

When Progress Depends on Us

Perspective Discussion Guide

LUV Library of Perspective

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

A break may offer respite. Relief comes when we are no longer expected to carry alone what was never ours to own alone.

Understanding → Mutual Dignity → Ownership → Lasting Results

How to Use This Guide

For the person holding the conversation

This is a reflective dialogue, not a staff-wellness training, grievance session, performance review, or case consultation. Choose the questions that best fit the group. You do not need to ask every question.

- Invite discovery rather than persuasion.
- Allow people to name what they are carrying without requiring them to defend it.
- Do not use the conversation to identify who rescues, cares too much, or needs better boundaries.
- Protect the dignity of professionals, organizations, and people or families receiving services.
- Ask what the work may be revealing before asking who should fix it.
- Do not allow ownership to become another word for abandonment or blame.

The conversation has been worthwhile when people can see responsibility more clearly: what belongs to them, what belongs elsewhere, and what no one should be expected to carry alone.

The LUV Learning Process

Experience → Reflection → Discovery → Ownership

Choose Your Conversation

Begin with the shared questions. Then choose the perspective that best fits the people in the room and what they are ready to explore.

Conversation	Designed For
Shared Reflection	Any group reading the Perspective together
Leadership	Executives, directors, board members, and senior leaders
Managers and Supervisors	Those supporting staff and translating organizational expectations
Direct Practice	Professionals working directly with people, families, youth, and communities
Across Roles	Leadership, management, administrative, support, and direct-practice roles together
People and Families	Conversations with—or in preparation for engaging—people who receive services

1. Before the Discussion

Welcome to this reflection on When Progress Depends on Us.

The purpose of this conversation is not to determine who is overworking, who needs stronger boundaries, or whether staff are sufficiently resilient.

It is an invitation to explore where meaningful progress depends on extraordinary individual effort, what that effort may be holding together, and whether rest has become the primary response to work that needs a different kind of support.

The Perspective also asks a second question: Are professionals carrying understanding, choices, and actions that rightfully belong to the person or family?

These questions must be held together. Relief cannot come from moving organizational or system responsibility onto the person. Ownership cannot grow when professionals remain the energy carrying someone else's plan.

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Real relief begins when responsibility is no longer invisible, ownership is no longer misplaced, and support is not something we offer only after someone is exhausted.

2. Shared Discussion Questions

Use with any audience before moving into a role-specific conversation

First Response

What stayed with you after reading the Experience?

What did the care coordinator mean when she said, “A day off doesn’t change what I’m carrying”?

What part of the Perspective felt immediately true, uncomfortable, or difficult to answer?

What idea are you still sitting with?

Respite and Relief

What forms of respite does your organization currently offer or encourage?

What can time away restore? What remains unchanged when the person returns?

Where might rest be offered in response to a burden that actually needs to be redistributed, clarified, or addressed?

What would real relief look like without suggesting that the work should become easy?

Invisible Work and Responsibility

What important work is completed because someone notices it rather than because a role or process clearly holds it?

Where might extraordinary effort be making an unrealistic workload or disconnected process appear manageable?

What happens when the person who remembers, coordinates, or repairs everything becomes unavailable?

How can invisible effort become visible without turning dedication into a permanent expectation?

The Rightful Owner

What is the difference between supporting a person’s plan and becoming the energy moving it forward?

Where might professionals be carrying understanding, choices, or actions that the person or family needs an opportunity to own?

How can professionals step back from misplaced ownership without withdrawing meaningful support?

What would show that the person understands, shapes, and increasingly carries forward what comes next?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

The person or family is not an outcome to be produced. They are the owner of the life our work is intended to support.

Sustainable Progress

What progress currently depends on someone being exceptional every day?

Which results would be most vulnerable if one committed professional left?

How do we distinguish a strong professional relationship from a system that works only because of that relationship?

What would allow progress to remain supported without depending on one person carrying everything?

3. Conversations by Role

A. Leadership Perspective

For executives, directors, board members, and senior organizational leaders

Purpose: To explore what the organization may be asking committed people to hold, what leadership can and cannot see, and how accountability can remain clear without placing every outcome on one worker.

Where might staff effort be concealing a gap in capacity, coordination, authority, or infrastructure?

What happens when leaders learn that an expected outcome cannot reasonably be achieved within current conditions?

How can leaders make it safe to name limitations without normalizing low expectations for the people served?

What support can become available before exhaustion is the evidence that something must change?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Leadership cannot redistribute what it cannot see—and staff cannot reveal what they fear will be treated as failure.

B. Managers and Supervisors Perspective

For those supporting staff and translating organizational expectations into everyday work

Purpose: To explore what supervisors are asked to absorb, what choices they can offer staff, and where recurring problems can go when they exceed supervisory authority.

When staff say they are carrying too much, what options are actually available to the supervisor?

Which recurring problems are returned to staff with encouragement because there is nowhere else to take them?

How can supervisors distinguish a need for respite from a need to change how responsibility is held?

What are supervisors themselves carrying that may need to become visible?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Support is limited when the supervisor can offer compassion but cannot alter what the person must return to.

C. Direct-Practice Perspective

For professionals working directly with people, families, youth, and communities

Purpose: To explore the difference between caring deeply, carrying legitimate professional responsibility, bridging urgent gaps, and gradually taking ownership of another person's progress.

What do you carry because it belongs to your role? What do you carry because leaving it undone may harm someone?

Where has going above and beyond quietly become part of the ordinary expectation?

When does support begin to replace the person's opportunity to understand, choose, or act?

What would allow you to set down misplaced responsibility without feeling that you are abandoning the person?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Caring deeply and carrying everything are not the same thing.

D. Across Roles

For conversations including leadership, management, administrative, support, and direct-practice roles

Purpose: To explore where responsibility begins, ends, overlaps, or disappears—and how different roles experience the same work.

Where does one role believe its responsibility ends while another experiences the work beginning?

What does each role carry that may be invisible to the others?

Where is shared responsibility genuinely shared, and where does it ultimately settle on one person?

What information must move across roles so recurring gaps are not continually repaired through personal effort?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

What appears to be individual resilience may be an entire system resting on someone's willingness to keep absorbing the gaps.

E. People and Families Perspective

For conversations with—or in preparation for engaging—people who receive services

Purpose: To understand how professional support is experienced, what makes ownership possible, and where one trusted relationship may have become the only path through the system.

What support made it easier for you to understand what was happening and make choices that felt like yours?

When did support feel like someone standing beside you, and when did it feel like someone carrying the plan for you?

What happened when a professional you trusted was unavailable or left?

What would have helped you take greater ownership without feeling that support was being withdrawn?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Ownership should not require people to navigate system gaps alone.

4. Where Does Responsibility Live?

Use these questions to clarify responsibility, not to push work downward or assign blame. More than one party may carry a legitimate part, but ownership should not remain invisible or assumed.

The System

What responsibilities are attached to the system's authority, mandates, eligibility decisions, or control of resources?

What gaps are local organizations or workers repeatedly expected to bridge?

What should not be reframed as an individual worker's failure?

The Organization

What conditions, processes, workload expectations, and coverage does the organization own?

How does the organization learn what committed staff are quietly holding together?

Where can recurring problems go when they exceed one team's authority?

Professionals

What belongs to the integrity, judgment, and quality of professional practice?

What can professionals influence without being able to control?

What outcome are professionals treating as personal evidence of how much they cared?

Partners

Which commitments have partners made to one another and to the person or family?

Where does responsibility become unclear between agencies or programs?

Who currently repairs the consequences when a commitment is not carried forward?

The Person or Family

What direction, decisions, and actions rightfully belong to the person or family?

Have they had a genuine opportunity to understand and shape what they are being asked to carry?

How can their ownership grow without organizational or system responsibility being transferred onto them?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Relief does not come from abandoning responsibility. It comes from understanding where responsibility lives.

5. After the Discussion

Do not rush to create a wellness initiative, revise job descriptions, or tell people to stop doing so much. Allow the group to remain with what has become visible.

What are you still sitting with?

What did you hear from another role that you had not considered?

Where did you recognize responsibility that has become invisible or misplaced?

What tension remains between supporting the person and preserving their ownership?

What question should be carried into another conversation?

Participants may reflect silently, write privately, or share with the group. No one is required to leave with the same conclusion.

6. Guidance for the Person Holding the Conversation

Your role is not to identify the correct owner of every task or guide participants toward a predetermined solution.

- Invite rather than persuade.
- Allow people to name exhaustion without diagnosing burnout.
- Protect dignity across roles and levels of authority.
- Do not turn the conversation into a complaint session or shut down difficult truths because they sound like complaints.
- Do not use ownership to justify withdrawing support.
- Do not use caring to justify carrying another person's choices and actions indefinitely.
- Ask what the pattern reveals before asking who should change.
- Let discovery belong to the participants.

When the Conversation Moves Too Quickly Toward Action

What do we need to understand more fully before deciding what to do?

Are we addressing the burden—or asking the same people to manage it differently?

Whose responsibility might this solution increase, conceal, or remove?

How might this affect the ownership of the person or family?

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

The conversation has been worthwhile when responsibility becomes clearer—not merely when another task has been assigned.

7. Continue the Conversation

When Progress Depends on Us invites organizations to consider what committed people are holding together, what that effort may be concealing, and whether rest has become the primary response to work that needs a different kind of support.

This discussion is not intended to resolve the tension in one meeting. It is an invitation to make invisible responsibility visible and explore where ownership genuinely belongs.

Consider continuing the conversation through another role, with people or families who have experienced the system, or through a deeper cross-role dialogue.

Continue the Conversation with LUV

Every organization carries its own responsibilities, boundaries, pressures, relationships, and possibilities. If this Perspective raised questions about what people are carrying and what real relief might require, LUV Solutions welcomes the opportunity to listen and explore them with you.

A complimentary conversation is not a presentation or a commitment to purchase anything. It is a thoughtful conversation about what your organization is seeing, what may already be working, and what may deserve to be understood more fully.

QUESTION TO SIT WITH

Real relief begins when responsibility is no longer invisible, ownership is no longer misplaced, and support is not something we offer only after someone is exhausted.