



# Welcome to the OneJustice Executive Fellowship!

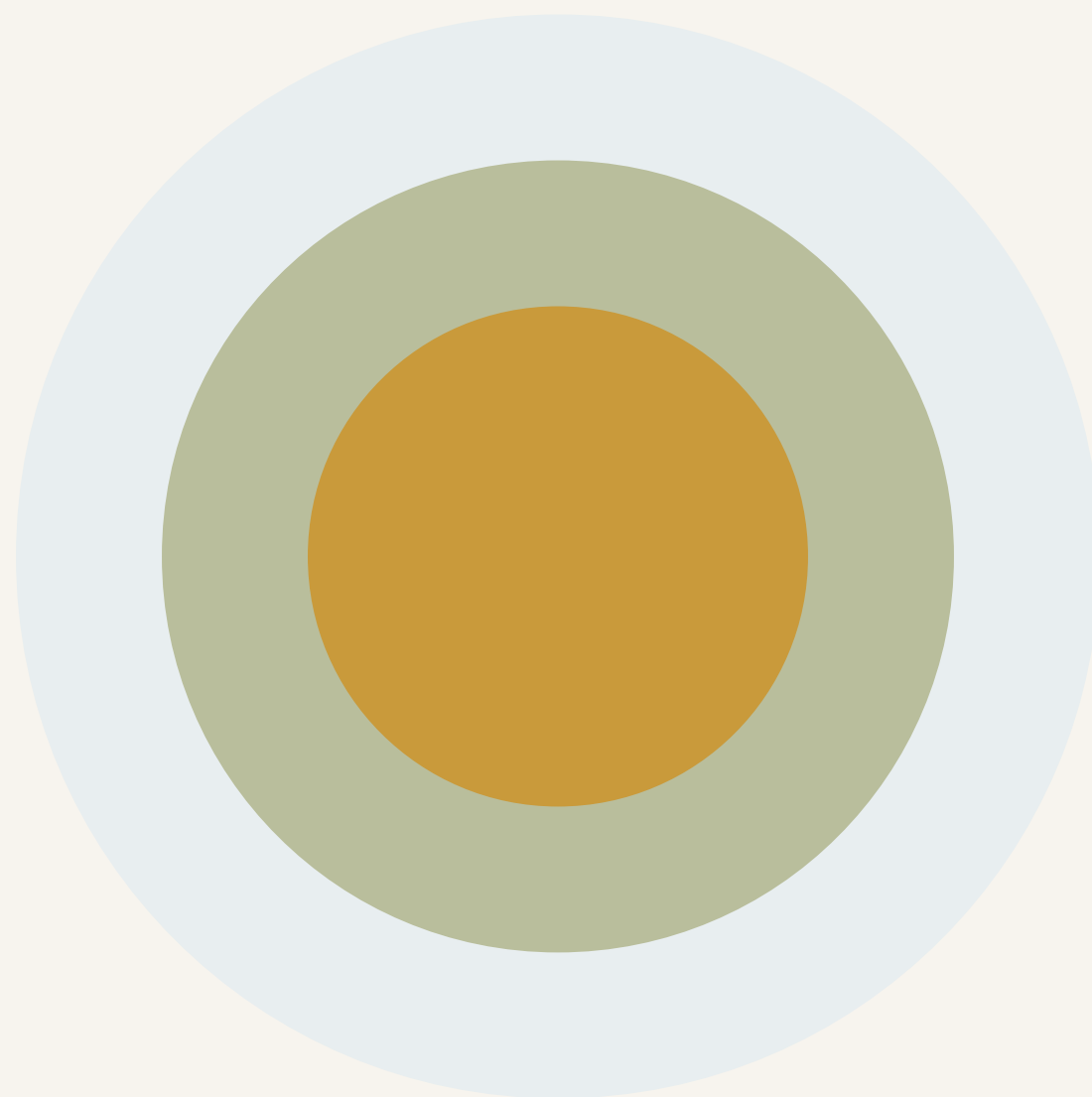
Session 1: Leading Yourself & Sustainable  
Leadership

*Thursday, September 17, 2026*



# Grounding Moment

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# Today's Agenda

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**9:30** Welcome & Community Agreements

**9:35** Program Overview & Objectives

**9:50** Who's In the Room

**10:22** The Capstone Process

**10:42** Break

**10:52** High-Performing Leaders

**11:27** Break

**11:32** CliftonStrengths Overview

**11:45** Lunch

**1:00** Understanding Your Strengths

**1:40** Break

**1:50** Sustainable Leadership

**3:05** Share-Out & Recap

**3:20** Session Evaluation & Close Out

# About OneJustice



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- **Mission:** Strengthen the legal services sector's expertise and capacity to advance justice and equity
  - **Vision:** A thriving, effective legal services sector advances a just, equitable society
  - **How We Work:** Equip the sector with skills and tools; champion a robust, reliable flow of resources; convene the sector to harness its wisdom and power; share analyses and insights about systemic trends and challenges
  - **The Executive Fellowship:** One expression of that mission — building the capacity of the sector's leaders directly, so they can strengthen their organizations and better serve their communities

# About OneJustice: Programs & Resources

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- Executive Fellowship
- Strategic Leadership
- Board Leadership Training
- Maximizing Impact: Pro Bono
- Maximizing Impact: Immigration
- Pro Bono Justice Conference
- Bay Area & Beyond ED Group
- New EDs Collaborative
- Deputy Directors Group
- Board Chair Group
- Consumer Protection Advocacy
- Homelessness Prevention
- Consulting
- Coaching

# Session Learning Objectives



- 
- Build a foundation of shared language and understanding of the Fellowship's objectives, curriculum, and key concepts
  - Examine core elements of leadership skills
  - Understand your individual strengths in the context of teams and leadership
  - Begin developing sustainable practices for leading yourself through the demands of the role

# Executive Fellows Key Concepts



- 
- Think Bolder and Larger
  - Question Status Quo
  - Drive Critical Changes
  - Make Better Decisions Based on Data
  - Analyze, Plan, Execute, Recalibrate
  - Lead from Strengths
  - Partner for Weaknesses
  - Use the Full Team
  - Focus on Priorities

# Curriculum Overview

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# Curriculum Overview

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1. Leading Yourself & Sustainable Leadership (Sept, Day 1)
2. Being a Leader for Your Team, Organization & Community (Sept, Day 2)
3. Nonprofit Governance (Oct)
4. Hot Seat #1 (Oct)
5. Finance 101 — optional (Nov)
6. Financial Storytelling (Dec)
7. Fundraising & Raising Resources (Jan)
8. Hot Seat #2 (Feb)
9. Change Management & Crucial Communications (Mar)
10. Capstone Work Day (Apr)
11. Capstone Presentations #1 & #2 (May)
12. Graduation (June)

# Participant Agreements & Community Norms

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1. Respect one another's choices
2. Respect the confidentiality of Fellowship discussions
3. Be present and patient
4. Trust intent, acknowledge the impact of each other's words
5. Encourage open communication, feedback, & transparency
6. Take space, leave space. Make sure everyone can speak and be heard
7. Practice and experience humility
8. Expect/accept non-closure; there's value in the process
9. Don't freeze people in time. Be open to change and progress.
10. Practice "yes, and"
11. Use "I" statements
12. Act as partners in each other's liberation

# Who's In the Room?



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legal aid /  
nonprofit leaders

**Geography:** CA (21), CO, DC, LA, MI, MS, NM, TX

**Roles:** 7 EDs, 8 executive management, 14 senior program or administrative roles

**Budgets:** <\$5 mil (10), \$5–10 mil (7), \$10–25 mil (8), >\$25 mil (4)

**Issues:** Immigration, housing/eviction defense, disability rights, elder law, workers' rights, tribal/indigenous legal services, public defense, economic rights, civil rights

# Why You Enrolled



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## **Financial & Fundraising Skills**

Nonprofit finance, budgeting, and diversifying revenue

## **Governance & Structure**

Board partnership, succession planning, and building stronger internal structures

## **Leading Through Change**

Leading teams through funding cuts, political shifts, and organizational transitions

## **Peer Community & Belonging**

A trusted network of legal aid leaders facing similar challenges

## **Growing Into the ED Role**

Building the confidence and skills to step into, or grow within, the ED role

# Get Acquainted: Small Groups



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*Pick 1 or More Questions:*

**Q1**

Where Are You On Your Leadership Journey?

**Q2**

What Makes You Happy at Work?

**Q3**

As a Kid, Did You Ever Imagine This Is What You'd Be Doing for Work?

# The Capstone Project



# What is a Capstone Project?

A capstone project is a structured, multi-step process in which you investigate an unresolved issue/challenge or opportunity facing your organization/department/program — through conducting internal/external research and financial analysis — to produce two outputs your organization's leadership can act on:

1. **Strategic Vision** ('What we can do'), a recommendation addressing the core issue, and
2. **Tactical Execution** ('How we can do it'), a concrete implementation plan to maximize community impact.

# Capstone Project Objectives

By the end of the Capstone Project, you should be able to:

- Identify and clearly frame an organizational challenge or opportunity
- Conduct both internal (organizational) and external (environmental/sector) research relevant to your capstone question.
- Apply nonprofit financial analysis to ground your recommendations in your organization's real financial picture.
- Synthesize research and analysis into clear recommendations (**Strategic Vision** - “What we can do”).
- Build a realistic implementation plan with concrete next steps to act on (**Tactical Execution** - “How we can do it”).

# How it all begins: The Capstone Question

## What it is:

A written, open-ended question about a specific unresolved issue, challenge, or opportunity facing your organization — one you will explore.

**“What revenue model would allow Valley Legal Aid of L.A. to reduce its dependence on the three federal grants that fund most of its budget over the next three years — while increasing unrestricted funding and without adding to current staff workloads?”**



# Assignments and Deadlines

1. Draft Capstone Question
  - 10/15/26
1. Final Capstone Question
  - 11/19/26
1. Organizational & Environmental Context
  - 12/17/26
1. Build a Research Plan
  - 1/28/27
1. Conduct Research & Financial Context Analysis
  - Feb – Apr

6. Draft Capstone Memo
  - 4/22/27
6. \*Final Capstone Memo
  - 5/06/27
6. Presentation Day 1
  - 5/06/27
6. Presentation Day 2
  - 5/20/27
6. Graduation
  - 6/10/27

# Assignment Instructions: How to structure a Capstone Question

**Criteria 1:** Start your sentence with “**How**” or “**What** model/structure...” to allow the capstone project to explore more than one solution.

**Criteria 2:** Integrate the organization’s problem/issue into the capstone question.

**Criteria 3:** Include possible success factor(s) in the capstone question, preferably at the end of the sentence. Introduce success factors with “**while**,” “**without**,” or “**so that**,” and then name those success factors.

In other words, follow this structure when creating your capstone question:

**"What/How"** \_\_can\_\_[org's name]... [insert the challenges/issues/ opportunity facing your org]... **"While"**.. **"Without"** **"So that"** \_\_[insert success factors]...\_\_\_\_\_.

“**What** revenue model would allow Valley Legal Aid of L.A. to reduce its dependence on the three government contracts that fund most of its budget over the next three years — **while** increasing unrestricted funding and **without** adding to current staff workloads?”

# The Decision Making Check for non-Executive-Director Fellows

## What it is:

A quick three-step checklist that helps non-Executive-Director Fellows (or equivalent positions) frame a Capstone Question around what a Fellow can actually act on — so its Recommendations and Implementation Plan land appropriately with the right decision-maker(s).

## Checklist

**Step 1:** Name the decision your capstone question leads to.

**Step 2:** Identify who actually holds that decision making power.

**Step 3:** If you don't have full decision-making power, reframe the Capstone Question around what you can do/act on.

Running the check early lets you keep the full scope of the issue while making sure your version of the question ends in something you can deliver — a proposal, an analysis, or a documented case the right decision-maker(s) can act on.

# Decision Making Check: Managing Attorney Example

## Original Question

“How can VLALA reduce its dependence on the three government contracts that fund most of its budget by fiscal year 2030 — while growing unrestricted funding and without further stretching the attorneys who serve LPRs seeking citizenship?”

- Leads to an org-wide revenue decision
- That decision belongs to the ED, board, and Development — not the Managing Attorney

## Refined Question

“How can VLALA's **immigration program** better meet the unmet need for naturalization assistance among LPRs in our service area, given the program's dependence on the three government contracts that fund most of its budget — while keeping our attorneys' caseloads manageable and **so that the ED and Development team have a documented client demand, cost, and staffing case** for growing unrestricted funding before FY2030?”

- Emphasis on the program (immigration program) revenue decision not the org-wide budget
- Focus on what the Managing Attorney can act on/commits—producing a documented case for leadership to decide on

# Content Area(s): Choose top three



# Your Support System: Coaches, Peers, and Resources

- Facilitate sessions dedicated to brainstorming the capstone project
- OneJustice staff coach to brainstorm capstone project ideas
- We want to build community with you
- Robert and Miguel leads on the Capstone Project
  - [rwhite@one-justice.org](mailto:rwhite@one-justice.org)
  - [mmartinez@one-justice.org](mailto:mmartinez@one-justice.org)

## EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP Capstone Project Guidelines



# Q&A

**Break**

# High-Performing Leaders

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**Self-care**

**Awareness**

**Empathy**

**Grit**

**Confidence**

**Learning**

# High-Performing Leaders



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## Small Group Discussion

- How do you define high-performing leadership?
- How do you think you are performing as a leader?
- Where do you think you can improve as an executive leader?
- Are there any specific aspects of leadership you want to learn from the Fellowship and to work on this year?

# Intermission: 5 Mins

Move, Stretch, Reset

# CliftonStrengths Top 5



- 
- **What is CliftonStrengths?**
  - **Why Does OneJustice Do This?**
  - **What CliftonStrengths Is and Is NOT**
  - **Criticism & Limitations**

# Four Domains of Leadership Contribution



*An organizing lens for the 34 themes, not four types, rankings, or opposing styles.*

## EXECUTING

Turns intentions and decisions into dependable action.

*Achiever • Responsibility • Focus*

**How will I move this forward?**

## INFLUENCING

Builds visibility, momentum, and commitment around an idea.

*Activator • Communication • Woo*

**Who needs to understand or engage?**

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Creates connection, trust, and conditions for people to contribute.

*Empathy • Includer • Relator*

**Whose perspective or experience matters here?**

## STRATEGIC THINKING

Uses information and ideas to expand understanding and possibility.

*Analytical • Learner • Strategic*

**What are we not yet seeing?**

*Your Top 5 may span several domains. Use the questions to widen your leadership attention, not to place yourself in a box.*

# CliftonStrengths: A Lens, Not a Label



*Your report is a starting point for reflection, not a verdict.*

1

## Notice

What patterns show up in how you think, lead, and get things done?

2

## Test

What resonates? What needs context? Keep what fits your real experience of yourself, question what doesn't.

3

## Apply

Pick one theme to use more intentionally in an upcoming leadership situation.

*Not a measure of intelligence, competence, or leadership potential — and you don't need to agree with every word.*

# What Stands Out Across the Cohort?



A descriptive reading of 29 individual reports — not a profile of “the ideal leader.”

## RELATIONSHIPS

Trust, inclusion, development,  
interpersonal awareness

## COMMITMENT

Values, accountability,  
persistence, follow-through

## SENSE-MAKING

Learning, reflection, analysis,  
generating possibilities

**Influencing themes are present, but more concentrated in particular profiles than the other three domains.**

*Read these as conversation starters, not conclusions about leadership effectiveness.*

# A Strong Relationship-Building Current



Leadership often appears to begin with connection, trust, and attention to people.

Relator

Developer

Harmony

Empathy

Connectedness

Individualization

Includer

POSSIBLE COHORT  
CONTRIBUTION

**Creating trust, recognizing potential, widening participation, and navigating interpersonal dynamics.**

***Leadership question: How do we extend relationship-centered leadership beyond the people we already know and trust?***

# Commitment Is a Second Strong Current



Many reports combine service orientation with dependable execution.

## Responsibility

Ownership of commitments

## Belief

Purpose and values

## Achiever

Drive and stamina

## Arranger

Flexible coordination

## Discipline

Structure and routine

## Focus / Deliberative

Direction and care

A leadership identity organized around “What is needed?” and “Who is depending on me?” can be powerful and demanding.

***Sustainability question: Which commitments are truly yours to hold, and which should be shared, renegotiated, or released?***

# Strategic Thinking Is Also Highly Visible



The cohort is not only people-centered. Many profiles also emphasize learning and complexity.

## LEARN

Learner • Input

What do we need to understand?

## REFLECT

Intellection • Context

What becomes clearer when we pause or look back?

## ANALYZE

Analytical • Strategic

What patterns, evidence, or options matter?

## IMAGINE

Ideation • Futuristic

What else could be possible?

*Cohort question: How do we turn insight into timely action without bypassing the learning we need?*

# Influencing Is Present, but More Concentrated



Visibility, persuasion, initiative, and public presence may come naturally to some profiles more than others.

## **Communication**

Bringing ideas to life in words

## **Woo**

Opening new relationships

## **Activator**

Creating movement

## **Command**

Taking a clear stand

## **Self-Assurance**

Trusting internal judgment

## **Maximizer**

Mobilizing around excellence

*Leadership question: Which forms of influence feel culturally comfortable, and which may need more intentionality for you to use them?*

# A Possible Cohort Story



Hold the pattern lightly, then test it against your experience.

**This cohort appears rich in relationship-centered, values-driven, and learning-oriented leadership, with strong capacity for dependable execution.**

- 1** Where does this pattern serve leaders and their organizations well?
- 2** Where might these same patterns become costly under pressure?
- 3** What leadership question do you want to carry into your own practice?

# Lunch

Return at 1:00pm PST

**CliftonStrengths**

# Quiet Reflection

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- Take a few quiet minutes with your report and your worksheet.
- Pick ONE strength from your Top 5.
- Use the worksheet at your seat to jot down: a real moment it helped you lead, and a time it might have gotten in the way.

**7 minutes • Worksheet at your seat • Cameras optional • This is just for you**

# Small Group Discussion



*Groups of 3–5. Everyone gets a turn. Go alphabetically by first name.*

- 1** Tell your group about a real moment this strength helped you lead.
- 2** When might this same strength become overused or backfire — especially under pressure?
- 3** Where could you use it more purposefully in the next month?

**20 minutes total — roughly 5 -6 minutes per person**

# Choose Your Breakout Room



Find your name below, then join that Zoom breakout room. There are seven groups.  
Groups 1–4 here. Groups 5 - 7 on next slide.

1

**Administrative &  
Operations Leads**

Coryelle, Leann, Tina, Benita, Gracia

2

**Executive Directors  
& CEOs — Group A**

Kate, Stephen, Mona

3

**Executive Directors  
& CEOs — Group B**

Hillary, Kimberly, Stephanie B.

4

**Legal Practice  
Supervisors**

Christian, Jacque, Suzan, Stephanie C., Veronica

# Choose Your Breakout Room



Groups 5–7 — find your name below.

5

**Multi-Function  
Deputies & COOs**

Anastasia, Kimberly, Lela, Peyman, Tamiko

6

**Policy & Advocacy  
Directors**

Harya, Doug, Lena, Caleb

7

**Senior Program  
& Legal Officers**

Emily, Rebecca, Ronnette, Cristian

Can't find your name? Raise your hand or drop a note in the chat.

# Your Intention



*Make it specific enough that you'll actually notice it happening.*

In the next month, I will use \_\_\_\_\_

more when \_\_\_\_\_

I'll know it's working when... \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep this for yourself — we are not collecting it*

**Break**

# Sustainable Leadership



- 
- Talking about self-care and wellness as it relates to legal aid work means speaking to the experiences of those dealing with burnout and/or vicarious trauma.
  - We'll approach this at the level of patterns and practices, not personal trauma stories — no one needs to describe a client's story or their own trauma in detail.
  - Reflection questions today are private first; any sharing with a partner or group is always optional.
  - Please take care of yourselves and each other — step out and back in as needed.

# Sustainable Leadership: Why It Matters



- 
- Legal aid leaders operate under chronic resource strain — high need, limited funding, and constant urgency
  - Burnout doesn't just cost you — it costs your team, your organization, and the clients you serve
  - Unsustainable leadership gets modeled: your team learns what's “normal” by watching you
  - Sustainability is a leadership skill

# Burnout & Vicarious Trauma



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## Vicarious Trauma

- *Aka Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Stress*
- Helping professionals developing their own trauma symptoms from continuously working with traumatized people

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## Burnout

- Develops gradually – an accumulation of stress and erosion of idealism
- Results from chronic, unmanaged stress in the workplace

**Both show up as physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual exhaustion**

# Managing Your Energy



**Physical**

**Emotional**

**Mental**

**Spiritual**

*Adapted from Tony Schwartz & Catherine McCarthy, "Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time" (Harvard Business Review)*

# Quick Energy Check-In



- 
- As I name each of the four energies — physical, mental, emotional, spiritual — hold up 1–4 fingers
  - 1 = running on empty right now, 4 = full tank
  - No talking yet — just notice where you are
  - We'll build on this in the reflection that follows

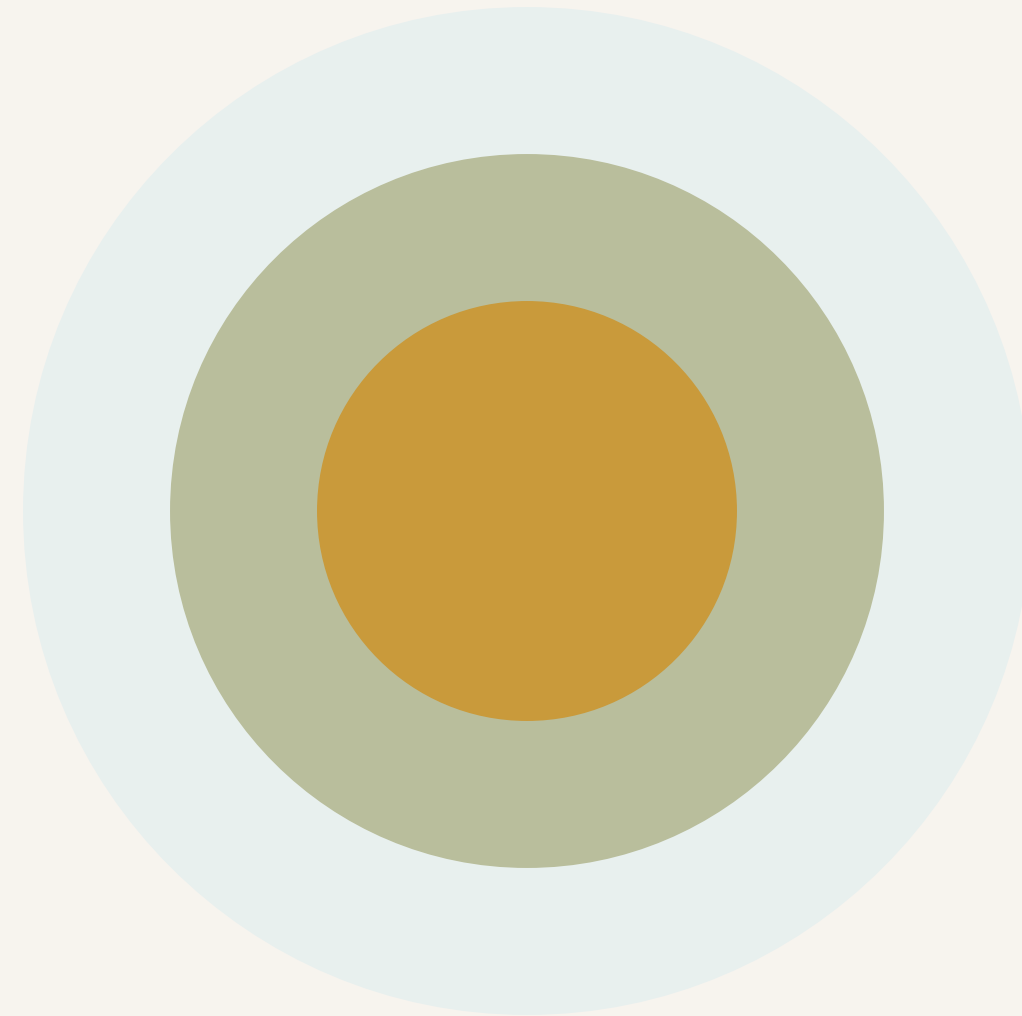
# Sustainable Leadership



## Reflect & Share (write first — sharing is optional)

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- . **Private write (2 min):** What does an unsustainable pace look like for you — early warning signs? Which of the four energies is most depleted for you right now?
- . **Pair share (3 min):** One practice that helps you manage stress, burnout, or vicarious trauma — what makes it stick, and what gets in the way?



**From Reflection to Practice**

# Individual Strategies



*What would you like to try this month?*

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- Setting boundaries; time audits / 'stop doing' lists
- Energy management; peer coaching / accountability partners
- Breathwork, meditation, or somatic practices
- Journaling or being in nature
- Counseling or EMDR
- Daily decompression / 'unplug' time

# Organizational Strategies



*Which 1–2 could your organization realistically adopt this year?*

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- Succession planning; delegation matrices / distributed leadership
- Scenario planning & contingency budgeting
- Trauma-informed supervision
- Formalized screening for staff burnout/VT
- Optimal caseloads

# Case Study



- 
- Working 60+ hours per week
  - Managing a funding crisis and staff vacancy
  - Snapping at staff
  - Waking up at night thinking about work and client stories
  - Avoiding calls from the Board Chair
  - Staff morale dipping
  - Attorneys voicing burnout

# Case Study



- 
- 1 Signs of burnout and/or vicarious trauma?
  - 2 How can she personally sustain herself?
  - 3 What organizational practices could help prevent this from happening in the first place?
  - 4 How might Board or leadership team support sustainable leadership here?

**Break**

# Bringing It Together



- 
- You've named a warning sign, an energy that's low, and a practice you'd try
  - Sustainability isn't one big fix — it's small, repeatable choices, modeled visibly for your team
  - Now let's turn that into one concrete commitment

# Personal Sustainability Commitment



- 
- Take 5 minutes to write down ONE practice you'll adopt for yourself, and ONE you'll model for your team
  - Make it concrete: a specific day/time/action, not a vague intention (“I will leave by 6pm on Fridays,” not “I will work less”)
  - Share with a partner: share your commitment out loud, and name one peer you'll follow up with for accountability
  - Hang onto that commitment — it's yours to keep.

# Share-Out & Recap

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**Key Takeaways & Aha Moments**

**Reflect and Give Feedback**

# Looking Ahead: Day 2



## Tomorrow: Being a Leader for Your Team and Organization

- We'll explore identity as an element of leading yourself and shift to leading others — supervision

**Pre-Session 2:** Think of a specific moment when an aspect of your identity — cultural background, race, gender, orientation, lived experience, or other dimension — strongly influenced how you led or connected with your community or team. Come ready to discuss it in small groups. No later than 9:30 a.m. tomorrow take the two-question survey (in the chat) to set up our breakout groups tomorrow. Optional: Do the Self-Exploration Worksheet (or complete it in class tomorrow).

- Bring what surfaced today — your CliftonStrengths, your sustainability commitment — into tomorrow's conversation about leading others

**See you tomorrow at 9:30 AM**

*Note that lunch tomorrow will be earlier: 11:15am – 12:30pm Pacific*

# Thank You!!

See you tomorrow for Session 2

