

RAFT Leadership Call January 13, 2026 Call Summary

Main Topic: Legislative Bill on Human Trafficking

- A participant raises concerns about a proposed state bill:
 - The bill would allow individuals arrested for purchasing sex to pay a fine, attend an educational class, and have the offense expunged from their record.
 - The participant, a survivor, strongly opposes this, arguing it is unfair compared to the lasting consequences faced by survivors.
- Key points of discussion:
 - The fairness and effectiveness of restorative justice versus punitive approaches for offenders.
 - The perceived inadequacy of brief educational interventions for those arrested.
 - Concerns about high recidivism rates among offenders and the lack of equivalent leniency for survivors.
 - The need for survivor voices in legislative advocacy.
- Suggestions from the group:
 - Identify and critique the specific curriculum proposed for offender education.
 - Gather data and statistics on the effectiveness of such programs.
 - Collaborate with coalitions and advocacy groups to build opposition.
 - Leverage awareness months and social media for visibility.
 - Ensure clarity on the bill's language to avoid misrepresentation in advocacy.

Broader Discussion: Restorative Justice & Systemic Issues

- Participants discuss the broader context of restorative justice in the criminal system.
- Comparisons are made between different justice systems and their focus on rehabilitation versus punishment.
- The group reflects on the challenges of legislative advocacy, including political climates and the slow movement of bills.

Organizational & Personal Development: Using Themes

Introduction to Yearly Themes

- The facilitator introduces the concept of “yearly themes” as an alternative to traditional New Year’s resolutions.
 - Yearly themes are broad intentions or guiding concepts for the year, rather than specific, measurable goals.
 - Themes are designed to be flexible, allowing for multiple pathways to success and adaptation as circumstances change.
 - The approach is inspired by external resources (e.g., the “Theme System” and related workshops), but can be implemented simply in a personal journal or with a team.

How Themes Work

- A theme is chosen to reflect an overarching intention for the year (or a shorter period, such as a quarter or a month).
- The theme should be broad enough to encompass various actions and outcomes, but clear enough to guide decision-making.
- Participants are encouraged to:
 - Define what their theme means to them.
 - Articulate the “why” behind their theme—why it matters and what they hope to achieve.
 - Identify several “ideal outcomes” that would indicate progress toward the theme, while remaining open to changing these outcomes as the year unfolds.

Example Themes Shared by Participants

- **“Do Better”** (Personal Theme)
 - Focuses on improvement in various areas of life, not perfection.
 - Example outcomes: Completing a certification, taking regular walks for health, writing blog posts.
 - Emphasizes scheduling, follow-through, and self-compassion when goals aren’t met.
- **“Slow Down”** (Personal Theme)
 - Chosen by a participant who feels overextended in advocacy work.
 - Motivated by family concerns and personal health.

- Example outcomes: Reducing the number of meetings, reevaluating organizational commitments, spending more time with family, and improving health (e.g., gaining weight, being more mindful about self-care).
- **“Quieting the Noise”** (Personal Theme)
 - Focuses on reducing distractions and stress from external sources.
 - Example outcomes: Cutting down on screen time, journaling with a focus on stoicism, practicing mindfulness, and being more present.
 - The theme was broadened from “Year of Stoicism” to allow for other philosophies and practices that support the intention.
- **“Year of Community”** (Organizational Theme from Previous Year)
 - Guided the organization to focus on building and strengthening community.
 - Example outcomes: Hosting open workshops, growing the newsletter audience, increasing support calls, and expanding resources.
- **“Year of Implementing Systems Awkwardly”** (Current Organizational Theme)
 - Emphasizes the importance of trying new systems, accepting mistakes, and maintaining a lighthearted approach to organizational change.
 - Encourages flexibility and resilience in the face of challenges.

Practical Steps for Implementing Themes

- Participants are encouraged to:
 - Write down their theme, the reasons behind it, and possible outcomes.
 - Use the theme to guide choices throughout the year, especially when faced with competing priorities.
 - Review and adjust outcomes as needed, recognizing that life’s circumstances may require flexibility.
 - Consider applying themes to shorter timeframes (quarter, month, season) if a year feels overwhelming.

Team and Organizational Applications

- Themes can be set at the team or organizational level to align values and intentions.
 - Example: A team uses a values workbook to identify individual and collective values, then creates a theme to guide workflow and boundaries.
 - Themes help staff understand each other’s motivations, improve communication, and reduce burnout.

- Leaders are encouraged to use themes to foster consistency, intentionality, and well-being among team members.

Additional Insights

- The group discusses the importance of aligning personal values with organizational values for resilience and retention.
- Setting boundaries and practicing “positive no” (saying no in a values-driven, constructive way) are highlighted as key skills for maintaining well-being.
- Themes support intentionality in both personal and professional contexts, helping individuals and teams navigate complex, high-stress environments.

Reflections on Burnout & Self-Care

- The group discusses the impact of burnout on both staff and clients.
- Emphasis is placed on the need for intentionality, self-care, and setting boundaries to maintain effectiveness and well-being.
- Leaders reflect on the importance of consistency in supporting their teams and themselves.

Closing Thoughts & Takeaways

- The call concludes with reflections on:
 - The challenges and rewards of advocacy work.
 - The importance of collaboration and finding allies.
 - Celebrating progress and focusing on what can be controlled, even when outcomes are uncertain.
 - Encouragement to try themes for shorter periods (quarter, month) if a year feels overwhelming.
- Participants express gratitude for the opportunity to connect, share, and support each other.