



**COLLECTIVE  
IMPACT FORUM**



# **Collective Impact Amid Collective Uncertainty: *Holding Goals and Momentum in a Shifting Environment***





# Breathe





# The Stockdale Paradox



*“You must never confuse **faith that you will prevail in the end...**with the discipline to **confront the most brutal facts of your current reality**”*

*Leaders must hold both*





# Collective Action Problem





# Collective Impact Best Practices

- Clear strategy guides clear commitment
- Form follows function
- Culture eats strategy for breakfast



# Reckoning with the U.S. Election: *10 Reflections and Recommendations for Collective Impact Networks*

1. Reject the “landslide” narrative, it was a virtual tie won on the margin
2. The coalition that elected the President is not a monolith
3. Focus on engagement not blame
4. Our work is supported by overwhelming majorities
5. Don’t surrender (but navigate) diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. Protect, Resist, Build, Bridge
7. Remember Congress controls spending, not the President (whoops)
8. Don’t be afraid of advocacy (know the rules)
9. Triage strategy and workplans as needed with plan to migrate back
10. Take care of ourselves and each other





# Responding to Threats and Challenges Tool

- (1) **Core Values and Principles:** How will we navigate and stand for them
- (2) **Protect:** Who do we need to protect in our network and community?
- (3) **Resist:** What threats or harms to our organization/network and the community we serve do we need to resist?
- (4) **Build:** What do we need to prioritize building to demonstrate results and serve greatest needs?
- (5) **Bridge:** Where can we build bridges and gain support for our values and work?

## Core Values and Principles

*What does your organization believe and stand for at your core? It is especially important to discuss how to commit and navigate commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion. How will these values and principles help you make decisions, choose fights, and navigate this moment? How do you re-commit to them in communications with stakeholders? Are there ways you may have to adjust your messaging on them without compromising them?*

Core Values and Principles	What tensions exist between this value/principle and the current political context	How will you hold this in your decision making and communications?	What are next steps? Who will take them when? What support might you need?

## Protect

*Who among our staff, stakeholders, partners, and people we serve (including their families) are under direct threat by specific policies, actions, or groups? What is our promise to them and how will we fulfill that?*

Specific people or populations in your network under threat	What is the threat they are facing and from who?	How will you protect them? What support can you provide?	What are next steps? Who will take them when? What support might you need?



# Strategy Triage Tool

(1) **Current Priority Still**

(2) **Emergent Priority: For a set period or ongoing?**

(3) **Pause & Resume:**  
When will you assess?

(4) **Unknown:** What data do we need?

(5) **Honor & Let Go**

**Guiding Question/Line of Site:** What will it take to...?  
Where are you heading? What are you trying to achieve?

**Current Priority – Still Relevant, Continues Forward** (with modified approach)

These are items that are relevant and possible and will go forward, though perhaps not as planned. Make a few notes on likely modifications.

**Pause & Resume when crisis is “over”** (assuming high uncertainty)

These items will be paused. They are either not feasible now, or they need to be paused to make room for emergent priorities. You don't really know for how long – maybe 6-9 months.

**Emergent Priority or Existing but Newly Prioritized** (because of new conditions)

These items are new or newly prioritized items that are on the table (or front burner) because of current conditions. You are being asked to do them or you realize they are now more necessary or urgent.

**Unknown Status/Approach** (need more data, too much in flux to know)

These are items that are either unclear or too much in flux to decide. You need to have more data, talk to others, or let the dust settle more before deciding.

**Honor and Let Go** (not going to happen)

Conditions make these items impossible.

Marian Urquilla, Strategy Lift, 2020

“Reimagining Strategy in Context of the COVID-19 Crisis: A Triage Tool”, Center for Community Investment





# Change Management

*What do partners and other stakeholders have to change, improve, or stop doing in order to align with the network and meet current conditions?*

- Signal early
- Communicate why and how decisions were made
- Communicate with empathy
- Acknowledge trade-offs and losses
- Clearly describe the change process, give people responsibility, on-ramps, and bridges
- Keep communicating





# Learning Leadership from Addiction Recovery

- There are no silver bullets, people's needs are different and change, and relationships matter more than programs;
- Mentors matter most;
- Own your mistakes and failures;
- Welcome and don't judge others' stories;
- Practice acceptance, forgiveness, and gratitude;
- Pay it Forward





# Questions



## Articles and Tools Referenced

- **10 Dangers (and 3 Best Practices) for Collective Impact:** [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/10\\_dangers\\_to\\_collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/10_dangers_to_collective_impact)
- **Backbone Leadership is Different: The Skill and Mindset Shifts Needed for Collective Impact:** <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/resource/backbone-leadership-is-different-the-skills-and-mindset-shifts-needed-for-collective-impact/>
- **Reckoning with the US Election: 10 Reflections and Recommendations for Collective Impact Networks:** <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/blog/reckoning-with-the-u-s-election-10-reflections-and-recommendations-for-collective-impact-networks/>
- **Responding to Threats and Challenges Tool** <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/resource/responding-to-threats-and-challenges-planning-tool/>
- **Strategy Triage Tool** <https://centerforcommunityinvestment.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Strategy-Triage-Tool-2025.pdf>
- **What I Learned About Leadership from Addiction Recovery:** [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-i-learned-about-leadership-from-addiction-recovery\\_b\\_7141108](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-i-learned-about-leadership-from-addiction-recovery_b_7141108)