Followers who have the expected traits and fit this prototype receive the leader's trust, support, and mentorship. And, of course, those who do not fit the leader's follower schema will likely not be perceived as effective followers—they might be viewed as members of an out-group.

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2020-09-12

The ILT suggests that the typical prototype for a leader is a White male. Photo courtesy of Paul Jordan.

With this information, it becomes important that leaders are aware of their prototypes for followers. Bligh and Kohles (2014) provided examples in which follower prototypes held by leaders limited the leaders' ability to recognize the potential of contributing and effective followers. One example was that Western (including those in the U.S.) leaders often recognize the potential of followers who demonstrate enthusiasm—they are committed, involved, extraverted, and take initiative (for example)—and label and treat individuals with these traits as "high potentials." High potentials receive more attention and resources from the leader, which contributes to their success. Enthusiasm is an important implicit followership trait, so much so that Bligh and Kohles found that Western leaders often overlooked the potential in equally capable followers who, because of cultural differences, did not exhibit outward enthusiasm (e.g., followers who were American Indian). The nonprototypical followers received less attention from the leader and were granted fewer responsibilities, thereby limiting their leadership advancement.

Research is ongoing, but it has been suggested that similar IFT bias may exist for gender in which females are perceived to be less competent, less committed, and more easily swayed by others (all undesirable traits for a prototypical follower). A leader who holds this follower prototype could easily overlook female group members' contributions to group success. In turn, this could lead to fewer opportunities for personal development, access to leader attention, and other important resources for personal and professional growth. Overlooking the potential of any follower can be detrimental to the individual as well as to the success of the group. Thus, it is important that leaders and followers understand follower prototypes so as to facilitate leadership opportunities for all.

One distinct aspect of the ILT and IFT that is embedded in how people perceive leaders and followers is power. Leadership, followership, and power tend to be considered as comingled and finite—a leader has power, a follower does not (or has less). In other cases such as with shared leadership, power is shared and leaders and followers are both empowered to act. And, as with other elements of leadership (e.g., gender, age, disability, and other traits of prototypes), there is an assumption about the distribution of power. See Table 1.2 for a comparison of theories.

> **"Leaders hold typical prototypes of followers that include industry (how hardworking followers are), competence and skills, conformity (whether followers are easily influenced by others or trends), enthusiasm, and good citizenship (followers are loyal, reliable, and team players)."**

Leadership and Power: What's the Connection?

An accepted definition of power is the ability to influence others to do something; this means that both leaders and followers can have power. However, the most commonly held perspective on power is that those in charge (leaders) have more power than those who might be identified lower on the organizational chart (followers). Hoption (2016) found that in traditional views of leadership followers expect leaders to have power; power is part of the leader prototype. In a situation where shared leadership is the orientation of a group, however, power is shared among group members.

Schaap (2014) identified two foci of power: *socialized* and *personalized*. Socialized power is used to influence others to accomplish tasks in order to achieve goals; it is task focused. On the other hand, personalized power is used to obtain power that can help people gain appreciation/esteem and status for themselves. The focus of personalized power is on enhancing perceptions of the self rather than on helping the group to achieve goals.

In addition to how power might be focused, Schaap (2014) conceptualized two types of power: power *over* and power *with*. Power over describes the traditional understanding of power—one person has it and others do not. Those with power can tell others what to do and others are supposed to do it. The foundation of power over is usually access to and control of resources. The one who has power has more resources than the others. The powerful one might be able to promote someone, provide inside information, or award public recognition. At the same time, the powerful can apply consequences to those who do not comply with directives.

Power with, on the other hand, is generally thought of as empowerment when power is shared among all involved. In this view, there is no fear that giving others power will reduce the power of any one individual. Power is viewed as infinite—everyone has access to and control over resources. This enables group members to apply power in ways that will benefit the efforts of the group.

To understand the various manifestations of power, several researchers have contributed to a list of the various ways people exhibit and recognize power (Goncalves, 2013; Lumby, 2013). Individuals, groups, and leaders all use one or more of these types of power in different situations. It is important to remember that culture, gender, seniority, and sometimes age all influence how people act out, grant/claim, and perceive power. These differences may be due to strongly embedded values, stereotypes individuals hold about the capabilities of a particular people, or other factors. The types of power are listed alphabetically, and short explanations are provided for each.

Charisma/Referent

People admire, respect, and look up to a person with charisma; she or he exhibits confidence and social magnetism. These individuals exude a special energy, warmth, and charm that draws others to them seemingly without any effort on the part of the leader. Followers admire and want to be associated with a leader

> **“Power with, on the other hand, is generally thought of as empowerment when power is shared among all involved. In this view, there is no fear that giving others power will reduce the power of any one individual.”**

Table 1.2

Comparison of ITL and IFT

Characteristic	ILT: Leader	IFT: Follower
Definition	Subconscious mental images and expectations people hold for who is a leader and what a leader looks like and does	Subconscious mental images and expectations people hold for who is a follower and what a follower looks like and does
Prototypical Traits	Intelligence, dedication, sensitivity (to others), dynamism (charisma), assertive, confident, dominant, powerful	Committed, involved, extraverted, takes initiative, loyal, competent, hardworking
Gender Bias	Males viewed as more powerful, assertive, and competent than females	Females viewed as less competent, less committed, more easily swayed by others than are males
Power	Has power	Does not have power

who has this type of power. Gender plays a role in attributions of charismatic power, with research showing that women are infrequently perceived as having this type of power. Charismatic power has been attributed to historical figures such as highly regarded religious leaders, which typically included only males (Buddha, Moses, Confucius, Jesus); contemporary public figures include women such as Oprah Winfrey and Michelle Obama.

Coercive

A person who uses coercive power demands immediate compliance from others with a threat of punishment if demands are not met. A leader who uses coercion to achieve a goal may receive compliance from followers, but commitment to the task and trusting relationships will be lacking. Research has shown that women and African Americans are often negatively evaluated when using this type of power. In the parks and recreation profession, a coercive leader might have the ability (and use this information as an underlying threat) to suspend participants from a sports league, to withhold a paycheck, or to make an individual sit in time-out. Although one of the least effective forms of power, coercion (punishment) is a component of transactional leadership.

Connectional

In this day and age when networking is considered vital to professional development, an individual who has varied and strong connections with others is perceived as having connectional power. It is important for leaders (and followers) to develop connections and networks—both social and professional—and to engage ethically in those relationships. Connectional power facilitates people's ability to enhance their base of support and extend known information sources; those who have strong and varied networks manifest this type of power. Leaders who know numerous people in the profession, including those in support positions (e.g., maintenance staff, city officials), vendors, and other "people who know people" exhibit connectional power.

People perceive leader power through a variety of behaviors. Photo courtesy of Deb Jordan.

Empowerment

Empowerment is power shared with others; it facilitates the ability of people "to do." In this view, power is not viewed as finite, but rather as expansive. Giving power to followers enables them (and the leader) to accomplish more within trusting and satisfaction-laden groups. Leaders empower people when they teach them the skills, provide them the social support, and give them the resources needed to meet group goals. Empowerment involves people having the authority to make decisions for the situation at hand without having to ask permission every step of the way. For example, a front desk staff member might be empowered by her supervisor to handle customer complaints directly rather than passing the complainant up the line. People who express dissatisfaction with an experience and feel like they are being passed from one person to another before they are truly heard often escalate from feeling minor annoyance to expressing full-blown public frustration. Being empowered to address a problem at the outset can be beneficial to all.

> **"Empowerment is power shared with others; it facilitates the ability of people "to do." In this view, power is not viewed as finite, but rather as expansive."**

Expert Power

Some people attribute power to an individual because they believe that person has special knowledge or expertise about the task at hand. This type of power is often situational, and the power will shift as the individual's expertise no longer applies. As with other types of power, women, people of color, young people, and those who represent other undervalued dimensions of diversity may find it challenging to be perceived as having expert power. For example, an individual who knows the meanings of gang symbols will likely be granted power when in gang-tagged territory. In general, people with expert power tend to be well respected within their area of expertise. As with other types of power, women, people of color, young people, and those who represent other undervalued dimensions of diversity may find it challenging to be perceived as having expert power.

Helplessness

Everyone uses helplessness power at one time or another. For example, people can claim to be helpless to induce others to do something for them. This is a form of indirect power and can be successful in terms of influencing others to action. At the same time, however, when overused or used by low status people, helplessness power can be detrimental to the actor. Examples of this include a person seeking help with a crafts project by claiming a lack of skill to complete it or a leader saying that she or he does not know what to do with crying children so that someone else will handle the uncomfortable situation.

Indirect Power

In groups in which power is relatively balanced, at times a few group members may use indirect power to persuade one or more individuals to do things their way. Using group norms, dropping subtle hints, and making other people think an idea was theirs to influence behavior are methods of expressing indirect power. For instance, when standing in front of a new group member, one teammate might say to another, "You know, around here, we follow this process . . ." This is a subtle way of telling a new group member to stop doing something in one manner and follow previously established and accepted group norms.

Informational

A person with informational power has formal and informal access to material that can affect another individual. This individual might be considered the agency or organization "historian," or keepers of knowledge. This is the person who knows where everything is, whom to contact for what resource, how to use a piece of machinery, the rules of the game, the required steps to process travel claims, and similar information vital for a leader's and organization's success. When used ethically, this type of power can lead to strong relationships within a group.

Legitimate

In this situation, the person with legitimate power is seen as having the right and/or formally recognized authority to do something (usually by way of position) and others are obliged to follow. For instance, department staff members may grant legitimate power to members of a supervisory board, and tour group members commonly attribute legitimate power to the identified trip leaders. It is important to note that just because leaders hold a position with a title and authority does not necessarily mean that they will have influence over the group. As noted earlier, group members have to grant and others have to claim leadership before progress can be made.

> **"Just because leaders hold a position with a title and authority does not necessarily mean that they will have influence over the group."**

Reward

Reward power is often perceived as the opposite of coercive power. Rather than sensing a threat of punishment from the leader, followers believe this leader has the capacity to reward them and thus they respond positively. A person high in reward power has access to resources that are perceived as prizes or awards. A reward might be something tangible such as a pay raise or a move to a more desirable office; it might also be something intangible such as public recognition for contributions or an increase in respect and trust from the leader.

Social Status

Often, those with higher levels of social status, as indicated by their position in the community, occupation, or history of altruism (someone who donates a lot of time or money to various causes), are perceived to have more power than those with lower social status. Social status and the power that goes with it may be attributed to someone who is a team captain, a major donor to an organization, or the most respected member of the community. This type of power is not guaranteed to an individual who is in the upper strata of social class, but social status is a prerequisite to have this type of power and the associated influence.

Power is embedded in leadership, and when used ethically and with skill, it often facilitates group progress. Being familiar with the types of power helps leaders and followers to understand the potential motivations of others (as well as their own). This knowledge is beneficial to leaders who wish to influence others in one direction or another. See Table 1.3 for a list of the types of power.

Table 1.3

Types of Power

Type of power	Description
Coercive	Threat of punishment
Connectional	Networking
Charisma/Referent	Magnetism
Empowerment	Shared power
Expert Power	Based on knowledge, skill
Helplessness	I need assistance
Indirect Power	Behind the scenes
Informational	Keeper of knowledge
Legitimate	Position viewed as powerful
Reward	Something given in return for good deeds
Social Status	Higher socioeconomic class

Leader Development

Learning about the underpinnings of leadership—how people have understood it over the years, how leaders are identified, the roles of leaders and followers and the relationship between them, and how power relates to leadership—sets the stage for those who wish to improve their leadership and followership skills throughout their careers. To do so requires ongoing personal development that includes a growing self-awareness and the practice of interpersonal, task, and conceptual skills. These aspects of learning can result in failure or success. Those who learn from life experiences and can put what was learned into practice will continue to develop as leaders who can make a difference.

Cairns-Lee (2015) suggested that leadership development is a process of self-development. People's inner selves are not static, but rather human nature is to be dynamic and full of energy and vitality. This enables people to learn, to evolve, to re-create themselves over and over again. This is good news, as the way of constantly becoming is filled with ups and downs. Throughout the process of developing the leadership self, each individual must remember that everyone lives in relation to others—attitudes, thoughts, and actions affect surrounding people. Thus, self-development requires self-awareness, and that self-awareness must include a person's recognition of and responsiveness to how her or his beliefs and actions affect others.

As parks and recreation professionals become increasingly aware of their values, motivations, biases, emotional intelligence, life experiences, and so on, they begin to relate those traits and experiences to their views about leadership and followership. Perhaps recreation practitioners are more comfortable understanding leadership as a transaction than as transformation—do they know where that inclination came from? Do individuals understand how the ways they manifest that piece of who they are affects others? Does that self-knowledge help them to discover effective and other affirming ways to lead?

> **“Learning about the underpinnings of leadership—how people have understood it over the years, how leaders are identified, the roles of leaders and followers and the relationship between them, and how power relates to leadership—sets the stage for those who wish to improve their leadership and followership skills throughout their careers.”**

Two authors provide advice for those in the early stages of personal leadership development. Mitstifer (2014) presented a leadership development model that includes four areas on which a person can concentrate to enhance personal leadership capabilities:

(a) strengthen self-awareness, (b) develop relationships (with colleagues and peers) and practice teamwork as a leader and as a team member, (c) understand alliances (how and why professionals and agencies are connected) and political realities within the community and profession, and (d) envision and take steps to ensure the future success of an agency or organization in serving constituents. By being purposeful in taking actions to meet these foci, recreation professionals further their personal leadership and, by extension, followership development.

Another author who has offered advice for apprentice leaders is Allio (2013). He provides a succinct list of actions that can help people develop leadership and follower strengths:

1. Accept leadership challenges and practice acts of leadership. In formal learning environments, the simple act of raising a hand to ask or answer a question is a challenge for some; others might be challenged by volunteering to serve as a chairperson of a committee.
2. Emulate ethical and successful leaders and their leadership behaviors. This means that a person must consciously look for one or more effective leaders and pay attention to how they speak, act, and carry themselves with integrity.
3. Find one or more mentors or coaches who are willing to provide constructive feedback. This is an important step in ongoing leadership development. Ask people who are successful leaders how they arrived at that point, and most of them will easily be able to name one or more people who helped make them the person and leader they are today. All developing leaders are encouraged to engage formally with one or more mentors.
4. Attend leadership programs to refine specific leadership skills such as how to provide effective feedback to staff. One opportunity to learn the elements to leadership success is to attend state, regional, and/or national conferences and go to leadership development sessions. In addition to formal educational sessions, such meetings provide many informal opportunities to learn from peers, engage in networking, engage mentors, and test a person's views of leadership.
5. Work to develop personal traits of empathy, patience, and fortitude. These traits can make a difference in a person's abilities to work effectively with a variety of people who have work styles, interpersonal skills, and ways of looking at the world that are different from their own.

In addition to the list for personal leadership development, Allio (2013) offered guidelines for followers, as all leaders are followers at some time in their careers. He suggested that as professionals evolve into the best followers they can be, they should seek to do the following:

1. Develop relationships with other followers (in- and out-group members) to share learning strategies and the associated outcomes—both positive and detrimental. One opportunity to learn in this way is to join more than one group, observe, ask questions, and get to know both group members and leaders.
2. Give constructive feedback to the leader. To do so first requires purposely paying attention to the leader's words and behaviors and the effect those actions have on group members. Fully understanding the effects of leader behaviors might include obtaining insights from other group members. Once a follower has a solid understanding of the leader action–follower reaction process, the next step is to be intentional about how to best word and offer the feedback to the leader in a way that will be helpful and not simply a complaint.

Leader development is an ongoing process. Photo courtesy of Deb Jordan.

3. Engage in creative dissent—know when to say no to leader suggestions and help to create alternative ways to accomplish the goal. One of the most important elements of creative dissent is to go beyond resistance and help generate alternatives to achieve the same end. Thus, any time a person disagrees with a particular course of action they should be prepared to suggest alternatives.
4. Recognize appropriate times and methods when followers can assume leadership roles to enhance the group process and goals. This is one way to enact shared leadership. It is important, of course, that such role switches avoid being acts of mutiny in which a leader and her or his guidance is deemed unworthy and group members abandon them.
5. Finally, take advantage of rapid and open access to information; this process and level of engagement can be beneficial in maintaining group cohesion while continuing progress.

Leadership is an important responsibility. A leader's attitudes, words, and actions have profound effects on followers, leaders, and observers. People rarely have a sense of how the way they present themselves and how their work touches others; thus, it becomes important for people to remain aware that their reach is broad and long lasting. As such for professionals in a human services field, it is incumbent upon all to engage in continual leadership development. Learning how to be intentional in leadership and in followership can have positive outcomes for constituents, the agency or organization, and the leaders themselves.

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Chapter 2

Leadership Across the Lifespan

Photo courtesy of Whitney Sauter.

Leaders who truly understand human development are more successful than those who do not. Learning about how people grow, mature, and develop across the lifespan helps leaders understand the thoughts, behaviors, and motivations of participants. For instance, a young child who refuses to share equipment does not necessarily do so out of selfishness. Rather, a child does not learn to share and cooperate with others until a particular stage of development. The social, psychological, emotional, and physical evolutions of each individual influence that person's development. In addition, many external factors influence human development including cultural mores, generational events, dimensions of diversity (see Chapter 3), and family experiences.

Human development is a complex and extensive field, and leaders who understand the basics have a foundation from which to draw when applying various leadership skills to people of all ages. Knowledge and understanding of general principles of human development is necessary to lead in a developmentally appropriate fashion. This is needed because at different stages of cognitive development, for example, some techniques are more effective than others. For instance, when dealing with a child who has not yet fully reached Piaget's concrete operations stage, an effective leader will need to use literal rather than figurative directions and instructions. Once a person develops the capability to understand literal language, leaders may be more creative with their use of terms. It should be noted that everyone does not move through developmental stages at the same time in life, and some people experience arrested development at particular stages. People who are well above the chronological age most typical of a particular developmental stage (e.g., have slowed or stopped in intellectual development) are typically considered to have a cognitive or developmental disability.

The behaviors, skills, and abilities described within each developmental stage are simply more typical of one age group than another—they are not hard-and-fast rules of when a particular individual should go through each stage or developmental phase. Individual people differ in genetics, health, and outlook on life; thus, although information about human development can be extremely helpful in understanding people in general, it cannot be used to predict individual behaviors or be certain of reasons behind specific behaviors. That said, a basic comprehension of human development is useful in matching leader expectations and choices with participant capabilities. This is developmentally appropriate leadership.

> **Learning about how people grow, mature, and develop across the lifespan helps leaders understand the thoughts, behaviors, and motivations of participants.**

Theories of Human Development

The information in this chapter is a compilation of material from a mix of many authors. For readability, rather than cite each individual source for each bit of data, we offer the sources here and in the reference list. It is important to understand that the work of authors from all disciplines and professions support the concept of human development as it relates to the recreation profession. The authors whose material is embedded throughout this chapter include Bandura (1971); Berenbaum, Beltz, and Corley (2015); Bryant et al. (2012); Buettner, Hur, Jeon, and Andrews (2016); Diehl, Wahl, Brothers, and Miche (2015); Farb and Matjasko (2012); Ferguson, Cassells, MacAllister, and Evans (2013); Futch, Deutsch, Fox, Johnson, and Varga (2016); Hart, Van Hoof, Orobio de Castro, Van Aken, and Van Goethem (2015); Kim, Oesterle, Catalano, and Hawkins (2015); Meisner and Baker (2013); North and Fiske (2015); Pope (2013); and Von Humboldt, Leal, Pimenta, and Niculescu (2012).

Many theories or models of human development exist; some are based in cognition and thought processes, others are based in motivation and behaviors, and yet others are based in biology and physiology. We describe three models that we believe can help recreation services professionals intentionally make good decisions throughout the leadership process. The first is a social cognitive model developed in the early 1970s. This model is considered to be a social learning theory—it represents a thought process as well as a behavioral process. Relatedly, Piaget believed that knowledge is constructed as people interact through and within the environment. Last, Kohlberg and Gilligan focused on the development of morality across the lifespan.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory

One of the key tenets of Bandura's theory is that the influences that affect learning and development are reciprocal—they both affect one another. Thus, throughout the development process, the environment influences how people grow and mature. At the same time, what people learn and how they act on that learning influences the environment. For example, consider Katerina, who is in a beginner photography class. The way the instructor teaches, the physical environment (indoors or outdoors, cold or hot), and the other participants (attentive, distracting, asking a lot of questions) affect how well and how quickly Katerina learns photography basics. At the same time, how Katerina behaves with others, how she moves, where she positions herself in the physical space, and how she interacts with the instructor and other participants influence the class atmosphere and environment, thereby affecting the learning of others. Katerina's learning is affected by the environment, and her learning influences the environment. This idea of reciprocity helps leaders to manage situations in which multiple individuals are involved, and vice versa. The way each person acts and reacts affects everyone else in the environment.

According to Bandura, learning is a two-way process. Photo courtesy of Carmen Russoniello.

In addition to the notion of reciprocity, Bandura's primary premise was that people can learn through observation of others' behaviors. He referred to the behaviors of observed others as modeling. He explained that there are three types of modeling. First, every moment is teachable, and people can learn by *visually observing* a behavior that another demonstrates. Thus, whether a leader is intentionally instructing how to sing a song or informally interacting with participants, people are watching and learning. In the one case, people can learn how to sing a song through a leader first singing (modeling) the lyrics and melody;

in the other instance, people learn (whether positive or negative) how individuals should communicate with one another (see Chapter 4).

Second, *verbal modeling* includes the descriptions and explanations of actions that leaders give to participants. Understanding this can help leaders focus on their direct leadership techniques (see Chapter 10) so as to give the most effective explanations as possible. This verbal modeling can relate to how to do a tangible activity (e.g., explaining how to complete a *J* stroke when canoeing) as well as to concepts that are more abstract such as how to behave (describing what is meant by respecting others).

Third, *symbolic modeling* comes through a secondary medium. For instance, rather than the model being a live person doing a behavior that others observe, symbolic models are characters that are viewed in the popular media such as television, video games, movies, the Internet, and graphic novels. The models (who are symbols or representations of live people) can be fictional or real characters. For example, social learning theory could be used to support the proposition that someone who watches nothing but violent video games in which the actors communicate aggressively and rudely would learn through their observations that violent and aggressive behavior is acceptable.

Regardless of the type of modeling people observe and from which they learn, Bandura identified four requirements for learning to occur (see Figure 2.1). As with most learning situations, social learning theory says that for learning to occur a person must first be *attentive* to the message. If someone is not paying attention (even at a subconscious level), learning will not occur. The more exciting or innovative a modeling behavior is (whether it is given in person, through verbal instruction, or via a secondary medium), the more effective the subsequent learning will be. Thus, a leader who uses stories, analogies, or metaphors when leading a group on a challenge course, for instance, may find that participant learning will be higher than if the leader was to simply give straightforward, everyday instructions.

In addition to paying attention to what is being modeled, learners must be able to *retain* the information they are learning. This is necessary for the next step in learning, which is *reproduction*—being able to imitate what the leader had modeled. So first people must be paying attention, and then they have to be able to remember what they learned so that they can then do the behavior themselves. This is part of the practicing component of learning. To help people learn, a leader might first model a behavior (how to swing a bat), and assuming those being taught were paying attention and can remember what they observed, they now can practice their bat swing. Subsequent modeling (perhaps verbal modeling) may be needed to explain the nuances involved in effectively swinging a bat. Leaders might also use symbolic modeling to help with instruction by showing videos that illustrate best practices for swinging a bat.

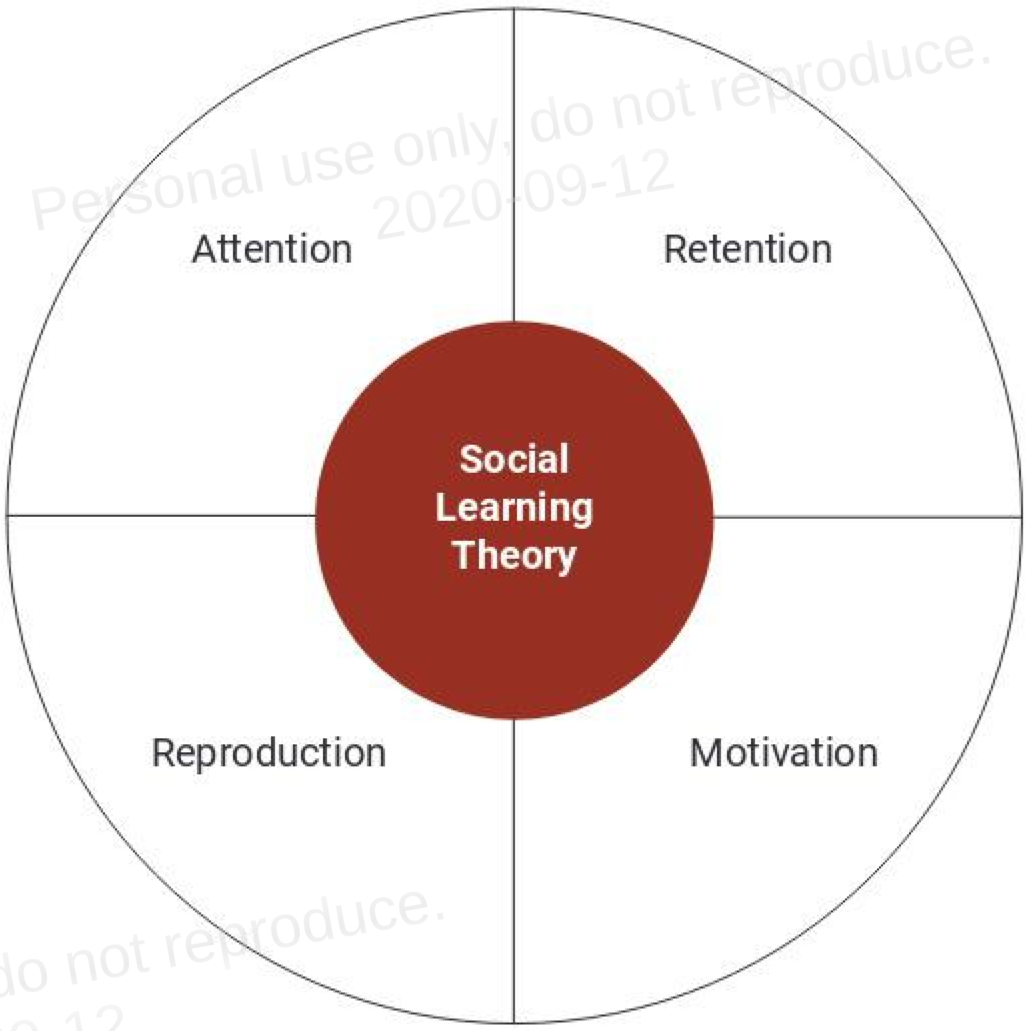


Figure 2.1. Social learning theory.

The fourth element to social learning theory that explains how learning occurs is *motivation.* A person who is motivated to learn is more likely to learn than an individual who is not motivated to do so. Further, a person who is internally (or intrinsically) motivated to learn will learn more effectively and deeply than one who is externally motivated. As with other phenomena, motivation can be learned through observation. If one person observes another individual being rewarded for particular words or acts, that individual may begin to engage in similar behaviors with the expectation that she or he would be rewarded as well. This becomes important for recreation services leaders, as leading in a way that helps participants to achieve competence and mastery can be an effective tool to enhance intrinsic motivation.

Bandura's model of social learning helps leaders to understand that people learn from modeling, and modeling occurs through multiple processes. In recreation settings just as participants and spectators learn from how leaders behave, leaders also learn how to behave from observing participants and spectators. Further, although people learn from their environment (which includes other people), the learning and subsequent behavior of people affects the environment—learning is a reciprocal process. Understanding social learning theory can help leaders remain alert and be intentional with their own behaviors—recognizing that they are being observed all the time. Everything a leader says and does is a potential lesson for someone else.

> **“A person who is internally (or intrinsically) motivated to learn will learn more effectively and deeply than one who is externally motivated to learn.”**

Development According to Piaget

Although they sometimes seem to be miniature grown-ups, children have unique ways of learning and understanding. These differences are based on developmental stages that involve cognitive abilities and limitations. Levels of understanding and cognitive abilities evolve over time and affect the way an individual interacts with others, approaches tasks, and makes decisions. According to Piaget, knowledge is constructed gradually through interactions with the environment. Responses to the environment depend upon how individuals understand the situation in which they find themselves. In the early 1900s, Piaget theorized that four general stages of development exist: sensorimotor intelligence, preoperational, concrete operations stage, and formal operations (see Table 2.1).

Sensorimotor intelligence stage (typically birth to 24 months). The sensorimotor stage occurs within the first two years of life. What occurs at this stage of development may not affect recreation leadership directly, but knowledge of this stage provides an important foundation for understanding people. The sensorimotor stage includes human learning through reflexes and exploration of the world (e.g., infants explore things through the five senses: taste, smell, touch, seeing, and hearing). Through this type of exploration, babies develop an understanding of their position in the world. As you might imagine, at this stage repetition is the primary method of learning. Through multiple exposures, children learn object permanence (i.e., the knowledge that things do not cease to exist simply because they are hidden from view), physical causality (i.e., the knowledge that things do not happen at random), and that intentional acts are required to achieve a desired goal.

Preoperational stage (typically 2 to 6 years). Children enter the preoperational stage between ages 2 and 6. At this stage, they learn how to use language,

Table 2.1

Four Stages of Development According to Piaget

Stage	Age	Description
Sensorimotor intelligence	Birth–24 months	• Human learning through reflexes and exploration of the world
Preoperational	2–6 years	• Learn how to use language, but are limited in understanding abstract constructs • Egocentric
Concrete operations	7–11 years	• Learn to classify and group objects and begin to understand abstract notions and logical reasoning • Learn that general principles apply across a variety of situations and that basic principles apply to everyone • Use inductive logic or reasoning • Lessening and eventual disappearance of egocentrism
Formal operations	11+ years	• Development of problem-solving abilities and hypothesis testing

but are limited in understanding abstract constructs. For instance, children in this developmental stage believe that water poured from a short, wide glass becomes more (in volume) when poured into a tall, thin glass, because the taller glass looks bigger. They do not yet have the cognitive skills to understand the concepts of volume and constancy.

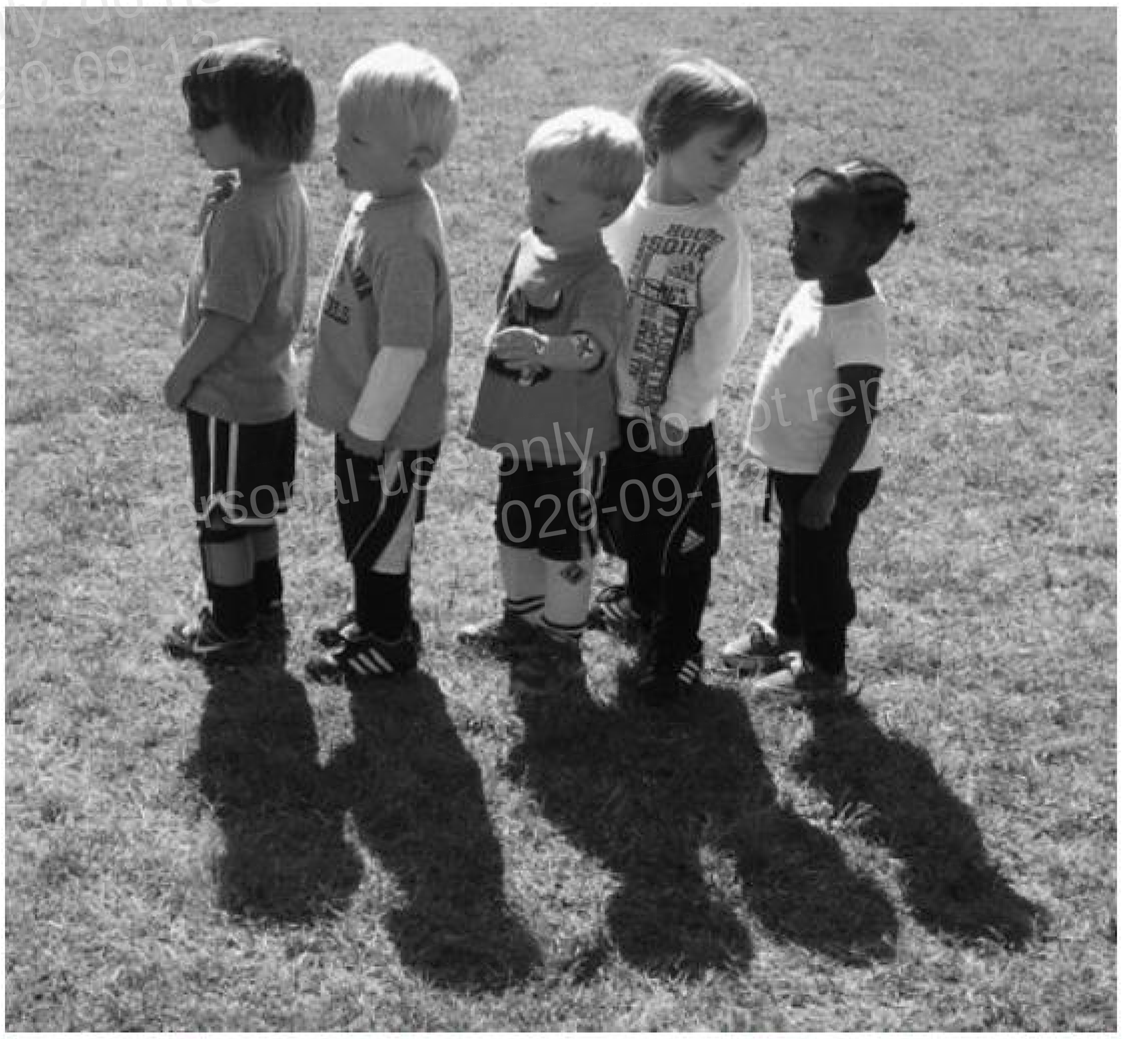
During this stage of development, children are egocentric—they believe that everyone sees things the same way they do. Knowledge of this egocentricity can help leaders modify their expectations of children's social capabilities, such as problem solving and sharing. Also at this stage, children believe that inanimate objects such as stuffed animals have feelings just as people do; young children have great capacity for imaginary play. In addition, between the ages of 2 and 6, children believe that they cause events to happen merely by thinking or wishing that they occur. For example, if in anger a child were to wish ill of someone (whether they think it or say it out loud) and something bad were to happen to that person, youngsters at this stage would believe that their wish caused the bad thing to occur. Leaders who recognize this can be sensitive to a child's seeming overreactions to negative occurrences and follow up with appropriate reassurances.

Concrete operations stage (typically 7 to 11 years). In middle childhood, youngsters learn to classify and group objects and begin to understand abstract notions and logical reasoning. Children can focus on more than one thing at a time and can handle multiple sequential instructions from a leader. In the previous developmental stage, leaders would want to give instructions for an activity one step at a time. For example, a leader might tell children in the preoperational stage to "go over there"; once the children were at the appropriate location, the leader would give the next instruction, "Stand in line so you are side by side," and so on. Because children's cognitive capabilities have grown, at this concrete operations stage of development most youngsters can follow several directions at once—the leader could tell the children, "Go over there and stand in line so you are side by side," for instance.

In middle childhood, young people learn that general principles apply across a variety of situations and that basic principles apply to everyone. They also learn how to retrace their thought processes and keep track of their thoughts. They begin to understand that merely changing the form of an object does not change the nature of it; thus, they understand that pouring water from a short, wide glass into a tall, thin glass does not change the amount of water. Understanding what occurs developmentally during this stage helps leaders to communicate, assign tasks, and use increasingly sophisticated behavior management techniques. For instance, most 7- to 11-year-old children understand what it means to play within activity rules. In the previous stage (preoperational), children may make up rules during play to avoid failing or losing.

Piaget believed that children in the concrete operational stage were fairly good at the use of inductive logic or reasoning. Inductive reasoning involves cognitively moving from a specific experience to a general principle. An example of inductive logic is when children notice that every time they play with a specific child they get into trouble. The children could then reason from that experience that they should avoid hanging out with that particular child. On the other hand, children at this age have difficulty using deductive logic, which involves using a general principle to determine a specific event. For example, children may not recognize that the success they faced in an activity was due to prior practice or instruction.

The concrete operational stage is also marked by the lessening and eventual disappearance of egocentrism; 7- to 11-year-olds understand that other peo-



Parents often enroll their very young children in organized sports. Photo courtesy of Kindal Shores.

ple might see things in different ways than they do. For example, children at this stage of development can recognize that losing a soccer match might affect teammates in different ways. One teammate might become upset and get teary-eyed, another teammate might be outwardly angry, and another teammate might see the loss as an impetus to schedule additional practices. Appreciating that people react differently to the same situation gives rise to developing feelings of empathy.

Formal operations stage (typically 11+ years). The development and acquisition of formal operations is gradual. It generally begins around age 11, but the skills acquired in this stage do not become consistently learned and applied until approximately age 16; this level of skills is maintained throughout the lifespan. The formal operations stage includes the development of problem-solving abilities and hypothesis testing. People have the ability to wonder, "What would happen if . . . ?" and then test that notion. When moving through this stage, young people learn best when confronted with novelty and a desire to understand. For example, to help youth develop the ability to solve problems, leaders might engage them in leadership decisions, intentional conflict management, and the creation of new games and activities.

In cultivating his four-stage theory of development, Piaget examined how people move from infancy into adolescence and noted that enough similarities exist to define the four stages of human development as described above. Piaget's model focuses on how people learn, what they learn, and the beliefs they hold about their place in the world. The framework helps leaders to understand how and why people develop, think, and behave the way they do. It is generally accepted that all people follow similar patterns of development across the lifespan, although the actual age at which a person reaches a particular stage varies.

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Many have attempted to understand how a sense of morality (learning about right and wrong) develops over the lifespan, and the model proposed by Kohlberg is one of the most commonly applied. In the mid-1950s, Kohlberg theorized that people of all cultures experience moral development through the same stages, although perhaps at different rates. Further, he proposed that people learn about morality through thinking about moral problems and through interaction with others. As people grow through the various moral stages, they integrate what they learned at earlier stages into frameworks that are more integrated.

Leaders who understand moral development will better recognize the thinking and motivations behind participant actions and be in a position to intervene, as necessary. It is generally thought that as people grow and mature, they move through various stages of moral development, from an egotistical position (me orientation) to a more objective position (an outside perspective). It should be noted that all people do not move through all stages of moral development, but individuals do evolve progressively over the lifespan. In some cases, people may regress and move from a higher stage to a lower stage of moral development.

> **"People learn about morality through thinking about moral problems and through interaction with others."**

Preconventional stages (1 and 2). Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development (see Figure 2.2) and grouped them into three broader categories: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. The two earliest stages of moral development are considered to be within the preconventional stage and are common among children, although adults can also exhibit this level of reasoning. Reasoners at this level judge the morality of an action by its direct consequences to themselves.

Stage 1: Obedience and punishment (early childhood). In Stage 1, moral decisions are based on a desire to avoid punishment. People in this stage of moral development decide not to violate social norms (misbehave, do something considered bad or wrong) because they fear or want to avoid the consequences. At this stage, authority figures rule and children defer to them. For example, in their early years, children believe that a behavior is wrong if they were punished for that behavior or saw someone else punished for a similar behavior. They think, "The last time I did that I had to sit out, so I will not do it again." The worse the punishment for the behavior, the more wrong or bad the act is perceived to be. An example of obedience and punishment-driven morality is children refusing to do something another child suggests, because if they did so, they would get into trouble.

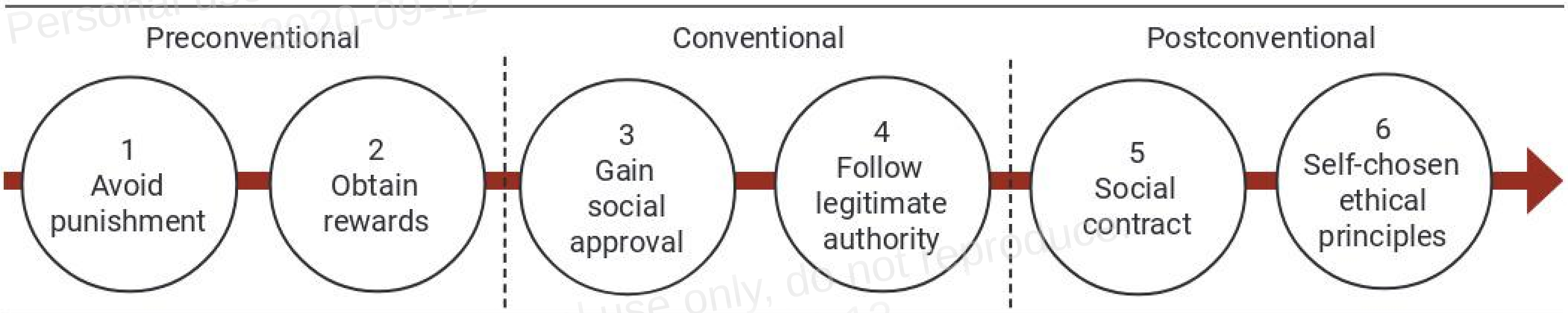


Figure 2.2. Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Kohlberg postulated about moral development across the lifespan and viewed this development as progressive and integrative.

Stage 2: Self-interest driven (early/middle childhood). In Stage 2, people make decisions about how to behave based on a desire to obtain rewards; they want to know, what is in it for me? Morality is viewed somewhat as an exchange or a transaction—youngsters believe that if they do something for someone else, the moral thing to do would be for that individual to reciprocate in some fashion. A right behavior is defined by whatever individuals believe to be in their best interest. In addition, they view what is right narrowly and do not consider the effect on their reputation or relationships to other people—the young person's view (and subsequent actions) is self-serving. For instance, if a leader was to ask a youth to pick up equipment, her or his initial response might be, "I didn't mess it up" followed by "What do I get if I pick it up?" Picking up the equipment would be considered right if the child received something in return.

Conventional stages. The moral perspectives that epitomize Stages 3 and 4 are typical of adolescents and adults. To reason in a conventional way is to judge the morality of actions by comparing them to society's views and expectations rather than only in relation to oneself. Conventional morality is characterized by an acceptance of society's conventions concerning right and wrong. At this level, an individual obeys rules and follows group or societal norms even when there are no consequences for obedience or disobedience. Adherence to rules and conventions is somewhat rigid, however, and the appropriateness or fairness of a rule is seldom questioned. At this stage, teens believe that a rule that defines an undesirable behavior is right merely because it is a rule.

Stage 3: Good intentions as determined by social consensus (adolescence). As people move through the stages of moral development, they move from being self-centered (holding an egocentric view) to becoming aware of society and their place in it. In Stage 3, people make decisions based on a desire to gain social approval—they strive for good interpersonal relationships and peer influence may be strong. Adolescents want to live up to others' (both peers' and adults') expectations. They also begin to consider good intentions and motivations when judging others' actions. For many, this is the highest moral development stage attained; across the lifespan, people look to others to serve as their measures for morality. This means that when individuals are about to make an ethically difficult decision, they first look for what others (often peers) model, seek counsel from them, and try to think about how others would handle the situation before making a decision.

Stage 4: Authority and social order obedience driven (adolescence/young adulthood). At this phase of moral development, individuals consider the importance of a shared understanding of what is right and wrong to be important to maintaining social order; thus, what society says is right is so. The thinking is that rules and moral imperatives help people in society to live together in relative safety and civility. The thought is that those in legitimate authority positions determine morality and do so out of a desire to manage successful social coexistence. What is legal is moral, and what is illegal is immoral. People at this stage follow rules because they believe that if everyone broke the rules, chaos might ensue. Stage 4 can be seen as rigid, and an either-or moral stance as the source of morality comes from outside sources; in addition they perceive relatively clear right and wrong actions. Kohlberg believed that most adults remain at Stage 4 once achieved.

Postconventional stages. The postconventional level, also known as the principled level, is marked by a growing realization that individuals are separate entities from society and that the individual's own perspective may take precedence over society's view—individuals may disobey rules that are inconsistent with their own principles. Postconventional moralists live by their own ethical principles—principles that typically include basic human rights such as life, liberty, and justice. People who exhibit postconventional morality view rules as useful but changeable—ideally, rules can maintain the general social order and protect human rights, but rules are not absolute dictates that must be obeyed without question. Because postconventional individuals elevate their own moral evaluation of a situation over social conventions, their behavior, especially at Stage 6, may be confused with that of those at the preconventional level. Some theorists have speculated that many people never reach this level of abstract moral reasoning.

Stage 5: Social contract driven (young/middle adulthood). People who have achieved a sense of morality illustrated in Stage 5 acknowledge that people hold different opinions, principles, and values and that the various perspectives should be mutually respected as unique to each person or community. They begin to think and act in ways that will likely result in the greatest good for the greatest number. Morality is based on an assumption that an unwritten contract exists among members of society in which people agree to behave in an acceptable and appropriate manner for the good of all. The concern is not for the consequences of one person's acts, but for the welfare of society; some view this perspective as reflecting social justice views. At this stage, people make decisions and engage in behaviors that are in the best interest of others. For instance, a recreation leader might remove an angry spectator from an event because to do so would enhance the enjoyment of those who remain. If the leader was to maintain the one person's right to attend an event, the rights of many others would be negatively affected.

Stage 6: Universal ethical principles driven (adulthood). As individuals achieve what Kohlberg viewed as the highest stage of moral development, they base decisions on universal ethical principles that clearly serve the good of humanity. People at this stage operate within a consistent system of values and principles and do so with integrity. They use abstract thinking and carefully consider the greater good prior to acting. This involves individuals imagining what they would do in another's shoes or thinking about if they believe what the other person imagines to be true. The action taken is never a means, but always an end in itself; individuals act because it is right (and not to avoid punishment), in their best interest, expected, legal, or previously agreed upon.

Kohlberg envisioned moral development as maturing over six stages across the lifespan, from obedience, to fear of punishment, to social justice, to acts that are moral or immoral in and of themselves. As with all theories about human development, life stages do not necessarily correlate to a particular moral development stage. However, generally, as people mature they move away from a fear-based morality to a moral viewpoint that focuses on the good of humanity.

Morality Based on an Ethic of Care

It was common practice in early years of science to conduct research with only males as subjects; thus, it is not surprising that Kohlberg worked only with boys in the initial development of his theory. As you might imagine, this raised questions related to the viability of early moral development theories for girls and women. Concerned about the exclusion of females in studies related to moral development, Gilligan (1982) engaged in research to examine the moral development of girls.

Gilligan noted that girls and women are taught to value relationships and remain connected to others—relationships are paramount. Thus, the female approach to morality is that people have responsibilities toward others, and the highest moral imperative is to care for others. This may require self-sacrifice as the focus is on others' needs rather than one's own. On the other hand, the male approach to morality has been characterized as the belief that all people have certain (and the same) rights. The moral imperative of that view is to respect those rights; thus, rules are necessary to maintain fairness for all.

Gilligan termed this alternative approach to morality as an *ethic of care*. In contrast, the moral development process presented by Kohlberg has been characterized as an *ethic of rights and justice* (see Figure 2.3). For example, an individual in an adult sports league adhering to an ethic of rights and justice might avoid an argument or fight with others because it is against the rules and the rules apply to everyone. On the other hand, an individual who subscribes to an ethic of care would avoid an altercation out of a concern for hurting others emotionally and/or physically.

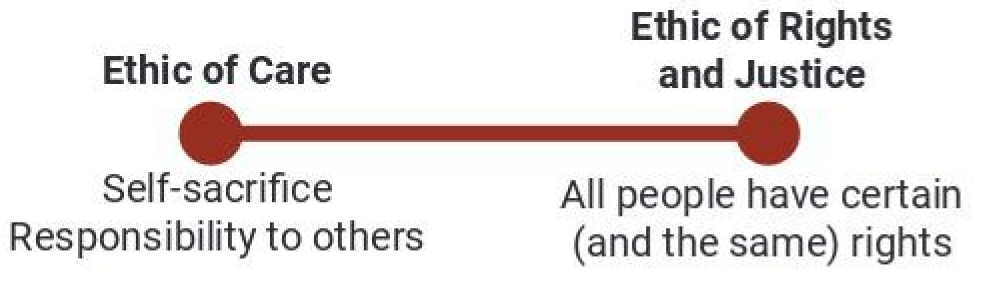

Ethic of Care
Ethic of Rights and Justice
Self-sacrifice
Responsibility to others
All people have certain (and the same) rights

Figure 2.3. Ethic of care and ethic of rights and justice.

Research related to the differences found between the models presented by Kohlberg and Gilligan has been contradictory. Initially, some thought that females and males learned about and achieved moral development differently. Research based on Gilligan's work continues, however, and now it appears that rather than developing differently, males and females perceive dilemmas differently. Females perceive moral dilemmas as more important to their lives than do males. In addition, females and males tend to focus on different issues within the same moral dilemma. Furthermore, rather than finding that women and men have different internal predispositions to morality, researchers have found that the dilemma itself is what leads a person to view it from a viewpoint of caring or of justice.

> **"The female approach to morality is that people have responsibilities toward others, and the highest moral imperative is to care for others."**

Morality is the foundation for ethical behaviors, which we address in some detail in Chapter 9 as related to ethical leadership. Having some level of comprehension for how people develop a sense of morality can help recreation experience leaders better understand their own growth and moral maturity as well as that of those with whom they work. The way people justify their (or others') behaviors when an issue arises may be indicative of the stage of moral development for that person. The ways people go about solving problems and addressing ethical dilemmas is another way leaders might recognize an individual's moral belief system (rights and justice or ethic of care). This information can help leaders determine the most effective ways of interacting with an individual, particularly if the stages of moral development differ between those communicating.

Life Stages and Age Groups

As with the theories of human development, the term *life stages* refers to general times in people's lives when major life events occur (see Figure 2.4). They are general classifications of people based on physical, cognitive, social, and emotional levels of maturity. In general, people in similar age groups tend to fall into the same life stages. With a knowledge of human development, recreation services leaders can make well-informed choices about what to expect and how to lead most effectively. With younger participants, a directive, transactional style of leadership might be appropriate; during adolescence, leaders might choose to use a more participative, transformational style; and a laissez-faire approach to leadership might work well with adults. Some styles or approaches to leadership, such as servant leadership, may be successfully applied across the lifespan.

Behavior results from a combination of physical, cognitive, socioemotional, and moral aspects of a person—it is a process and a product. Generally, *physical* development includes levels of energy and growth, the acquisition of fine and gross motor skills, and physical coordination. *Cognitive* development includes the ability to think abstractly, reasoning and logic, and intellectual abilities. *Socioemotional* development consists of relationships with others (of all ages), fears, worries, and emotions. The other element of development discussed in this chapter is *moral* development. This involves the beliefs and thought processes behind ethical decision making and how individuals define what is good and right.

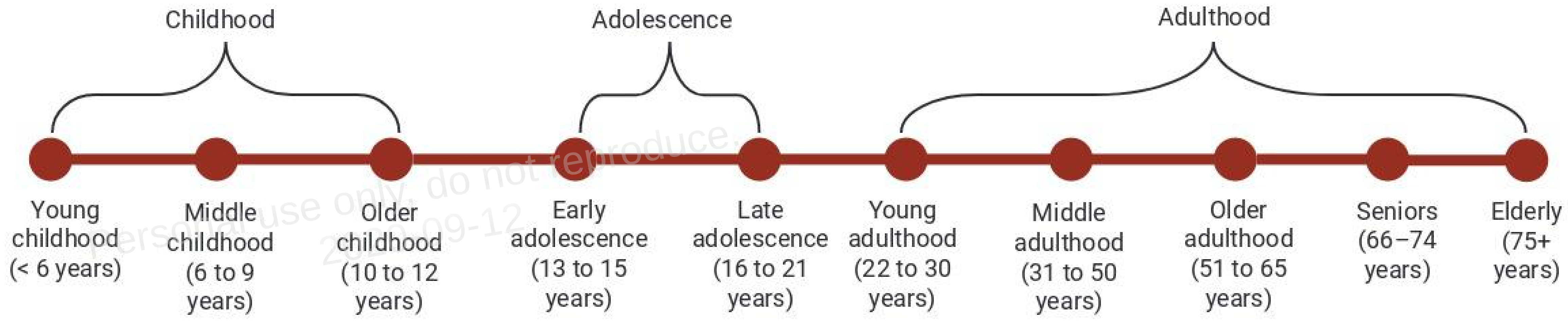

Childhood
Adolescence
Adulthood
Young childhood (< 6 years)
Middle childhood (6 to 9 years)
Older childhood (10 to 12 years)
Early adolescence (13 to 15 years)
Late adolescence (16 to 21 years)
Young adulthood (22 to 30 years)
Middle adulthood (31 to 50 years)
Older adulthood (51 to 65 years)
Seniors (66–74 years)
Elderly (75+ years)

Figure 2.4. Timeline of developmental stages.

> **“With a knowledge of human development, recreation services leaders can make well-informed choices about what to expect and how to lead most effectively.”**

These developmental elements will be helpful to leaders in establishing expectations of participants, selecting effective leadership styles, and using appropriate leadership techniques (e.g., behavior management, communication, group dynamics) in a range of situations. In addition, this knowledge will be useful for parks and recreation practitioners while they engage in professional activities such as programming, supervision, direct instruction, and applying policies and procedures. As with all generalities about groups of people, all individuals within an age group will not fall within the following categories; thus, this information can be helpful in many ways, but predicting specific individual behaviors is not possible.

Children often look to sports leaders as role models. Photo courtesy of Savanna Elkins.

Childhood

A definition of what constitutes childhood (and the other age groups across the lifespan) is a social construct that varies by culture, ethnicity, gender, and class. Generally, in the U.S., childhood spans toddlerhood to adolescence. It captures the time when youngsters begin to understand the world, enter the public school system, and develop a social self. A great deal of unstructured time, large developmental changes, and a strong dependence on adults for subsistence, safety, and security characterize childhood. It has three stages: young, middle, and older childhood. Young childhood usually encompasses preschool children under the age of 6, who are typically dependent on families for formal recreation services; thus, we do not address leading the youngest age group in this text.

Middle childhood (6 to 9 years).

Physical development. In terms of physical development, children aged 6 to 9 years grow about 2 in. each year. They have a lot of energy that comes in spurts and can be difficult to keep under control. As they continue to practice large motor skills, children at this age enjoy a great deal of running, hopping, skipping, climbing, and catching. In addition, chasing and being chased are favorite activities. Because children at this age struggle with fine motor control, they may experience frustration with these efforts (e.g., tying shoes), yet they need to practice these skills. The high level of physical activity complements a similar need for rest, as youngsters in this age group tend to tire easily. See Table 2.2.

Cognitive development. This period of life characterizes the fastest cognitive growth of any age group. Six- to 9-year-olds tend to be concrete thinkers and literal in interpreting meanings. At this age, children operate from perception and intuition rather than from logic. Young children have difficulty focusing on more than one thing at a time, and they see things primarily from their own perspective. They believe everyone sees things as they do, as well. Young children can accept and work with basic rules, but they will change rules when needed to avoid failure or losing a game. Because of the heavy reliance on concrete thinking, movement is often necessary for learning and understanding directions. At this age, children have active imaginations and a great capacity for fantasy play.

Socioemotional development. Children in this general age group do not have strong social skills (e.g., communication, conflict resolution, an other-orientation) and tend to be egoistic. Children in the middle stage begin to demonstrate the ability to share and to engage in interactive play; they are learning to take turns. In addition, there tends to be a separation of the genders, with girls and boys playing apart from one another. Children at this age generally are very honest, in part due to a lack of mastery over the nuances of lying. These youngsters lack strong organizational skills, often losing or leaving items behind, which can be frustrating for adults.

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2020-09-12

Table 2.2

Middle Childhood (Ages 6 to 9 Years)

Bandura's Social Learning Theory: Visual modeling is of most importance
Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development: Preoperational stage
Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory: Stage 1, obedience and punishment; Stage 2, self-interests as driving force
Gilligan's Theory of Ethic of Care: Is a challenge as youngsters are egoistic

Characteristics	Description	Leadership implications
Physical	• Lots of energy balanced with need for rest • Developing gross motor skills; struggling with fine motor skills • Enjoy running, hopping, chasing, catching, and climbing	• Teach through physical demonstration • Allow for practice of large motor skills; provide opportunities for practicing fine motor skills; build in rest opportunities • Risk management concerns based on lack of physical coordination and low levels of impulse control • Provide opportunities for success in social skills; give children a good deal of attention; lead simple activities with minimal and unsophisticated rules; be flexible • Take care to treat all youngsters with love and attention; be sensitive to their fragile emotional natures • Remember the power of words • Behavior management can be relatively basic as youngsters generally respond quickly to adults • Make sure there is enough and appropriate supplies and equipment to keep children occupied • Minimize wait time when leading; get the youngsters moving and keep them active and involved
Cognitive	• Concrete, literal thinkers • Poor organizational skills • Operate from perception and intuition; logic and reasoning abilities are limited • Able to focus only on one or two things at a time • Creativity and imagination are active • Movement is necessary for learning • Tend to see things only from their own perspective • Simple sense of humor, tends to be physical humor	
Socioemotional	• Poor social skills; impulsive in emotional reactions • Tend to be egotistical; do not share well • Tend to be very honest; do not tell lies well • Want to please adults; high need for adult love and affection • Sensitive to comments of others • Can be easily frustrated • Girls and boys tend to self-segregate, although for some mixed-gender groups are accepted • May change rules to avoid failure or losing • Emotions can swing quickly and widely	
Moral	• Decisions based on desire to avoid punishment or on hopes for rewards; self-centered • Authority figures set the tone for morality • Strong concern for perceived fairness • An ethic of care can be challenging as they are in an ego-based phase	

Young people at this stage of development (preoperational, according to Piaget) can be overly sensitive to comments and actions of others. For example, a child may be hurt if other children stick out their tongues at them. Youngsters of this age can be easily frustrated by difficulty in understanding directions. They need a good deal of encouragement and support from adults and seem to crave adult affection. In middle childhood, children tend to be impulsive and unable to control their emotions. They tend to use physical aggression to resolve problems, and they start and stop crying quickly. The sense of humor expressed tends to be focused on physical humor and that which is based on bodily functions.

Moral development. Generally, middle-stage children are at the first and second stages of moral development. They base decisions on what is right and wrong from a position of a fear of punishment or as part of an exchange in a desire for a reward; it is an egoistic view. Those aged 6 to 9 hold a self-centered perspective and believe that authority figures are the primary source of morality.

Implications for leaders. Successful leaders understand that knowledge of human development will provide a basis for understanding why people act the way they do. This is not meant to serve as an excuse for behaviors, however. One of the most fascinating things about humans is that they can learn (see Bandura's social learning theory). Thus, in addition to providing a basis for understanding, this knowledge allows leaders to establish environments that challenge people to grow and further develop within their current capabilities.

For instance, when working with a young child who becomes frustrated and hits another child, a leader first will be able to recognize that this was not necessarily a purposeful act of aggression aimed at the one specific child. Hitting among young children is often due to poor impulse control and the inability to reason through a conflict. Once a leader addresses the inappropriate behavior (in a developmentally appropriate way), she or he can then begin to help the youngster develop control over emotions through visual and verbal modeling, examples, and practice.

Because of their physical nature, young children learn best by doing. Leaders would be wise then to present activity instructions in such a way as to incorporate physical engagement of the children. Bear in mind that activities need to be balanced with rest; youngsters tire easily. Both fatigue and a need to move may be underlying reasons for undesirable behaviors; leaders will need to make a judgment based on their understanding of the entire situation. Logic and reasoning capabilities of young children are limited; therefore, extended lessons in reasoning may not be effective when addressing various difficulties. In addition, youth at this stage are literal thinkers and will follow directions literally rather than figuratively; therefore, explicit instructions are necessary.

Preventive behavior management with this age group can be accomplished by thorough preparation and management of the physical and social environments in which activities are to be held. In middle childhood, children may become easily distracted or bored and have difficulty with sharing; being fully prepared with enough equipment and supplies to go around is important. Flexibility in adjusting activities based on physical capabilities (establishing environments for success), intellectual capabilities (providing opportunities for youth to show mastery in creative areas), socioemotional skills (structuring social interactions to address low levels of maturity), and moral development (establishing a few easy-to-follow rules) will help set a tone for leader and participant success.

Relationships with adults are essential for children in the 6–9 years age range. Because of their need for safety and security as they continue to learn about the world around them, such relationships are especially important for these young people. Often youngsters become dependent on leaders and compete for their attention—sometimes by engaging in negative behaviors. Recreation services leaders will need to be sensitive to this and aware of how they treat youngsters who engage in negative attention-seeking behaviors (see Chapter 8).

Children learn through engagement in activities. Photo courtesy of Ron Ramsing.

> **Leaders working with 10- to 12-year-olds face young people at a time of many changes, particularly in physical and social development.**

Older childhood (10 to 12 years).

Physical development. As children move into older childhood, their physical coordination improves as do their abilities in gross motor and fine motor skills. High energy levels are still apparent, and children at this stage do not tire as easily as younger children. Children at this age can be still for longer periods, but active participation is still needed for optimum learning to occur. It is not uncommon for signs of puberty to occur in girls between 10 and 12 years of age (e.g., onset of menstruation, change in body shape). In terms of physical maturation, boys tend to lag behind girls by about two years. See Table 2.3.

Cognitive development. As youth move into the concrete operations stage (Piaget), logic and reasoning abilities begin to appear. In addition, the ability to deal effectively with abstractions develops. One of the characteristics of 10- to 12-year-olds is that they ask a lot of why questions as they begin to sort out and understand issues of cause and effect. During this stage, the development of self-concept begins. Youngsters in this age group tend to be easily motivated and able to engage within activity rules.

At this stage, children can consider more than one aspect of a situation, and they understand general concepts better than when younger; they begin to understand how to engage in planning ahead. Problem-solving skills improve and youngsters can work independently for short periods. When they were between 6 and 9 years old, children would give up if faced with frustration, whereas at 10 to 12 years of age, they tend to persevere longer—they begin to believe that they can make something happen if they try hard enough and long enough. At this life stage, the sense of humor becomes more sophisticated and youth begin to understand the wittiness of double meanings.

Socioemotional development. As children move out of the egoistic phase, they gain impulse control and begin to understand social mores. At this age in particular, shyness and being perceived as different from the group may lead to exclusion and social isolation. Because children are beginning to form attachments to groups and cliques begin to form, they become concerned about fairness and equality. They share better, yet for the most part the genders remain separate (girls/boys have "cooties"). Children in this age group who are maturing more quickly than others may describe girlfriend/boyfriend relationships. As groups develop, so too do relationship skills; youngsters at this age develop some tact, but are not always sensitive to others' needs. Adults remain important figures in the lives of these youth, although older children begin to test adults in their desire for independence.

Children between the ages of 10 and 12 years old do not take criticism from peers or adults well (they tend to be sensitive and defensive) and are easily embarrassed. An increased awareness of peers' and others' expectations affects the development of self-esteem. This may be seen in an increase of girls primping and boys striving to look cool as dictated by socially imposed gender roles.

Moral development. Youth in this stage of development begin to form and articulate values. They recognize that there is more than one viewpoint and often more than one right way to do things. While still acting out of their own interests, young people in this age group begin to consider the consequences of their behaviors before acting. At the same time, they are striving to gain social approval and often base decisions of morality on peer or social approval. Because of this, interactions between children can be cruel and hurtful. Most youngsters at this age are in Kohlberg's Stage 2, where they look out first for their own interests, and some are beginning to exhibit characteristics of Stage 3, where their sense of what is right and wrong matches that of general society. An ethic of rights and justice predominates.

Implications for leaders. Leaders working with 10- to 12-year-olds face young people at a time of many changes, particularly in physical and social development. Physical coordination is improving, and children are beginning to understand reasoning and logic. Therefore, leaders might experience increased success in using logic and reasoning when explaining activity directions or rules. These children are not so literal as when younger and can better understand leader nuances. Communication with adults seems to become easier as these abilities develop during this period. The ability to work independently and away from immediate adult supervision allows for a focus on overall leadership and also allows space for child growth and development.

Table 2.3

Older Childhood (Ages 10 to 12 Years)

Bandura's Social Learning Theory: Learn through visual modeling; increased sophistication in understanding facilitates learning through verbal modeling
Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development: Concrete operations stage
Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory: Stage 2, acting out of self-interest; Stage 3, looks to peer groups or society for moral standards
Gilligan's Theory of Ethic of Care: Beginning to become evident among girls; boys tend to follow an ethic of rights and justice

Characteristics	Description	Leadership implications
Physical	• Lots of energy balanced with reduced need for rest • Improved hand–eye and foot–eye coordination skills • Active participation needed for maximum learning • Can sit still for a variety of engaging activities • Early signs of puberty in girls	• Provide opportunities to practice and achieve success with gross and fine motor skills • Begin to introduce new activities that stretch existing physical, cognitive, and socioemotional skill levels • Facilitate development of interpersonal skills, including how to handle instances of social exclusion • Explain the reason behind leader decisions; help youth to understand the processes that leaders go through in decision making • Talk to youth with respect—they need adult attention • Facilitate opportunities for youth to continue practicing communication and social skills with peers and adults • Be aware of frustration and impulsive acting out (emotional regression) if things are not going well • Provide lots of opportunities for exploration and learning new things in an emotionally safe environment • Provide structured choices • Engage in and teach youth conflict resolution skills • Encourage youth to try new things and work toward their potential • Be aware of and address self-esteem challenges and changes (particularly in girls)
Cognitive	• Logic and reasoning abilities being developed and practiced • Able to follow several sequential directions at one time • Curiosity abounds; asks a lot of why questions and are easily motivated • Learn to deal with abstractions and general concepts • Can consider situations from more than one view; problem-solving skills are improving • Begin to work independently and exhibit persistence	
Socioemotional	• Social skills are improving; peer groups begin to become important • Girls and boys tend to be in separate groups although they begin to talk about girl- and boyfriends • Friendships develop and change quickly; some interactions can be hurtful • Self-esteem development becomes apparent; self-concept is forming and easily observed; youth become concerned with how others (especially peers) see them • Concern with fairness and equity • Adults remain important figures	
Moral	• Values development is initiated; children begin to think of consequences prior to acting • Decisions are based on a desire for tangible rewards and beginning to be based on social acceptance/approval • Ethic of rights and justice paramount	

In middle childhood, best friends come and go and children may be sensitive to these changing relationships; interactions can be cruel as children look for ways to experience belonging. Leaders who are aware of social development can help youth through the difficult times and help them practice new social skills. This may be accomplished by manipulating group membership and structuring activities to facilitate group problem solving and other cooperative efforts.

Knowing that at this age youngsters begin to test adult limits enables leaders to understand that some undesirable behaviors are not motivated out of malice nor directed at them personally. Rather, the behaviors (and leader reactions) help youth to gain a sense of self and independence within acceptable social boundaries. Therefore, when it appears that preadolescents are acting to disrupt leadership efforts, remembering that many possible reasons exist for the undesirable behaviors may guide leaders in the most appropriate response. When working with all people, leaders need to be aware of the effect of leadership on the self-esteem of participants; this is particularly true at this age. In particular, research has shown that the self-esteem of preadolescent girls tends to drop during this life stage; sensitive leaders can actively work to counteract this trend. The values that leaders model in behaviors, words, and style of presentation have a large effect on the development and esteem of young people.

Adolescence

The period of adolescence has been described in several ways. Some define it from a biological perspective—the time between puberty and physical maturation, including brain development. Others take the position that adolescence is simply what occurs between the ages of 12 and 21 years old. Yet others take a more sociological approach and define adolescence as the transition from dependence on adults to personal independence and autonomy. It may not be critically important to come to a particular agreement on the exact period of adolescence as long as recreation leaders have a general understanding of the changes that occur during this developmental period and respond appropriately.

In general, adolescents go through a tremendous growth period—physically, socioemotionally, and cognitively. Physically, of course, a multitude of changes are happening and involvement in recreation services and programs can aid in healthy growth, coordination, and finding a skill niche. Cognitively, the brain undergoes a great deal of development during the adolescent years and the external environment has a tremendous effect on the types and strength of changes that occur. Short-term memory increases, the ability to process information accelerates, and the ability to process complex information improves; these are called executive functioning skills and are necessary for successful adulthood. In the socioemotional context, this is a period when adolescents learn to control emotions, particularly when under stress, and to better interpret the emotions of others.

So much growth and development occurs during adolescence that the role of adults (in our case, recreation experience leaders) is central to successful transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Understanding and leading physical activities that help young people to develop healthy lifestyles is one avenue for influence. Serving as a facilitator and guide, recreation leaders can help young teens experiment and discover where their competencies might lie, whether it be the arts, team sports, outdoor nature-based activities, music, or some other recreation possibility. Developing a sense of mastery not only helps youth to identify lifelong recreation interests, but it also helps with enhancing self-esteem and personal identity.

Providing opportunities for planning, problem solving, and practicing conflict resolution skills aids in building executive functioning skills. Ways to do this include providing opportunities for teens to design and choose their own recreation experiences and seeking their input—and being responsive to it—when creating new programs or policies that will affect them. If conflicts arise between participants, it might be best for leaders to guide the teens through a conflict resolution process rather than step in to fix the issue for the teens.

> **“Adolescents go through a tremendous growth period—physically, socioemotionally, and cognitively.”**

Young adolescents learn much through observation. Photo courtesy of Deb Jordan.

Emotionally, adolescents of all ages may seem confused; sometimes they seem well in control of their emotions, and at other times they appear to be out of control. Leaders who remember that teenagers are still learning (as their brains continue to develop) how to regulate their emotions will be best prepared to lead with empathy and integrity. Helping young people who seem angry or withdrawn to reengage appropriately (rather than treating them harshly) is one type of opportunity to help with this developmental phase. An area in which recreation services leaders often focus with teens is the socioemotional domain. Much program leadership used with adolescents is designed to help young people create appropriate relationship skills that will enhance interpersonal interactions as well as those between individual teens and the community. Safe places for youth to experiment with relationships, to develop trust between one another and with the leader, and to practice empathy are possible through effective recreation leadership.

> **“Cognitively, the brain undergoes a great deal of development during the adolescent years and the external environment has a tremendous effect on the types and strength of changes that occur.”**

Early adolescence (13 to 15 years).

Physical development. In the early teen years, youth experience tremendous physical growth, more so than in any other life stage. Many experience a balance in their energy output; the impulsivity of the previous years has lessened. At 13 to 15 years of age, most girls have experienced the onset of puberty and the development of secondary sex characteristics, which can result in changes related to self-image. There is great variation with boys; some boys have reached puberty, and others are just beginning the sexual maturation process. Because of the increase in hormones, muscle mass in boys can increase by almost 45% during this period (Strawbridge, 2013); this may require separating participants by size rather than by age for competitive physical activities. For many young people in this age group, abilities related to coordination and fine motor and gross motor skills are well developed. For boys, however, sudden growth spurts may result in a temporary loss of coordination until they become used to the physical changes. See Table 2.4.

Cognitive development. Most teenage youth gain experience in the formal operational stage as described by Piaget, which becomes evident during this period. Logic, reasoning, and problem-solving skills develop and organizational skills and rules management improve as the brain continues to develop. Thirteen-year-old to 15-year-old youth have the capabilities to understand multiple perspectives (e.g., they can see and begin to appreciate others' viewpoints) and to deal with abstractions. Teens begin to develop the ability to formulate and test hypotheses (e.g., what-if situations). In this period of early adolescence, many youth find themselves facing an identity crisis as they begin to develop a sense of self-identity separate from family and friends. Individual interest is on the present, rather than on the future; thus, these are years of exploration (e.g., drugs, sexuality, risk-taking behaviors) as the search for self continues.

Socioemotional development. Peers are an important source of support for young teens as they strive to transition from family dependence to independence. The peer group strongly influences this age group, and the need for belonging seems all important. This may result in tight social groups as well as individuals who might be considered social outcasts. Recreation services leaders will want to be particular-