



## Middle Managers Training Series

**Purpose:** The Human Services Coalition's Middle Managers Training Series attempts to provide to persons who supervise other people and who are in turn supervised by another staff person knowledge and some limited skill-building around the topics of greatest need for persons in their positions.

The Series therefore focuses on effective supervision of others, as well as appropriate followership. It teaches how to lead a team, as well as how to be an effective contributor to a team. It seeks to help middle managers to integrate their work into the bigger picture aspirations of their organization, and to manage themselves and their time in ways that make their working and personal lives compatible and sustainable.

The series is taught by five Ithaca area teacher/facilitators each of whom has many years of experience helping individuals and organizations improve their work. Five full days of teaching and learning is a substantial commitment and it is a good start; but it is only a start. The Coalition strongly recommends following up on this training series by inviting some or all of these presenters into your organization during the months and years following the series to address the improvement areas that you and your staff decide are critical – and any of these five can assist you to determine what topic areas would be of greatest benefit.

**Bios** of each trainer appear below. Their extensive experience guarantees that this series will be an exceptional one for your staff. The trainers have developed this Series as a team; all of them know what other trainers intend to cover and how. This will enable them to reinforce one another's teaching.

**FEE** is \$800 per employee for the five days. This includes snacks, drinks and lunch; these will be ample but thrifty to keep your cost down.

For more information about this series contact Scott Heyman, Director of Education and Training for the Human Services Coalition, at [sheyman@hsctc.org](mailto:sheyman@hsctc.org) or at 607.273.8686.

**Day One**  
***Introduction***  
**9:00 – 10:00 am**

**Laura Branca, Kirby Edmonds, Nadia Rubaii, Jeff Shepardson and Karen Fritz**

On Day One, the full training team will discuss the importance of having a shared mission, vision and values for your organization; of communicating that throughout your organization clearly and often; and of ensuring all employees approach all of their work with those perspectives in mind. We will spend an hour with all attendees and their chief executives establishing a foundation for the success of this series.

**Day One**  
***Managing from the Middle, Part One: Situational Leadership***  
**10:00 am – 5:00 pm**

**TFC (Training for Change) Associates: Kirby Edmonds and Laura Branca**

Laying the foundational base of Situational Leadership, this day defines middle management as the crucial connective tissue of your organization. No position is more pivotal to whether an organization can truly walk its talk.

Through the supervision and core leadership of the middle manager,

- ✓ Clear expectations and standards are communicated,
- ✓ Workforce preparation and training are provided,
- ✓ Job-specific responsibilities are guided and delegated, and
- ✓ Performance is honed, evaluated and recognized.

Alongside supervision, middle managers are the key to building and maintaining a workplace climate that fosters a healthy balance between individuals' development and creativity, and the synergy of collaboration within a valued team. Middle managers will be encouraged to understand their own leadership as a blend of

- ✓ *Your commitment to the mission*
- ✓ *Your personal style*
- ✓ *The ability to tailor your approach to make each member of your team successful*

Topics covered:

- **Role of middle manager**
- **Communicating clear expectations**
- **Delegation**
- **Evaluation**
- **Discipline**

**Day Two**  
***Managing from the Middle, Part Two: Coaching and Delegating***  
**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**Nadia Rubaii and Jeff Shepardson**

On Day One attendees learned how to understand and navigate their situation as middle managers. In this session we focus on two aspects of that situation: coaching and delegation.

The way an effective manager coaches and delegates needs to be modified to the specific person and situation. To facilitate improved employee performance, a supervisor must

- Become skilled in identifying the cause(s) of performance problems
- Communicate feedback in a constructive manner
- Structure opportunities for improvement that are based on people, task, time and organizational characteristics

Participants will learn to

- Overcome inaction and avoidance
- Diagnose causes of performance problems
- Understand how causes (and other circumstances) dictate solutions
- Communicate performance feedback in a way that increases opportunities for success and avoids common pitfalls
- Apply the principles of emotional intelligence
- Know when and how to coach employees
  - When coaching is and is not appropriate
  - Coaching is not the same as cheerleading
  - Supervisor and employee roles in a coaching relationship
- Know when and how to delegate
  - When delegation is and is not appropriate
  - Delegating is not the same as dumping
  - Supervisor and employee roles in a delegation relationship
- Evaluate her or his own performance in coaching and delegating

**Day Three**  
***Building the Team, Part One: Leading and Engaging All Kinds of People***  
**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

**TFC (Training for Change) Associates: Laura Branca and Kirby Edmonds**

On Day Three, TFC Associates will return for a highly interactive session on the exciting and challenging tasks of recruiting and sustaining an inclusive, multicultural team. Building on Days One and Two, the managers will shift their focus from directing, supporting and developing individual employees to building a truly inclusive team. Participants will explore what diversity means, how exclusion affects workers, what workplace inclusion means in practical terms, and why it matters.

When individuals' multi-faceted identities and differences in culture and style are valued as sources of enrichment to your team and your workplace culture, their perspectives can sharpen the relevance and effectiveness of your entire organization. But diversity in background, norms, and style can also be sources of confusion and friction.

Middle managers are sometimes tasked with recruiting and hiring to create a more culturally diverse workforce. Even if they are not directly involved in those efforts, they must be ready to thoughtfully prepare their workforce for the changes that come if those efforts are successful. Setting clear expectations is essential, but so is inclusive practice.

Inclusive practices are skill sets that can be developed regardless of the demographics of your staff, but require

- ✓ clarity of purpose and forethought
- ✓ commitment to your vision
- ✓ trust and encouragement of others' contributions.

Inclusion means not only supporting individuals' success based on their needs and goals, but engaging employees in sharing resources, leadership, solving problems and making decisions with one another. As your team's membership changes, these inclusive organizational habits are a solid foundation for welcoming in diversity. In order to set the stage for getting the most from the diverse talents and perspectives available among you, effective managers foster respect through

- ✓ ***Employee and team recognition***
- ✓ ***Flexibility with a range of working styles, and***
- ✓ ***The resolve and patience to lead organizational change***

The challenges of managing an inclusive, multicultural team are real but rewarding, and when your crew reflects the multicultural world in which we live, the benefits to the organization's effectiveness are potentially huge.

Topics covered:

- **Recruiting and sustaining an inclusive, multicultural team**
- **Employee engagement and shared leadership**
- **Understanding different working styles**
- **Leading change**

## **Day Four**

### ***Building the Team - Part Two***

#### ***Managing Meetings, Managing Conflict, and Sometimes Doing Both at the Same Time!***

**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

#### **Jeff Shepardson and Nadia Rubaii**

Good managers can lead effective meetings and handle conflict. Attendees will leave this session with the tools they need to do both well.

#### **MANAGING MEETINGS**

Meetings provide unique and valuable opportunities – when they are well structured and well run. Effective meetings allow a group to accomplish its goals while maximizing the opportunity to hear diverse perspectives and opinions.

In this part of Day Four attendees will learn, through discussion and role play:

- To make meetings more productive and engaging
- To support each person's contributions
- To facilitate interactions that allow a meeting to stay on track and on time
- Meeting Best Practice ( Examples: Clearly articulated outcomes, collaborative agendas, meeting guidelines)

#### **MANAGING CONFLICT**

Managing conflict successfully requires understanding the dynamics of conflict and its effects on people. This session will also use discussion and role plays and it will teach:

- What is the nature of conflict
- How conflict interactions can be transformed
- How to become comfortable with conflict – really!

Attendees will come to understand what they need to do to align their words and actions with their intentions when faced with any conflict, whether they are directly involved or whether they are supporting others in dealing with differences and compromised interactions.

**Day Five**  
***Building Your Self: Finding and Keeping Your Balance***  
**9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

**Karen Fritz**

During the first four days of this series middle managers learned about the most critical skills they must have to be successful. But those skills will do them little good if they cannot manage time and stress – and keep their balance!

Attendees will be able to manage their time after they learn -

- Why prioritizing is important, and how to do it
- How to set – and keep track of – realistic goals
- How to set and monitor boundaries
- How to become aware of their personal “time stealers” and distractions

Attendees will learn how to keep stress at a healthy level through understanding

- ✓ The warning signs of stress
- ✓ The impact on supervisors when stress is not well managed
- ✓ A variety of evidence based stress management and relaxation tools and strategies
- ✓ How to build resiliency
- ✓ How to practice mindfulness
- ✓ The power of improving their self talk.

Participants will reflect upon what a balanced state of being means to them. The relentless demands of life inside and outside the workplace often leave middle managers feeling pulled in every direction, distracted and rushed. But if time is well managed and stress is not excessive work/life balance becomes a realistic goal and a healthy, purposeful life results.

**Day Five**  
***Wrapup***  
**3:30 – 4:30 pm**

**Laura Branca, Kirby Edmonds, Nadia Rubaii, Jeff Shepardson and Karen Fritz**

- What have we learned?
- What more do we want to learn?
- How will we follow up?

## **PRESENTERS:**

**Laura Branca** is a managing partner at Training for Change (TFC) Associates, founded in Ithaca in 1982. She leads interactive training and retreats on organizational change, planning, leadership development, team building, communication, decision-making, handling conflict, diversity inclusion, and building culturally competent organizations and coalitions. She particularly enjoys teaching group dynamics and training and facilitation skills. Her associate at TFC is Kirby Edmonds.

Laura is Board President and a co-owner of Moosewood, Inc., and a Senior Fellow with the Dorothy Cotton Institute. She also designs and facilitates the Multicultural Resource Center's well known and widely praised "Talking Circles on Race and Racism." Laura has more than 30 years of experience teaching conflict management, helping people resolve interpersonal, organizational and community conflicts, and mediating for the Community Dispute Resolution Center.

**Kirby Edmonds**, a managing partner at Training for Change (TFC) Associates, has designed and delivered numerous workshops for counselors in the areas of basic counseling, group counseling and developing cultural competency. He has designed training workshops, written manuals, and provided consulting services for a wide variety of organizations and networks including UNICEF, NTEU, Corning, Inc., Pennsylvania Department of Health, National Skill Standards Board, National Rural Development Partnership, Supreme Court of Ohio, AFL/CIO, Solidarity Center, union executives in the manufacturing sector, migrant workers' alliance in New York State, and a multicultural leadership project for youth.

Kirby is a trained mediator with over 25 years' experience managing and resolving interpersonal, multi-party, inter-organizational and community conflicts. He also teaches courses in conflict management and cooperative conflict resolution.

**Nadia Rubaii, Ph.D.**, is associate professor in the Department of Public Administration at Binghamton University. She has more than 20 years of experience teaching graduate courses and professional workshops on all aspects of human resource management. She has worked with leaders of local government and nonprofit organizations throughout the United States and abroad to improve their hiring processes and decisions, overhaul their performance appraisal processes, increase communication skills among supervisors, ensure compliance with laws governing employment relations, and to more effectively manage increasing diversity within the workplace and in the community.

Nadia has given plenary presentations at numerous national and international conferences. She is active in the International City/County Management Association, having made presentations and provided training at several of their annual conferences, and having authored articles for their publications and a major white paper for their congressional lobbying efforts. Nadia grew up in the Cortland-Ithaca area, attended school at what was then SUNY-Binghamton, and then worked for more than 15 years in southern New Mexico. She returned to upstate New York in 2004 to be closer to family members, several of whom still reside in Ithaca.

**Jeff Shepardson** is the Director of Training & Facilitation Services for the Community Dispute Resolution Center. He has served CDRC as staff member, mediator and trainer since 2005, mediating and facilitating cases in a wide variety of settings, including workplace, home, public forums, nursing facilities, local government, schools and social service centers. Jeff provides Mediator, Facilitator & Conflict Resolution Skill Trainings on a local, state and national level. As a veteran mediator-trainer and the recipient of intensive and advanced trainings, Jeff holds a deep belief in the power of alternative dispute resolution skills to transform conflict interaction. Jeff is a certified mediator with the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, New York State CDRCP Certified Trainer, Adjunct Trainer at Hofstra Law School and Cornell School of Industrial & Labor Relations and holds degrees in Literature, Communications and Theology.

**Karen Fritz** served as the director of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at Family & Children's Service of Ithaca for 12 years. In 2013, 55 area employers contracted to make the EAP services available to approximately 6,000 of their employees and their households. She has provided consultation to supervisors, managers, and human resource professionals on sensitive interpersonal issues, workplace challenges and crises.

Karen presented dozens of trainings each year to small and large businesses in both the public and private sectors in Tompkins and Cortland counties, including non-profit agencies, government entities, school districts, banking institutions, medical centers, and large industry. She has presented supervisory and professional development topics such as giving feedback, and dealing with difficult people, as well as relaxation techniques and stress reduction among many others.

Karen is a New York State Licensed Master Social Worker, and worked as a therapist for seven years prior to moving to the Ithaca area to direct the EAP. Her presentation style is heavily influenced by her therapy background and training attendees often describe her as having a calming presence. She listens well to participants, and while giving practical strategies she facilitates dialogue, insight and reflection.