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Integral Leadership: A four quadrant description of a leader of health system transformation

A leader of health system transformation has a strong personal conviction to transform the health system so that all members of society can enjoy healthier lives. She describes her leadership role as a special calling or vocation, motivated by a world centric spirituality. She is cognizant of the complexity of health systems and the enormous challenges that must be overcome; and, she believes that transformation is possible.

A leader of health system transformation leads an active lifestyle. Her life practices and visible pursuit of personal mastery is an inspiration to others. She shares her vision and tells compelling stories and creates new communities of support. When she communicates, the tone of her message is positive, realistic, truthful and caring. She helps others see evidence of progress and demands accountability. She adapts to meet a wide variety of different stakeholders, constituents and audiences. She embraces ideas from around the world, and because her caring is boundless and not limited to a specific geopolitical boundary, she participates in exchanges around the world.

A leader of health system transformation is engaged in a variety of cultural spaces. Within her home organization, she has meaningful interactions and personal connections with volunteers, staff, and employees. She is actively engaging the community through small organizations and by direct engagement of community members in dialogue and through direct participation in change projects. Within the organization and into the community, collective meaning about health transformation is developed and shared through the use of stories and metaphor. A leader of health system transformation is also part of a sub-culture of economic, social and political leaders from across the health system's jurisdiction. Culturally-determined morals dictate what are 'good' and 'just' decisions – including how to best use public resources to serve different populations, what health services should be provided, and other key decisions that have shared implications for all the leaders' areas of concern and responsibility. For example, in Canada, a strong shared cultural value is placed on universal health care and this has economic, social, political and health implications, amongst others. The community in which the leader lives her personal life is another collective space that shapes the leader's perspectives.

A leader of health systems transformation is supported and served by communications systems and technology that support effectively reaching and influencing broad audiences. The leader functions across different language systems including bureaucratic language, the language of medicine and other disciplines that intervene in the health of an individual, and the official languages of business and commerce. The various municipalities, regions and other geo-political jurisdictions within her system's boundaries also shape the social context in which she works. The health promotion system of education, social and recreation agencies, community groups, businesses and the physical environment, is as important as the more traditional health care system of hospitals, clinics, laboratories and doctors offices to fulfill her intent. She uses tools, such as the determinants of health to choose the highest leverage interventions for successful transformation and to measure progress.