Leadership
of the
BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM

A MINI PANEL
with Insights from

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INTRODUCTION

Good leadership is critical to the success and functioning of a BIT. While every member on the team has a responsibility to demonstrate leadership in support of team goals, the chair of the BIT serves to bring the team together and keep discussions productive and focused, while maintaining a long-term view of team development and education.[1,2,3,4,5] In their 2018 guidance, the Department of Homeland Security and the Secret Service make team leadership a requirement in either a part-time or full-time capacity, stating: "The team needs to have a specifically designated leader. The position is usually occupied by a senior administrator within the school" (p. 3). When seen as a part-time role, leaders are drawn in high percentage from the dean of students in college and university settings, principal, superintendent, or assistant principal in K–12 systems and schools, and human resources coordinator in employment settings.[6,7,8,9] When seen as a full-time role, case managers or directors of student support services often fit the bill.[9]

THE ISSUES

This paper addresses a number of questions to help you understand and improve the leadership of Behavioral Intervention Teams:

- What are some of the essential areas of responsibility for a team chair?
- Why are both aspirational leadership and day-to-day management critical for a team chair?
- Do you have any thoughts on co-chairs? Are there certain positions or departments that should or should not chair a team?
- How does team leadership change when it is part time versus a full-time position?
- How does the leadership burden change at a community college (nonresidential), a health science center, or a four-year residential campus? How do things change in a K-12 or workplace setting?
- What are some of the core characteristics of teams' leaders that make them successful?
- What are some personality traits or characteristics that make leadership more difficult?
- How might a team chair build interest and support from administrative leadership, obtain a budget for the team, or address faculty concerns about disruptive behavior in the classroom?
- Why are regular supervision meetings with team members and training/retreats to improve technical skills (e.g., assessment, case management, legal issues, documentation), build community, and address departmental "hot spots" important?

[1] National Threat Assessment Center (2018). Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence. U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security.

[2] Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending Campus Violence: New Approaches to Prevention. NY, NY: Routledge.

[3] Van Brunt, B. (2012). Ending Campus Violence: New Approaches to Prevention. NY, NY: Routledge.

[4] Dunkle, J. H., Silverstein, Z. B., and Warner, S. L. (2008). Managing Violent and Other Troubling Students: The Role of Threat Assessment Teams on Campus. Journal of College and University Law, 34, pp. 585–636.

[5] Eells, G. T. and Rockland-Miller, H. S. (2011). Assessing and Respond- ing to Disturbed and Disturbing Students: Understanding the Role of Administrative Teams in Institutions of Higher Education. Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 25 (1), pp. 8–23.

[6] Van Brunt, B., Sokolow, B., Lewis, W., and Schuster, S. (2012). NaBITA Team Survey. Berwyn, PA: National Association of Behavioral Intervention Teams (NaBITA).

[7] Van Brunt, B. (2014). NaBITA Team Survey. Berwyn, PA: National Association of Behavioral Intervention Teams (NaBITA).

[8] Van Brunt, B. and Murphy, A. (2016). Summary and Analysis of 2016 NaBITA Survey. Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention (JBIT), 4, pp. 49–61.

[9] Schiemann, M. (2018). A Summary and Analysis of the 2018 NaBITA Survey Data. Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention (J-BIT), 6, pp. 42–57.

Characteristics of the BIT Chair

Dunkle, Silverstein, and Warner[4] write: "The team leader should be a senior student affairs administrator who has high-level authority to manage student behavior and who has a solid understanding of the institution's administrative structure, the institution's policies and procedures concerning student conduct, and the complexity of managing difficult student situations" (p. 593). Eells and Rockland-Miller[5] suggest that a team leader should strive to be "well respected and have outstanding communication skills and judgment" (p. 16).

In the 2015 NaBITA white paper, Van Brunt, Reese, and Lewis write, "A BIT chair must be vested with the authority to compel students to complete psychological and threat assessments, address academic concerns, and refer students to the conduct office with the recommendation to separate them from the university. A team leader without the authority to act on these issues runs the risk of identifying a high-risk situation and not having the ability to mitigate the risk by responding with an appropriate action" (p. 10).

> *The permanent chair has the ability to bring a team in line with BIT standards of practice and implement a collaborative management approach, in which diverse opinions and perspectives are brought seamlessly together to problem-solve.*

Regardless of whether the chair position is a part-time or full-time role, the chair position should be a permanent appointment.[1] In other words, the position of chair should not rotate among team members but rather be a permanently identified role occupied by someone who is well-suited and well-trained for the position.[1,10] In this capacity, the permanent chair has the ability to bring a team in line with BIT standards of practice and implement a collaborative management approach, in which diverse opinions and perspectives are brought seamlessly together to problem-solve. Further, the chair position should be held by one person and should not be a co-chair role. A co-chair structure can lead to confusion about leadership, difficulty in decision-making, and unclear lines of communication. At the same time, the singular chair should be willing to adopt a multicomponent philosophy of decision-making, rather than unilaterally making key decisions. Ideally, the chair will be a person to whom others are drawn and who inspires a sense of loyalty and a desire to follow; has the ability to develop consistency and reliability among team members; and can establish trust and positive communication within the team and with others around campus.[6,10]

TABLE 1.1 Good Qualities of a Team Leader

1	Well-respected in the community with an ability to bring together different groups.
2	Ability to multitask and delegate assignments while focusing on team goals.
3	Ability to conduct a team audit through NaBITA standards or Core Q[10].

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[10] Van Brunt, B., Reese, A. & Lewis, W. (2015). Who's on the Team? Mission, Motivation and Membership. Berwyn, PA: National Association of Behavioral Intervention Teams (NaBITA).

4	Commitment to individual supervision and coaching of team members, as well as planning retreats and training agendas. Has foundational knowledge of group theory and can effectively manage team conflict and bias.
5	Level-headed, calm in crisis, and able to hear from different perspectives.
6	Ability to balance microtasks such as database organization, keeping an agenda, and sticking to a time schedule, with team macro-goals such as having a yearly training schedule, conducting yearly audits, and building team awareness on campus.
7	Knowledgeable about current cases, legal issues, and has access to resources and experts when the leader doesn't know the answer to a question.
8	Commitment to prevention and early identification.
9	Ability to motivate team members to participate in team meetings and engage in the overall mission and vision of the BIT.
10	Commitment to marketing the team and educating the community about how to identify individuals of concern and make referrals to the team.

Responsibilities of the BIT Chair

The responsibilities associated with an effective and efficient BIT require collective action by all members of the team, but the leadership and vision of the BIT chair is essential as it relates to several areas of BIT functions.[10]

- Vision and Planning for the Team
- Community Buy-In and Support
- Team Training and Transitions
- Team Meetings and Processes
- BIT Reporting and Assessment

Effective BITs have a clear mission that includes a vision for the future of the team and shared goals for team performance and continuous improvement. The BIT chair should lead planning and goal-setting processes for the team in coordination with other school or workplace planning efforts. Teams with specific and measurable goals are better able to assess their overall functioning and communicate about the impact of their work.[10,11]

The BIT chair is the primary representative of the team to the school or workplace community. While it is important for all members to be positive representatives, to generate referrals and to discuss how and why to work with the BIT, the chair is the unified voice to administrators and stakeholders about the team.

[11] Van Brunt, B., Schiemann, M., Pescara-Kovach, L., Murphy, A., Halligan-Avery, E. (2018). Standards for Behavioral Intervention Teams. Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention (J-BIT), 6, pp.29-41

This includes an intentional effort to build community buy-in and support for the team, meaning coordinating presentations and marketing about the team, budget, and resource requests (even if shared across units), and disseminating communications and reports about the team to key stakeholders.

Managing team membership is an important role of the BIT leader. Team members need a clear understanding of their roles and expectations as a members of the team, along with regular opportunities to discuss their respective roles on the team. Most team chairs will not have direct supervisory responsibilities for those on the team. Thus, the leader must build relationships across units, communicate effectively about the importance of each member's role on the BIT, utilize creative supervisory strategies for coaching and performance feedback, and work in coordination with each team member's direct supervisor about the member's role on the team. BITs also experience team member transitions, so the BIT leader should have succession plans for the various members by coordinating backups for core positions on the team and using strong onboarding and training efforts when bringing on new members.

BIT leaders are responsible for planning and running an efficient team meeting and guiding the membership through the three BIT phases of data gathering, assessment, and intervention.

In addition to new members, current BIT members need regular training and practice applying the BIT tools and resources in their work. To ensure the team remains up to date on training and best practices, the BIT chair should coordinate ongoing training efforts, team-building activities, tabletop exercises, and team discussions on current issues, "hot-spots," and events. This means using every meeting time wisely and not canceling meetings when agendas are small.

Team meetings can get a bad reputation, causing team members to disengage or not attend. This is often because they are not useful or drag on without a clear agenda or purpose. BIT leaders are responsible for planning and running an efficient team meeting and guiding the membership through the three BIT phases of data gathering, assessment, and intervention. The BIT leader should have a plan for generating a meeting agenda, recordkeeping on cases and communicating about cases outside of the regularly scheduled meeting time. These efforts are improved when the team has clearly written policies and procedures that are reviewed and updated regularly. It is also important as the leader to have an awareness of the overall team climate. Are there conflicts on the team? Is bias creeping into decision-making? Are certain members not participating? By establishing a healthy and safe team climate in and outside of meetings, the BIT members will feel safer speaking up in meetings, discussing the various cases, and trusting the expertise of others on the team.

The final area of BIT leader responsibility is related to assessing team performance and generating regular reports to communicate about the team's efforts. The leader can coordinate formal or informal assessments of the team, including self-audits of team operations. This information, as well as data generated from record-keeping systems, should be compiled into end-of-year reporting as part of continuous improvement processes that link to the team's shared goals and further efforts to generate buy-in and support for the BIT.

THE PANEL

To further discuss issues of leadership and the BIT, we have compiled a panel of experienced BIT professionals and leaders in the field to share their perspectives and ideas on leading a BIT.

[MS] Makenzie Schiemann, M.S. is an associate consultant for TNG and the associate executive director for the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA). Makenzie started her professional career as a teacher working in middle grades education, but has spent the last nine years in higher education overseeing the behavioral intervention team, case management program, and victim advocacy department at both a small private college and a large public university. Makenzie has presented at numerous national conferences including NASPA, the Higher Education Case Manager's Association (HECMA), NaBITA, and ASCA. She currently serves on the advisory board for NaBITA, is an editor for the Journal for Behavioral Intervention Teams, and has previously served on the leadership board for the Higher Education Case Managers Association (HECMA). Her areas of expertise include policy and program development for behavioral intervention teams, case management, and victim advocacy, strategies for chairing BITs, research and assessment, and strategic planning for comprehensive educational and awareness programming.

[AM] Amy Murphy, Ph.D., is the 2019 NaBITA president, a member of the NaBITA Advisory Board, a faculty member, and a former student affairs administrator. She currently coordinates a master's program in student development and leadership in higher education at Angelo State University. Dr. Murphy previously served as the dean of students at Texas Tech University, as well as a graduate faculty member in higher education. Dr. Murphy's role included serving as chairperson for the BIT for more than 10 years. Dr. Murphy co-authored *A Staff Guide to Addressing Disruptive and Dangerous Behavior On Campus and Uprooting Sexual Violence in Higher Education: A Guide for Practitioners and Faculty*. Her research includes the development of the ERIS: Extremist Risk Intervention Scale, alongside Dr. Brian Van Brunt.

[SKS] Saundra K. Schuster, Esq., is a partner with TNG, a national risk management legal consulting firm. Ms. Schuster is a recognized expert in preventive and civil rights law for education, notably in the fields of harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct and violence, and ADA and disability issues. Ms. Schuster has extensive experience and expertise in, and routinely advises clients on, the First Amendment, campus access issues, risk management and liability, behavior intervention and threat assessment, student discipline and campus conduct, and intellectual property and employment issues. Ms. Schuster provides assistance nationally to both public and private educational entities in policy development, faculty handbooks and employee manuals, and training for state and federal compliance.

[PF] Poppy Fitch, Ed.D., brings more than 25 years of experience as a higher education administrator and counselor in San Diego area community college and university settings. She currently serves students as the associate vice president of student affairs, 504/ADA and Title IX coordinator at Ashford University. There, Poppy led the development of the mission, policies, and practices of the student affairs division and established the university's BIT. Embracing an equity-minded perspective, Poppy focuses on institutional responsibility to support outcomes, so that all students are free to reach their fullest potential through the transformative power of education. She is a Gallup-certified strengths mentor and coach, is a published author of *A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Education:*

Managing Across the Generations, and presents regularly at regional and national conferences. Poppy earned her doctorate in post-secondary/community college educational leadership and her master's in education with a specialization in multicultural counseling, both from San Diego State University. Her research focuses on the success factors for foster youth who have persisted to college degree completion.

[JM] Jamie Molnar, M.App.Psych., LMHC, QS, has 12 years of clinical and organizational psychology experience, with particular expertise in clinical counseling, coaching, case management, crisis response, and health and wellness initiatives. She earned her B.S. in psychology from the University of Central Florida and her master's in applied psychology (clinical) from Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. She is a licensed mental health counselor, a State of Florida Qualified LMHC Supervisor, and a Gallup-certified strengths coach. Jamie is an advocate for mental wellness and early intervention. She currently works in clinical practice in St. Petersburg, Florida, provides higher education consulting nationally, and offers online trainings and courses for mind-body-spirit living. She has worked in a variety of clinical settings but spent the last six years in higher education, working in both clinical and nonclinical roles in Student Affairs. She has experience in college counseling, wellness outreach initiatives, chairing a BIT, and designing, implementing, and overseeing case management services. She is an active member of the Higher Education Case Manager Association's (HECMA) Operations and Strategic Planning Committee and co-authored the 2017 HECMA Member Survey and Analysis Report. She also provides mentorship to new case managers through the HECMA Mentorship program. Jamie currently serves on the advisory board for the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA) and is an editor for the National Journal for Behavioral Intervention Teams. She writes and presents regularly on case management in higher education.

[EW] Erica Woodley, M.S., is an assistant vice president of student affairs and assistant dean of students at Tulane University in New Orleans. During her time at Tulane, she has also served as an area director and the director of residence life within Housing and Residence Life. She led the student evacuation team during Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and helped set up a call center for displaced students, faculty, and staff in Houston, Texas, in the immediate aftermath. She was actively involved in the recovery efforts within Housing and Residence at Tulane after their campus sustained damage in 95 percent of the residential buildings. Ms. Woodley was integral in the creation of the case management program at Tulane, as well as the Student Resources and Support Services department that she oversees, which encompasses the main case management function for the university and an Office of Violence Prevention and Support Services. She has created the policies and procedures that guide the practice of case management and the identification, support, and documentation of high risk students at Tulane. Additionally, she established and currently chairs the Tulane University BIT.

[BAS] Brett Sokolow, Esq., is the CEO of TNG LLC, a national multidisciplinary risk management consulting firm with more than 3,000 education-sector clients, 23 executive and support employees, and a roster of 32 consultants who are at the forefront of the field in their areas of expertise. Sokolow founded TNG, then known as The National Center for Higher Education Risk Management (www.ncherm.org), in 2000. Sokolow is recognized for his national leadership on systems-level solutions for safer schools and campuses and is widely considered to be one of the foremost Title IX experts in the nation. He has served as an expert witness in more than 50 significant lawsuits affecting college, university, and school liability. In addition to his role with TNG, Sokolow served as Executive Director of ATIXA

from 2012–2017 and now serves as president of ATIXA, the Association of Title IX Administrators, the leading industry association for Title IX compliance, with over 3,600 active school and college members. He led NaBITA as executive director until 2017 and now serves as founder and board chair.

[BVB] Brian Van Brunt, Ed.D., has worked in the counseling field for more than 20 years, and specializes in educational counseling, behavioral intervention and support, and issues related to mental health and alcohol/substance abuse by students. He served as director of counseling at New England College and Western Kentucky University. He is currently a partner with TNG and serves as the Executive Director of NaBITA. Dr. Van Brunt is also a prolific writer, having authored numerous books, book chapters, and articles. He has additionally produced various assessment instruments, video training materials, and is a blogger and photographer during his spare time.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEAM LEADER?

MS: A good team leader is someone who can guide the team through difficult case discussions, manage the day-to-day operations, and maintain a long-term, big-picture view of the team's mission, vision, and scope. This certainly isn't easy. Being able to balance all of this is both a science and an art. It takes organization, content knowledge, charisma, and people skills. Good leaders know how to motivate their teams and can lead them through discussions that often include various viewpoints and disagreement. I often compare this to herding cats, as BIT meetings can become scattered and lose focus or direction without a good team leader. To keep the team on track, good team leaders must be knowledgeable in the resources available to the team, able to accurately assess risk, and creative in deploying interventions that maximize the team's strengths and provide quality support to the individual.

Team leaders must navigate the unique challenges of work in behavioral intervention, including creating buy-in for the team, influencing the participation of a multidisciplinary membership, and recognizing and resolving team conflicts and dysfunction.

AM: Two qualities immediately come to mind for a good BIT leader. First, the ability to build positive and trusting professional relationships with the team and BIT stakeholders, and the second is a commitment to the NaBITA standards of practice and the three-stage BIT process. Team leaders must navigate the unique challenges of work in behavioral intervention, including creating buy-in for the team, influencing the participation of a multidisciplinary membership, and recognizing and resolving team conflicts and dysfunction. A good team leader can leverage the strengths of each team member and understand the unique needs of each position on the team while also communicating the value of the BIT across stakeholders. A firm foundation of rapport and mutual respect in the various professional relationships gives team leaders an advantage when addressing these difficult issues associated with the BIT. When these positive relationships are combined with knowledge of and commitment to foundational BIT principles, the team leader has the necessary characteristics to lead an effective and efficient BIT.

SKS: The qualities for an effective team leader for a BIT is somewhat different than general leadership elements because a BIT leader is likely to also be employed at the institution in a different full-time position. Therefore, the individual holding this position must have a strong commitment to the work of the BIT on the campus because otherwise it could become relegated to a back burner. Because BITs are most effective when there is strong campus support and engagement in creating a culture of reporting and confidence in the response of the team, the BIT leader must either be recognized as a leader on the campus and respected in that role (which would carry over to the BIT) or work hard to establish a role as the leader of the BIT initiative on the campus.

JM: A good team leader is someone who has a foundational understanding of group dynamics and the ability to manage conflict effectively. BITs are naturally fluid both in structure and content. There can be a variety of personalities and viewpoints to manage, as well as turnover in positions. Additionally, teams are consistently faced with new and challenging cases, while also regularly confronted with cultural and societal influences, biases, the general pressures of the work itself, and the expectations of the institution. A strong team leader is able to assist the team with managing all of this by maintaining a balance of consistency in process with being adaptable and flexible to accommodate all of these external influences. Gone are the days of just setting an agenda and reacting to the occasional referral. The work has changed and become more involved, more demanding. It now requires an understanding of the subtle interpersonal dynamics and unconscious psychological forces of the team and how they influence the team's behavior and performance.

PF: Inclusive, caring, and connected, strong team leaders understand the relationship between themselves, their team members, and the success of the team as a whole. They self-reflect and encourage others to do so. Part leader and part manager, the team leader focuses on how the team contributes broadly to the safety of the community and understands the importance of engaging individual team members to meeting that mission. In short, a team leader attends to both the work and to the people.

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EW: I've been the leader of our BIT since its inception. One of the most important characteristics of a team leader is the ability to balance being a steady, stable force while also responding to the changes in the landscape — both university and national — and the dynamics of the team. Keeping the practices of your team consistent, while also evaluating and responding to each case individually, can be difficult given these dynamics. The team leader really needs to be the person who ensures the consistency and makes sure that the team isn't just applying a one-size-fits-all approach to situations.

Over the years, our team has struggled to remain true to the values of our institution while keeping up with the ever-changing regulatory landscape and adjusting the dynamic of our team as people enter and exit. Being able to slow down in some important ways has not always been easy but has been very important. For example, when there is disagreement about the dispensation of a case, it's easy to go with the voices at the table who are louder and move on, but that can erode the relationships of the team members with each other.

BAS: The introduction to this paper noted that case managers and directors of student services can fit the bill for team leadership, and I wanted to comment that I agree, to the extent that they are able to wield sufficient institutional authority, both culturally and politically. This goes for anyone who might chair the team, regardless of title. I am not a fan of the disempowered team model, in which the chair has to go to other administrators for permission to invoke actions that the BIT has determined need to be taken. While this disempowered model can work, it relies on bridge-building and relationships rather than actual authority, and inserts an extra step into what can be time-critical decision-making. Instead, the BIT chair should either be delegated authority to act or should possess that authority inherent within their positions, such as with a dean of students. Where a BIT chair is otherwise a middle-management professional within the institutional structure, the chair needs to be a person whose professionalism, expertise, and personality command the respect of peers and leaders such that the institution is willing to delegate authority to that person as BIT chair that which may not necessarily exist outside of BIT duties.

BVB: One of my favorite quotes about leadership is from Frank Herbert, the author of *Dune*: "The difference between a good administrator and a bad one is about five heartbeats." A good leader is influential while building coalition within the team, but ultimately can take responsibility and make decisions that may be unpopular but essential for team functioning, with BIT members voting "students" off the island. A decisive team leader is able to make tough choices and does this after seeking input from each team member, analyzing the information and moving the process forward. Additionally, a team leader takes a personal reasonability in keeping their team running efficiently. This means scheduling monthly supervision with team members, developing a training schedule, and addressing flare-ups and personality hot spots that may impact team effectiveness.

HOW DO LEADERSHIP QUALITIES SHIFT AT DIFFERENT SCHOOLS?

MS: Institutional culture, as well as strengths, needs, and resources, vary from school to school. A good team leader understands the institution and responds accordingly. Every organization and group of people has a formal, and often informal, way of operating. Communication styles, operating procedures, and "just how things are done" are unique to every person and to every institution. A good leader must be flexible to this. While the basic tenets of a team leader's responsibilities remain stable (agenda creation, a focus on team process, documentation, supervision, etc.), *how* these get done – the way in which the team leaders go about these items – is likely to look and feel different based on the school.

What shouldn't change in different setting is a team chair's ability to operate autonomously and consistently. In other words, a co-chair or a rotating chair model is not ideal. When the team chair position is shared it can lead to confusion, lack of direction, and inconsistencies on the team. Instead, appoint someone to serve as permanent team chair who has the time, the authority, and the personality to lead the team. I think case managers make strong team chairs as they tend to have training in group dynamics, are skilled communicators, and can focus on details of the cases. Knowing that every school does not have a case manager, a strong alternative is either the dean of students or associate/assistant dean of students.

AM: I would argue that the critical leadership qualities do not shift across BIT contexts. While positions and titles may vary across institutions, ultimately, the leadership competencies important to BIT leaders

remain the same across school environments. However, the positions or titles of team leaders vary across institutions because of the different organizational structures and job responsibilities of those involved on the BIT. Ultimately, the positionality of the team leader needs to be someone who can influence administrative decisions related to team activities and resource allocation for the BIT, while also having the time commitment and passion to do the work. While I would not recommend a co-chair situation, I do recommend that the leader have a strong support structure and a "second in command" to work with on day-to-day BIT operations and to fill in when the chair is absent.

JM: I think general leadership qualities remain pretty consistent across settings. It is important that, regardless of the setting, the team leader sets the tone for the team. This includes the mission, purpose, and scope of the work, as well as clarity and consistency with the systems and processes the team will utilize to function effectively. I think what could change, however, is knowledge of systems, policies, and how different members of the team can contribute appropriately, as this might look differently in K-12, colleges, and workplace settings.

> *Ultimately, the positionality of the team leader needs to be someone who can influence administrative decisions related to team activities and resource allocation for the BIT, while also having the time commitment and passion to do the work.*

PF: While teams will operate differently based upon their context, whether in a K-12, college, university, or workplace setting, under no circumstance do BITs operate in a vacuum. Instead, they are a part of the larger ecosystem of their community. Effective leaders are aware of and connected to the role of the team to their community's mission, and to its strategic and operational goals. They have a clear sense of the stories and experiences of both those who come onto the BIT radar, as well as the community around them. One important distinction across the various contexts is whether the team operates on a traditional academic calendar or if it operates on a full-year calendar. Operating on an academic calendar allows for teams to have a reprieve during periods of school break. During these periods, BITs have the opportunity to recharge, and chairs can prioritize training and assessment activities. Teams operating on a full-year calendar may find taking time for these activities more difficult. It is in this context that a co-chair or other shared responsibility leadership arrangement may be advantageous, allowing for a step away when necessary.

EW: When I first started doing presentations about BITs and case management, I largely ignored the organizational culture at Tulane that allowed ours to be successful. Over time, I started to get feedback from colleagues that what worked for me was actually failing miserably for them. I realized that while there are some fundamental leadership skills that, in my mind, are best practices, the organizational culture and political landscape of an institution can be so powerful that failing to consider it can actually cause even the most competent leader to fail. It is very important to do an honest and thorough assessment of the landscape in which you operate in order to determine what communication looks like, what resources you have, who your key stakeholders are, and how the institution views risk. These are all important factors, which shape the kind of skills the person who leads the BIT will need to have.

BAS: I have seen dramatic differences in BITs across varying institutional types and formats. Sometimes, the leader is a reflection of these community variations, and, sometimes, the leader has to succeed in spite of them. For example, larger institutions tend to have more than one BIT, and also a Threat Assessment Team (TAT) or other response team that competes with the BIT for turf, resources, and authority. The TAT tends to get the lion's share of the time and emphasis, and so the BIT chair has to fight for the role and resources of the BIT. It should be the case that a TAT wants to empower a BIT, as the more effective a BIT is, the less likely it is that a TAT will be needed. Yet, that beneficence does not often prove out in practice. I have also seen BITs at very academically inclined institutions and campuses where faculty authority is strong. These teams tend to be faculty-dominated, and to take a scholarly approach to BIT development and interactions. This can be of value, but there is a point where a BIT chair has to put an end to three-hour meetings and the tendency to "chase the rabbit into Wonderland" on every case. These teams tend to over-ponder and shy away from action. BITs at community colleges tend to be lean and mean, in the best sense of the phrase. They don't lack the academic chops, but they aren't as likely to be burdened by scholarly niceties or the paralysis of shared governance. At the same time, BIT chairs at community colleges need to fight for resources, and ensure that the BIT isn't too efficient, as everyone on the BIT has five roles, and sometimes that can result in a tendency to give short shrift to cases that would benefit from a deeper level of engagement. Community colleges often also lack the resources to follow cases and do post-intervention follow-up at the same level of quality as better-resourced schools. Thus, the BIT chair needs to find ways to keep an eye on long-term follow-up often without the advantage of having a case manager at the ready.

BVB: Leadership, essentially, requires someone with focus, commitment, and the ability to know the team members and keep them focused on the mission and scope of the team's functioning. For a K-12 team, this will require a strong knowledge of psychological issues, special education, and the ability to work with parents. For a community college, this often requires immense efforts in multitasking and doing more with fewer resources. While there are times when having shared team leadership makes sense, given the contextual and subjective facets of a particular system, the preference is to have one leader who is ultimately responsible for the team and a strong "No. 2" who may take on more day-to-day management and attend to details and follow up with students. In terms of the positional department the leader may come from, the main issue is ensuring the leader doesn't allow personal subject area bias and experience in that department, either implicit or explicit, to guide decision making or limit the communication and process of the team. For example, a team leader with law enforcement experience may see cases from that lens and see a referral to off-campus law enforcement as the end of the BIT's involvement; similarly with student conduct/discipline and counseling. Team members with heightened privilege (such as clergy, lawyers, nurses, medical providers, and mental health clinicians) should also be wary of falling into the trap of seeing the team's communication as governed by their own privilege.

> *Leadership, essentially, requires someone with focus, commitment, and the ability to know the team members and keep them focused on the mission and scope of the team's functioning.*

TABLE 1.2 Bad Qualities of a Team Leader

1	Has a tendency to move from fire to fire, rather than looking to build a better approach; operates from problem to problem rather than looking at "up-stream" work.
2	Lacks an understanding of research, current legal cases, or the differences between threat assessment and mental health assessments.
3	Jumps to conclusions about cases based on bias or who is most persuasive or vocal on the team.
4	Becomes so passionate about issues so as to shut out other opinions.
5	Needs to make every decision personally, rather than trusting the team process.
6	Doesn't see the value in documentation or quality assurance when it comes to documentation.
7	Doesn't provide opportunities for team training or professional growth.
8	Is not collaborative, creative, or effective in deploying interventions to reduce or address risk.
9	Lacks the ability to guide the team through the key three phases of a BIT meeting: data gathering, assessment, and interventions.
10	Fails to follow through or ensure follow-up is being done on cases after they are discussed; utilizes a "one-and-done" approach to managing cases.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS A TEAM LEADER CAN BUILD COMMUNITY?

MS: Building strong communication on the team is crucial to team effectiveness. This can be tough though when you think about the makeup of the team – it is intentionally diverse with individuals representing different constituencies with different priorities, viewpoints, and perspectives. These variances will inevitably lead to difference of opinion. The challenge for the team chair becomes turning these differences in opinion into healthy debate and discourse rather than arguments and unhealthy conflict. Understanding one another – knowing each team member's strengths, styles, and personality – can aid in facilitating strong communication. This can be done formally using personality assessments or other tools, but I think there is a benefit to the informal approach as well. Have your team members spend time getting to know each other outside of the team meetings: team coffee trips, team happy hours, team retreats, etc. Once you understand and know someone as a human, it becomes easier to see things from his/her perspective and communicate respectfully and openly.

AM: The team will rally around a common purpose and designated, valuable roles on the BIT. This is the foundation upon which a BIT builds community among members. A team leader can infuse this

spirit into the team by sharing seminal documents about the value of BIT work (e.g., recent Secret Service report on enhancing school safety with threat assessment) and investing in team member training and development in areas related to their interest and contributions to the team. Let's not forget: BITs can also influence community building across a school or campus community by promoting a culture of care, prevention, and reporting.

SKS: Building community is not for the shy or faint of heart. The initial development must be substantial, strategic, and high profile. Therefore, the team leader must, in collaboration with team members, develop a comprehensive marketing plan to establish the BIT, create team visibility, and meet with groups and individuals to discuss and encourage the concept of the BIT to stay in the forefront of discussion and awareness on the campus. While the intense initial marketing and awareness building may diminish in the coming years, the emphasis must remain on the BIT representing a culture of support for the entire community.

JM: Relationship building is key – both individually and as a group. Trust, communication, and commitment are some of the core components of a well-functioning team, and one of the best ways to achieve this is through strong, healthy relationships. When we truly know each other and see each other – when we learn each other's stories – we build connection. This then creates empathy, respect, and trust, which helps us communicate more effectively and builds commitment to each other and the team. This process can take time and patience but is so important. I am a big fan of the one-on-one, informal "get-to-know-you" coffees and lunches. It is more personal and helps build connection.

> *When we truly know each other and see each other - when we learn each other's stories - we build connection.*

PF: Team leaders who create opportunities for the growth and development of the team are making an investment in their success. Growing and sustaining a healthy team doesn't happen by accident. It involves resourcing, intentional action, and the emotional intelligence to understand and balance the needs of the individuals and the team as a whole. But when we create opportunities for the team to learn and enjoy one another's company, we are creating a community that can sustain when resources are limited and tensions are high. In building community, recognition and team building are my leadership "top two."

Recognizing team members at birthdays or milestone celebrations, for their subject matter contributions to the team, or simply for "who they are" in and outside of the workplace can be an especially effective way of creating a community and helping individuals feel seen, appreciated, and valued. There is little debate over the effectiveness of time away. Anne Lamott wisely said, "Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you." Whether planning team building for fun or for professional development, an interesting inverse relationship exists that goes something like this: The more the team needs the time, the less energy and wherewithal you possess to plan and execute. Whether the team leader engages the team members in their ideas for the activity, or instead identifies an inspirational (or just plain fun) activity, what is most important is that team leaders fully engage themselves to set the tone that it is important and expected for folks to fully participate. Isn't that just a breath of fresh air?

EW: Most of the time, the people on your team are all independently very busy people, so finding time to really focus on team building can be a challenge. When I first started chairing our BIT, I thought I would carve out 15 minutes at the end of the meeting to do some low-level team building, but as you might imagine, it wasn't long before our meetings started bleeding into that time out of necessity. When I apologized to the team about this, they candidly shared that they thought it had been a waste of time anyway. So I decided to focus on some things that I hoped would build the team along the way:

- Conducting regular in-service trainings: These have taken many different forms structurally, but bringing our team together without the pressure of actual student cases allows for a more informal gathering.
- Sending relevant articles to the group, so that if time permits at the end of the meeting, there is an opportunity for a discussion.
- Meeting with individual team members throughout the year to hear about their experiences on the BIT.
- Taking the time, at least annually, to really thank the BIT members for what they do. (This can be lunch, a note from the provost or president, etc.)

BAS: The teams that gel the best, in my view, are those that have regular opportunities for tabletop and model exercises and full-scale simulations. Nothing makes a team come together like a tough case that taps the expertise of everyone at the table, and requires them to collaborate and respect each other's skill-sets and territory.

BVB: A useful analogy here is the operation of an exotic sports car. The car will run well if it has the right fuel, maintenance, and an experienced driver. The BIT works more efficiently when the team leader ensures there is on-gong training, supervision, learning retreats, and conduits to address hot-spots that may arise among different departments or personalities. A team works best when its members have diverse perspectives, which does not happen by accident, nor will it continue to function well without communication and training. A team leader is able to see the importance of training and team cohesion from a wide lens and takes a personal responsibility to ensure the time and energy goes to this tune-up process.

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SHARE A STORY: Think of an experience you have had as a team leader that you have grown from and which shaped your experience as a team leader.

MS: On one of the BITs I chaired, we had a member that often viewed cases very differently from me. The team member and I consistently saw risk differently, interpreted the context of a situation from opposing angles, and chose interventions for the case differently. Over time, this built as resentment in me as I interpreted the team member as difficult, obstinate, and, frankly, inaccurate in the assessment of and intervention planning for a case. I let it build too long. I didn't invest in learning to understand the team member's perspective or personality from the beginning. As I realized the effect my resentment

was having on my ability to lead the team, I sought out opportunities to get to know the team member. I would pop into that team member's office just to say hi or to talk about a student. We would grab a drink together after work to decompress from the day. What I realized is that the team member wasn't being difficult and certainly didn't view cases "wrong." Instead, the team member just looked at cases through a different lens: personal experiences, background, personality, etc., all contributed to a different way of seeing things. And this was a good thing. The team member also valued student success and sought to keep our community safe and the different way of approaching cases brought strong diversity to our team.

AM: At one point early in my time as chairperson of the BIT, our team was split into multiple teams working across BIT responsibilities. We were all feeling various frustrations – duplicate work, lack of communication across teams, unclear team purpose, and rocky coordination of our team activities. Needless to say, we also were not in alignment with emerging best practices for BITs: one team, designated leader, regular meetings, etc. I'm sharing this story because I think we all have moments as team leaders where we need to make adjustments, large and small, to team structures and processes. I used the beginning of the fall semester as an opportunity to regroup. I met with key individual members of the team prior to any broad announcements to make sure they were on board with changes. Then I worked with my administration to review recommendations and changes to ensure I had their support. We also invested resources in team trainings to support the proposed changes. Finally, I shared a summary of the changes to the team and a vision for what our future would look like as a BIT in writing, as well as during a team retreat. I hope my story helps you to feel confident in introducing change to your BIT while also highlighting the need to be intentional and strategic in beginning any change process.

SKS: I created the BIT at an institution with which I was employed as their general counsel. This is never the appropriate role of legal counsel to serve, but the institution did not have a team and needed one badly. (Doesn't every school/college?) As one of the early pioneers of NaBITA, I was passionate about generating this resource for the campus. Thus, I tapped individuals from HR, student affairs, campus law enforcement, disability support services, the provost office, and the special assistant to the president. I spent many hours with this group, orienting the members to the importance of the team and their role on campus. One of the most important members was the associate provost. The faculty loved him, the nonfaculty staff loved and respected him, and he became our ambassador for talking with faculty about their role in creating an effective response to "low-level issues," not merely threats. The word got out pretty quickly and we were off and running to do the important work of meeting, assessing, following up, and, for this very new team, reporting back to the campus at large the ways in which the team was serving the community. Pretty quickly, I was able to hand over the reins to another team member and withdraw as a member, but I remained a consultant to the team and supported them with training.

JM: I had a team member from a key department who frequently did not show for meetings, and was often unprepared when there. This made it really difficult for me as chair. I tried to connect with this individual, went to this member's supervisor for support, but none of that changed the dynamic. We were a small school, so there wasn't anyone else who could fulfill the role. I eventually had to find alternative ways to get the necessary information from that department, and while it certainly wasn't ideal, it worked. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the member left the position and a new team member came in that the situation was resolved. I share this to say I recognize that teams aren't perfect, that sometimes we have challenges that can't be fixed in the immediate, and we sometimes have to find alternative

strategies to mitigate difficult situations. Always strive for best practice, but for some challenges, you may have to get a bit more creative with solutions as well.

I recognize that teams aren't perfect, that sometimes we have challenges that can't be fixed in the immediate, and we sometimes have to find alternative strategies to mitigate difficult situations.

PF: Short story: I recently overheard an interaction between BIT members. They were sharing about a student situation where one of the team members had contacted the student directly and introduced himself not by his role at the university, but by his service on the team. The team member shared with the student about the purpose of the BIT and the concerns that had precipitated the outreach. The outcome was quite positive: The student was surprised to know the team existed, felt supported, and they worked together to identify appropriate resources and help the student arrange for an incomplete and a break from school. While this might not seem noteworthy, the staff member was fairly new to the team, and this experience had him reflecting positively both about being a member of the BIT, as well as the university as a whole. He noted that, before his service, he hadn't known too much about how or why it functioned, and through this experience, the BIT had "come alive" for him through this one student interaction. We've nominated him to be our unofficial "BIT community outreach lead," given how powerful his new perspective could be to helping others understand the role of the BIT in our community! It was a good lesson for us all that a fresh perspective can be really powerful.

EW: About four years after the formation of our BIT, people had settled into the roles they had on our team and things were operating relatively smoothly. People had really started to use our online reporting system. Our agendas and meetings were long, in spite of the efficiency with which we were operating. We had a student who had chronic mental health issues who showed up on our agenda with some degree of frequency. Over time, we became almost increasingly immune to this student's issues. The student was connected with community providers, and we were managing the really problematic behaviors as they came up through conduct. We had spoken to his emergency contact and that person was fully looped in. The student was semi-compliant with case management and performing well academically, for the most part. We felt we had done all that we could do. Somewhere along the way, we stopped engaging in active discussions about this student. When the circumstances escalated, it came to light that our becoming desensitized to his issues had probably allowed some subtle escalations to go unnoticed; certain people on the team didn't agree with our continued interventions with the student. Thankfully, this story didn't end with tragedy, but it did remind me of the importance of slowing down and really fully processing each case on your agenda. It's also a good reminder that your team members need to understand that it is their responsibility to vocalize concerns – even if the opportunity doesn't seem to be there.

BAS: I worked with a team at a small private college where laziness and apathy had set in. The vice president of student affairs asked TNG to come in and help to revitalize the team. I recommended replacing the chair, which was not a popular choice, as the existing chair was competent, if complacent. We tried to get the existing chair to adopt industry-standard practices, but the team resisted, even if their chair embraced the need, at least superficially. We shook up the structure, replaced the chair and

removed a member who was a barrier to change. That caused the rest of the team to renew their vows, if you will, because they realized we were willing to clean house. The remaining team members were very committed and wanted to stay on the team. They embraced that doing so would require them to work harder and be more diligent. The biggest cultural shift was to formalize the use of the risk rubric, and the chair imposed the discipline that every student would receive a risk score at each meeting (or between meetings) if the student had a touch point with the team. There was no slippage allowed, as that had befallen the previous team leadership, and it became a ritual to close each discussion of each student with a risk categorization by consensus of the team.

BVB: I'm going to embarrass Amy here. The role she played in the *Window into BIT 2* is an excellent example of patient team leadership. If you haven't had the opportunity to see Dr. Murphy corral what can only be described as some very difficult cats in a similar direction, I would highly recommend you take a watch. She illustrates three phases of team process, from data gathering to rubric analysis to intervention, while checking in with each of the team members. The video training was designed to illustrate a community college system that had some difficult team members who were not all "rowing in the same direction." Amy's 15 years of team leadership experience comes through with her focus on inclusion, staying on task, and bringing harmony to the team discussion. The videos of follow up meetings with a difficult psychology faculty member are also very useful to watch her direct supervision skills at play.

HOW CAN TEAM LEADERS ENGAGE IN BURNOUT PREVENTION?

MS: As team leaders, we are often managing some of the most difficult and high-stress cases that the school will handle. As team chair, director of the case management program, and victim advocate, I often felt like I was interacting with our students during their most difficult times. I felt burned out by this. My empathy pool was running incredibly low. I needed to see our students doing well and shining. So, I decided to start leading spring break service trips. While it may seem counterintuitive to add work to myself when I was feeling burned out, these trips gave me an opportunity to interact with our students in an entirely new capacity. I got to see them at their best – serving others, learning, and growing. I felt renewed and energized by these trips and by our student's incredible energy on them.

AM: I've been pretty vocal that burnout is one of the primary reasons I am not currently in a student affairs administrator position. While not the only contributing factor, my role and responsibilities on the BIT certainly contributed to the overwhelming stress and anxiety that I started to feel in my work, and I was part of an amazing team doing really valuable work! The most important lesson I can share is that a BIT must have adequate resources: time, money, people, training, and support. Doing more with less may be a short-term adjustment or response, but it is not a long-term solution. As team leader, it is your job to coordinate communications about BIT standards and reports about BIT activities to those in positions to invest resources in the team. This can mean advocating for a case manager position, administrative support, or shifts in other job responsibilities for you or others on the team. It's also import-

> *The most important lesson I can share is that a BIT must have adequate resources: time, money, people, training, and support.*

ant to consider the impact of after-hours work and the response to crisis situations that often overlap with our roles on the BIT. Identifying processes and structures that allow BIT members an opportunity to truly leave work at work regularly is an important part of preventing burnout. More than anything, it is not a failure to ask for help. You cannot be hesitant about advocating for changes that allow you and the team to sustain their important work related to safety and wellness.

JM: I think developing and managing the team's emotional awareness is an essential strategy for tuning into the energy of the group and mitigating burnout. Not only does this help the individual, but it also assists with building a supportive and trusting team dynamic. This work can be heavy, and the team leader needs to be comfortable with doing group "check-ins" during meetings, particularly after difficult cases, to get a pulse on the energy of the room. Allowing time for debriefing and light banter can also lift the energy levels and help team members manage the output needed to do the work.

PF: As ironic as it feels to be writing this for an audience whose purpose is prioritizing support for life stress and emotional health, as well as reducing the risk of violence, some things bear repeating: There can be no team success without the mental health of its members. Sincerely caring for one another and noticing when something is amiss is critical. Here, the chair plays a valuable part in demonstrating care for others and self: By simply asking when things seem amiss, by setting clear boundaries, and by being clear that no one person will "make or break" the team, the chair can help ensure that individual members feel supported and can avoid burnout in service to the team.

EW: This is something everyone struggles with, and I don't think there is a one-size-fits-all approach to burnout prevention. I am not even sure that burnout prevention should be the goal. I think in the environments in which most of us work, inevitably there are times when we all feel a little burned out. The important thing is not to ignore that feeling, and to normalize the notion of stepping back when a team member feels burnout setting in. Many of our millennial colleagues are great about this, and it's been interesting to see how they can challenge (in good ways) our Generation X and baby boomer colleagues on the team. At the end of the day, I think it is the chair's responsibility to model good self-care, and to create an environment where someone can say "I just can't do this today" or "I need a break." Being able to do this protects not only your team members, but also the integrity of the team.

> *At the end of the day, I think it is the chair's responsibility to model good self-care, and to create an environment where someone can say "I just can't do this today" or "I need a break."*

BAS: Red, red wine.

BVB: Simply stated, the team leader has the responsibility to make sure the team is able to stay at peak operating ability. This means taking breaks, supervision with individual team members, planning retreats, finding access to training money, creative problem-solving, and supporting members when they are having a difficult time. For each of us, we have a different version of self-care that is effective. Some need quiet and time to rest, others want social interaction and feedback. Some enjoy training and supervision, others find these activities stressful. The task of a good team leader is to strike a bal-

ance and offer diverse and timely interventions to assist team members in managing their stress and burnout. One way NaBITA can help with this is with our *iMATTER* 90-minute video. This would be an excellent first step to developing a retreat day at the end of the semester or start of the year.

RESOURCES FOR BIT LEADERS

In addition to this whitepaper, there are several resources to guide you in leading the BIT.

BIT Standards of Practice: The NaBITA Advisory Board published the first Standards for Behavioral Intervention Teams in 2018. The goals for this document are to provide quality recommendations and guidelines for use by school practitioners to build and maintain BITs.

Policy and Procedure Manual Template: NaBITA's Care Manual provides a template that BITs can use as a starting place from which to cut and paste material into their own policy and procedural manual.

5 Challenges for BIT Chairs Webinar: This webinar walks BIT chairs through five common challenges and how to address them. The webinar provides practical tips and takeaways for chairs to apply to their team challenges so they may build a more effective team.

Journal of Campus Behavioral Intervention Teams (J-BIT): NaBITA publishes an annual peer-reviewed academic journal, J-BIT. J-BIT is a multidisciplinary journal intended to encourage academic research and scholarship regarding the function, design, operation, and assessment of BITs.

BIT Roadshow Template: Given the day to day work of BIT chairs, it can be difficult to take a step back and develop educational or training materials for your campus community. In an effort to streamline this work for you, NaBITA created the Campus Training Template, a customizable resource package that teams can use to teach their community about how to identify, support, and refer a student of concern.

Team Training Template: This template provides an in-depth list of resources that chairs can use to ensure their teams are well trained on every NaBITA standard. The resources are also provided in a 12-month calendar to provide a sample schedule for ongoing team training.

Checklist for Professional Development and Teambuilding Success (from A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Ed: Managing Across the Generations Fitch & Van Brunt)

1. Have a clear and common objective in mind. What do you hope to accomplish with this activity? Solicit feedback from your team about what their priorities are. Remember, "just having fun" is often just what the doctor ordered. Gain consensus, but recognize you will be hard-pressed to please all the people all the time!
2. Plan activities that have the capacity to live on. Consider the sustainability of your activities. Can the professional development program you bring in directly impact the work of your staff with students? Does the book club you've organized have the potential for future related activities? "One-and-done" programs have less potential to stick.

3. Spark and leverage the creative energy of the group. Activities that get people using their creative talents help to ensure participants are engaged. As a bonus: Creativity leads to flow, and flow is good for our well-being.

4. Attend to details. Book rooms well in advance. Send out calendar invitations holding the date and giving participants information about the event so they have something to anticipate. Make flyers and printed materials engaging. Consider using social media as a part of your activity. And, if attending to details isn't your thing...

5. Identify team members to attend to details on your behalf. By leveraging the strengths of your staff you get the job done and present an opportunity for others to use their strengths in meeting the planning objectives. Bonus: Special projects break up the monotony of day to day work.

6. Remember, many hands make light work. Spread out the responsibilities throughout the team. As above, by leveraging the strengths of your staff you get the job done and allow others to use their strengths in meeting the planning objectives.

7. Don't get stuck in the "we have no budget" trap. Think about the talents of those around you. Invite a faculty member to present on a topic relevant to your team. Watch a documentary on the state of higher education and invite an administrator from your campus to come foster a discussion afterward.

8. Remember that breaking bread together builds community. And, if No. 7, above, is a barrier, make your event a themed potluck, solicit food donations from local restaurants, or plan events outside of meal hours but provide light/healthy snacks or even just coffee. (People with be pleasantly surprised by this gesture.)

9. Take every opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge. Read a kudos email from a student or faculty member about a standout staff person. Offer a public thanks to a team member who recently went above and beyond on a project. Acknowledge the team members who helped organize the event. This time together creates an opportunity to appreciate and celebrate — why not use it?

10. Invite your team to participate in acknowledging your presenter(s). Write and sign a paper thank you card, adding short messages from staff. This will go a long way in the good will department (particularly if No. 7, above, had you asking for speakers for little or no honorarium), and it will provide your staff an opportunity to reflect on the activity or presentation. Bonus: Reflecting with gratitude on the actions of others helps to increase our capacity for resilience.

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