



# Leading With Why

## Defining Your Personal Motivation

### Contributors:

Loretta Severin

Katherine Cantu Anguiano

“What motivates you to leap out of bed in the morning?” This is one of the first questions the IRIS team explores with new partners. Rather than inquiring whether it’s the first cup of coffee or an early morning stroll with the dog that gets our partners up and out the door, what we’re seeking to understand is the change they are compelled to make in the world. We’re curious about the “why”—the core belief or value, a vision for change, or a personal source of inspiration-- that propels each IRIS leader forward.

Early in implementation, IRIS leaders and partners define and share their whys. This activity, which provides the foundation for establishing a shared IRIS vision for community, encourages connection and understanding. Partners often discover that they are driven by common values and shared dreams for the future. System change is often difficult. However, while implementing IRIS, communities will uncover uncomfortable truths and reckon with obstacles that lack clear solutions. Rooting collaboration in the recognition of all partners’ values and personal motivations creates a foundation of good intent that can motivate and inspire partners when the process of change feels challenging.

### **IDENTIFY YOUR ‘WHY’**

Spend some time thinking about why a coordinated referral platform is important. Consider how you believe this project will help people in your community receive needed services and supports. A good way to start this process is to brainstorm for a few minutes.

1. **Reflect:** Write down key words or phrases as they come to mind. What impact do you want to have on your community as a professional? What inspired you to take part in this project? What most excites you about IRIS and transforming how families access services and supports in your community?
2. **Define:** Look at the key ideas that you listed and generate a sentence or two that sums up the heart of your why: “I believe I have a responsibility to...” or “I want to contribute to a community that...” Don’t be afraid to use bold language that conveys your passion.
3. **Practice:** Say your why out loud and modify it until it feels right. Ask friends and family if it resonates with them as a reflection of your values.

If you would like to share your why, please submit [here](#). Our team is energized by hearing what inspires others!