

ASHA Leadership Academy Quick Reference

STRATEGIC THINKING

Strategic thinking involves a set of skills and practices to help leaders anticipate, prepare for, and implement solutions associated with emerging trends and threats. Research suggests that a critical difference between a leader and a manager is the capacity to think and act from a bigger picture and long-term perspective. A key determinant of career success for many CSD professionals is their ability to identify new opportunities to add value in their organizational and volunteer roles.

ASSESSMENT	
Webinar Objective	Skill Rating ① None ② Basic ③ Competent ④ Masterful
Distinguish between thinking styles: creative, critical, and systems-oriented thinking	
Explore how to identify and frame strategic opportunities	
Explore and apply the SWOT analysis technique	
TOTAL	

Scoring

SCORE	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
LESS THAN 6	Complete the Leadership Academy webinar on this topic
7-9	Review the developmental suggestions in this reference
MORE THAN 10	Explore the supplemental resources for in-depth insights on this topic; consider mentoring others on this skill.

SKILLED BEHAVIOR	UNSKILLED BEHAVIOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uses a variety of thinking styles including creative, critical, and systems thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Relies primarily on one style of thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Aware of ones' organizational strategic plan and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Unaware of the larger organizational context for strategic thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Balances tactical and strategic focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Overemphasizes either a tactical or strategic focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Periodically evaluates emerging threats and trends in ones' profession or sector to identify possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Exclusively focuses internally and is unaware of critical trends

Development Tips and Suggestions

- Interview two experienced leaders you respect to learn about how they practice and apply strategic thinking
- Review your organization's strategic plan and brainstorm potential solutions or programs that align with it
- Set aside time each week to think strategically about your role and trends that represent strategic possibilities; add this to your calendar
- Identify two colleagues you can partner with to brainstorm possibilities to add more value to your organization
- Identify your passions, interests, and strengths; explore how you can use these more frequently to add value to your organization
- Use the 5-Why technique to explore a thorny organizational challenge
- Use the "How can we...?" question format to identify powerful questions that will prompt strategic thinking (e.g., How can we more proactively determine the needs of our members?)

Resources

Citrin, J.M., and Smith, R.A. (2003). *The Five Patterns of Extraordinary Careers*. New York: Crown Books.

Horwath, R. *What is Strategic Thinking? The Deep Dive Strategic Thinking Framework (video)*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/z2NYJJ7XTrc>

Oshry, B. (2007). *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Michalko, M. (2006). *Thinkertoys: A handbook of creative-thinking techniques*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Robert, M. (2006). *The New Strategic Thinking: Pure and Simple*. New York: McGraw-Hill.