

A woman in a white blazer and glasses stands in a meeting room, presenting to a group of people seated around a table. The room has large windows overlooking a city. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Leading Through Disruption:

Stories that Shape Resilient Leaders and Systems

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Disclosures



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Disclosure:

None of the speakers for this educational activity have relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

Why Stories Matter

- ✓ Narrative competence helps clinicians and Educators recognize, interpret, and act on the experiences of others
- ✓ Stories translate lived experiences into shared meaning across teams
- ✓ Narrative reflection strengthens empathy, communication, and professional insight
- ✓ Stories help leaders make sense of complex situations and competing perspectives
- ✓ Shared stories transform individual experiences into collective insight for coordinated leadership



Who is in the Room?



Role



Years in
Medical
Education

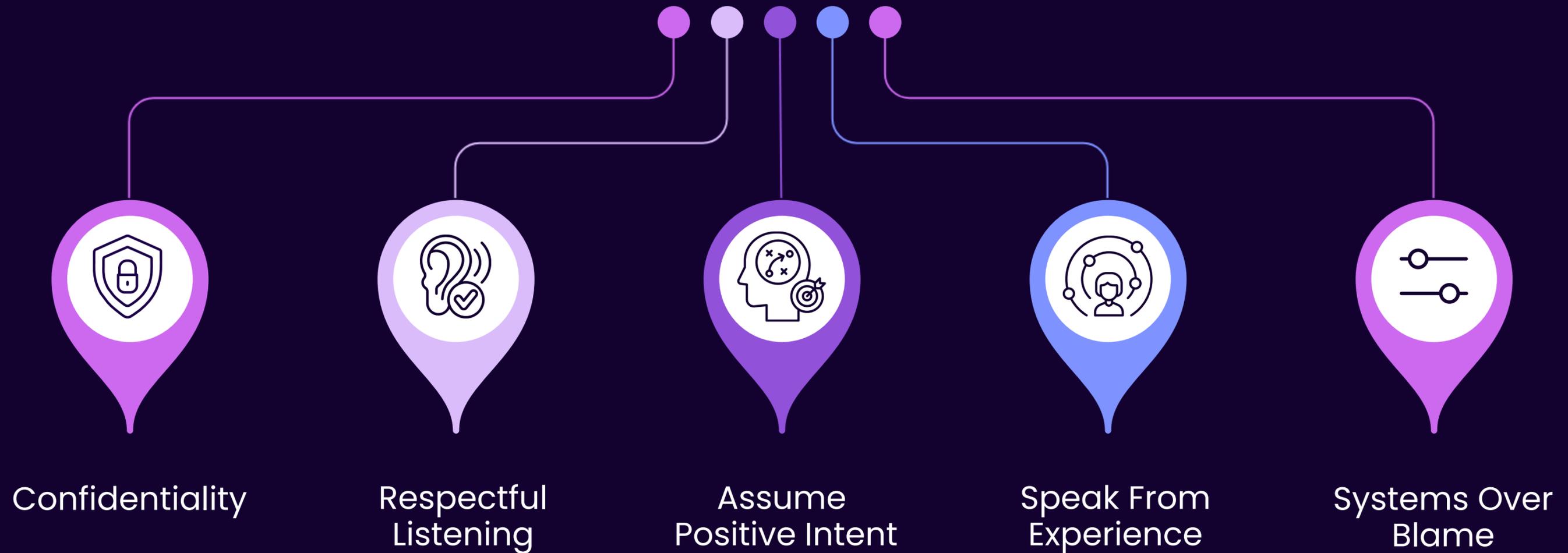


Institution

The experience in this room represents countless leadership decisions made under pressure – and we are going to lean into that today

Session Ground Rules

Engagement Norms



Why This Session Matters

Medical Education Leadership Is High Stakes

- Patient safety
- Accreditation risk
- Learner development
- Institutional reputation

Therefore, Medical Education Leadership can be

- Isolating
- Emotionally taxing

Leadership decisions made during disruption often define institutional culture long after the moment has passed



If You Take Away Nothing Else... **You Are Not Alone**

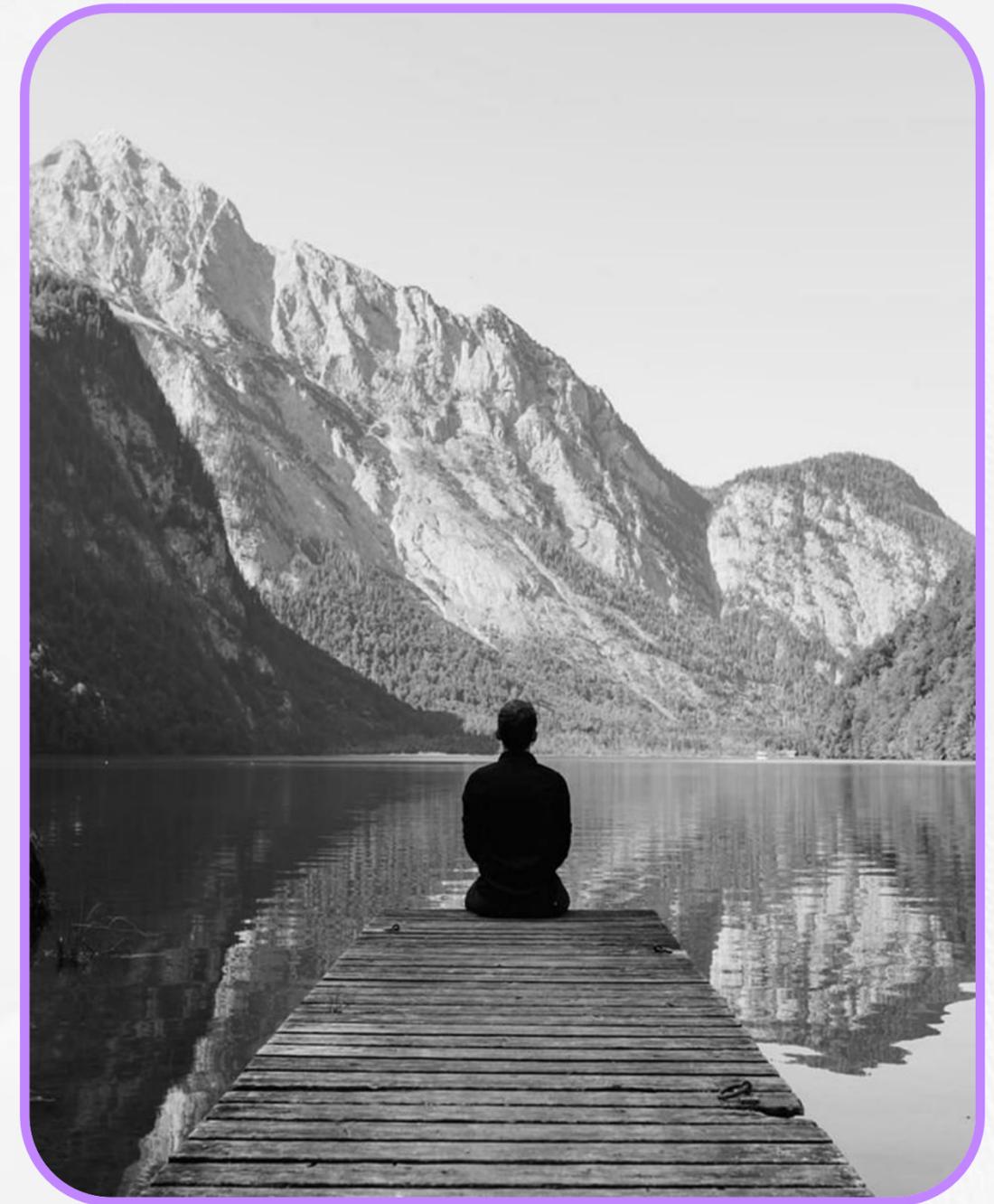
- The most complex parts of our roles are rarely straightforward
- The areas that cause the most stress are often the least formally taught
- Feeling unprepared in moments of ambiguity is normal
- Ambiguity is not a leadership failure – it is the reality of the environment we lead in



Reflection

Before we explore our stories, reflect on one of your own

- What made this moment hard?
- What about the decision felt unclear?
- Looking back, what signal did you miss at the time?

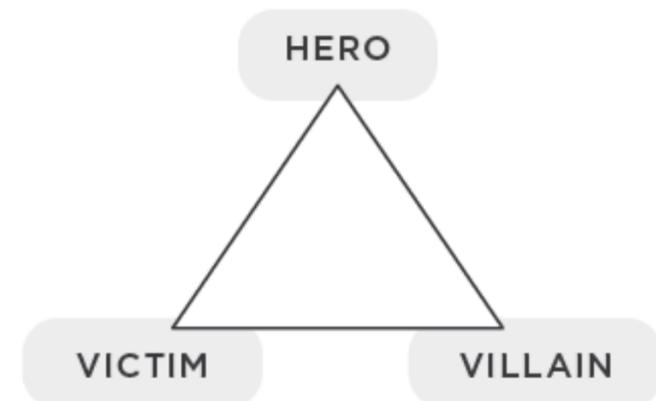


From Experience to Insight

- Stories are data and help leaders notice when teams shift above or below the line
- They reveal whether people respond with curiosity and learning versus blame and defensiveness
- The patterns can reveal system strain
- Leadership failures rarely start with a crisis – they start with signals that were ignored

Resilient leaders notice patterns before systems break

STRONG GROUND A *dare to lead* BOOK



ATTRIBUTION: It appears that the concept of “above the line/below the line” originated with Robert Kiyosaki, the author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*. In Carolyn Taylor’s book *Walking the Talk*, Taylor acknowledges Kiyosaki as the source of her introduction to the idea. She goes on to explore the “above the line/below the line” concept in depth, applying it to leadership and organizational culture. The Conscious Leadership Group (Jim Dethmer, Diana Chapman, and Kaley Warner Klemp) popularized the framework among coaches and leadership consultants in their book, *The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership*. They also advanced the concept by adding Stephen Karpman’s Drama Triangle and David Emerald’s Empowerment Dynamic.

A Leadership Lens for Disruption

Disruption tests three leadership anchors,
Most leadership failures occur when we overcorrect towards one

- 1 — Empathy (without lowering standards)
- 2 — Accountability (without eroding trust)
- 3 — Systems Thinking (without scapegoating)

Most leadership failures happen when we overcorrect toward one; Resilient leaders hold all three



But Do Not Forget...

Disruption Rarely Starts with Crisis

- Most leadership crises begin quietly
- Signals appear before systems break
- The question is **not** whether disruption will occur
- The question is whether leaders recognize it early





Leadership Under Pressure: Two Real Disruptions

Case Study Framework

We are not analyzing outcomes – we are analyzing leadership decisions

How we will work through cases:

- What happened?
- Who was impacted?
- What was documented?
- What communication occurred?
- Where did empathy show up?
- What you would do differently?
- What system allowed this?



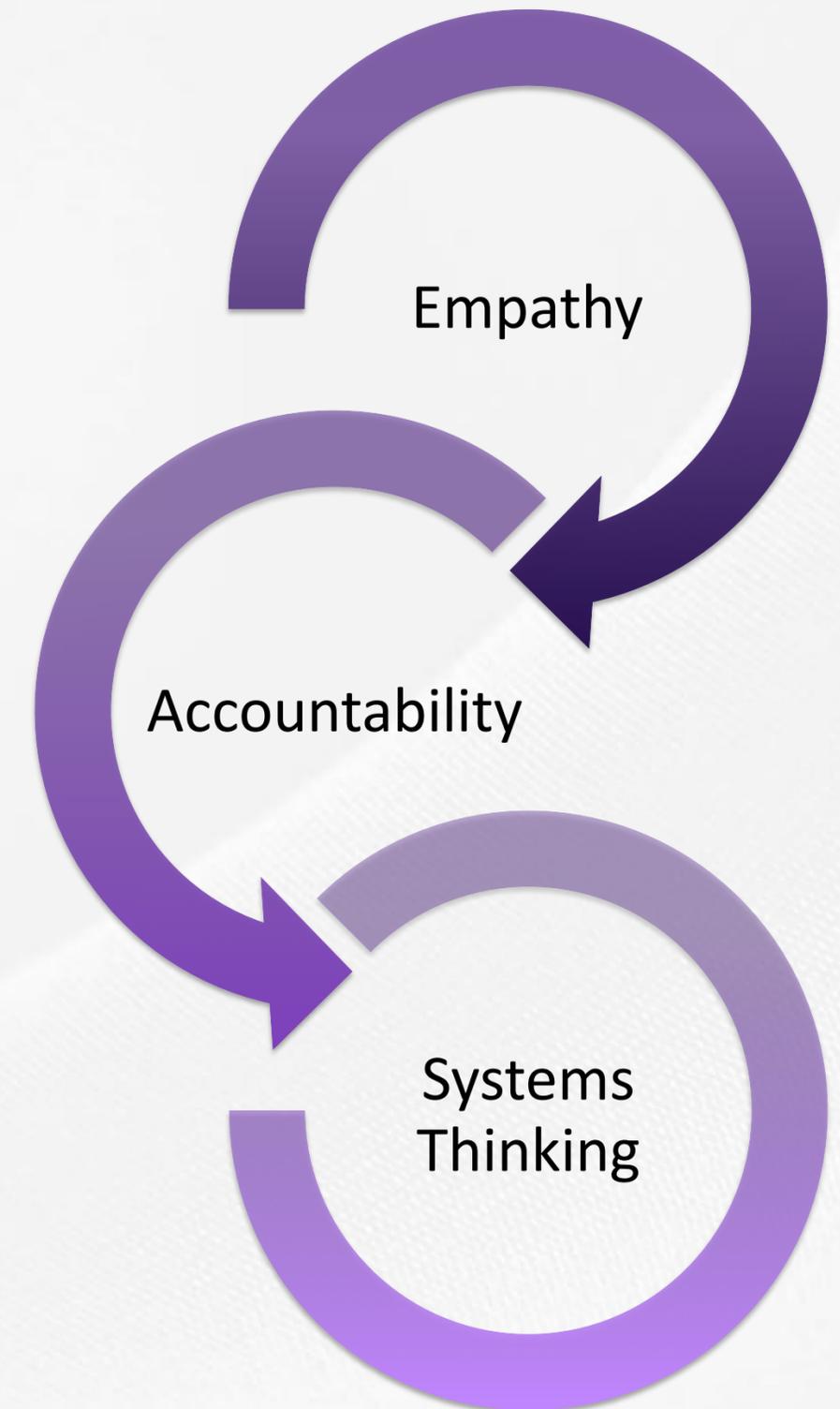
Small Group Leadership Lab

Instructions:

- Each group will analyze one case
- 20 minutes discussion time
- Use the Case Study Framework and the provided discussion questions

Breakout Expectations:

- Assign a note-taker and someone to report out
- Be prepared to share insights
- Identify decision points, not just outcomes
- Apply the three leadership anchors
- Capture patterns, do not assign blame
- Your role is not to SOLVE the case,
Your role is to explore the leadership decision points



Case 1: Professionalism Erosion: When Culture Starts to Fracture

A junior resident is repeatedly reported for tense interactions with nursing and administrative staff. No single incident is egregious, but the pattern is becoming harder to ignore. Staff begin questioning whether leadership is aware of the behavior or willing to address it.

Prior feedback was informal and undocumented. When approached, the resident appears genuinely surprised and attributes the behavior to being “direct under pressure.”

Faculty are now divided on how to respond.

Decision Point: Coaching plan, formal warning, or both?



Case 1: Leadership Challenge

How do you ensure fairness and due process for the resident while protecting staff psychological safety and team culture?



Case 2: Institutional Misalignment: When Messaging Collapses

During a period of operational strain, institutional policy changes affecting resident schedules are communicated through multiple channels.

The result – inconsistent messaging.

Some program leaders are informed early. Others learn only after residents begin raising concerns. Program coordinators are fielding emotional responses but lack clarity themselves.

Residents report confusion and mistrust. A town hall is scheduled as tensions rise. Institutional leaders believe communication was adequate.

Decision Point: What do you say first at the town hall?



Case 2: Leadership Challenge

How do you acknowledge communication missteps without undermining institutional credibility while repairing trust across leadership levels and preventing future communication breakdowns?



Can You Relate?



**Other Thoughts?
Other Comments?
Other Confessions?**

Leadership Skills in Action

Recognize

- Pattern recognition
- Early signals
- Team feedback



Respond

- Clear, direct communication
- Empathy with boundaries
- Collaborative decision-making



Reinforce

- Structured documentation
- Transparent communication loops
- Aligned leadership messaging



**These skills are not sequential;
they are cyclical and interdependent**

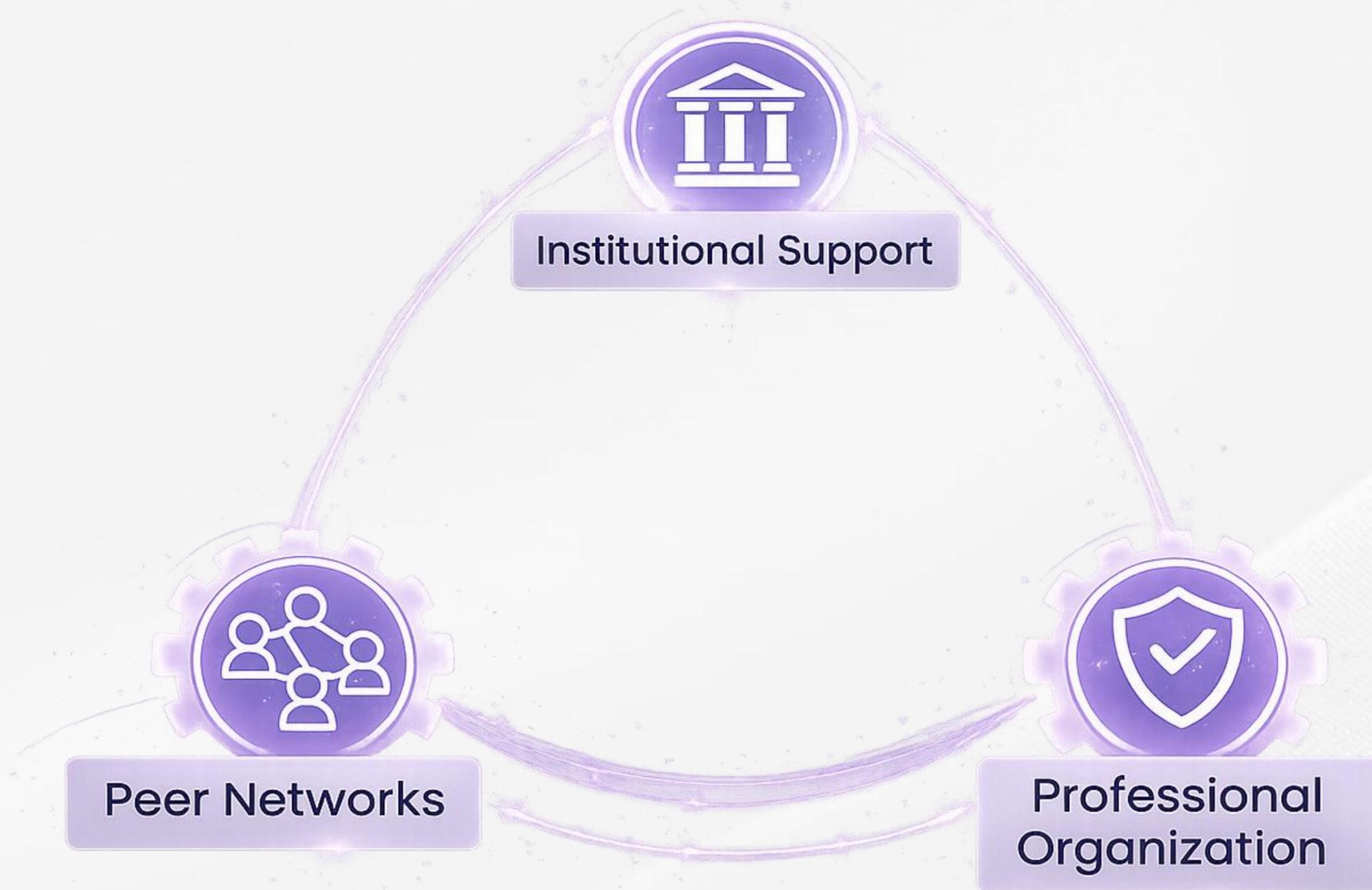
Building Resilient GME Systems

From individual actions to institutional culture

- Standardized documentation pathways
- Clearly defined remediation thresholds
- Defined HR escalation processes
- Aligned institutional messaging
- Psychological safety guardrails

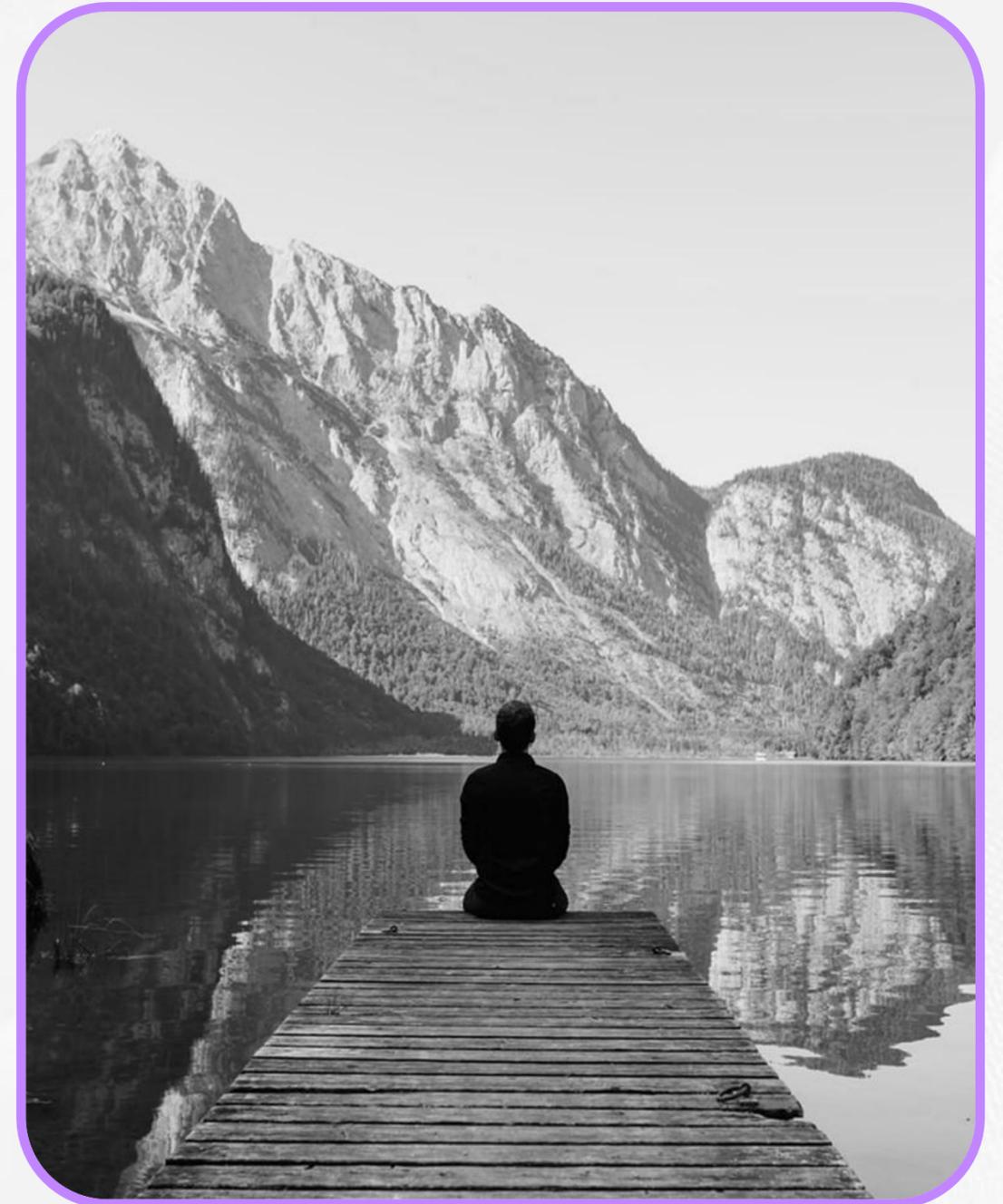


Resources and Ongoing Support



Final Reflection

What conversation have you been avoiding that this session gives you clarity to start?



Final Takeaways

- Leadership is rarely about right versus wrong
- Clarity under pressure is a leadership skill
- Documentation protects people and systems
- Courageous conversations protect culture
- Alignment across systems prevents future disruption
- Tell the stories and find shared ground

And Never Forget...
We are all in this together, lean into your village



Questions?

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