January 27 Leadership Call — Topic Summary

- **Overview of leadership and advocate resources**

  - Find all RAFT Leadership Resources here: https://www.raftcares.org/leadership-resources/

  - Walkthrough of leadership and advocate resource pages, including worksheets, toolkits, reports, and workshops.

  - Emphasis on accessibility, open use, and adaptability of materials.

  - Discussion of the challenge of organizing a growing volume of resources and interim solutions.

- **Introduction to the concept of yearly themes**

  - Explanation of yearly themes as an alternative to traditional resolutions or rigid strategic plans.

  - Themes described as broad guideposts with multiple pathways rather than fixed goals.

  - Benefits highlighted: flexibility, adaptability to change, reduced sense of failure, and clearer decision-making.

- **Examples of yearly themes in practice**

  - A prior organizational theme focused on community growth, outreach, and connection.

  - Description of how multiple initiatives aligned under a single theme without being pre-planned.

  - Reflection on how external changes required mid-year pivots while still honoring the theme.

- **Current organizational theme: implementing systems imperfectly**

  - Introduction of a theme focused on building systems while accepting imperfection and iteration.

  - Discussion of tension between adaptability and lack of structure.

- o Recognition that insufficient systems increased stress and reduced clarity for staff.

- o Emphasis on balancing system creation with compassion, humor, and learning.

- **Trauma-informed leadership and systems**

  - o Discussion of how clear systems, transparency, and predictability support trauma-informed workplaces.

  - o Reflection on how leadership styles influence organizational structure and staff experience.

  - o Importance of maintaining psychological safety while introducing accountability.

- **Lead–second project structure**

  - o Explanation of assigning a lead and a supporting second to projects.

  - o Benefits included clarity, accountability, reduced stagnation, and easier follow-up.

  - o Used as a strategy to prevent unassigned tasks and unclear ownership.

- **Participant-generated theme ideas**

  - o Themes discussed included collaboration, transition, sustainability, accountability, learning, and confidence.

  - o Participants reflected on how themes can support periods of leadership change or organizational growth.

  - o Emphasis on grace, forgiveness, and patience during transitions.

- **Measuring progress within a broad theme**

  - o Discussion of identifying "ideal outcomes" rather than fixed benchmarks.

  - o Encouragement to reflect at year's end on what signals progress rather than checking off tasks.

  - o Examples included clearer role definitions, improved communication, cross-training, and documented systems.

- **Balancing flexibility with structure**

- o   Guidance on narrowing a theme with a short descriptive statement if needed.

- o   Recognition that themes can evolve as new opportunities or constraints arise.

- o   Emphasis on avoiding rigid plans that set leaders up for failure in changing conditions.

- **Confidence, accountability, and role clarity**

    - o   Exploration of how leaders can assess staff confidence and understanding of their roles.

    - o   Strategies discussed included regular check-ins, one-on-one meetings, cross-training, and shared reporting.

    - o   Distinction made between operational tasks (routine, systemized) and projects (new, experimental).

- **Performance feedback and support**

    - o   Discussion of mid-year and annual reviews as tools to reduce surprises and support growth.

    - o   Emphasis on framing missed deadlines or challenges as system or support gaps, not personal failure.

    - o   Examples shared of coaching-oriented approaches that prioritize learning and resourcing.

- **Transparency and trust**

    - o   Strong emphasis on transparency as a key trait of positive workplaces.

    - o   Discussion of leaders naming what they do not know and inviting staff expertise.

    - o   Recognition that transparency benefits both staff well-being and leadership sustainability.

- **Journaling and reflection practices**

    - o   Sharing of personal and professional journaling practices as tools for focus, self-compassion, and tracking progress.

    - o   Use of daily priorities, gratitude, displacement tracking, and end-of-day reflection.

- o Journaling framed as a way to notice progress aligned with yearly themes.

- **Leadership presence and modeling**

  - o Discussion of leaders staying connected to frontline work through shadowing and participation.

  - o Emphasis on understanding how systems affect day-to-day practice.

  - o Leadership credibility strengthened through shared experience and visibility.

- **Closing reflections**

  - o Participants expressed appreciation for shared learning and practical examples.

  - o Reinforcement that themes are meant to support resilience, not perfection.

  - o Invitation to continue reflecting on themes, outcomes, and leadership practices throughout the year.