

# Inspiring in the Void: Leading with Courage, Clarity & Purpose in Uncertain Times

A journey toward adaptive leadership in  
moments of profound uncertainty

Nyla Christian, CPRSS, NCIP, NCLC  
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Advocate | Educate | Innovate | Celebrate

**From Program to Purpose:  
Strengthening Recovery  
Through Community  
Connection and Innovation**



# A Moment of Disorientation → A Moment of Direction

## The Void I Faced

- My leadership journey hit a void
- Familiar systems crumbled, old strategies failed
- Survival: Letting go of control and listening to the chaos; finding direction where there was once only disorientation. The Big Shift
- Uncertainty can be our greatest teacher
- Leading through the void demands courage and a reimagined approach to leadership.



My Shift...

# Where We're Going Today

01

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## Reconnect to Your Why

Rediscover the anchor that grounds your leadership, especially when everything else feels unsteady.

02

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## Strengthen Adaptive Leadership

Learn the five essential moves that transform how you lead through complexity and change.

03

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## Build Sustainable, People-Centered Infrastructure

Create systems and cultures that thrive beyond your tenure and empower others to lead.

These three objectives aren't just topics—they're survival skills for leaders navigating today's constantly shifting landscape.

# Naming the Moment: *The Void*

Change is constant, capacity is thin, and systems are devolving faster than we can build new structures



## The Shifting Landscape

Old playbooks are obsolete. Systems are devolving faster than we can build new structures, creating a fundamental reshaping of leadership dynamics.



## Overwhelmed Capacity

Resources are stretched thin and teams are exhausted, leaving organizations with minimal capacity to respond effectively to new challenges.



## Problems Outpace Solutions

The rate at which new problems emerge now fundamentally outpaces our ability to find and implement solutions.

*This "void" is our new normal. Our job isn't to wish it away, but to learn how to lead within it, finding solid ground and building meaning amidst constant change.*

*What is your new normal?*



# Leadership is an act of adaptation. Not authority.

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The leaders who will thrive in the void aren't the ones with the loudest voices or the most control. They're the ones who can **adapt**—who can read the room, shift their approach, empower their people, and evolve their thinking in real time.

We are THEY!

Authority is about position. Adaptation is about practice. And in uncertain times, practice beats position every single time.

# Objective 1: Reground in Your Why

## Your Why Is Not a Slogan

- What is the bone-deep reason you started this work?
- What/who sustains you through challenges and provides an anchor in uncertain times?
- What reminds you that your work matters, even when things feel untethered?
- It's easy to lose touch with this core purpose amidst daily demands.
- Reconnecting to your "why" is essential for resilience and survival.





## 30-Second Reflection

### When Did Your Why Get Loud?

Think back to a moment when you knew—without question—why you do this work. What was happening? What did you feel? What became clear?

Take thirty seconds right now. Close your eyes if you need to. Let yourself remember. That moment—that clarity—still lives inside you. Your job as a leader is to keep it close, especially when the noise gets overwhelming.

📌 **Pro tip:** Write down your "why moment" and keep it somewhere visible. On hard days, read it. Let it remind you why you're still here.

# Objective 2: Lead in a Flexible Way



## Doing Everything Yourself

You carry all the tasks, make all the choices, and are the only one who knows how things work.



## Building a Team to Share the Load

You spread out leadership, help others grow, and create a team that can work together to achieve your goals.

Adaptive leadership means you stop being the only problem-solver and start building a team that solves problems with you. This means letting go and trusting others. Remember, you don't have to do it all alone.

# The Five Adaptive Moves



## Hierarchy → Shared Power

Flatten decision-making and invite more voices into leadership



## Control → Collaboration

Shift from directing to co-creating solutions with your team



## Managing → Mentoring

Focus on developing people, not just managing tasks



## Urgency → Intentionality

Replace reactive firefighting with strategic, purposeful action



## Exhaustion → Evolution

Stop pushing through burnout and start evolving your systems

These five moves aren't linear steps—they're ongoing practices. You'll cycle through them repeatedly, and that's exactly as it should be. Adaptive leadership is a practice, not a destination.

# Shared Power: Trusting the People You Built

Shared power can feel like losing control, especially for leaders who built their organizations. But the truth is, **shared power isn't about losing control**; it's about multiplying impact. Distributing decision-making strengthens your organization, builds resilience, and empowers your team with real authority to carry the vision.

*"We are the best leaders for this movement. We don't create followers. We create more leaders. We are the movement!"*

## Intentional Evolution

### Evolve or Repeat

The only way forward is evolution; what worked before won't work now. Evolution requires intentionality, prompting us to ask:

*What needs to change?*

*What needs to stay?*

Leaders who evolve don't just survive uncertainty—they use it as fuel for transformation.

# Objective 3: Sustainable Infrastructure

## Build People, Not Monuments.



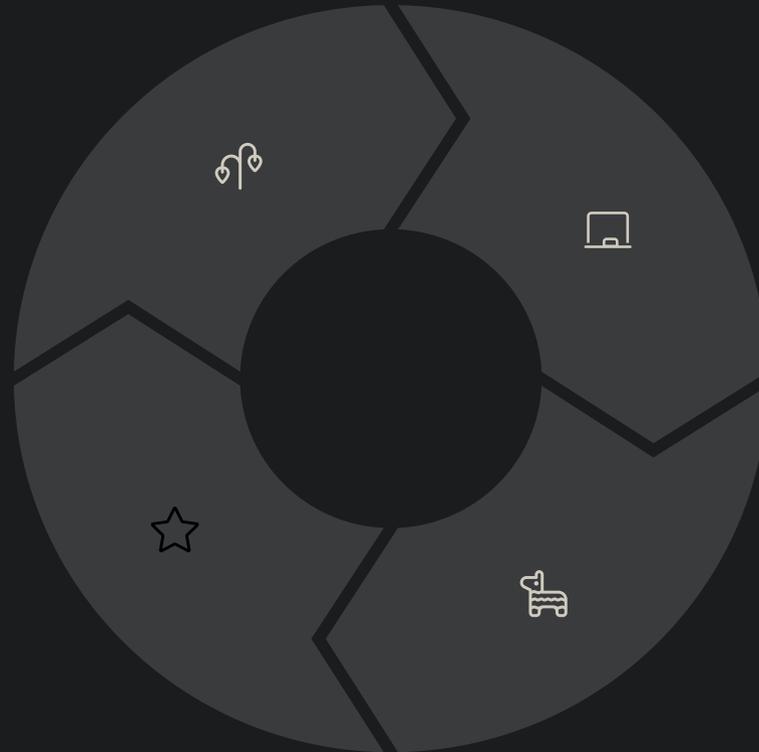
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Leaders often focus on building strict systems. However, true sustainable infrastructure is really about **investing in your people**. Unlike monuments that can crumble, people last and can adapt with the times. When we encourage critical thinking and bold leadership, we create strong systems that can handle any challenge.

# Succession as Care

**Invest in Development**  
Identify and nurture emerging leaders early

**Build Culture**  
Embed values and practices into the DNA of the organization



**Transfer Knowledge**  
Share the wisdom, relationships, and institutional memory

**Create Opportunities**  
Give people real responsibility and room to grow

Succession isn't just about who takes over when you leave. It's about how you're preparing the ground right now, every day, so that leadership can flourish at every level. **Succession is cultural investment in the community**, not exit planning. It breeds new leadership and breathes new life.

# The Three Future Questions

## What Breaks If I Step Out?

If you left, what would collapse? Identify critical systems or relationships where you're a single point of failure and build redundancy now.

## Who Am I Developing?

Who are you actively mentoring and giving leadership opportunities to?

## What Am I Hoarding That I Need to Teach?

What critical knowledge, relationships, or processes are only in your head? Start teaching, documenting, and sharing immediately.

# The Void as Calling

The void is not a problem to solve. It's the birthplace of new leadership.

Every great leader faces the void—a period of profound uncertainty where old ways fail, demanding a new path. It strips away the non-essential, revealing what truly matters. Within this space, true leadership emerges: you learn to lead through uncertainty, make courageous decisions, and discover inner strength. The void isn't your adversary; it's your calling. It's the crucible for transformation, forging leaders and shaping the future.

# Why + We

## Leadership Is Not Solo Work

Your "why" matters. But it's not enough on its own. Leadership in the void requires **community**. It requires a "we."

You need people who share your vision, who challenge your thinking, who pick you up when you stumble, and who remind you why this work matters when you forget. You need co-conspirators, not just colleagues.

The "we" is what makes the "why" sustainable. Solo leaders burn out. Connected leaders endure.



📌 **Reflection:** Who is your "we"? Who are the people you turn to when the void feels overwhelming? If you can't name them, it's time to build that network.

# Four Practices That Ground Leaders



## Pause

Create space between stimulus and response. Not every crisis needs an immediate reaction. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is pause, breathe, and think before acting.



## Invite Support

Ask for help. Lean on your "we." Share the burden. Leaders who try to do everything alone don't last. Leaders who build support systems thrive.



## Name Reality

Say what's true, even when it's uncomfortable. Name the problems. Acknowledge the challenges. Call out what's not working. Reality-naming builds trust and clears the path for real solutions.



## Choose Clarity Over Certainty

You won't always have all the answers. That's okay. What matters is being clear about your values, your priorities, and your direction—even when the outcome is uncertain.

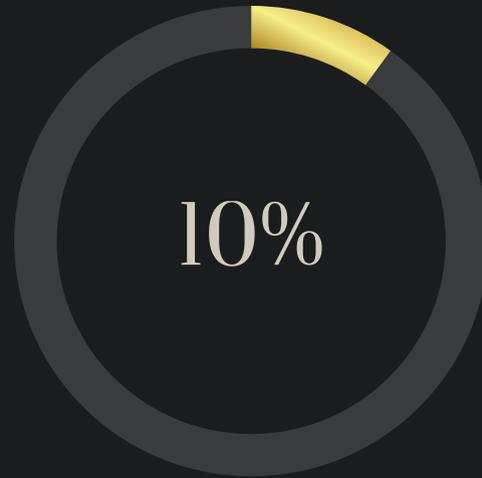
These four practices aren't complex, but they're essential. They're what keep you grounded when everything else is spinning. Practice them daily.

# The 10-10-10 Model



## What You Know

The facts, data, and information you have with certainty.



## What You Influence

The decisions, systems, and people you can directly impact.



## Must-Change-Now

The critical issues that require immediate attention and action.

# The Rest = Noise

Here's the liberating truth: 70% of what comes at you as a leader is noise. It's urgent-sounding but not important; it's distracting but not decisive. Your job isn't to respond to all of it. Your job is to focus on the 30% that actually matters.

10% is what you know for sure. Ground your decisions there. 10% is what you can directly influence. Spend your energy there. 10% is what must change immediately. Prioritize that. Everything else? Let it go.

# Leading in New York

You are not leading in a vacuum. You are shaping one of the most complex, diverse, and consequential mental health systems in the country—perhaps in the world. The work you do here ripples outward. The decisions you make affect thousands of lives.

New York doesn't give you the luxury of simple solutions. Everything is layered, interconnected, and political. But that complexity is also what makes this work so important. You're not just managing programs—you're **shaping the future of care** for some of the most vulnerable people in one of the most influential states.

*The stakes are high. The challenges are real. And you are exactly the leaders this moment requires.*

Don't underestimate the significance of what you're doing. The void you're navigating isn't just your void—it's the void facing mental health systems everywhere. How you lead through it matters far beyond your organization.

You Are Necessary

You are already the leaders  
this moment requires.

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Not the leaders you'll become someday, after more training or more experience. Not the leaders you think you should be. **You, right now, as you are**—you are necessary.

The void doesn't demand perfection. It demands presence. It demands courage. It demands people who are willing to show up, even when they don't have all the answers. You are those people.

You are the ones who stayed when others left. You are the ones who kept showing up when systems broke down. You are the ones who chose this work knowing how hard it would be. **You are necessary**. Don't forget that.

# What We Did Today

1

## Reconnected to Your Why

You remembered *why* you do this work and *why* it still matters, even in the void.

2

## Strengthened Adaptive Leadership

You explored the five moves that shift leadership from control to collaboration, from urgency to evolution.

3

## Re-centered Sustainable, People-Powered Infrastructure

You committed to building people, not monuments, and to creating systems that outlast you.

These aren't just ideas you heard today. They're practices you'll carry forward. They're shifts you'll continue to make, every day, in how you lead, how you show up, and how you build the future.

📌 **Next step:** Choose one practice from today and commit to it this week. Just one. Start there.

# The void doesn't swallow leaders. It reveals them.

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You are standing in the void right now, and you are not being swallowed. You are being **revealed**—your strength, your wisdom, your capacity to lead when everything feels uncertain.

The void is where you discover who you truly are as a leader. It's where you learn to trust yourself, your people, and your purpose. It's where you find the courage to let go of what no longer serves and build what the future requires.

Keep going. Keep adapting. Keep building. You are exactly who we need.

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