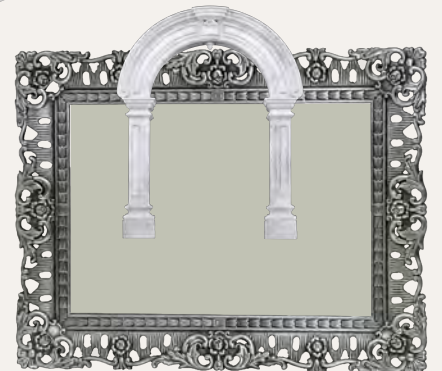
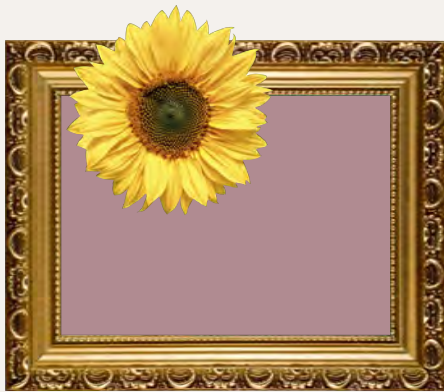
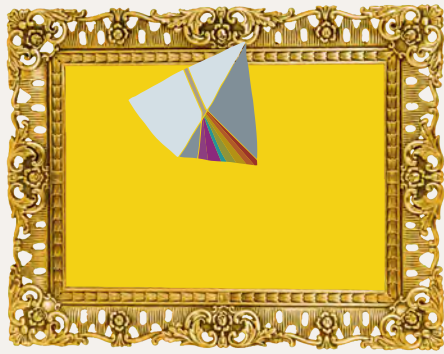
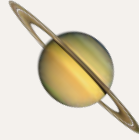




# Tool Gallery



MOSAICS & MIRRORS  
FEMINIST COLEADERSHIP

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This is a set of tools for co-leaders based on and accompanying the research report 'Mosaics and Mirrors, Insights and Practices on Feminist Co-Leadership'. The tools complement the practice guide section in the report, aligning to the different stages - 'Emerging', 'Nurturing' and 'Evolving'. It is inspired and informed by our own experiences, other inspirations and other sources and we hope for it to be a live list that grows and evolves as others add to it. Where relevant, and so as to not reinvent the wheel, we have signposted to other tools and resources. We are deeply grateful for the existing expertise that is present in the world, and want to honour the work done before this tool. While the tools in this booklet were developed with co-leaders in mind, it may lend themselves to different relationships beyond co-leadership.

Throughout the resource there are varying types of tools, these include: Discussion; Worksheet; Individual Journaling; Shared Journaling; Guided Exercise; Cards  
The development of these tools was led by Georgia Booth, in collaboration with Devi Leiper O'Malley and Ruby Johnson, with inputs from Amanda Gigler.

# Is co-leadership right for your organisation?

This is a self-evaluation tool to support you in thinking about whether you or your organisation are ready to take up a co-leadership model. Successful transition to feminist co-leadership requires an explicit and full commitment by senior leadership, including the board and executive director/s themselves, to changing the current leadership.

Work with your senior leadership and board to answer the questions in this worksheet. Based on the answers, are you ready to proceed or are there still areas that require attention? If so, can you make a plan and timeline to work through them?

SELF-EVALUATION STATEMENTS	Yes / No / In Progress
We have broad support from the board to explore a co-leadership model	
We have clarity on why we are choosing this model of leadership.	
There is a willingness to invest tangible resources and time into supporting the implementation.	
We currently have the resources to cover the costs to operationalise a co-leadership model. *If not, is there willingness to actively mobilize resources?	
If there is an existing leader, they are whole-heartedly behind the idea of a co-leadership structure.	



<p>We are aware of how this model might shift power and enable shared decision making within the organisation and are conscious of the need for ongoing learning and reflection on this.</p>	
<p>If there are other staff or relevant community in the organisation, they have been consulted on the decision and are open or fully endorse it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If not, consider holding an internal webinar to share more about your intentions, plans and also perhaps findings from this research and hold a reflection space about. If appropriate, you could consider inviting co-leads from another organisation to share their experience.</li> </ul>	
<p>The budget and salary policy to employ two (or more) co-leaders has been approved.</p>	
<p>There is agreement on what the hiring process will be including where decision-making lies</p>	



# Creation of a co-leadership statement

The idea of a co-leadership statement is inspired by Urgent Action Fund Asia & Pacific. It collates co-lead(s) political and practical vision and commitments. It can be shared with the wider organisation and be referred back to during annual appraisals.

This activity is designed to be completed with your co-lead(s), with the resulting statement being shared with the wider organisation and board. You may even wish to complete this activity with your staff so that the statement itself is co-created with them. In this case, consider sharing the questions in advance so that staff can think about the vision, leadership, accountability and commitments they wish to see.

The prompts offered are suggestions. Feel free to tweak them or write new ones that better fit your relationship and goals.

## Individually

Reflect individually on the following prompt questions, writing responses on post-its/stickies (real or virtual). Try to capture one idea per post-it so it is easy to group them with your co-lead(s) responses.

My personal goals are...

My hopes and dreams for this role are...

My vision for the organisation is...

I want to be a leader who...

I believe co-leadership is transformative because...



# With your co-lead(s)

## VISION, LEADERSHIP AND POLITICS

Share these responses with your co-lead. Are there similarities in your vision, hope and dreams? How do your leadership styles align or complement each other? What political values underpin your vision and leadership style? Group the post-its together where possible. Are there any gaps or tensions that need to be addressed?

Together, develop a response to the following prompts, writing it up on the wall or virtual board. You may wish to each write one and then give feedback on each other's:

Our vision for the organisation / initiative we are co-leading is...

We hope to be leaders who...

We will model this shared leadership in our practices by

We believe co-leadership is transformative because...

The values that ground us are...

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Brainstorm together who you are accountable to, listing the groups on the wall/virtual board e.g. each other, the organisation, staff, your team, the communities/constituencies you serve. For each, write one or two sentences about how you will stay accountable to them and how they can hold you to account. This should also include how you are accountable to and will show up for each other.

## COMMITMENTS

Lastly, reflect on the following questions to develop shared commitments. You can write these on post-its, brainstorming first and sharing with each other after.

- What practices will you commit to doing?
- How will your ways of working foster a culture of meaningful accountability, shared power and collaboration?
- How will you continuously reflect on your own power as leaders and as a team?  
How will you ensure that your practice reflects your values and that power is distributed across the organisation?

Your responses should begin to formulate the foundations for a shared statement. Agree together how to write this up. You may wish to put on music, split the sections and write up the statement together.



# With your organisation

If you developed the statement with your co-lead(s) only, it is important to share this statement with your staff and board. Think about whether this is something you are asking for feedback on or if it will be shared as a final document. Try to be clear on the invitation as to what expectations are. You might wish to hold a discussion on how best to use this statement as a practical tool e.g. in your annual appraisals. Consider engaging an artist to design the statement so that it is not just a practical tool, but also a visual representation of your commitment and leadership.



# Building rituals

Creating your own sacred practices and rituals can help establish a unique character to your co-leadership. Rituals help build memory and connect you to the human experience of co-leadership.

- MOSAICS AND MIRRORS, INSIGHTS AND PRACTICES ON FEMINIST CO-LEADERSHIP

## Developing rituals

Everyone will have their own style and approach to developing shared practices and rituals. In case it is helpful, we offer this template tool to design and capture your shared rituals together such as Ritual Design Lab's [ritual design template](#). The accompanying tarot cards may in themselves be a nice ritual to do alone or together.

Rituals can be simple regular practices you integrate into your day to day, into regular meetings, or to mark specific occasions, in-person meetings, celebrations and transitions. They can be done alone, between co-leads, or with your team, organisation or board.

## Rituals alone

“In ritual, a bit of behaviour or interaction, an aspect of social life, a moment in time is selected, stopped, remarked upon.”<sup>1</sup> - Barbara Myerhoff

“Rituals can be grand, dramatic things, or they can be tiny, personal ones. Either way, rituals help people to understand the world, cope with transitions, express strong emotions, and build their own life story.”<sup>2</sup> - The Ritual Design Lab

In your journal, reflect on these quotes and what they mean to you, using these questions as a prompt.

- What rituals have you created in your day to day life? This could be as simple as the process of brewing tea in the morning or repeating a mantra to yourself.
- Do you do them alone, with family or friends?
- What inspired them?

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<sup>1</sup> Myerhoff, B (1992) Secular Ritual

<sup>2</sup> <http://thewisdomdaily.com/mezuzah-doorbell-design-ritual/>





Thinking back to your self-care plan, is there one more ritual you could create to recognise and honour the co-leadership relationship that you are beginning?

## Rituals together

Before meeting your co-lead(s), come prepared to share one of your personal rituals with them, to give insight for them into a precious moment in your day. Are there similarities between the rituals? What are the differences?

Think back together on your collective care plan with the aim of co-creating new rituals to do together. Together, brainstorm rituals that you can build in your regular interactions, whether it is daily, weekly or monthly. Then think about how you will create rituals when you are together in person. You do not need to come up with them now, but decide together how, where, and when you will e.g. while you spend time together in nature before a strategy workshop you will create a ritual to begin any such workshop.

## Rituals with the team

Shared rituals can be beautiful to create not only with your co-leads but with your wider team. They can support connection, collective memory and meaning. At annual planning meetings, or during more informal spaces, carve out time for the team to share their personal rituals and to co-create new ones together. Examples of rituals could be circles of appreciation, sharing memories, dancing, sharing things from your different cultures, creating an altar together or embracing rituals to start meetings, celebrate success or to close out the year.

You might want to consider bringing in an external facilitator with experience in this area of work to hold the space. This can help the process to feel less led by leadership and more owned by staff.

## Reflecting back at the end of the year

Come back to the rituals you have created together throughout the year. Have your rituals changed? Have you created new ones? How have your shared rituals impacted your relationship?



# Professional development

As with any role, a co-leadership role should support the individual's professional development goals and help them build new areas of expertise. These should be developed as per the organisation's goal setting process. Co-leads should also decide what they wish to learn together - a shared professional development goal. With two or more co-leads, the professional development budget increases so planning for this in advance can help to manage sensitivities when opportunities arise.

## Individual goal

Reflect on these questions to help you formulate individual professional development goals. What are your individual professional development goals? What new skills, knowledge or areas of expertise do you wish to build in the year ahead? Do you have any ideas already of how you might meet this goal?

## Shared goal

With your co-lead(s), review your professional development goals together. Do you have questions for each other? Is there any crossover? Together, brainstorm what you might want to learn together. What new skills, knowledge or areas of expertise do you wish to build together in the year ahead? Do you have any ideas already of how you both might meet this goal and how you wish to be reviewed for it?

### CONSIDERATION

- **Budgeting.** Agree together what a fair approach is for managing a shared professional development budget. Will you review opportunities like training or speaking invitations as they come up or will you allocate budget at the beginning of the financial year? How might you manage the tension that arises if a professional development opportunity arises and you only have the budget for one of you to take it.
- **Coaching.** Will you both hire individual and shared coaches? What values or approaches are important to you in a coach?
- **Annual review.** Agree with the board how you will be reviewed individually and as a co-leads, communicating this with your staff so they are clear when and how they can also be part of the review process



# Developing an accountability framework

It is important to have clarity on where accountability lies between co-leads. This exercise sets out a process to complete an accountability framework that should become a living document and should be clearly communicated to staff. It should be completed by co-leads together.

1. Begin with your TORs / Job Descriptions. What areas of work does each co-lead hold individually? What functions will you deliver as co-leads together? Are there any grey areas or gaps that require further discussion? Write down each area of work or function in the template. Begin with a brainstorm and complete the template once you have talked through all the areas.
2. Reflect back on your professional development goals. What is an area that you each would like to grow in? Is there an area of work or function that lends itself well to you each leading it?
3. Aside from core responsibilities, what other functions or areas of work would benefit from shared accountability e.g. HR, finance, operations, staff care and wellbeing. These each still require a manager who is responsible for them.
4. Looking through the list of areas of work or functions, where does decision-making lie? Who does or should this sit with (including managers)? Which decisions should you make together as co-leads and which could you make individually, while keeping your co-lead(s) informed?

You can use a [RACI template](#) in Google Sheets or you could easily create one in Mural, Miro or Word, depending on what works best for you and your co-lead(s). You may wish to start with open brainstorming to respond to the questions and collect ideas, and then use the template or something similar to organise it after. Feel free to also create a new acronym with different roles if the ones in the traditional RACI don't capture your reality.

## Power sharing across the organisation

It is important that any discussions that are had on where power lies, and how decisions are made, are also agreed with relevant staff members e.g. managers who might also have decision-making power, direct reports who will be seeking input and



approval. Whatever template or chart you use, make sure you complete it with relevant staff once you have agreed overall accountabilities. It should then be communicated to the broader organisation. Be clear on what the categories mean e.g. accountable = overall sign off.

Does this make sense to them? Do they have any questions or concerns? Thinking about their own work and responsibilities, are they clear about accountability lines? Does this help the organisation to develop its capacity to share power in clear and intentional ways?

## Embracing risk together

Co-leadership offers the opportunity for bold moves due to the additional dialogue, analysis and support two or more leaders bring to the process. Take time together to discuss risk and how you will manage and embrace it together. This can be supported by a Risk Assessment, along with a Risk Management Tool or Matrix.

As you develop the RACI framework and other risk management tools for the organisation, it can be helpful to agree your risk appetite for each area of work:

- When and where are you comfortable with certain risks? When and where might you want to be more risk averse? When might you want to be bolder?
- Do you have any personal or shared redlines?
- How might you be able to divide certain risk management responsibilities, depending on each of your 'appetites' and comfort levels?

You might not have the answers now, which is OK. Come back to this throughout the year as you revisit the RACI. When you come together to make big decisions, make note of how you approach and discuss risk management together. Were there scenarios that made you uncomfortable or nervous? How did you navigate it together? What did you learn from yourself and from one another?

## Additional resources:

Example [Risk Assessment Template](#)

[DIY Committee Guide Risk Assessment Tool](#)

[InterAction NGO Risk Management: Principles and Promising Practice](#)



# Mapping power within your organisation

As well as completing the checklist, you may also wish to conduct a power mapping and decision making *within* your organisation to better understand how co-leadership might be a tool to work towards more shared power and transformation. Most power mapping resources are designed for social justice or political campaigning as opposed to mapping power *within* an organisation. There are several that could be adapted or used for inspiration:

[Mobilisation Lab Systems Map](#)  
[Article and tips on power mappings](#)  
[Power mapping template in Word](#)

## CONSIDERATIONS:

- Think about who should be involved in the power mapping. It should include a diversity of roles and seniority levels. It might be helpful to hire an external facilitator so that all those in the room are able to participate fully.
- Develop a mind map or axis to identify the types of power and decision making and actors who hold them. You can use the above templates as examples or use a virtual tool like Mural. Consider the following types of power:
  - Power of resources/budget
  - Human Resources power (including oversight of hiring decisions)
  - Decision-making over strategic direction and priorities
  - Decision-making over ways of working
  - Access to and sharing of knowledge and information
- Reflect on who holds these different types of power and responsibility and who does not
  - As an organisation, where are you and where do you want to be in terms of how power and decisions are distributed?
  - How might co-leadership help to transform unequal power distributions?
  - What are some risks of a co-leadership model?



- Identify if there are intentions you have about actively decentralising, shifting or sharing power as a part of your co-leadership practices. Are there any existing parts in the organisation where you have shared or co-leadership that may echo that at the executive level? Are there places where you do want to model shared decision making, and what might that look like?
- Consider undertaking this exercise before you embark on building a co-leadership model and revisit it frequently, such as annually.



# Setting boundaries & ways of working

Use this exercise to explore each others' ways of working preferences and boundaries. Before you begin, take a moment to reflect on this quote from Prentis Hemphill:

*"Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously. They might be, actually, the first and fundamental expression of self-love"* -Prentis Hemphill

Does it resonate? What does this mean to you? What boundaries might you need to think about when moving into a co-leadership relationship? As well as ways of working, how might you need to establish boundaries when it comes to supporting one another vs seeking support elsewhere?

## My ideal week, month and year

Individually think about your ideal week, month and year. What are your preferred working hours? How do your self-care practices fit into your work day? When do you take time off? Are you a morning person or a night owl? Where does learning and reading time fit in? How and when does time with your family or friends intersect with your working life? How and from where do you get support?

My ideal week involves...

My ideal month involves...

My ideal year involves...



#### ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:

- Draw 1-2 animal or plant cards that resonate with your ideal work week, month or year
- What are the characteristics of the animal or plant that relate to your ways of working?
- Draw the pairing card for each card you chose and reflect on the characteristics of the pairing card in relation to your written answers to the prompts

## Our shared way of working

Share this with each other, noting any similarities or differences. Together with your co-lead, reflect on the following prompt questions:

- How will you communicate day to day?
- How will you respect each other's work hours and preferences?
- How will you balance time off and holidays? Will you tag-team on certain areas of work, handing over to each other?
- Does your office close at set times throughout the year for rest periods and to minimise email disruption?
- How often will you come together for regular check-ins, to share feedback, and for strategy planning? Will this be virtual or in-person? If you are coming together in person, how will you carve out space for joy and friendship? Will you segment time for deeper culture building and reflection?
- What do you need to communicate with your wider team about your boundaries and ways of working? Might it be useful to go through this activity with them too?

Consider writing this up into a ways of working agreement that can be referred back to throughout the year. You may also wish to share this with the wider organisation, so they are aware of your ways of working preferences, but also to encourage them to co-create similar agreements.





# Balancing FOMO and JOMO

You might be familiar with the term, FOMO: the Fear of missing out. But are you familiar with JOMO? The Joy of Missing Out. As you reflect on your boundaries and potential opportunities that might arise that only one co-lead can take advantage of, what fears might arise? Can you visualise them? What does it look like? What might you say to that fear if you could talk to it?

Now can you reframe the situation and think about the benefits of missing out? Instead of visualising your fears, visualise something positive. What is a visual representation of the Joy of Missing Out? How might you express your gratitude to that image?

Use your journal to write or draw your reflections on these questions.



# Supporting through the highs and the lows

This set of prompt questions is to be completed individually at first using your journal. Draw or write your responses. This activity will take you to two times in your life, evoking a negative or challenging memory and then a positive and nourishing one. Once you have completed the individual journaling, you are welcome to share what you feel comfortable with sharing, with your co-lead.

Think back to a time in a previous role when you felt alone, adrift or isolated.

- What was happening? Who was there?
- What conditions were in place? What did it feel like?
- Think through all your senses, what could you smell? What were you touching? Could you taste anything? What can you see and hear?
- Are there images or words that come up for you when you think about this time?
- Is there a way you could have been better supported? Are there suggestions for your co-lead that you might wish to share?

## ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:

- As you consider the question, spread out the cards face-up and choose the ones that visually speak to you and/or which have descriptions that resonate in relation to that question
- Draw or write about your reflections

Now think back to a time in a previous role when you felt really confident and lifted up. Reflect on similar questions.

- What was happening? Who was there?
- What conditions were in place? What did it feel like?
- Think through all your senses, what could you smell? What were you touching? Could you taste anything? What can you see and hear?
- Are there images or words that come up for you when you think about this time?



- How might you hold onto or come back to this time? Are there suggestions for your co-lead that you might wish to share?

Before meeting with your co-lead, consider what you wish to share with your co-lead. It may all be relevant or some may feel too personal or challenging.

When you meet, share back with each other. Take turns to share back what you are hearing and understanding, including practically what this might mean for your relationship e.g.

“I am hearing that you find it helpful to hear feedback in a closed space...”

“I am hearing that when you are stressed, you need alone time first before coming together for support...”

“It sounds like you respond really well to praise, no matter how small - let’s make an effort to call out when we are each doing a great job day to day.”

It may be helpful to use ‘active’ listening methods where each of you take a turn to speak and the other must only listen (they can’t interrupt or ask questions). Then they repeat back what they heard.

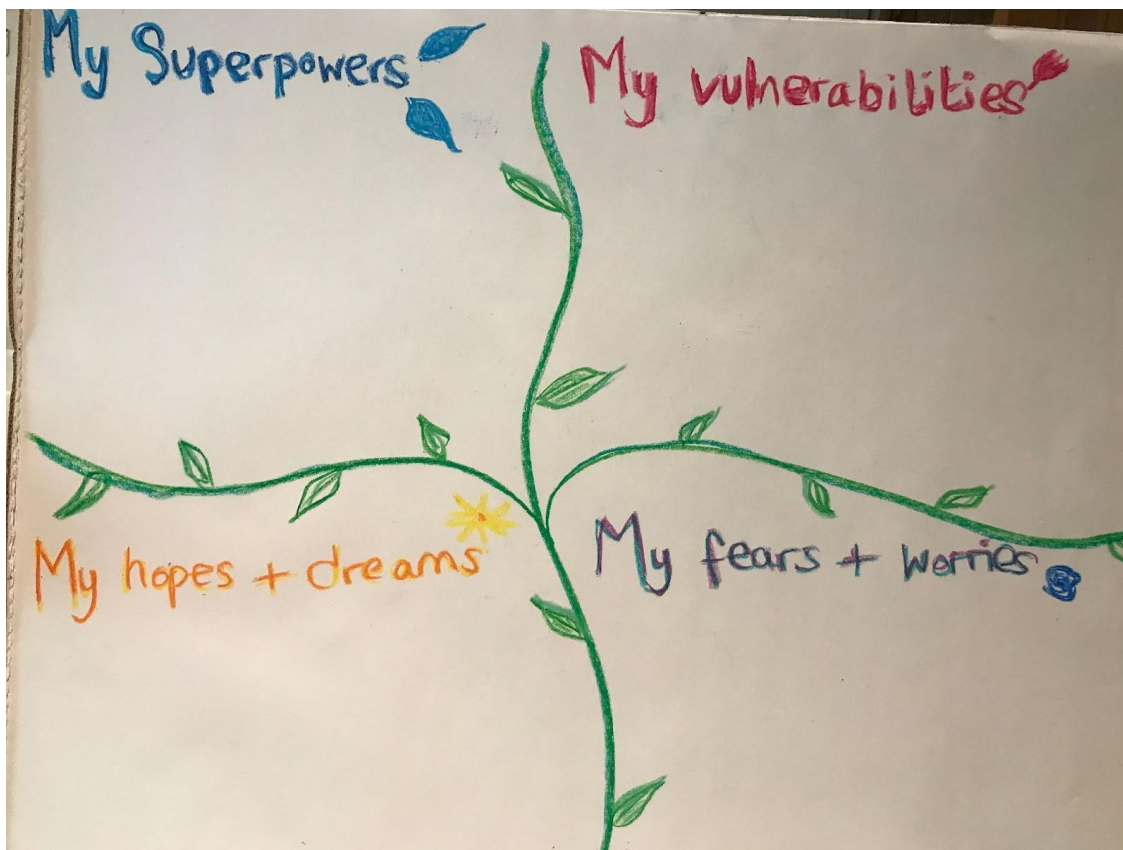


# Power & Vulnerability Garden

A SWOT analysis is a tool that usually compiles a team, organisation or project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This activity, inspired by the SWOT, is more personal. It is a reflection activity for co-leads to complete individually. It explores an individual's:

- Superpowers (what are your strengths and skills?)
- Vulnerabilities (What might be your weaknesses or areas for improvement?)
- Hopes and dreams (what positive change are you hoping to see and experience with the co-leadership model and relationship?)
- Fears and worries (What concerns you about the co-leadership model and relationship?).

There is no expectation to share this with your co-lead, though you are welcome to do so.



OPTION 1	OPTION 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Once you have filled out your quadrant, randomly place 1-2 cards in each quadrant.</li> <li>● Consider the superpowers, vulnerabilities, hopes and fears of each card</li> </ul> <p>The animals, plants and landscapes cards will work well for this, more so than flavours, "facts" and symbols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After filling in the quadrants, look through the cards and draw ones that resonate with what you have written.</li> <li>● What are the characteristics of particular animals, plants or landscapes that relate to your superpowers, vulnerabilities, hopes and fears?</li> </ul> <p>The animals, plants and landscapes cards will work well for this, more so than flavours, "facts" and symbols.</p>



# Creating space for feedback

A commitment to share feedback with each other, formalised with a simple process will help to not only create open channels between co-leads, but also between and with staff.

Use the following prompt questions to explore what your preferences are and how you might navigate both positive and challenging feedback, with each other and your teams:

- How do you like to receive feedback? Can you think of examples where you have received feedback in a way that was nurturing and helpful vs in a way that was challenging or unproductive?
- Are you comfortable giving it honestly to others? Can you share an example where you struggled to give feedback? Why was it difficult and how did you manage it?

If you are doing this initial part of the activity together, consider using post-its or a virtual stickies tool like Mural. Write your answers individually to begin with and then post them on the wall (real or virtual!) and discuss your answers together.

Design a simple process that might include some of the following components:

- Grounded in care and love - perhaps starting or ending with a practice or affirmation that reflects this.
- Build space for 1:1 feedback into your check ins
- If feedback is more urgent, set up a time to speak and be clear that it will be a space for feedback.
- Agree that when giving feedback, you will be specific, time and, where relevant, clear about what action you think should be taken. Where a clear action or change is not obvious, create space to discuss together what a potential solution might be.
- When receiving feedback, come with an open mind, listen and ask questions. Acknowledge the feedback and be open to discussing solutions with your co-lead. It is also OK to say that you need some more time to think.
- Finish with gratitude, saying thank you to the person who shared feedback and to the person who listened and took it on board.
- Check in with each other after in case either of you need additional care.
- Decide together and with HR what types of feedback need to be followed up with a formal process and documented.



To encourage a culture of feedback within your team or organisation, consider:

- Reflecting as a team on why feedback is important and what a culture of feedback could look like.
- Providing training to staff, including managers and senior leaders.
- Practising regular two-way feedback sessions with your staff.
- Creating space for ‘festivals of failure’ where staff and co-leads can share past professional failures, with a strong focus on what they learnt.
- Identifying different feedback tools including 1:1, 360 feedback and anonymous surveys and hotlines.
- Developing fun ways to share positive feedback and recognise awesome work on an ongoing basis.

## Getting to the growth mindset

A growth mindset means you believe that your intelligence can develop and expand over time. A fixed mindset means you believe intelligence is fixed and certain strengths are static. A growth mindset recognises that you continue to learn, embracing setbacks or challenges as learning opportunities.

What does this mean for co-leadership? A growth mindset is vital for this leadership model as it involves:

- Adapting and developing with you co-lead(s), being open to learning new approaches and ways of thinking
- Managing and embracing risk together as you make decisions in a way you have not done so before
- Accepting and acting on constructive feedback
- Recognising and being able to navigate when you are behaving out of fear, and sharing that with your co-lead

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- [Youtube video](#) by Dr Carol Dweck who coined the term.
- [Test your mindset](#) here with a simple online tool.
- Here is an [article](#) with a helpful comparison visual.



# Moments of appreciation

Below are optional reflection questions to do with you co-lead(s). This could be part of the annual review process or a 3-6 month strategy workshop.

- What do you value in your co-lead?
- What is their super power? What is their hidden strength that you see that they may not see themselves?
- What do you find comforting in their partnership?

## **ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:**

- Pull an animal card for each other that you feel reflects strengths within your co-lead.
- Why did you pull that card? What do you appreciate and admire about your co-lead(s)' strengths and skills?

## Additional Resources

[Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook](#) - contains simple tips for sharing and receiving feedback.





# Conflict resolution scenario planning

Below is a set of scenarios that you will use in this activity. Read through each one and then follow the instructions.

First, reflect on the following scenarios individually. In your journal, write or draw your responses to the prompt questions:

- How would this make you feel? What emotions might arise?
- How might you respond?
- Is there support or help you could ask for from your co-lead?
- Do you tend to fight, flight or freeze?

You can write your responses, draw them, list them or create a visual mind map depending on how you respond to them and what works for you creatively.

## **ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:**

Look at the cards and choose one that speaks to you visually as you consider the questions. Read the description of the card and reflect on how the visual and description relates (or not) to your gut reaction to the question.

Then share your responses with each other.

- Did you respond differently? Did your co-lead respond how you expected them to or was there something surprising?
- Are there ways you could support each other? Are there additional considerations for you each as individuals for certain scenarios?



## Scenario examples to build out:

1. Your co-lead gets invited to speak at a conference. It will be an important platform and networking event, with travel to an exciting place that neither of you have been to before.
2. Your co-lead receives some challenging feedback about you from someone you manage. They share it with you in one of your regular catch ups.
3. There is a limited professional development budget and both you and your co-lead have different ideas about how you want to use it.
4. You have experienced a loss in your family and need to take compassionate leave. You need to hand over a critical piece of work to your co-lead. It is something that is really important to you.
5. You are struggling to make a decision on whether to accept funding from a new donor. You and your co-lead disagree on the way forward. They wish to accept the funding and you are more hesitant.

### **ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:**

For each scenario, draw 2-3 oracle cards from the deck to guide a conversation about the directions the scenario could take. With your co-lead(s), share your perspectives and directions that your interactions with the scenario could take.



# Navigating conflict together

Conflict can be both beneficial and challenging. Without a resolution process, it can reveal a lack of respect or cause tension that is hard to move forward from. As outlined in the research, disagreements, when managed well, can be helpful to open up co-leads to listening, growth and new ways of thinking. This is a concept put forward by Malika Dutt of generative conflict<sup>3</sup>. This exercise encourages you to reflect on your own ego through practising self-awareness. It then provides practical prompts to guide you and your co-lead(s) to develop a conflict resolution plan.

## Generative Conflict<sup>4</sup>

The concept of generative conflict involves first reflecting on whether you are dealing with a conflict (to be resolved) or a tension (to be managed). Practising generative conflict involves three steps: 1. self-awareness, 2. reflection on power and 3. Deep listening and understanding of the others' position. The below activity takes inspiration from this practice to ground conflict resolution in a commitment to growth and care.

## Starting with the self

In a moment of tension or conflict, take a breath. Step away if needed. Take a moment to observe yourself:

- How are you feeling? If something has made you uncomfortable, anxious or angry, sit with those feelings. Acknowledge them, label them. Don't try to explain it yet, just recognise that something is coming up for you.
- Don't react straight away. Remember your values and the care with which you hold this relationship. How can you approach this with love? If you were to look back on this interaction, what behaviour would you like to see?
- If you have trusted contacts or a coach, might it be helpful to seek advice or support?
- As you think of ways to respond, consider how you might feel being on the receiving end of each. Is there anything you could do differently?

<sup>3</sup> <https://mallikadutt.com/blog/generative-conflict/>

<sup>4</sup>



- Think back to the ‘Emerging’ activities. What do you know about yourself from previous reflections that might be helpful to consider here? What did you learn about your co-lead that you should take into account?

## Our shared approach

It can be helpful to develop a simple conflict resolution process so that when there is tension, you are both clear on how to navigate it together. Generally a conflict resolution process will involve the following steps:

1. Reflect back on the ‘Emerging’ activities. Take time alone to self-reflect first. Ground yourself in how you are reacting to the conflict (fight/flight/freeze).
2. Remind yourself of what your co-lead has shared with you on how they typically react to conflict to reflect on their behaviour as well.
3. Identify the source of disagreement. How did the tension begin? Was there a specific moment or a series of things that built up? Who was involved?
4. Explore possible solutions and agree on a shared goal.
5. Discuss ways to meet the goal including each person’s responsibilities.
6. Check in with each other after some time has passed. Be mindful of feelings of discomfort, pain, anger, fear.

Agree these steps together, including more informal ways to communicate pain or stress with each other or to request some personal time, like an emoji. Write them up and revisit the process together during times of conflict.

## Managing conflict within our organisation

You might consider repeating this process with your whole organisation so that it feels held and owned by all staff and so that you start to share the same language and culture or practices on how to deal with conflict. They might come up with a different process than what you and your co-lead use with each other, which is OK. When you develop your accountability framework, consider whether managing this process and revisiting it to make sure it is working, sits with one person or is a shared accountability.

## Additional Resources

[Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook](#)

[The Drama Triangle](#) and [how to escape](#)



# Diagnosing challenges or what is going wrong

Co-leadership as a model can be over-romanticized. Even with the best intentions and with a strong relationship between co-leads, there can be external factors that make things challenging. In some situations, things just do not work out. In addition to the conflict resolution exercise, this activity can support co-leads to recognise and navigate unforeseen tensions that arise in their relationship.

## Common things that can go wrong

- Lack of clarity in work distribution, that can result in one person feeling like they are doing more work than the other, or as if they are not clear on what they are leading.
- Disparate compensation perhaps due to different negotiation processes if co-leads are hired separately, and/or lack of transparency around the organisation's compensation policies and salary scales.
- Changing personal goals and priorities including growth or development in different directions.
- Competing priorities - both personal and professional, for example managing vacation time, parental leave, or travel
- Power play from board members or staff that drives rifts or causes tension between co-leads
- Relationship fatigue.
- Clashing personalities or ways of working with limited space available to agree through ways of working.
- Distrust between co-leads, often as a result of gatekeeping information from each other, not sharing accountability or responsibility equitably, or competition with each other.
- Lack of self reflection by one or more co-leads.



# Diagnosing the problem

If something does not feel right, or there is ongoing or repeated tension, reflect on these questions individually or, if appropriate, with your co-lead(s)

- What is the problem really about?
  - How is it a problem? What makes it so and how does the problem play out? What are the elements of the problem?
  - You may find that by reflecting on these questions alone, together or with your coach, solutions emerge.
- Who is involved?
- What elements of the situation are you able and willing to change?
- What are the external constraints that are out of your control?
- What matters most to you? What matters most to those involved?
- Will the conflict resolution process work to resolve this or is the source of tension external to your relationship with my co-lead(s)?

## Some ways to respond when a co-leadership relationship is not working

- Self-reflect - take time for yourself to be truly aware of yourself, your ego. Go back to the activity on 'Navigating conflict' and reflect on the self-awareness activity again.
- Consider if co-leadership really is right for you. It is not for everyone, and though you may want to believe it is the 'right' kind of leadership, sometimes it just doesn't work for you. Conversely, it may be multiple contextual factors that mean it is not working for you at this moment in time.
- Accept if it is not going to work out. What could different outcomes be? How would you feel about each? How can you move through the conflict resolution process with love and care?
- Create space for honest discussion, with a mediator if needed
- Be gentle with yourself and each other



# Developing a self and collective care plan

“Many co-leaders have made efforts to prioritise practices of ritual, collective care and joy in their work”<sup>5</sup>. Creating a self and collective care plan is a way to stay accountable to yourself and with your co-lead(s). This plan should be revisited throughout the year, perhaps when you are together in person and can spend time together exploring self-care practices or building rituals.

## Journaling time

Before you create your plan using the template below, spend time reflecting on these quotes. Think of other imagery or literature that reminds you of this idea of care

- “In being everything for everyone, when am I anything for myself?” — Malebo Sephodi
- “It is said that we can’t attain enlightenment, let alone feel contentment and joy, without seeing who we are and what we do, without seeing our patterns and our habits. This is called maitri – developing loving-kindness and an unconditional friendship with ourselves.” –PEMA CHÖDRÖN, AMERICAN-BORN TIBETAN BUDDHIST NUN
- Read the full poem, [Fire, by Judy Brown](#), shared to us by Ingrid Benedict, who supported Ruby and Devi’s leadership transition

What ideas do these quotes spark for you? What practices do you think of when you think about self-care? Are there specific foods or drinks that make you feel nourished?

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<sup>5</sup> Johnson, R. & Leiper O'Malley, D. (2022) Mosaics and Mirrors, Insights and Practices on Feminist Co-Leadership



# Developing your self and collective care plan

Download, make a copy, or make your own version of this [worksheet](#). Then follow the instructions in the sheet.

## **ADDITIONAL REFLECTION WITH THE CARD DECK:**

Consider pulling a card or several cards from the deck. Consider how that plant, animal, ecosystem or flavour conveys nourishment or care to you. If this activity is helpful to you, consider coming back to it and pulling new cards each time. This could be a solitary activity or one that is shared with your co-lead(s).

## Additional Resources

[Tarshi Self-Care Resources](#) - there is a wealth of practical tools and resources on the Tarshi website, from mindful breathing to understanding your stressors.





# Looking back

One, both (or all) of you have decided it is time to move on. This is an opportunity for 'harvesting' your achievements, moments of joy, experiences and lessons learned, good and bad. The activity includes individual journalling, collective reflection and tips for capturing and sharing your experience.

## Who I was, who I have become

Individually reflect on the following prompts.

When I came into this role I was...

When I came into this role I felt...

As I leave this role, I am...

As I leave this role, I feel...

## Who we were, who we have become together

With your co-lead(s), reflect together with the following prompts.

When we came into this relationship, we were...

As we leave this relationship, we are...

Together we have learned...

Together we have overcome...

Together we celebrate...



# Celebrating together

Together with your co-lead/s, consider the following questions:

- How will you capture your experience and lessons learned?
- How will you celebrate and reflect with your team? And externally?
- Would you benefit from an externally moderated dialogue together, with the team and/or with partners?
- Is there a way to work with an artist to create a visual representation of your time together?

## Rituals to support transition and closure

A key time for rituals is when new co-leads start and former leadership is transitioning out. These can include offering people a way to celebrate the work done, and appreciate the former leadership, while creating a space for the new co-leads to thrive.

### **Example of farewell rituals:**

A ceremony where each team member shares some words, or a note of gratitude for the outgoing leads sharing gifts, sharing memories, dancing, singing and celebration.



# Exit strategy checklist

The Exit Strategy Checklist is a tool when one or more co-leads decide to leave their role. It should be supplemented by space for learning, reflection, celebration and joy.

Download or make a copy of this worksheet and fill in your answers.

SHARED-EVALUATION STATEMENTS	Yes / No / In Progress
We have defined together what we need, individually and collectively in terms of deciding whether to leave	
We have considered the terms of our departure, especially in terms of any 'sabbatical', exit compensation, any ongoing role, access to email, etc. This should be considered in line with existing exit policies.	
We have developed a communications plan to inform the various groups of people on who is leaving and when, as well as addressing immediate concerns of how the next leadership will be selected.	
The board is aware of who is leaving and when	
The staff are aware of who is leaving and when	
The larger community is aware of who is leaving and when	
We have set up a leadership transition team or committee, made up of staff, board members and consultants, to support the process of selecting new leadership	
We have taken into account the strategic planning cycle and accommodated this as much as possible	
If there is an expected capacity gap, we have revisited the RACI and agree what areas of work will continue and what will be paused	
We have completed a short risk assessment about potential new or heightened risks from the transition	



<p>We have agreed a recruitment process for the new co-lead(s) that includes staff's role at every stage (This does not necessarily mean staff are involved in the decision-making, but should be at least informed. It is up to each organisation to determine staff's role in the recruitment and the most important thing is that this is communicated clearly.)</p>	
<p>Both the outgoing and incoming co-leads have access to additional care and emotional support throughout the period of transition if needed</p>	
<p>The staff have access to additional care and emotional support throughout the period of transition, since the co-leads may not be the most appropriate people to offer this and/or cannot do on their own.</p>	
<p>We have come up with ideas for how to capture and celebrate our co-leadership relationship and achievements</p>	
<p>The Board has come up with ideas for how to capture and celebrate our co-leadership relationship and achievements</p>	
<p>The staff has come up with ideas for how to capture and celebrate our co-leadership relationship and achievements</p>	
<p>We have secured funding to document our experience as co-leads</p>	

