





Community Leadership Training Series

Leading Through Ambiguity and Change

Workshops are offered through a partnership with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and Hartford Public Library.

 This event has live captioning.

 This webinar is being recorded



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Community Leadership Training Series

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Session #1

Exploring Organizational and Leadership Life Cycles

Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 12:00pm -1:30pm
(Virtual Session via Zoom)

Session #2

Leading Through Ambiguity and Change

Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 12:00pm -1:30pm
(Virtual Session via Zoom)

Session #3

Aligning Leadership with Purpose

Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 9:30am -12:30pm
(In-Person, 10 Columbus Blvd, 7th floor)

Webinar Engagement

How to get the most out of this session?

01

Feel free to introduce yourselves to us in the chat. We want to connect with each other here!

02

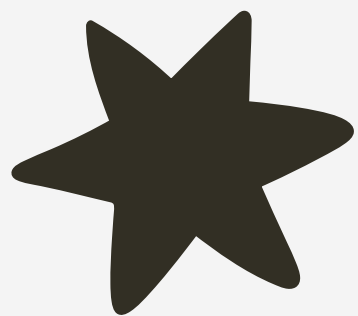
Being present, engaged, and practicing active listening.

03

Please share your questions in the chat as we go through the session. I'll try to respond organically or we'll put it in a parking lot at the end.

Raíces/Roots

Comes from the Latin word radix, which means "starting point." You can think of your raíces/roots, as the place where your leadership starts.





Today's Agenda

What we'll learn and experience:

- Understand how uncertainty impacts the brain and body, and how stress responses can influence leadership behavior and decision-making.
- Explore how vulnerability can be leadership strength during uncertainty.
- Learn practical tools—The Change Curve and Micro-Decisions—to lead effectively during times of ambiguity and change.
- Apply the tools in real time to a current leadership challenge or organizational transition they are facing.
- Build somatic awareness by identifying where stress shows up in the body and practicing techniques to reduce tension and re-center.
- Engage in peer learning and coaching to reflect on current leadership practices and gather new strategies from others in the room.
- Leave with one actionable step they can take this week to lead with more confidence and intention—even without having all the answers.



Are you aware of where stress shows up in your body?

Poll #1

(Choose the response that feels most true right now.)

- Yes — I know exactly where I hold it
- Sort of — I notice it sometimes, but not always
- Not really — I don't usually pay attention to that
- I've never thought about it before



Grounding Technique

How Uncertainty Hijacks your Brain

But here's the problem: in survival mode, your prefrontal cortex—the part of your brain responsible for focus, problem-solving, and long-term thinking—goes offline.

How Do You Respond to Stress?			
Fight 	Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressiveness & confrontational behavior • Defensiveness • Quick to anger • Need to control situations or outcomes 	
	Workplace Manifestation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent arguing or verbal aggressiveness • Attempts to dominate teams or projects • May undermine colleagues to gain a sense of control 	
Flight 	Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety & restlessness • Difficulty staying still or focusing • Conflict avoidant • Escapist behaviors like daydreaming 	
	Workplace Manifestation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids challenging tasks or difficult discussions • Engages in busywork to escape stressors • Excuses themselves when conversations get tense 	
Freeze 	Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling stuck physically or psychological when faced with stress • Difficulty with decisions or taking action • Feeling helpless or numb emotionally 	
	Workplace Manifestation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears disengaged or unresponsive in meetings • Could struggle with deadlines or decision making when stress is high 	
Fawn 	Characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive people pleasing • Difficulty asserting boundaries or vocalizing needs • Approval and validation seeking. 	
	Workplace Manifestation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May overcommit in order to please manager • Struggles to voice opinions or go against the grain 	

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How do you usually feel when you're facing uncertainty as a leader?

Poll #2

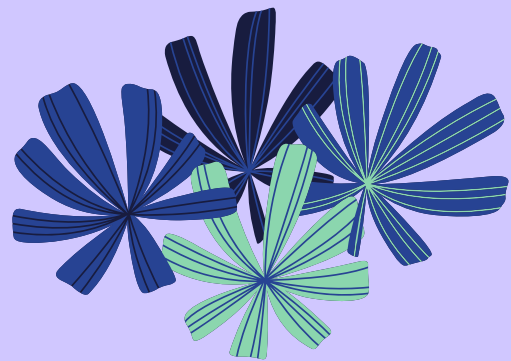
(Choose the response that feels most true right now.)

- I try to take control of everything to feel safer
- I freeze or delay decisions until I have more clarity
- I act quickly, even if I'm not 100% sure it's the right move
- I stay calm on the outside but feel anxious underneath
- I've learned to tolerate uncertainty and stay grounded
- It depends on the day—I'm still figuring it out

VIDEO



Brene Brown: What's the Difference Between Fear and 'Armor'?



The change curve





Where do you think you are on the Change Curve right now?

Poll #3

(Choose the response that feels most true right now.)

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance
- I'm bouncing between stages
- Not sure yet — still processing



Devon's Story

Devon is the Executive Director of a small, community-based nonprofit that just lost a 25% foundation grant due to federal budget cuts. It's a big blow—not catastrophic, but enough to delay a staff hire, pause a program, and spark real uncertainty about the future.

Devon is working overtime to fix things—lining up meetings with potential funders, exploring new collaborations, and doing everything he can to “hold it all together.” Meanwhile, morale is dropping. The team is quiet, disconnected, and avoiding big-picture conversations.

He senses the fear and overwhelm but keeps pushing through. He worries that if he slows down or opens up, things might unravel.



Where he is on the Change Curve:

→ Bargaining — trying to “fix” the situation quickly, make it less painful, and avoid facing the full implications of the loss.

What’s happening in his body:

→ Jaw clenching, shallow breathing, and restless nights worrying about the future.

His Micro-Decision:

→ Pause this week’s staff meeting agenda to say:

One thing he can offer right now...

- A wellness day next week—no meetings, no emails, no questions asked. I hope that gives everyone a little space to reset.
- And I also want to hear from you—what would actually help you feel more supported right now? What’s one thing I could do that would make a difference?



The Reality Nonprofits Are Facing

- ✗ Delays, restrictions, or loss of federal funding
- 🎯 Scrutiny or reputational attacks based on mission or values
- 🗣️ Pushback for engaging in constitutionally protected speech
- 📈 Increased demand for services amid crisis (immigration, jobs, safety net)
- 🤝 Fractured partnerships across sectors like education, law, and philanthropy
- 👁️ The need to operate “under the radar” to avoid harm

7 Readiness Areas for Navigating Uncertainty



SOURCE: Movement Lessons from the First 100 Days April 2025

Legal, Strategic & Risk Planning

Scenario planning, risk assessments, legal prep, and operational contingency plans.

Safety & Security

Physical and digital safety protocols, incident response plans, and drills.

Care & Conflict

Agreements for conflict navigation, trauma-informed practices, and internal sustainability.

Communications & Storytelling

Narrative strategy, crisis communications, and uplifting community voice.

Fundraising & Donor Engagement

Grassroots fundraising, donor education, and reducing reliance on vulnerable funding.

Documentation & Advocacy

Tracking harm and impact to inform advocacy, messaging, and coalition building.

Solidarity & Partnerships

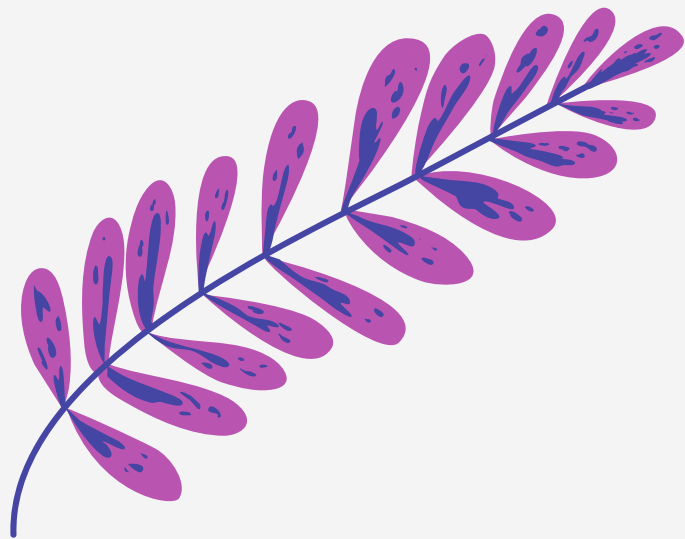
Cross-sector collaboration, mutual aid strategies, and aligned organizational support.



Break Out Groups

What's one concrete thing your organization has done — or could do — in one of the 7 areas to stay ready, rooted, and responsive?

SESSION SUMMARY



Uncertainty impacts individual leadership — it lives in the body and shapes how we show up.

Awareness is the first step — noticing stress patterns helps us regain access to our best leadership tools.

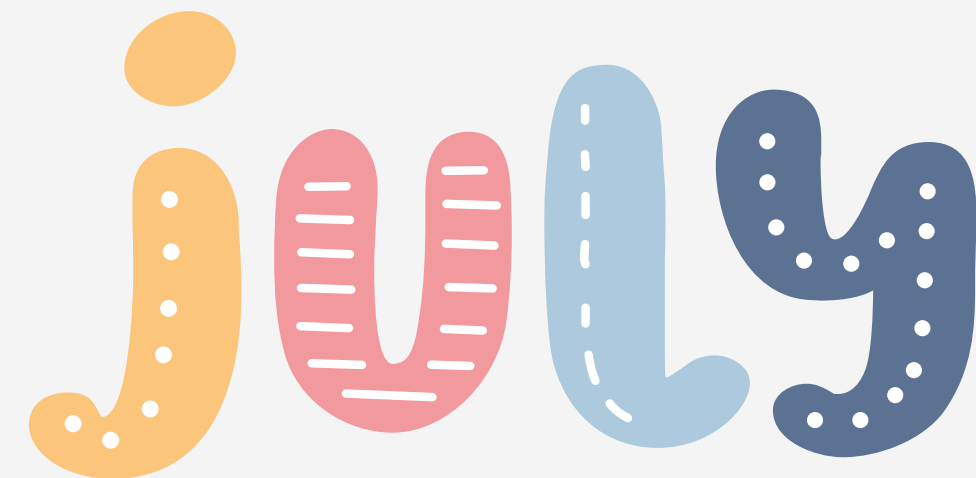
Fight/Flight responses are natural — and learning to recognize them creates space for choice.

The Change Curve is real — knowing where you (and your team) are can guide how you respond.

Small steps matter — micro-decisions grounded in values create stability and momentum.

Vulnerability builds trust — naming what's hard while staying steady is powerful leadership.

We're not alone — connecting with peers helps normalize the experience and build collective resilience.



Upcoming Trainings

Workshop #3
Aligning Leadership with Purpose

Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 9:30am -12:30pm
(In-Person, 10 Columbus Blvd, 7th floor,
Hatford)

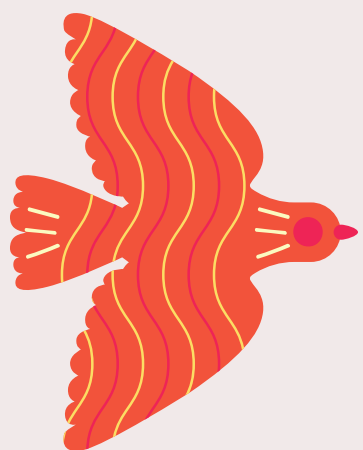
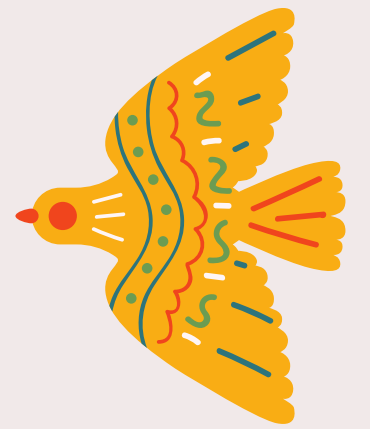
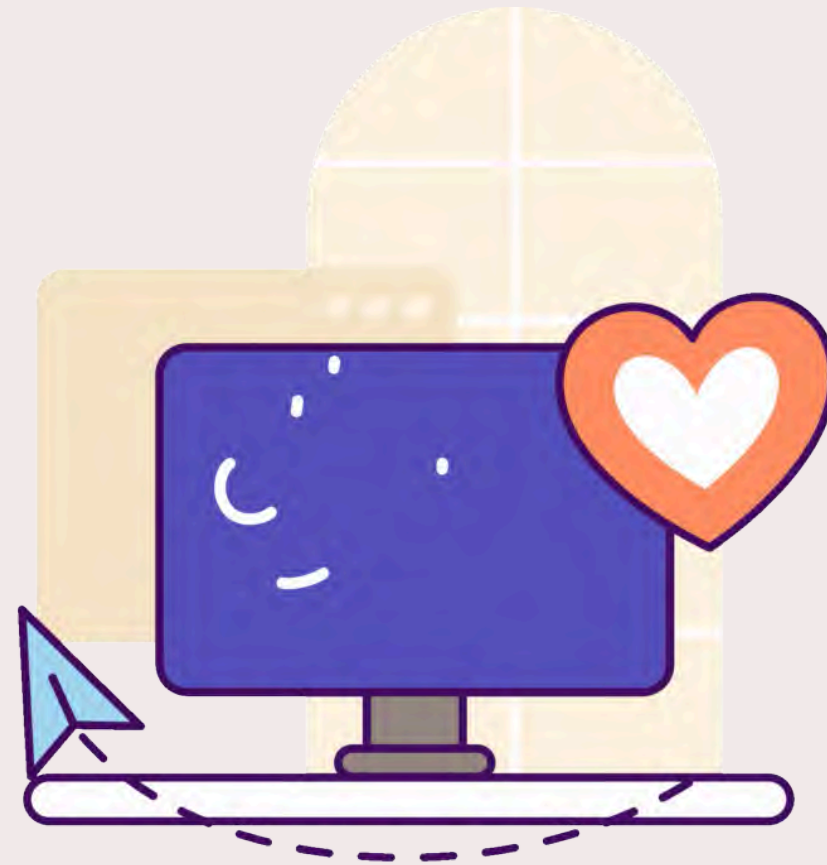


Resources

How To Lead Through Big (And Small) Changes

Brene Brown: What's the Difference Between Fear and 'Armor'?

Movement Lessons from the First 100 Days April 2025



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