

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Core Competencies for Navigating Change & Complexity

CORE SKILL	DEFINITION & APPLICATION	DEVELOPMENT ACTION
The Balcony Perspective	Stepping back from the daily "dance floor" to view patterns, systemic issues, and the bigger picture.	<i>Schedule 30 minutes weekly for "non-operational" reflection.</i>
Distinguishing Technical vs. Adaptive	Identifying if a problem requires an expert fix (technical) or a change in people's values and habits (adaptive).	<i>Analyze current obstacles: is there a known solution, or is learning required?</i>
Regulating Distress	Maintaining a "productive zone of disequilibrium" where there is enough tension to drive change without paralyzing the team.	<i>Practice emotional composure during high-conflict meetings.</i>
Disciplined Attention	Keeping the team focused on the "work that matters" and preventing avoidance of difficult, underlying issues.	<i>Refocus discussions when the team pivots to "easy" distractions.</i>
Giving the Work Back	Empowering stakeholders to take responsibility for the change rather than relying on the leader to provide all answers.	<i>Ask "What do you think we should do?" instead of providing directives.</i>
Protecting Voices from Below	Ensuring whistleblowers, creative deviants, and marginalized perspectives are heard to avoid groupthink.	<i>Actively solicit the opinion of the person most likely to disagree.</i>

