

Seven Characteristics of a Bridge Builder

Each bridge builder brings a unique set of skills and abilities to their leadership role. Here is a set of potential characteristics of a cross-cultural leader to reflect on.

Curiosity and desire to learn	Bridge builders possess the desire to know about the world around you. A bridge builder also understands that as groups are ever evolving. As a result, they actively seek new knowledge and deeper understanding of the groups/individuals you work with.
Initiative and the ability to inspire action	A bridge builder has the desire to start or help create some action, solution or change. A bridge builder should also help make room for and encourage the leadership of others.
Develops and maintains Positive relationships	A bridge builder is able to establish positive relationships with and between communities. Establishing positive relationships requires a bridge builder to develop credibility through trust and transparency. A bridge builder also cares to maintain their relationships through continued support.
Understands equity versus equality	A bridge builder understands that equal is not always fair. The tools, resources, time, etc. that one group needs to achieve a goal is not always the same as what another group may need to achieve a similar goal. A bridge builder should be mindful that each group they work with will have a separate set of needs and different process toward achieving mutual goals.
Awareness	A bridge builder recognizes and appreciates the differences between the groups they navigate. A bridge-builder is also aware of their personal biases and how they impact their view of the world around them.
Flexibility/Adaptability	Bridge builders are able to adapt to new, different, or changing ideas and situations. A bridge builder is able to modify their ideas and behaviors to best to fit the situation at hand.
Communication	Bridge builders have the ability to communicate clearly across a cultural divide. Clear communication includes the ability to express oneself, to actively listen to others and to apply the new information.

Three Ways to Use Your Bridge Builder Skills:

- Run for office in governing body
- Start or join a multicultural student club/organization that helps educate others about culture
- Join a community center or church leadership group

Bridge Builder Reflection

There are many different ways to be a leader. Being a leader is about things you do and say, and about how you think about your community. Together, we've been working on thinking about our communities as leaders. You are all already leaders – and you will always continue adding ways to be a leader to who you are. You are invited to reflect on your current skill set and brainstorm ways to increase your skills below.

List **three** bridge builder skills you already practice:

Skill	Ways I use this skill
1.	
2.	
3.	

List **two** new skills you'd like to gain:

Skill	Ways I can develop this skill
1.	
2.	

List some ways you might be a bridge builder in your community:

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