

Course Reflections

Early understanding of Responsible Leadership and Health Systems Science (HSS)

At the start of the course, I came in with a fairly straightforward idea of what leadership meant mainly about decision-making, guiding others, and having a clear sense of direction. But I hadn't yet thought deeply about what *responsible* leadership actually involves, especially in the context of health systems. I assumed it had something to do with ethics and accountability, but those ideas felt quite abstract to me.

As we began to explore the framework of Health Systems Science, I started to see how leadership isn't just about doing things right, but about doing the *right* things for the right reasons, and with a clear awareness of the systems and people involved. It became clearer that responsible leadership requires listening more than speaking, and noticing the often invisible threads that connect individual actions to broader community outcomes.

Looking back, I think I was still very focused on the "individual" aspects of leadership. I hadn't fully appreciated the relational side the way trust, vulnerability, and humility play a part in leading responsibly. This reflection helped me notice those early assumptions and gently let go of the idea that leadership is only about being in front. Sometimes, it's about being alongside.

Mid-course reflection on development and learning

By this point in the course, something shifted. I began to feel less like I was studying a subject and more like I was living inside it seeing the relevance of HSS and responsible leadership not only in theory, but in real, everyday contexts.

One of the things that stood out for me was how complex and interwoven health systems really are. I used to think of health care mostly in terms of the clinic or the patient-provider interaction. But now, I'm seeing the bigger picture how social determinants, policy, community relationships, and even historical contexts all play a part. It's both overwhelming and strangely grounding.

My learning started to feel more personal too. I caught myself reflecting on my own reactions to group work, my hesitations when engaging with unfamiliar topics, and my discomfort when I didn't feel "expert enough" to lead. Slowly, I've been learning to sit with that discomfort. To treat it as part of the process, not a flaw.

It's also been encouraging to see growth in small but meaningful ways more confidence in discussions, a better ability to connect theory with lived experience, and a stronger sense of what kind of leader I might want to become. Not perfect. But thoughtful. And hopefully, kind.

Later stage or end-of-course reflection

Coming to the end of the course feels surprisingly emotional. I've learned a lot, yes, but I've also changed in ways I didn't fully expect. What once felt like distant ideals responsibility, systems thinking, leadership grounded in justice now feel closer to home. More like values I want to live by, not just things I've read about.

I think the biggest shift has been in how I relate to complexity. I used to feel the need to solve or fix things quickly. Now, I'm more comfortable with holding questions, sitting in grey areas, and working toward slow, layered change. That's not always easy, especially in health care where people are often looking for quick solutions. But I've come to see value in pausing, in listening, in being accountable not only to outcomes, but to relationships.

I also feel more connected to a community of peers who are thinking deeply about similar things. That sense of shared purpose has helped me feel less alone in the learning. It's reminded me that leadership doesn't have to be solitary. In fact, maybe it shouldn't be.

This course hasn't just taught me concepts. It's asked me to reflect, to stretch, to be honest with myself. And I'm grateful for that.

Leadership Competency Reflection How my personal development plan evolved

When I first began thinking about my leadership competencies, I focused on areas where I felt unsure or lacking communication under pressure, confidence in group settings, managing conflict. My development plan started out feeling like a checklist. Things I needed to fix.

But as the course went on, I began to understand personal development less as fixing and more as unfolding. I noticed qualities I hadn't really valued before like the ability to listen carefully, to observe quietly, to hold space for uncertainty. These became central to how I understood leadership.

Through feedback, self-reflection, and course activities, I also began to recognize moments where I had stepped up in ways that aligned with my values. Not loudly, but intentionally. I still have areas to grow, of course. But I no longer see those as weaknesses. Just parts of the path.

If anything, my development plan has become more flexible. Less about ticking off skills and more about staying open curious, honest, willing to grow in unexpected directions. And I think that's what responsible leadership, at its core, really asks of us.

Module Reflections

Module 1:

At the start, project management felt a bit abstract to me. But as the sessions went on, I began to see how theories and methodologies actually fit together in real life. I'm now more confident

about mixing approaches to suit different projects, rather than sticking to one way. Moving forward, I want to be flexible and intentional in applying these tools, especially in complex healthcare projects.

Module 2:

When choosing a method for each scenario, I found myself really thinking about the specific challenges and what the project needed most—whether that was flexibility, clear structure, or speed. It made me realize there's no one-size-fits-all solution. This approach taught me to pause and reflect on context before deciding on the best way forward.

Module 3:

Learning about project initiation helped me appreciate how important a strong start is. Now, I see initiation as more than paperwork; it's setting a clear vision and aligning the team early on. I plan to be more thorough in this phase to avoid confusion and keep projects on track from the beginning.

Module 4:

I noticed I need to build stronger skills in stakeholder engagement and risk identification during initiation. These areas seem crucial to setting realistic expectations and preventing surprises. Developing these competencies will help me lead projects with more confidence and fewer bumps along the way.

Module 5:

Procurement often seemed like a technical detail before, but now I understand it's central to project success—getting the right resources at the right time can make or break progress. I'll pay closer attention to this process and aim for clearer communication with suppliers and partners.

Module 6:

Project documentation used to feel like a chore, but now I see it as a vital communication tool and record of decisions. Keeping good documentation can save time and confusion later. I want to develop habits that make documentation efficient and meaningful for everyone involved.

Module 7:

Before, I hadn't thought much about project closure beyond ticking boxes. Now, I see it as an

opportunity to reflect, celebrate achievements, and learn lessons. Proper closure helps wrap up loose ends and prepares the team better for the next project. I'll make sure to build this step into every project plan going forward.

Artifacts and Evidence

Activity 1.2.2



Activity 1.2.2: Competency Mapping Exercise - Project Management Skills

Add the results or conclusions to your portfolio of learning.

The objective of this activity is to help you assess your current competencies in project management skills and identify areas for development. By reflecting on your strengths and areas for improvement, you can set goals and tailor your learning experience in the course accordingly.

Thus, complete one of these Self-Assessment surveys where you take some time to reflect on your current competencies in project management skills.

Select one of the following surveys:

- MindTools. (2023). How Good Are Your Project Management Skills? [Quiz]. Retrieved from: [How Good Are Your Project Management Skills? - Improving Your Skills to Run a Successful Project \(mindtools.com\)](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/newbytlr/quiz/HowGoodAreYourProjectManagementSkills.aspx) ↗.
- Balboa Park Online Collaborative (BPOC). (n.d). Project Management Skills Assessment [Online survey]. SurveyMonkey. Retrieved from: [Project Management Skills Assessment Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/project-management-skills-assessment) ↗.
- Hoberecht, B. (n.d). A Simple Project Management Competency Framework. In PMO Notebook. Retrieved from: [A Simple Project Management Competency Framework \(pinnacleprojects.com\)](https://www.pinnacleprojects.com/2016/01/a-simple-project-management-competency-framework/) ↗.

Artefact Activity 1.2.2 : MindTools – How Good Are Your Project Management Skills? (2023)

I chose the MindTools self-assessment because I was curious to get a broad, practical sense of where I currently stand with project management. The questions felt accessible and covered a wide range of relevant areas like planning, communication, team coordination, and risk management which made it easier for me to reflect honestly.

Reflection:

What stood out to me during the assessment was how much I tend to rely on intuition and past experience, rather than formal structures or tools. While I scored reasonably well in areas like communication and team engagement probably because these are skills I use daily I realised I still have room to grow when it comes to setting up detailed timelines, managing risk proactively, and closing out projects in a structured way.

This reflection reminded me that although I feel confident leading from a people-first perspective, there's a lot of value in developing a more methodical approach too. I'm starting to see project management not just as a behind-the-scenes tool, but as a way to support people better by providing clarity, reducing confusion, and making space for better outcomes.

Going forward, I'd like to focus more on strengthening my planning and risk assessment skills. Even small improvements there could make a meaningful difference in how I approach future projects, especially in the healthcare context where structure really matters.

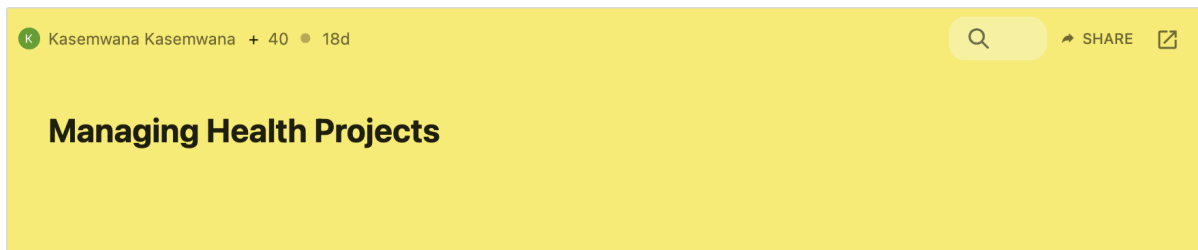
Activity 4.1.2 Identifying Stakeholders



Activity 4.1.2: Identifying Stakeholders

Add this to your portfolio of learning.

List tools and frameworks to identify the primary and secondary stakeholders in project management.



Artefact Activity 4.2.1: Identifying Stakeholders Activity

I selected this artefact because it reminded me just how important it is to take the time to understand who's involved in or affected by a project often more people than I initially realise.

Reflection:

Through this activity, I learned that stakeholder identification isn't just a checklist. It's a process of listening, mapping relationships, and thinking more broadly about influence and impact. It helped me realise that engaging the right people early can prevent misunderstandings later, and that even quiet voices matter. I'd like to improve on staying engaged with stakeholders throughout the project, not just at the start.

Activity 8.2.2



Activity

Activity 8.2.2: Project Communication

Create a concise project communication guide where you detail the following:

1. What to communicate
2. When to communicate
3. How to communicate
4. Which communication tools to use and when to use them?

Use an example where necessary and add it to your portfolio of learning.

Selected Artefact: Activity 8.2.2 Project Communication Guide

I chose this artefact because clear communication often makes or breaks a project. I've seen firsthand how confusion can spread when updates aren't shared consistently or when the right people are left out of key conversations.

Project Communication Guide

What to communicate:

- Project goals and updates
- Roles and responsibilities
- Key decisions and changes
- Risks, issues, and action plans
- Progress against milestones and deadlines

When to communicate:

- At the start (kick-off meeting)
- Weekly updates for the core team
- After any major changes or decisions
- During key milestones or deliverables
- At project closure and evaluation

How to communicate:

- Keep it simple, relevant, and timely
- Use clear language and avoid unnecessary jargon
- Tailor the message to the audience what's important to one stakeholder may not matter to another

Which tools to use and when:

- **Email:** For formal updates, documentation, and follow-ups
- **WhatsApp/Teams Chat:** For quick check-ins or urgent updates
- **Meetings (in-person or virtual):** For deeper discussions, brainstorming, or resolving misunderstandings
- **Shared folders or platforms (like Google Drive or SharePoint):** For storing documents, plans, and reports that everyone can access

Example:

In a recent wellness project, we held a short weekly check-in via Teams every Monday morning. We used a shared Google Sheet to track progress, and emails were reserved for summary updates after milestones. WhatsApp was helpful for same-day reminders or resolving small hiccups quickly. This combination worked well to keep everyone in the loop without overwhelming them.

Reflection:

This activity reminded me that communication isn't just about sharing information—it's about creating connection, clarity, and trust. I've learned that being proactive with updates, even small ones, can help a team feel supported and more focused. Going forward, I want to work on improving how I tailor messages to different stakeholders, especially in more complex or sensitive projects.

Activity 9.1.2



Activity 9.1.2: Agile Approach in a Health Project

Submit this to your portfolio of learning.

In this activity, you need to reflect on all the sessions and assignments you have completed. Select a case study to work on (either the one below or the ones you have worked on before). Thereafter, select and apply an agile approach to managing a project based on the case study. Then answer the questions below (This will help you determine what you have done and what you will do in the future).

Case Study:

Project Overview: A regional healthcare authority embarked on a critical project to revamp its patient records management system, aiming to streamline data accessibility, improve patient care, and comply with evolving healthcare regulations. The project was set against a backdrop of volatility, uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity, requiring the project managers to employ an Agile methodology, specifically Scrum, to effectively navigate the challenges.

Selected Case Study: Revamping a Patient Records Management System

This project aimed to improve how patient data is stored and accessed, ensuring better care and compliance with healthcare regulations. The main challenges were the complexity of the system, shifting regulations, and coordinating across multiple teams.

Why Agile (Scrum)?

Given the uncertainty and frequent changes, Agile felt like the most practical approach. It allowed us to stay flexible, adapt quickly, and focus on delivering value in small, manageable phases. Scrum, in particular, gave the team structure without becoming rigid.

Agile in Action:

We broke the project into clear sprints focused on specific features (like patient search tools or security upgrades). Daily stand-ups helped keep everyone aligned and surfaced issues early. Adaptive planning meant we adjusted sprint goals as regulations or needs shifted.

Cross-functional collaboration was key. Having IT, admin, and clinical voices in the room led to smarter, more user-friendly solutions. Regular sprint reviews and retrospectives gave us space to learn, adjust, and stay grounded in the project's goals.

Outcomes and Impact:

Using Agile helped us respond faster to regulatory updates and user feedback. Collaboration made the solution more holistic. Reviews helped manage expectations and reduced confusion. Over time, retrospectives helped us work more efficiently and improved team trust.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned:

Agile taught me that in complex environments, flexibility and communication matter more than rigid planning. Small wins, consistent feedback, and shared ownership made this project succeed. Going forward, I'd encourage other project managers to keep the team close, stay open to change, and use Agile not just as a method—but as a mindset.

Activity 9.2.2



Activity

Activity 9.2.2: Utilising Kanban Boards in a Health Project

Submit this to your portfolio of learning.

Objective: To apply Kanban principles by creating and utilising a Kanban board for a health project, enhancing visual management, workflow optimisation, and collaboration within the project team.

Selected Artefact: Activity 9.2.2 – Utilising Kanban Boards in a Health Project

Project: Patient Records System Upgrade

For this activity, I created a digital Kanban board using Trello to map out the stages of our case study project. The workflow included: *Requirement Gathering, Design & Development, Testing, Approval, and Deployment.*

Reflection:

Using the Kanban board really helped me visualise the entire workflow at a glance. It made it easier to see what was in progress, what needed attention, and what had been completed. During daily stand-ups, it gave us a shared space to check in, update progress, and spot blockers early.

One thing I noticed was how tasks tended to pile up in the testing stage. This showed us where we needed more support or better planning. Setting WIP limits was useful it encouraged us not to take on too much at once and helped balance the team's workload more evenly.

Overall, I found the board created a sense of flow and kept us all aligned without needing long email threads or meetings. I can definitely see how this kind of tool could be used in other healthcare projects to stay organised and work more efficiently, especially when things get complex or fast-paced.

Activity 9.3.2



Activity

Activity 9.3.2: What could have been improved?

Submit this to your portfolio of learning.

In hindsight, reflecting on both the course and your project, are there specific areas that you believe could have been improved or approached differently? How do you envision these changes might have positively impacted your project outcomes?

Artefact: Activity 9.3.2 – Reflection on Areas for Improvement

Looking back on both the course and my project work, I think one area that could have been approached differently was the initial planning phase. We jumped into task execution quite quickly, and in doing so, I think we missed an opportunity to fully map out risks and stakeholder roles from the beginning.

If we had taken a bit more time to slow down and involve all key voices upfront, I believe the project would've had fewer delays mid-way through. It might have also improved alignment across the team and reduced some of the rework we had to do later on.

This reflection reminded me that in project work, a strong start often shapes the whole journey. Moving forward, I'll place more emphasis on early-stage planning, especially in complex health projects where clarity and buy-in are so crucial.

Completed activities.



Answer the Question:

What do you know about project management and why do you think its important?

To hide comments on the video player, click the gear icon and toggle the comments button.



Nosisa Ngqongqo 2 months ago

0:00

What I know about project management is that it is the overseeing of a project from the inception of the project up until its ends and this is done using systematic methods, expertise and tools so facilitate the activities of the project. it is important that all the activities that pertain to the project and the project activities are carried out meticulously so that the project goal/ goals are met.



Ethan Terblanche a month ago  



Hi Nosisa, thank you for sharing this is really interesting the way that you described it. This description is very similar to how I do my job as a project coordinator. I really like the way that you noted that goals needs to be met, in order for the project to be completed and satisfaction to be reached.



Nosisa Ngqongqo a month ago

Thank you Ethan, what would you say are some of the most significant challenges that you face as a project coordinator ?



Ethan Terblanche a month ago  

Definitely making sure that the design team meets the project deadlines on time

Loop

+ Create new

Activity 1.1.2: Disruptive Challe...

ET

Share

Search

Notifications

Recent

Meeting notes

Workspaces

Personal

My workspace

Recent

Ideas

What are the most disruptive challenges or issues...

References

South Africa's health system faces several challenges impacting project management. Rural clinics are understaffed, delaying projects and reducing quality (Shirley, 2020). Many facilities still use paper records, hindering coordination (South African Department of Health, 2021). The National Health Insurance (NHI) rollout also faces funding and implementation uncertainties (South African Department of Health, 2017). Project managers must adapt to these social, technological, and policy challenges, requiring flexibility and responsiveness (Shirley, 2020).

Shirley, D., 2020. *Project management for healthcare*. CRC Press.

South African Department of Health, 2017. *National Health Insurance for South Africa: Towards universal health coverage*. Pretoria: Department of Health.


Answer the Question:


Considering what you have learnt so far, what are the factors that can impact a project and what is the role of the project manager in relation to this?


To hide comments on the video player, click the gear icon and toggle the comments button.


Considering what you have learnt so far, w...

Considering what you have learnt so far, what are the factors that can impact a project and what is the role of the project manager in relation to this?

Resources such as funds can impact the success of a project. A project manager...

Not identifying or managing risks can negatively impact the outcome of a projec...

There are a number of factors that can impact a project, but ones that I would lik...



Ethan Terblanche a month ago   

0:05

Factors that impact a project include scope changes, limited resources, time constraints, and stakeholder expectations. The project manager's role is to identify these risks early, plan accordingly, communicate clearly, and keep the project on track despite challenges.

Reply



Spark

Answer the Question:

What is the purpose of creating a project budget and how can this aid in the successful monitoring of a project?

To hide comments on the video player, click the gear icon and toggle the comments button.

What is the purpose of creating a project b...

What is the purpose of creating a project budget and how can this aid in the successful monitoring of a project?



The purpose of creating a project budget is to estimate costs and allocate resources...



Creating a budget helps the project manager determine funds required for the...



Ethan Terblanche a month ago



0:00

The purpose of creating a project budget is to estimate costs and allocate resources effectively. It helps track spending, avoid overspending, and ensures the project stays financially on track, supporting successful monitoring and decision-making throughout the project.



Reply



Darmell Samaria 25 days ago

0:00

Creating a budget helps the project manager determine funds required for the project and how to allocate funds to different tasks. A well planned budget avoids resource depletion before the project has been completed. It does aid in monitoring the success of a project as certain costs are only spent during specific phases. We know once the money has been spent that a task has been set in motion .



Reply

Continuous Personal Development Assignment

For this assignment, I took time to honestly evaluate my leadership competencies, focusing on areas where I feel confident and those where I see room to grow. This self-evaluation helped me understand not just my strengths, but also the specific skills I need to develop to become a more effective leader in healthcare projects.

From my reflection, I identified two key competencies to focus on: **effective communication** and **adaptive problem-solving**. I chose these because clear communication has repeatedly shown itself as vital in managing complex teams, while adaptive problem-solving is crucial given how often unexpected challenges arise in healthcare environments.

To support my development, I selected a couple of resources:

1. **“Crucial Conversations” by Patterson et al.:** This book stood out because it’s widely recognized for offering practical strategies to handle difficult conversations. It felt valid and reliable due to its evidence-based approach and positive reviews from leaders across industries. Reading it helped me recognize the importance of listening actively and responding thoughtfully, which I’m already starting to apply in my daily interactions.
2. **An online course on Agile Leadership:** This course provides practical tools for leading teams in uncertain and changing environments. I picked it because it’s designed specifically for project leaders working in dynamic sectors like healthcare. The

interactive elements and case studies made the lessons feel real and applicable. Since engaging with the course, I've become more comfortable adapting plans quickly and encouraging my team to embrace change rather than resist it.

Reflecting on these artefacts, I realize that developing these competencies isn't just about acquiring knowledge but about shifting my mindset. I'm more mindful now of how I communicate under pressure and how I respond when things don't go as planned. Going forward, my approach will be more intentional I'll practice active listening daily and stay open to adjusting strategies as new information comes in.

This personal development plan feels like a meaningful step toward becoming the kind of leader who can navigate the complexities of healthcare projects with confidence and empathy.