



A Different Kind of Justice Lesson Plan

For Classroom Viewing & Discussion (for classes 75 min or more)

Who this lesson plan is for: University instructors, community college faculty, justice system educators, and grade 7–12 teachers hosting watch parties with students.

Duration: 75-90 minutes (flexible)

Learning Goals: By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- **Explain** how leadership approaches in prisons and jails influence employee well-being, institutional outcomes, and broader social impacts.
- **Analyze** how leadership approaches shape school and workplace environments, outside of corrections.
- **Describe** the role of psychological safety in people's ability to learn, grow, and succeed.
- **Identify and evaluate** strategies that could strengthen psychological safety and support more effective leadership across corporate, non-profit, and government systems.

Materials Needed

- Film: *A Different Kind of Justice*
- Projector or screen with access to Wi-Fi and YouTube and sound
- Conversation prompts (below)
- Optional: reflective writing prompts for extended learning, homework assignment, and handout with small group discussion prompts (all included below)

B. Course Integration

Instructors can connect the film to:

- restorative justice
- organizational psychology
- ethics and leadership
- public policy
- sociology of institutions
- trauma-informed practice
- civics and community engagement

Lesson Plan

1. Opening (1 min)

Invite students to settle in and share the purpose of the session:

“Today we’re watching *A Different Kind of Justice*, a documentary about a new strategy that policy makers are right now considering to transform culture and get to better outcomes. After the film, we’ll break into small groups to reflect on your own thoughts, and have a discussion to understand what the implications could be for the future of the justice system, and the workplace in general.”

2. Watch the Film (40 min)

No facilitation needed.

3. Break into Small-Groups (2 min)

After the film, ask students to move their seats or turn around to form groups of **3 or 4**. If they don’t know each other already, have them introduce themselves briefly.

4. First Student Discussion Prompt — Emotional Resonance (~4 min)

Let students know they will have 4 minutes in their small groups to discuss the question:

“What parts of the film stayed with you, and why?”

Instructor Debrief (~6 min)

When the 4 minutes is up, ask each group to share one “aha moment” or insight from their conversation. (If there are more than 7 small groups, just ask 3-7 groups to share out to support the timeline.)

5. Second Student Discussion Prompt — Systems Thinking (~7 min)

Let students know they will have 7 minutes in their small groups to discuss the next question. If they finish the first question early, suggest they try the bonus question:

What would need to shift to make psychological safety and/or human-centered leadership the norm in prisons and jails?

****Bonus question: If YOU were a warden, HOW would you seek to make those shifts, especially if most people were used to the traditional top-down practices?**



Instructor Debrief (~ 7 min)

Same as earlier. When the 7 minutes is up, ask each group to share one “aha moment” or insight from their conversation.

**Bonus conversation: If you have insight and more time for this section, help students understand why getting people to change their attitudes, habits and behaviors is so hard, and push them to discuss strategies for how one could address that effectively.*

6. Third Student Discussion Prompt — Implications (~7 min)

For the final prompt, asks students to consider the implications of human-centered leadership and psychological safety in contexts beyond corrections.

How does leadership approach and psychological safety affect those in corporate, non-profit, and educational settings?

***Bonus Question: If you were the leader of an organization, what things would you do with your team to foster psychological safety and a positive culture for better institutional outcomes?**

Instructor Debrief (~ 7 min)

Same as earlier. When the 7 minutes is up, ask each group to share one “aha moment” or insight from their conversation.

**Bonus conversation: If you have insight and more time for this section, help students understand how some of the pressures leaders feel to ‘not rock the boat’ might get in the way, and push them to discuss strategies for how one could address that effectively.*

6. (Optional) Wrap up:

Close by naming a few themes that surfaced in the discussion, and remind students that they’re the leaders shaping tomorrow’s workplaces and institutions — the ideas they carry forward (or let fade) will influence the world they inherit.

7. (Optional) Homework Assignment

Ask students to engage in research to further develop their understanding. For example:

- Compare and contrast human-centered leadership to another leadership models (i.e. Adaptive Leadership, Autocratic, Servant Leadership, Kaizen, etc.).
- Analyze a real-world institution through the lens of psychological safety.
- Write a short response connecting the film to course readings.



Optional Extension Activity – Written Reflections

Please respond to the following questions based on your viewing of the film, A Different Kind of Justice.

- What surprised you most in the film?
- What questions does the film raise for you?
- What are the implications of the film for correctional institutions?
- What are the implications for the future of the workplace?
- What is one thing you will do differently in the workplace, as a result of what you learned from this film?

Small Group Discussion Prompts

After the film, *A Different Kind of Justice*, please move into small groups of 3-4. Introduce yourselves, then answer the following questions one at a time. Be prepared to share out some insights from each of your conversations with the larger group.

Discussion Prompt 1 **(4 min)**

What parts of the film stayed with you, and why?

Discussion Prompts 2 **(7 min)**

What would need to shift to make psychological safety and/or human-centered leadership the norm in prisons and jails?

***Bonus question: If YOU were a warden, HOW would you seek to make those shifts, especially if most people were used to traditional top-down practices?*

Discussion Prompts 3 **(7 min)**

How does leadership approach and psychological safety affect those in corporate, non-profit, and educational settings?

**Bonus Question: If you were the leader of an organization, what things would YOU do with your team to foster psychological safety and a positive culture for better institutional outcomes?*