Proactive & Responsive
SYSTEMS MODEL

Come to each situation with humility. Leave everyone with their dignity.

Introduction

Leadership is complicated. Despite our best planning, we often have to make decisions with incomplete information. Stakeholders may not be in agreement, the situation is constantly evolving, or we are unable to accurately predict the impact of external influences.

School is happening whether we are ready or not.

"Wisdom is a balance of experience and reflection."

Aristotle

When we do not have the experience, or have not had adequate time to reflect, we need a system.

This two tiered system is designed to guide action. It requires a vision which is both future oriented, and grounded in the reality of the very next decision we make.

Proactive Strategies are designed to ensure forward motion toward Vision and Mission.

Responsive Strategies empower leaders to handle challenges, expected and unexpected, in a way that best meets the needs of all stakeholders.

It is completely different from being *reactive* . Being *proactive* and *responsive* are decisive and strategic.

Before taking action, know whether the situation is within your circle of influence or control.

Proactive Strategies

PERSONNEL

• Personally attend to the hiring process. Develop teams based on strengths, values, skills, relationship capacity. Remove redundancy, increase reciprocity, encourage autonomy, delegate authority.

POLICY

• Policies must be clear to all stakeholders. No acronyms or legal jargon. Develop policies (based on law and best practices) by engaging stakeholders and those who will be tasked with implementation. Review and update frequently. Publicize and make accessible. Only one version of a policy in use – no abridged or adapted wording in Handbooks, Codes of Conduct etc.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• The biggest barrier to sustainable implementation of a policy, strategy, or system, is ineffective or inadequate professional development. Use the expertise of the staff you have whenever possible. This enables you to build the leadership capacity of your team and be a good steward of funds. Experts and consultants are frequently expensive, and woefully unaware of the culture of your school, or external influences. Re-train frequently.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

• Take responsibility. Praise prolifically. Build capacity by ensuring everyone has something to gain from decisions = a legitimate stakeholder.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

• Share. Inform. Update. Invite. (Board members, parent groups, community leaders, chamber of commerce, business alliances, military, media, legislators).

Responsive Strategies

RESPOND

• Always acknowledge contact immediately. Even without the answer or a solution. People need to know they have been heard.

RESEARCH

• Be cautious of false assumptions, incomplete information, wrong people. Don't let this crucial component be compromised by perceived urgency expressed by stakeholders.
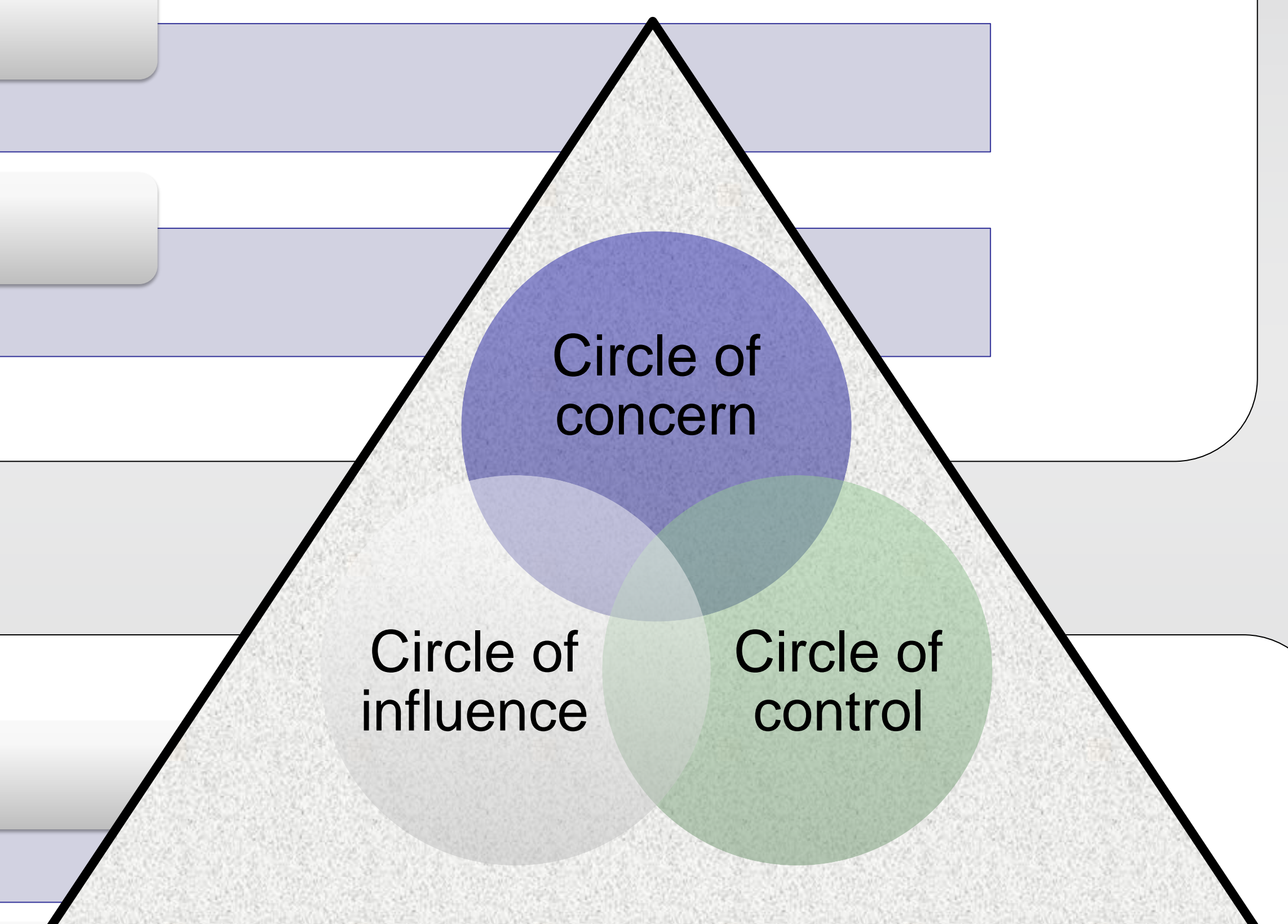
RECORD

• Be systematic about how information is gathered, disseminated, and preserved. *Transparency* and *dignity* are key.

REPORT

• Share what you know with those who are impacted as soon as possible. At the very least, check in routinely throughout the process.

REVISIT

• Never assume a challenge is resolved permanently. Check back. Situations evolve and perceptions waver.

Circle of concern

Circle of influence

Circle of control

" If we wish to spend more time on the things we value, we must have systems in place for the things we do not"

BJ Paris

References
Morieux. Y. (2014) *Six Simple Rules: How to Manage Complexity Without Getting Complicated*
Covey, S. (1989) *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
Brown, B. (2012) *Daring Greatly*
DeMeuse, K. (2009) *Driving Team Effectiveness.*
McCrystal, S. (20011) *Listen, Learn then Lead*
Sample, S.B. (2002) *Contrarians Guide to Leadership*