



# New Tools for Coordination and Leadership of Virtual Work

## WORKSHOP SESSION 4

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SOCIO TECHNICAL SYSTEMS ROUNDTABLE

[www.STSRoundtable.com](http://www.STSRoundtable.com)

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## A Note About Using and Sharing Our Work

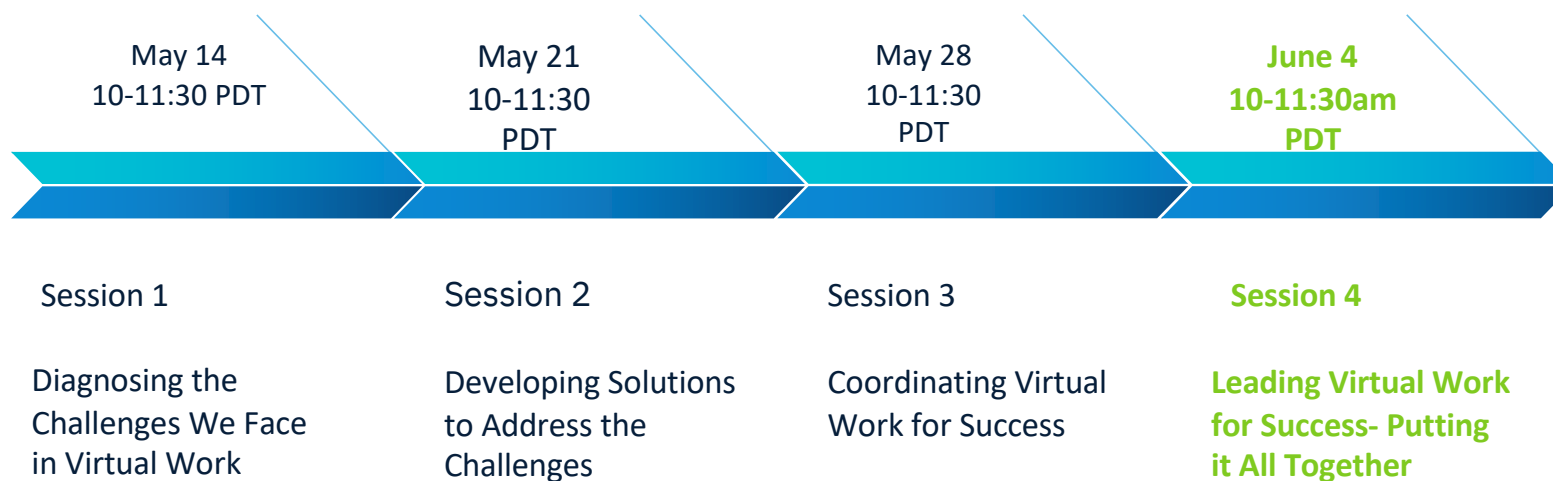
- “We are happy to share our work with you, and to have you share it with others.
- We would love to know if you adapt or build upon it, and to have you share that with us.
- If you do use our work, please give appropriate credit to our team and the National Science Foundation\*, and indicate if any changes were made in our original materials/work.
- You are welcome to adapt or make changes in any reasonable way, but not in any way that suggests that we or the NSF endorses you or your use.”

•“New Tools for Coordination and Leadership of Virtual Work”, Doug Austrom, Betsy Merck, Bert Painter, Pam Posey, STSRT, 2020.

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## New Tools for Coordination and Leadership of Virtual Work

### How the Series Works



# Session 4 Objectives: Leading Virtual Work for Success - Putting it All Together

- **How do we lead for success in this virtual work environment?**
  - ✓ Learn to see what is different about leadership in the context of virtual work
  - ✓ Learn effective leadership practices for coordination of virtual work
- **Putting It All Together**
  - ✓ Learn principles for designing and leading virtual work

## TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome
- Workshop overview and session objectives
- Participant check-ins via CHAT
- Key Concept: Leadership practices for better coordination of virtual work
- Key Concept: Putting it all together – principles for designing and leading virtual work
- Wrap-Up

# Who's Here Today?

## Directions:

Take 1 to 2 minutes to reflect on what you learned in our last session. Consider the homework assignment about leadership of virtual work. Please open Chat and enter your response to the question at the right.

Please share with us one or two leadership challenges you are experiencing or observing in your virtual work.

# Changing Context of Leadership\*

Complex environments are increasingly difficult to manage:

- ✓ large number of interacting parts
- ✓ incomplete/ambiguous information
- ✓ non-linear and tightly coupled system elements
- ✓ system elements are in constant flux
- ✓ hindsight does not lead to foresight

... the most common challenges cited for leaders are:


- ✓ information overload
- ✓ interconnectedness of systems and business communities
- ✓ dissolving of traditional organizational boundaries
- ✓ new technologies that disrupt old work practices
- ✓ different values and expectations of new generations entering the workplace
- ✓ increased globalization leading to the need to lead across cultures

\* Nick Petrie, Future Trends in Leadership Development, Center for Creative Leadership White Paper, 2014. p 7.



# Understanding Distributed Leadership in Virtual Work




- ✓ Role versus function
  - ✓ Many versus few
  - ✓ Distributed authority and inclusive decision-making
  - ✓ Distributed ownership
  - ✓ Distributed expertise
  - ✓ Shared commitment to purpose
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# Key Leadership Practices For Virtual Work



1. Establish and maintain trust through community building, information sharing and effective use of communication technology
  2. Ensure that diversity (people, ideas, perspectives, information and insights) in the work group is understood, appreciated, and leveraged
  3. Shepherd the virtual work cycle and meetings
  4. Ensure people have clear goals and effective means for monitoring progress
  5. Enhance the external visibility of the work and the workers
  6. Ensure individuals benefit from participating in virtual work
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# Leadership Practices for Coordinating Virtual Work

| Level of Uncertainty | Categories of Coordinating Mechanism | Specific Examples of Participative Leadership Practices  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Lower                | Standards - rule based               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ participatively establish working norms and procedures</li> <li>✓ jointly set protocols for effective communication</li> </ul>  |
|                      | Plans - results based                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ facilitate establishment of project plans, milestones, and requirements</li> <li>✓ jointly establish regular monitoring process</li> </ul>                            |
|                      | Formal mutual adjustment             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ facilitate idea divergence and preparation between meetings, and idea convergence in meetings</li> <li>✓ ensure clarity of roles and distributed ownership</li> </ul> |
| Higher               | Informal mutual adjustment           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ actively engage with each other between meetings</li> <li>✓ convene timely co-location as needed</li> </ul>   |

# The 6 C's of Distributed Leadership in Virtual Work

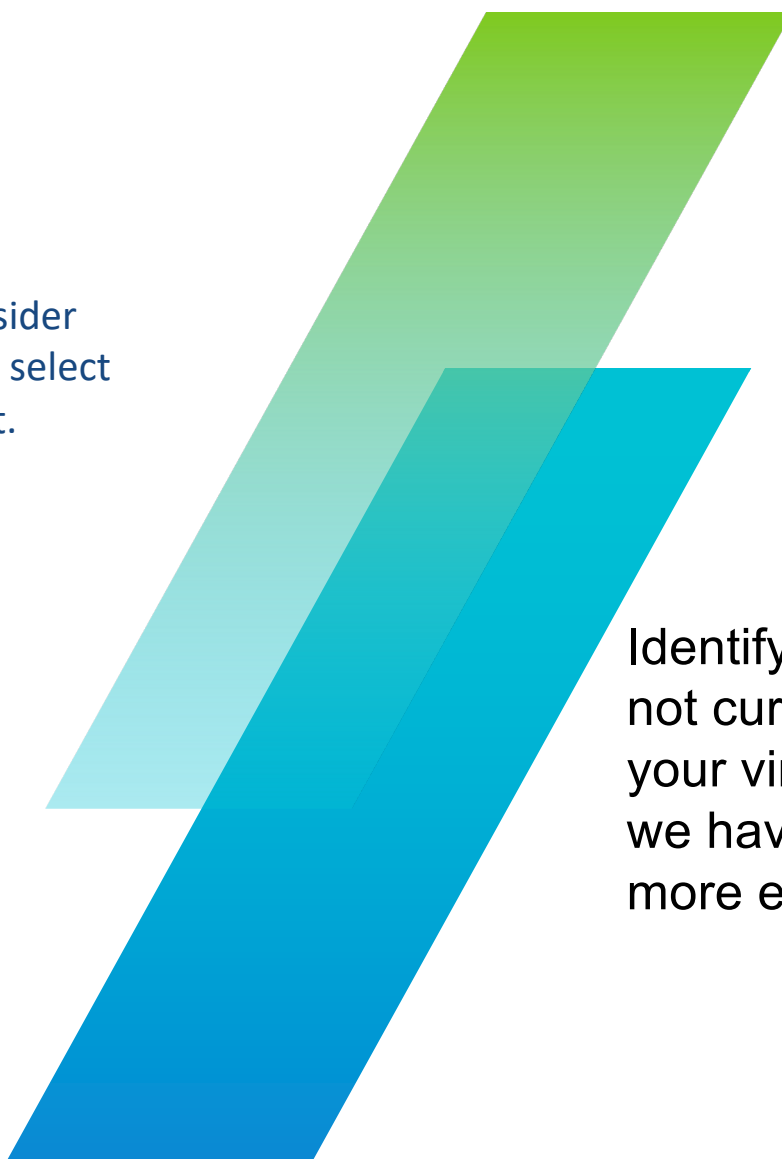
- ✓ Clarity
- ✓ Coordination
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate
- ✓ Caring

## Group Activity

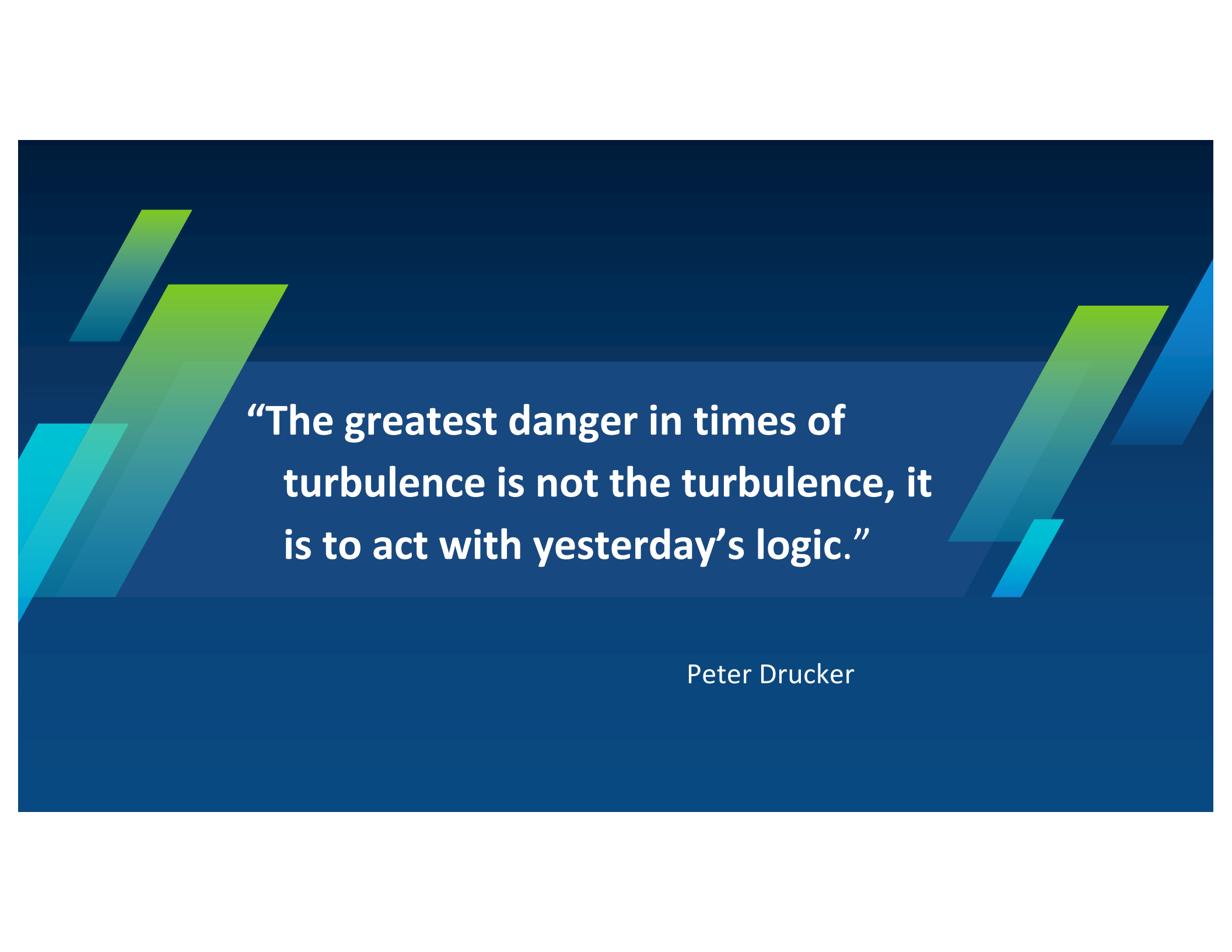
### Directions:

In your breakout groups consider the question at the right and select a spokesperson to report out.

Total Breakout Time: 15 mins



Identify a leadership practice that is not currently working or is absent in your virtual work. Reflecting on what we have shared, what would be more effective?




**“The greatest danger in times of  
turbulence is not the turbulence, it  
is to act with yesterday’s logic.”**

Peter Drucker



# Principles of Designing and Leading Virtual Work



1. Be aware of the level of task uncertainty in your core work
  2. Design deliberations carefully to move the work forward
  3. Be aware of the knowledge barriers that may impede the quality of the deliberations
  - 4: Understand how the right choice and use of coordination mechanisms can mitigate barriers
  - 5: Ensure the coordinating activities of leadership are appropriately distributed among those engaged in the work
  - 6: Maintain focus on the need for continual participative work design to address the ever changing context and evolution of virtual work
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# Join Us at the Virtual Water Cooler



- Bring the burning questions about virtual work you want to discuss with your colleagues!
- Date: Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>  
10:00am to 11:30am (PDT)  
(we'll send the Zoom link soon)




# *Thank you!*

If you are interested in learning more about this work, a selection of readings, our Zoom session recording and our slide deck will be posted shortly on our website:

[www.STSRoundtable.com](http://www.STSRoundtable.com)

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# So Long

