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The Ripple of Influence: The New ROI for Nonprofit Human Service CEOs

A Dissertation by

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School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

May 2022

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May 2022

The Ripple of Influence: The New ROI for Nonprofit Human Service CEOs

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first doctoral book assignment was *The Dissertation Journey* by Carol M. Roberts. Before diving into the book, I paused to appreciate the cover, which features a woman standing on a high plateau. Surrounded by snow-covered mountains and an endless crystal blue sky, she savors the marvel of the moment. Gazing at the picture, I wondered how my voyage would unfold. Would I have the mental stamina and fortitude to crest the highest academic peak?

As I celebrate completing my doctoral journey, it is time to "strike a power pose" and enjoy the view. My view includes all the people who helped me move mountains to achieve my dream. First, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Jeffrey Lee, my Committee Chair. You are the embodiment of an influencer and transformational leader. From the moment we met, you inspired and motivated me. I am proud to call you my mentor and my friend. Thank you to my talented committee members, Dr. Jalin Johnson and Dr. Patricia Davis. Your thoughtful feedback and knowledge strengthened my research. Additionally, I want to express my appreciation to my editor, Wendy, for her meticulous editing services.

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As I begin my descent back to basecamp and normal life, my heart fills with gratitude for my family. First, I acknowledge my loving husband and champion, Matt.

We achieved this milestone together! Thank you for recognizing when I needed a break, quiet time to write, or making me laugh. I love our life together and am eager to continue exploring the world with you.

Words cannot describe how grateful I am to my parents, Louis and Donna. You taught me to strive for excellence and to believe in myself. I regret that you are not here on this earth to see me in my academic regalia, but you are always in my heart. To my sisters, Laura and Rhonda, and my brothers-in-law, Joe and Steve, you are my backbone. Your unconditional love and support strengthen me. To my darling nieces and nephews, Alexandra, Andrew, Jarod, and Ashley, thank you for rooting for me. Remember always to pursue your passion and live into your purpose fearlessly. I also express my gratitude to the Jones family, who encouraged me every step of the journey. Finally, I thank my friend and vision partner, Trina. You are the jam to my peanut butter.

This study would not have gotten off the ground without assistance from Bank of America, whose investment in nonprofit leadership is unparalleled. George, thank you for believing that the world would benefit from hearing how Bank of America Neighborhood Builders[®] basic needs CEOs use influence and leadership to facilitate positive change in their organization and community.

I dedicate this dissertation to the fifteen study participants who propel their organizations to new heights of impact by daring to trek uncharted trails. Like a stone dropped in the water, your ripple of influence creates an empowering tide that lifts the human spirit. Thank you for the privilege of sharing your extraordinary stories of influence, perseverance, and resilience so that others might benefit from your experiences and insight.

ABSTRACT

The Ripple of Influence: The New ROI for Nonprofit Human Service CEOs

by Lucinda Perry Jones

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence.

Methodology: This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of 15 nonprofit human service CEOs and how they lead as influencers. Study participants were CEOs of basic needs organizations drawn from the Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders® award recipients from 2015-2020. The researcher collected qualitative data by utilizing an interview protocol and examining organizational artifacts.

Findings: Analysis of the qualitative data from 15 nonprofit human service CEOs yielded 14 major findings. The findings were divided into six domains according to Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. Data analysis demonstrated how these leaders apply influence so that staff members are consistently motivated and have the skills required to perform to the best of their ability.

Conclusions: Based on the data, the study featured 10 conclusions that focused on the need for leaders to develop a growth mindset and employ behaviors that inspire staff and others within their circle of influence to achieve organizational goals. The study further underscored that when leaders used influence to create a culture of empowerment and trust, innovation and collaboration thrived. Additionally, it was concluded that study participants consciously and unconsciously applied more than one of the six sources of influence to achieve desired results.

Recommendations: In an era when human service resources are finite and employee turnover is high, there is an imperative to understand better how nonprofit professionals achieve organizational goals by using influence. Leadership programs and professional membership organizations should offer trainings that deepen awareness about leading as an influencer. It would be beneficial for board members and recruitment specialists to hire leaders with proven ability to motivate and inspire staff and stakeholders. To glean holistic perspectives of how nonprofit influencers lead in a variety of missions, the researcher recommends further research be conducted with leaders of color leading nonprofit organizations in marginalized communities, nonprofit leaders located in rural settings, nonprofit professionals engaged in leading coalitions, and social workers with leadership responsibilities.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

—P. G. Northouse, *Leadership*

Sheila, the CEO of a nonprofit food bank, sighed as she reviewed the data she and her team had recently collected. The facts were undeniable. Job loss and underemployment were forcing individuals to make difficult choices between buying medicine or purchasing nutritious food, leading to an increase in hunger and food insecurity. Furthermore, the health and economic toll caused by chronic diseases related to poor nutrition such as hypertension, diabetes, and obesity continued to rise. Coupled with the high cost of utilities, paying the mortgage or rent and affording a source of reliable transportation to get to work, struggling individuals and families felt hopeless and ashamed.

As Sheila reflected on these challenges, her thoughts turned to other organizational challenges. Like her nonprofit sector peers, fundraising occupied much of her focus. Historically and recently, the food bank had been successful at raising money from foundations to fund operations, logistics, and staff positions required to collect and distribute food. However, Sheila knew that providing emergency food assistance was only one response to address a host of intricately woven complexities in the food systems ecosystem. Public and private funders were increasingly requiring basic needs organizations to implement programs to move beyond the band-aid approach to address the root causes of complex social problems. To accomplish this, the food bank would have to coordinate closely with a wide range of stakeholders. The food bank team

excelled at collaborating with other community-based health and human service organizations, but current strategies were not enough to achieve the type of breakthrough solutions that the food bank's region required.

Yet, recent events brought to light opportunities by which the food bank could usher in innovation and design programs to prevent hunger from becoming a chronic condition. To attain the new vision, the organization would have to undergo profound change because the transformation necessitated the development of new mindsets, processes, protocols, and systems change. At the same time, Sheila recognized that her staff were tired and depleted from months of working in a crisis mode caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. She worried that they would not have the energy to adapt to more organizational change. Sheila realized that this was a defining leadership moment in her career. How could she most effectively lead her staff to help them embrace the inevitable organizational changes before them? What sources of influence must she employ to motivate her staff to think and behave differently?

Sheila's story represents the leadership dilemma faced by many nonprofit human service CEOs. They grapple with some of America's most oppressive issues such as hunger, poverty, unemployment, health and racial disparities, and a host of inequities. In addition to navigating these deep-seated societal challenges, the human service CEO may be held to unrealistic performance expectations by the staff, board members, volunteers, donors and supporters, and community stakeholders. Often hailed as the guardian of the organizational mission, the human service CEO is expected to possess exceptional skills and abilities to surmount numerous organizational and environmental constraints (Block, 2004). Financial constraints, a reality for most human service organizations, further

thwart the CEO's ability to produce stellar results. The uncertainty of charitable giving patterns, combined with grantors' eschewing funding organizational overhead expenses in favor of program expansion projects, has contributed to a "vicious cycle of financial starvation" (Gregory & Howard, 2009, p. 1). As a result, CEOs must be adept at stretching limited organizational or financial resources to accomplish their mission.

Another facet of the human service CEO role is to demonstrate proficiency in meeting administrative benchmarks. For example, CEOs are obligated to respond to the demand for outcome measurements, uphold strict accountability and transparency standards, and restrict administrative overhead and salaries (Sargeant & Day, 2018). The nature of leadership also offers the CEO positional power and control with their staff and stakeholders. This leadership dynamic allows for the opportunity to influence others in significant ways while understanding they have a duty to be aware how their leadership and behaviors directly impacts followers' lives (Northouse, 2016). All these underlying forces accentuate the necessity for highly resourceful and competent leaders.

To rise above the nonprofit sector's far-reaching constraints, it appears that human service CEOs must possess dynamic leadership and multifaceted skill sets to effectively lead. Given the profound complexity of the nonprofit ecosystem, how can CEOs like Sheila emerge as influential leaders in their organization? Are there ways for human service CEOs to strengthen their ability to lead others by mastering the art and science of influence to achieve meaningful and lasting results?

Background

America's 1.56 million charitable nonprofits play a critical leadership role in responding to society's pressing needs (McKeever, 2018). Across the nation, millions of

individuals receive food and shelter, benefit from education and enrichment opportunities, and gain access to health and well-being services. At the same time, the nonprofit sector provides pathways for people from all walks of life to contribute to the common good, creating a springboard for shared values and dreams to come alive (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). For many Americans, nonprofit agencies represent hope, generosity, and fortitude.

Nonprofit leadership historically has been rewarding yet challenging. CEOs of nonprofits face myriad obstacles and must either possess or learn leadership skills for the purpose of harnessing staff and volunteer strengths to achieve the organizational mission. To better understand how nonprofit human service CEOs lead, it is important to investigate related literature concerning such issues as what distinguishing characteristics define a nonprofit organization, how nonprofit CEOs lead, and how they act as influencers to motivate and inspire.

The Nonprofit Sector

To understand how nonprofit CEOs lead and influence their organizations, it is helpful to first investigate the distinguishing characteristics of the nonprofit sector in the United States. From a taxation perspective, the Internal Revenue Service defines a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization as a “charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and the prevention of cruelty to children or animals” (Internal Revenue Service [IRS], n.d., para. 1). This broad definition underscores the difficulty of applying a one-size-fits-all description to encompass the countless societal issues addressed by the nonprofit sector.

Although some scholars contend that defining the scope of the nonprofit sector presents challenges (Anheier, 2014; Hall, 2016; Kelly & Lewis, 2009), others claim that measuring the effectiveness of a nonprofit is equally problematic (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011; Kaplan, 2001; Willems, Boenigk, & Jegers, 2014). Herman and Renz (1998) confirmed that mission achievement was difficult to assess, asserting that comparing mission achievement across different types of nonprofits was nearly impossible. As evidenced by the literature, ambiguities can contribute to the complex environment of nonprofit leadership and clarifying mission accomplishment.

Historically, the role of the nonprofit sector has been to meet the demand for programs and services that for-profit and government entities either cannot or do not desire to offer (Akingbola, 2015; Kelly & Lewis, 2009). Although most nonprofits operate differently from their private and government sector counterparts, they also share commonalities. For example, Frumkin (2009) drew parallels between the private sector and nonprofit sector, stating they were alike based on their noncoercive qualities. Specifically, Frumkin pointed out that private sector consumers are driven by the quality and relevance of their products and services; likewise, nonprofit clients choose to participate in services based on the relevance, quality, and mission of the organization.

Adherence to organizational core values further defines the nonprofit sector. Salamon, Geller, and Newhouse (2012) conducted research that revealed seven qualities of nonprofit organizational values, which included being productive, effective, enriching, empowering, responsive, reliable, and caring. To further elaborate on how organizational values intersect with nonprofit leadership, Wilson and Rice (2004) claimed that value-based leaders inspired the confidence that bold visions can be achieved.

Nonprofit Human Service Organizations

Because the nonprofit sector is broadly defined, shares differences and commonalities with the private and government sectors, and is primarily driven by core values, it is important to understand how nonprofit human service organizations function within the context of the nonprofit sector. There are several operational definitions to describe the nonprofit human service field. One popular definition, however, can be found in the work of Gibelman and Furman (2013) who explained that nonprofit human service organizations address different types of problems, provide different services and philosophies concerning prevention and treatment, and tailor programs to reach a variety of client population. The authors further stated that despite the wide range of missions found throughout the ecosystem of nonprofit human service organizations, they are unified by a common purpose: to prevent, alleviate, or resolve issues related to health, social, or environmental concerns that impact individuals, families, and society.

To illuminate how rapidly shifting health, social, and environmental concerns specifically affect human service organizational leadership practices, Hopkins and Austin (2004) contended that a new type of human service supervisor must emerge. In their study, they concluded that human service organizations required leaders who could create a collaborative and supportive environment that fosters how to solve problems, innovate, learn, and take risks. Accordingly, leading nonprofit human service organizations is a complex undertaking, as evidenced by Hopkins and Austin, and requires leaders who have a growth mindset, superior interpersonal skills, and a willingness to build a positive organizational climate for their staff.

Nonprofit Leadership

The literature revealed conflicting views regarding the nonprofit leader's passion and professional abilities. Riggio, Bass, and Orr (2004) claimed that the nonprofit leader's drive to lift the burden of marginalized individuals could be as intense as the corporate leader's aspiration to earn profits and gain market share although Eisenberg (2004b) asserted that the nonprofit sector required a new sort of leader who possessed vision, competence, and courage to lead the nonprofit sector into the 21st century. Furthermore, Eisenberg argued that the sector was deficient in cultivating emerging leaders who possessed these skills.

Other researchers agreed that the nature and complexity of the environment in which the nonprofit leader functions are rapidly evolving. Several scholars shared the view that nonprofit leaders operate in complex environments (M. J. Austin, Regan, Gothard, & Carnochan, 2013; Block, 2004; Coonan, 2010; Eisenberg, 2005; Hasenfeld, 2009). To further describe the complexities that nonprofit leaders encounter, Coonan (2010) and Hasenfeld (2009) concurred that nonprofit leaders must contend with intersecting issues outside of their missions, and Hunter (2009) identified the urgent need to deal with intersecting issues with a systems-level approach and emphasized that entrenched problems cannot be solved in isolation and individually targeted.

Nonprofit leaders have been known to wield their influence to achieve significant societal improvements. Block (2004) wrote that nonprofit organizations "truly and immeasurably influence daily life" (p. 8) and highlighted the sector's indelible mark toward abolishing child labor and slavery, advancing social justice issues, and eradicating disease. Friedman (2013) maintained that in the absence of monetary incentives, such as

bonuses and promotions, leader influence encouraged staff members, volunteers, and stakeholders to stay motivated and focused on the organizational mission. Yet a study conducted by Meehan and Starkey Jonker (2017b) found that 27% of nonprofit leaders and staff reported low confidence that their organizational culture supported or rewarded high performance and achievement.

Having briefly reviewed a body of research that indicated that the nonprofit leader must be adept at maneuvering complex environments while influencing a wide array of followers to align with organizational goals, one must understand the literature that describes the unique context and environment in which human service executives exhibit leadership.

The Human Service Leader

In general, human service organizations are organized by three levels of authority: executive, middle, and supervisory management (Patti, 2009). Lewis, Packard, and Lewis (2012) claimed that the frequent evolution and change within human service organizations required that agency executives, as well as managers at all levels, needed to be leaders to effectively respond to community concerns. The differentiating factor of human service leaders and staff, as defined by Hasenfeld (2010), was their ability to transform people's lives to a new state of well-being and personal fulfillment. Therefore, as evidenced by Lewis et al. (2012) and Hasenfeld (2010), it is against this multifaceted landscape of constant change, combined with the daunting responsibility of assisting, educating, and healing a diverse population, that the professional human service leader must operate.

Of the prolific scholarly writings describing the multitude of challenges confronted by the human service leader, the opinion that human service organizations are chronically underfunded dominates the literature. One line of research points to faulty philanthropic structures and policies that are insufficient to support the industry and should be revised (Eisenberg, 2004a; Gregory & Howard, 2009; Pallotta, 2009), but other researchers described how human service leaders might strengthen their leadership ability by managing and overseeing government contracts and philanthropic funding more effectively (Eckhart-Queenan, Etzel, Lanney, & Silverman, 2019; Kaplan, 2001).

Another challenge frequently cited in the literature refers to the leadership gap inherent within the nonprofit sector and its prevalence within human service organizations. Remedies that could alleviate and address the leadership gap in the short term were described by Callanan, Gardner, Mendonca, and Scott (2014) who identified a three-pronged approach that recommended the following actions: allocating a budget specifically for leadership development, listening to leaders to learn what resources they require, and providing opportunities for leaders to be mentored and coached by private sector leaders. Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, and Peters (2014) also identified the leadership gap as an issue that merited immediate attention. In their study, they recommended that human service executive leadership programs should offer flexible, innovative approaches designed to boost the competencies needed for the 21st-century human service leader.

Leadership and Influence

To better understand the relationship between leadership and influence, it is important to understand how the literature describes the positive and negative aspects of

influence. Cialdini (1993), a seminal expert in the field of influence, wrote extensively about the positive effects of influence and how leveraging it appropriately brings tangible results. His research centered around six universal principles of influence that included reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity.

More recently, McClung and Boudier (2019) contributed to influence literature by developing the four cylinders of positive influence framework. Their framework described influence as an interdependent series of four actions: a well-defined strategy, a purposeful communication, an embedded advocacy, and an internal capacity. They concluded that when “all four cylinders work seamlessly together, influence is turbocharged” (McClung & Boudier, 2019, p. 13).

Other researchers unearthed evidence that explains what may happen when the power of influence is underestimated. For example, Friedman (2013) asserted that although many leaders have influence in their organizations, they are not always sure how to use it. Similarly, Bohns and Flynn (2013) wrote about the dire consequences that may manifest when individuals underestimate their influence over others in the workplace. In their work, Bohns and Flynn asserted that when employees do not believe they possess or can exert influence over others, they may resist leading change initiatives, deny their own role in their teams’ performance shortcomings, and fail to speak out against unethical behavior.

Theoretical Framework

Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler (2013) viewed influence as the common attribute that all successful leaders must possess. The authors defined influence as “the ability to create changes in human behavior and the people who do it as

influencers” (p. 6). Moreover, they argued that what enables individuals to be called leaders depends on the extent to which they can influence others to change their behavior to achieve transformational results.

To assist individuals to maximize their ability to influence others, Grenny et al. (2013) developed a framework called the three keys to influence. The first key, *focus and measure*, maintained that influencers must have clarity about the intended result they want to achieve and measure goals zealously. The second key, *find vital behaviors*, meant focusing on high-impact behavior and actions that produce results. The third key, *engage all six sources of influence*, meant the influencers would employ all the forces that shape the human behavior they desire to change to act for the influencers instead of acting against them.

Statement of the Research Problem

The nonprofit sector contributes significantly to American life by providing a bridge to a vast array of services and enrichment programs (Renz & Herman, 2016). Many nonprofit scholars contend that 21st-century nonprofit leaders must be well-equipped to respond to societal problems caused by turbulent forces (M. J. Austin, Regan, Samples, Schwartz, & Carnochan, 2011; Block, 2004; Coonan, 2010; Eisenberg, 2005; Salamon, 2004). To further complicate this phenomenon, nonprofit leaders are expected to accomplish more with less resources (Independent Sector, 2015).

Against this backdrop, nonprofit human service CEOs wrestle with understanding that current leadership practices may not sufficiently resolve entrenched social crises in their communities (Şen, Kabak, & Yangınlar, 2013). In the human service field, CEOs realize that they must move toward systemic solutions to achieve greater organizational

impact (Hopkins & Hyde, 2002). Given that cost containment will likely remain a constant variable for nonprofit organizations, how might human service CEOs lead their organizations by inspiring staff members to generate innovative ideas and achieve seemingly impossible goals?

Grenny et al. (2013) contended that many of the vexing problems leaders ruminate over do not require additional technology or data; rather, they require the leaders to hone their ability to maximize influence with others. Grenny et al. are among many who have researched and published on influence. Influence and motivational practices targeting the workplace, from both a leader and follower perspective, have been extensively studied by researchers (Bandura, 2001; Friedkin & Johnsen, 1990; Tepper, 2010). There is also a dearth of literature that describes the leadership role of the human service CEOs and the unique environmental conditions in which they must operate (Hopkins et al., 2014; Paynter & Berner, 2014).

Ronquillo, Hein, and Carpenter (2012) confirmed that more scholars should focus on researching nonprofit leadership. Specifically, McBeath and Hopkins (2020) asserted that research illuminating dilemmas faced by human service organizations is vital to practice and scholarship. Yet few studies have examined the potential merits for how leadership and influence may support sustainable, long-term results in the nonprofit setting. Moreover, there are no studies that explore how nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organization by applying sources of influence. The lack of research in this area indicates the need for scholarly insights that may bolster the capacity of nonprofit human service CEOs to lead their organizations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence?

Subquestions

1. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff love what they hate?
2. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff do what they cannot do?
3. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing encouragement?
4. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing assistance?
5. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing their economy?
6. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing the physical environment?

Significance of the Problem

This study investigated how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. The study expanded the limited body of research about nonprofit leadership and its intersection with influence to achieve profound, long-lasting organizational results. It also sought to increase knowledge pertaining to how human service CEOs employ

specific influence strategies and tactics to motivate and build the ability of staff members. Hence, this study is significant for scholars and nonprofit practitioners through four applications.

First, this study is significant because it considers existing published literature and expands the current work on nonprofit leadership. According to Hasenfeld (2009), nonprofit scholars should explore more ways that enable human service organizations to increase the responsiveness and effectiveness in meeting human needs. In an era when human service financial resources are shrinking and employee turnover is high, it is both significant and important to better understand how CEOs lead their staff to achieve greater heights through the application of influence.

Second, this study is significant because findings from this study could impact the leadership practices of CEOs of nonprofit organizations across all missions. As current CEOs retire, nonprofit board members may find this study to be useful as they reflect on the leadership qualities and competencies required to navigate their organizations through uncertain and complex situations, both now and in the future. Similarly, nonprofit directors who desire to attain results with their current team or wish to acquire tangible skills in preparation for career advancement will also find this study to be helpful.

A third way this study is significant relates to hiring practices. Boards of nonprofit organizations could leverage results from this study to make critical decisions on how to groom or hire the next CEO. For example, if this study found that effective leaders help employees love what they hate, which is one tenet of Grenny et al.'s (2013) framework on influence, nonprofit boards can integrate elements of this competency in their job description. The job description could include elements of compassion and

empathy coupled with helping employees to persevere through learning and performing difficult tasks.

A fourth way this study is significant pertains to industry consultants and trainers. Results from this study can shed light on how trainers and consultants may coach organizations and nonprofit executives to achieve greater impact by teaching and promoting the use of influence as a core leadership competency.

Definitions

Bank of America Neighborhood Builders® award. Since 2004, select nonprofit organizations are invited to apply for the prestigious \$200,000, 2-year grant award through a competitive, community-driven process conducted in 49 Bank of America national markets. Once the winning nonprofit is identified in each market, the CEO and an emerging leader join other awardees across the nation for a series of professional leadership trainings (Bank of America, n.d.)

Exemplary. For the purposes of this study, exemplary is defined as a nonprofit human service CEO who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Human Service Chief Executive Officer (CEO). For this study, a human service CEO is defined as the top executive responsible for leading and overseeing the day-to-day operations of a human service agency. These individuals hold the title of CEO, Executive Director, or Director. They are compensated with a salary.

Human Service Organization. Nonprofit organizations that meet human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as

remediation of problems, and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of individuals (National Organization for Human Services, n.d.).

Influence. The ability to create changes in human behavior (Grenny et al., 2013).

Influencer. The individuals who use influence to create changes in human behavior (Grenny et al., 2013).

Motivation. Forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behavior (Ball, 2012).

Nonprofit organization. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is defined as a “charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and the prevention of cruelty to children or animals” (IRS, n.d., para. 1).

Six sources of influence. A framework in which to explain and identify specific actions employed by the influencer in order to achieve desired behaviors from followers (Grenny et al., 2013).

Staff. Staff in this study is also referred as team members and teammates. Staff refer to paid part-time and full-time employees of the nonprofit organization.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study refer to the conscious and specific decisions placed on a study by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). For this study, the delimitations set a boundary for identifying and obtaining respondents. With thousands of CEOs leading nonprofit human service organizations in the United States, it was necessary to delimit the scope of the study in three ways:

1. Nonprofit human service CEOs named as a Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders[®] award recipient from 2015–2020,
2. Nonprofit human service CEOs currently leading or have led a nonprofit human service organization, and
3. Nonprofit human service CEOs with responsibility for leading a staff of 5 or more people.

Organization of the Study

This phenomenological study examined and described how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. Chapter I introduced the topic of the study and its theoretical framework. It also included background information, the research problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question and subquestions, the significance of the problem, definitions, and delimitations of the study. Chapter II presents a review of the literature related to the history of nonprofit organizations and current nonprofit and human service leadership characteristics and challenges. Additionally, the chapter includes a literature review of leadership and influence. Chapter III provides the methodology rationale along with detailed steps for the study design, including how the population, target population, and sample were determined. The chapter also includes sampling procedures and instrumentation, gathering of data collection and analysis, and recognizing study limitations. Chapter IV analyzes the data and findings, and Chapter V presents research major findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Millions of individuals rely on nonprofit organizations to deliver myriad community benefits that range from enrichment activities to basic needs such as housing, food, clothing, and health-related services. Meanwhile, formidable factors such as widening economic gaps, pervasive inequality, and financial volatility contribute to rising demand for nonprofit services (Independent Sector, 2015). These pressures are acutely felt by nonprofit human service leaders charged with providing social care to the nation's most vulnerable human beings. Thus, it is important and significant to understand the unique leadership characteristics practiced by human service leaders.

Although much nonprofit literature elucidates the challenges and contributions of nonprofit organizations, little research has shed light on the intersection between nonprofit leadership and influence. Although Northouse (2016) stated, "Leadership without influence doesn't exist" (p. 6), research conducted by Bohns and Flynn (2013) pointed out that many individuals are unaware to what extent influence plays a factor in the workplace. Research points to a growing interest in leadership and its relevance in the context of nonprofit organizations. Despite heightened interest in the topic, scant scholarly knowledge examines leadership practices within human service organizations or how they apply influence when leading.

This review of literature investigates the nonprofit sector, nonprofit leadership, and leadership and influence. The first section contains a brief introduction enumerating how nonprofits exist with and separately from for-profit and government organizations, along with a historical overview of the nonprofit sector. The second section features nonprofit and human service leadership, providing an overview of the external forces

they contend with and the multiple stakeholders they lead. Finally, the last section highlights the convergence of leadership and influence. This section provides a snapshot of some of the seminal social theory authors and presents four theoretical influence model frameworks.

The Nonprofit Sector

The United States' economy is fueled by a diverse array of industries and classified by their primary produce or activity (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). Three distinct sectors anchor the U.S. economy: for-profit, government, and nonprofit. Endeavors pursued by nonprofit organizations, often referred to as the “third-sector,” are diverse and growing. From 2005 to 2015, the number of IRS registered nonprofit organizations rose from 1.41 million to 1.56 million, increasing 10.4% (McKeever, 2018). This growth spurt ushers in an opportunity for service expansion while supporting workforce development. In doing so, the nonprofit sector employs millions of individuals with jobs, contributes to the economy, and provides programs that reduce the toll caused by social injustice and tribulations (Salamon & Newhouse, 2019). Consequently, the nonprofit sector's economic impact must not be underestimated or overlooked (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). Table 1 illustrates data collected by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to report on the size of nonprofit organizations, employment statistics, and wages.

Table 1

Nonprofit Size Class Data, 2017 U.S. Totals, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Size class	Firms ^{ab}	Employment	Total wages (in thousands)
Fewer than 5 employees	64,806	117,417	\$4,386,660
5–9 employees	28,999	192,430	\$6,909,693
10–19 employees	23,506	321,085	\$11,271,648
20–49 employees	21,565	668,255	\$24,510,622
50–99 employees	10,297	724,193	\$28,083,102
100–249 employees	9,231	1,454,506	\$59,421,381
250–499 employees	3,763	1,305,096	\$56,073,013
500–999 employees	1,973	1,358,247	\$63,887,669
1,000+ employees	1,906	12,488,562	\$670,218,053
Totals	166,046	12,488,562	\$670,218,053

^aExcludes Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; wages in 2017 dollars.

^bA firm is an economic unit that may consist of multiple establishments.

Nonprofit organizations not only serve as a lifeline to millions of individuals and generate millions of jobs; they are also credited with tackling some of the most progressive social policy reforms in American history, frequently against staunch opposition. Abolishing slavery, prohibiting child labor, advancing civil rights, and promoting HIV research and health care to AIDS patients are just a few examples of controversial social reforms (Block, 2004). One of the unique power roles held by nonprofit organizations is the ability to mobilize like-minded individuals and coalitions to influence public policy and advocate for sweeping social change (Fyall, 2016). Eisenberg (2004a) noted the nonprofit sector's historical significance to promote and enforce democracy. He espoused that challenging unjust governmental policies, inviting in diverse voices and perspectives, and initiating public policy debates were essential to creating an engaged citizenry and more equitable society. To gain an appreciation for the

environment in which nonprofit organizations currently engage, it is helpful to understand the historical evolution of nonprofit organizations.

History of Nonprofit Organizations

American social values and humanitarian principles were profoundly influenced by European philanthropy models transported during colonization. Colonization itself was inspired by philanthropic intent, often motivated by the necessity of converting natives to Christianity, gifting land, and promising work to the poor and the opportunity to spread European ideals and institutions (Bremner, 1988). Consequently, the nonprofit sector as it exists today, along with much of its culture and historical achievements, is deeply rooted in religious practices and philosophies. During the colonial period, established churches were charged with “the legal responsibility of providing nearly all religious, cultural, human service, and education activities” (Hammack, 1998, p. 3). However, multiple factors barred some citizens from attending a consistent worship place, including the shortage of ministers, an unstable economy, political turmoil, lack of education, and unconventional family structures (Bunomi, 1986). The First Great Awakening, a mass religious movement from 1730–1755, captured people’s passion across all classes in the American colonies, but especially those of the poorer classes who did not belong to an established church (Bremner, 1988). For the first time, Bremner (1988) observed, they could transcend their life station by demonstrating their spiritual faith through acts of benevolence.

The years of 1896–1916, referred to as the Progressive Era, marked a dramatic uptick in activism and social reform in the United States. According to Marten and Fass (2014), the period was rife with reformist groups protesting the excesses of political

patronage, industry practices that did little to protect its workers, and an economic imbalance between classes. Marten and Fass contended that these conditions spurred interest groups from all corners of society to voice their views with the U.S. Congress and state legislators.

Another significant evolution in the nonprofit sector landscape occurred in the 1940s, brought on by peace and legislative policies. Hall (2016) claimed that the end of World War II and America's standing as a global leader illuminated racial, religious, and gender disparities, which led to a proliferation of social movements across the United States. He also attributed the Hill-Burton Act, a law passed by the U.S. Congress, as the second factor for growth. The Hill-Burton Act provided nonprofit hospitals, cultural and scientific institutions, and higher education with government subsidies and a tax code conduit. When the two events converged, the flow of available government dollars to fully or partially tax-exempt nonprofits contributed to explosive growth; by 1968, the number of tax-exempt organizations had grown from 12,500 to more than 250,000 (Hall, 2016). In the following years, the nonprofit sector continued to thrive under legislation and government expansion. The 1960s, spurred by national policy imperatives by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, enabled nonprofits to blossom with an infusion of government financing aimed at social and health programs (Kallman & Clark, 2016).

Alternatively, the nonprofit sector sputtered under the governmental devolution period witnessed during the 1980s and 1990s. This era was credited to have been the beginning of significant financial strain put upon nonprofit organizations (Steinberg & Powell, 2006). Federal and local governments slashed costs related to social welfare programs by abdicating these responsibilities to nonprofit organizations. More recently,

Crutchfield and Grant (2012) asserted that federal cutbacks in social spending, accompanied by pressures to devolve services to the local level, resulted in more outsourcing to community-based organizations. Crutchfield and Grant cautioned that the outsourcing model frequently did not provide sufficient investment to cover the full cost of programs, frequently leaving nonprofits to scramble for additional revenue.

Yet the expectation that nonprofit organizations would fill the gap left by government disinvestment persists today, creating even greater strain on nonprofit and human service leaders and their organizations (Eckhart-Queenan et al., 2019; Gregory & Howard, 2009). Hence, nonprofit CEOs not only must hold responsibility for leading people but also must demonstrate financial leadership to ensure mission impact and sustained financial health (Barr & Bell, 2019). This brief, historical overview of the nonprofit sector provides a context for understanding a recent trend that blur the roles between the for-profit, government, and nonprofit sectors.

Blurring Roles Between the Nonprofit, For-Profit, and Government Sectors

The IRS determines how for-profit, government, and nonprofit sectors are classified from a taxation perspective. Nonprofit organizations are assigned one of 27 types of a 501(c) designation with the 501(c)(3) being the most familiar to the general public (Fritz, 2020). The IRS defines a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization as a “charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, and the prevention of cruelty to children or animals” (IRS, n.d., para. 1). Under IRS rules, nonprofit organizations must abide by five rules: (a) have some organizational structure, (b) be engaged in at least one of several specified “exempt” activities, (c) do not distribute surpluses (profits), (d) limit lobbying

activities within a certain percentage, and (e) prohibit engaging in partisan political activity (Abramson, 2018).

The tax designation prescribed under IRS rules may be where simple definitions end. In the last decade, the strict delineation of responsibilities has blurred between the three sectors (Bromley & Meyer, 2017). To respond to the urgent necessity to improve performance and results, many government agencies and nonprofit organizations have adopted the same management strategies practiced by private industry businesses (Dees & Anderson, 2003a; Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Nonprofit leaders, like their government agencies and for-profit business counterparts, compete for financial resources and clients (Chetkovich & Frumkin, 2003). However, the competitive pressure experienced by the nonprofit sector has reshaped the way that some organizations have traditionally operated (Salamon et al., 2012). Consequently, it is important to understand how emerging trends such as sector-bending, social entrepreneurship, and the rise of public-private coalitions impact nonprofit leaders and the organizations they lead.

Sector-bending phenomenon. Two scholars, Dees and Anderson (2003b) wrote extensively on the subject of sector-bending. Sector-bending refers to how nonprofit and for-profit business practices are virtually indistinguishable because they behave similarly, operate in the same domains, or both. Likewise, Summers (2018) argued that the three sectors have merged in many ways and demonstrated far fewer distinctions than those practiced in previous decades. Rather than be alarmed by this emerging paradigm shift, Summers called upon nonprofit leaders and board members to embrace this new reality. Specifically, Summers touted the benefits of eliminating siloed sector efforts to focus on the more extensive social and economic opportunities that could be accomplished

through cross-sector collaboration. He further contended that today's most effective nonprofits favorably compare to high-performing, high-growth, for-profit organizations.

In the same vein, Rose (n.d.) voiced that nonprofits aspired to “market-like efficiency and pro-bono values” (p. 124). Rose proposed that nonprofit organizations should be risk-taking, innovative enterprises positioned to achieve tremendous advances in social causes, medical breakthroughs, and educational endeavors. He argued that nonprofits existed because they offered critical services that were not economically feasible for the free market to produce, and that government lacked the will to pursue. Effectuating bold actions and taking calculated risks, as outlined by Summers (2018) and Rose (n.d.), underscore the opportunity for nonprofit CEOs to lead through influence beyond the walls of their own organization.

Social entrepreneurship. The rise of the social entrepreneurship business model further demonstrates the blurred lines between sectors, challenging assumptions that for-profit organizations cannot or should not be engaged in advancing social causes. According to Auvinet and Lloret (2015), many scholars have studied various facets that described social entrepreneurship, including its origins, characteristics, organizational mission and goals, and value proposition. For-profit social entrepreneurs, according to Dees and Anderson (2003a), closely examine both social and financial objectives to evaluate success and guide decision-making. Like their nonprofit counterparts, social entrepreneurial leaders demonstrate a passion for the mission, leverage private and public resources, and hold themselves highly accountable (Goldsmith, 2010). As a result, the social entrepreneurship business model forces nonprofits to directly compete with for-profit businesses (Dees & Anderson, 2003b). Furthermore, the social entrepreneurship

business model appears to appeal to investors who want nonprofits to maximize their financial resources by generating earned income while seeking philanthropic donations (Meehan & Starkey Jonker, 2017a). According to Meehan and Starkey Jonker (2017a) this emerging mindset may alter how and to what extent future generations contribute to their favorite causes.

Private-public coalitions. Other scholars homed in on the interaction and blurring of responsibilities between nonprofit organizations and government agencies. For example, Salamon and Toepler (2015) confronted the notion that government and nonprofit organizations operated separately from one another. They contended that mutual interdependence between the sectors was a legitimate and essential avenue toward solving complex social, environmental, and economic dilemmas. In a complementary approach, Fyall (2016) conducted a study that examined the perceived lack of influence held by nonprofit leaders and their ability to impact public policy initiatives. Her findings indicated specific actions to strengthen the government-nonprofit rapport by forming private-public coalitions. In contrast, Worth (2014) described private-public partnerships as adversarial, citing that the market-based approach practiced by state and federal government has forced nonprofit organizations to either thrive or fail.

In sum, the literature underscored emerging opportunities and threats for nonprofit leaders to consider when collaborating or competing with the for-profit and government sectors. Ospina and Foldy (2010) noted that although social change organizations cannot address intractable societal issues on their own, convening multi-disciplinary organizational partners—even when interconnected interests are shared—is not a simple undertaking. Considering this distinctive conundrum, it appears nonprofit

leaders who understand how to lead by influence might tackle systemic solutions more effectively by gaining cross-sector collaboration. For example, the nonprofit leader might link cross-sector partners by defining shared mission and values, weaving a new narrative that could emerge because of collaboration. This influence tactic points out specific opportunities by which cross-sector alliances could simultaneously advance the nonprofit mission, benefit the people they serve, and promote business interests.

Nonprofit Human Service Organizations

Human service organizations, also referred to as social service agencies, assume a particular role within the diverse nonprofit ecosystem. One reason they are unique is that human service agencies can operate in the nonprofit, for-profit, and government sectors of the economy (Patti, 2009). Vaguely defined, human services exist to deliver life-enrichment programs to individuals and families (Smith, 2018). The National Organization for Human Services (NOHS, n.d.), a professional organization comprising human service professionals, students, and educators, described the human service field as “meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems, and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of service populations” (“About Human Services,” para. 1). To further appreciate the special role performed by human service organizations within the nonprofit sector, it is helpful to review the size and scope of nonprofit human service agencies as well as broader environmental forces that may shape how human service leaders lead their organizations.

As deeply entrenched societal problems persist and new challenges emerge, the nonprofit human service organizations’ size and scope have expanded in response.

According to the Urban Institute, nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS rose from 1.48 million to 1.54 million, an increase of 4.5% from 2006 to 2016. The number of registered human service organizations surpassed all other nonprofit subsectors operating in the United States (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019), depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Registered 501(c)(3) Nonprofits and Private Foundations by Subsector

Subsector	Total
Arts, culture, humanities	119,763
Education	184,114
Higher education	6,717
Healthcare and mental health	92,145
Hospitals	6,423
Human services	353,909
International	22,686
NTEE+T (regrantors such as community foundations, DAFs, and federated campaigns)	35,659
Other public/societal benefit and community improvement	94,794
Research: science, technology, social science	10,931
Religion-related, spiritual development	298,227
All others	9,505
Private foundations	126,676

Note. The National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) system identifies and applies the IRS Activity Codes to every entity granted tax-exempt status. DAF refers to donor-advised funds. From *Nonprofit Impact Matters: How America's Charitable Nonprofits Strengthen Communities and Improve Lives*, by National Council of Nonprofits, 2019 (<https://www.nonprofitimpactmatters.org/>).

Human service organizations with missions related to food, shelter, youth services, athletic clubs, and family services comprised 35.2% of all public charities,

representing more than one third of charitable organizations (Urban Institute: National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2020). Quite literally, human service organizations provide individuals with a system of cradle-to-grave services. According to a report commissioned by the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities & SeaChange Capital Partners (2017), the human service ecosystem touched the lives of an estimated one in five Americans. The report also disclosed that beyond benefitting society at large, human service community-based organizations employed more than 3 million Americans, contributing more than \$200 billion per year to local economies. These statistics appear to underscore the prominence and influence that human service organizations wield within the nonprofit sector while highlighting the magnitude of responsibility entrusted to human service leaders and their staff to lessen human suffering.

Escalation of societal problems. The pervasive nature of poverty and its related problems caused a rise in utilization rates at human service organizations. Proehl (2001) cited that as the number of individuals falling into the lower class rose, social service requests significantly increased. Likewise, a report conducted by the Independent Sector (2015) found that society-level trends and challenges present a sobering picture of widening wealth gaps and lack of fair wage employment opportunities. In this study, there was widespread agreement among participants that as economic inequality grew, high demand for nonprofit services followed. Because nonprofit human service agencies are a vital component of the nation's safety net in times of economic and social distress, Norris-Tirrell (2014) contended that government had a responsibility to fund social services appropriately. Her recommendations included governmental funding strategies

such as authorizing multiyear contracts, allowing organizational flexibility when developing quality standards, and funding capacity building projects.

Insufficient funding to address problems. In addition to the heightened need, some scholars examined the financial strain experienced by nonprofit and human service organizations and their leaders (Gregory & Howard, 2009; Pallotta, 2009). In an article written by Gregory and Howard (2009), the authors outlined the “starvation cycle” that choked financial health. They claimed that the starvation cycle started with funders having unrealistic expectations about the actual costs of funding programs. Reactively, leaders conformed to whatever the funder was willing to fund, resulting in underestimating the actual cost of overhead expenses and infrastructure. When perpetuated, this vicious cycle limited what funders, government, and human service agencies could accomplish together. The authors concluded that clients who utilized nonprofit human service programs encountered risks when organizations were not financially strong enough to deliver their promises.

A report from the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities & SeaChange Capital Partners (2017) presented the consequences of ignoring the link between adequate funding and organizational performance. These consequences ranged from adverse health outcomes which directly correlated to higher medical expenses, to an increase in the cost of criminal justice programs. Yet the report found that “about half of community-based organizations run persistent operating deficits, in part due to unfavorable contract terms with government agencies that chronically reimburse them less than the full cost of the programs and services being contracted for” (Alliance for Strong Families and Communities & SeaChange Capital Partners, 2017, p. 7). Likewise,

Hasenfeld (2015) cautioned against the relentless pursuit of efficiency, cost containment, and high productivity in human service organizations. He posited that such unrealistic, high expectations reinforced the illusion that human service organizations could do more with less. Hence, nonprofit human service leaders must be adaptive and flexible as they attempt to balance the triple priorities of understanding market forces, securing funding from external donors, and balancing client demand (Smith, 2018). These factors seem to accentuate the need to groom nonprofit leaders who are capable influencers.

Lack of public and political will to invest in transformational change. In addition to the indisputable challenge of responding to the community need under severe financial constraints, other scholars examined the public and political will to invest in measures that upheld a more equitable and just society. Despite its achievements, growth, and economic impact, Eisenberg (2005) questioned the level of power and influence exerted by nonprofit organizations and their leaders. Eisenberg cautioned that the nonprofit sector might be weaker and less influential than in past decades, attributed in part to a scattered focus on issues and a failure to unite collective action toward matters of national significance. Additionally, he maintained that leaders lacked the courage to challenge public policies that undermined economic mobility. Like Eisenberg, Coonan (2010) acknowledged that human service leaders were partly responsible for allowing a fragmented system to continue but cited different reasons for the phenomena. She claimed that human service professionals were deeply perplexed by the complexity of the problems presented by individuals and families and solving dilemmas within the rules of broken systems. Human service staff, overwhelmed with attending to symptoms, lacked the energy and resources to resolve or consider the underlying causes. Coonan's

assertation was further illustrated by Fisher (2017) who claimed some antihunger advocates resisted addressing long-term solutions. He pointed out that neglecting to combine short-term hunger relief with structural reform perpetuated the false belief that hunger could be solved through charity, which negatively impacted the opportunity to influence deeper reforms.

Blasi and Jost (2006) offered yet another perspective concerning the public and political will to seek social change, particularly against discrimination and injustice. Through the lens of system justification theory, they explained that humans possessed “a motive to defend and justify the social status quo, even among those who are seemingly most disadvantaged by it” (Blasi & Jost, 2006, p. 1119). They argued that the extent to which injustice could be reduced depended on self-reflection, understanding the motivations of others, and recognizing inherited social systems from the past. Similarly, Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004) wrote about the impact of reactive thinking. They posited that individuals, companies, and society often relied on habitual-thinking ways, which kept people and institutions from straying far from their comfort zones. Considering the daunting pressures related to rising need, insufficient funding to adequately address problems, and a resistance to invest in sustainable reforms, human service leaders encounter strong opposing headwinds when leading their organizations.

New call for systems thinking and approaches. There is scholarly evidence that nonprofit collaboration with cross-issue coalitions produce promising results ranging from increased fundraising potential to enhanced service delivery. Nonetheless, human service leaders must incorporate new behaviors when working with other organizations. In a study conducted by Hopkins and Hyde (2002), the findings revealed the chasm

between human service leaders' current management practices and expectations for visionary and groundbreaking methods. The authors discovered the solutions often failed to correspond with the identified challenges. This compelling research provided insight into the extent to which human service managers must think beyond solving systematic problems with symptomatic solutions. Yet human service organization leaders continue to grapple with blurred responsibility lines between the role of nonprofit, for-profit, and government agencies, indicating the need for nuanced leadership (Grønbjerg, 2001).

This brief overview provided a glimpse of the historical and emerging trends that nonprofit and human service sector leaders have navigated and continue to steer as they lead their organizations today. Moreover, the literature drew attention to the broader social, environmental, and political context that contribute to the leadership milieu. Having considered these forces, it is appropriate to review the literature regarding the specific nature of nonprofit and human service leaders and the multiple constituents they lead.

Nonprofit Leadership

Today's nonprofit leaders must be equipped to handle numerous situations and adapt their leadership skills to accommodate a diverse spectrum of constituents. Crawford (2010) who developed a leadership profile to describe the competencies, personality traits, and knowledge required of the nonprofit leader wrote, "They need to have a wide repertoire of knowledge, skills, and experiences, and know when to apply their array of skills, as the situation dictates" (p. 1). In parallel, Forsyth (2017) emphasized that nonprofit human service CEOs lead stakeholder groups who do not directly report to them yet are part of the organization or team. She asserted that new

skills, like influence and persuasion, must be acquired by the CEOs to empower and motivate people individuals with direct and indirect reporting lines. To fully appreciate and understand the direct and indirect supervisory dynamics experienced by nonprofit and human service leaders, it is important to describe four critical stakeholders who occupy considerable time, attention, and influence: the board of directors, donors, volunteers, and staff.

Leading the Board of Directors

All nonprofits are governed by a board of directors, comprising a group of volunteers with legal responsibility for ensuring mission clarity, overseeing and protecting its assets, and functioning ethically (BoardSource, 2021). In addition to their fiduciary and legal responsibilities, board members guide and provide advice on organizational functions that may encompass strategy, fundraising, advocacy, and culture-building activities (BoardSource, 2010). Despite the ever-changing expansion and reduction experienced by nonprofit organizations, the act of appointing a volunteer board of directors has remained consistent. Therefore, the subject of nonprofit boards has offered rich fodder for scholarly insight and study.

One dominant theme pursued by nonprofit legal scholars addressed governance as fulfilling legal and fiduciary responsibilities, especially regarding board compliance toward care and loyalty standards (Stone & Ostrower, 2007). Two nonprofit scholars, Herman and Renz (2000), focused on the level of organizational effectiveness concerning board governance. They believed that “the extent to which nonprofit organizations are capable and reliable partners depends not only on the skills of the managers, employees and service volunteers in those organizations but also on the commitment and skills of

their boards of directors” (Herman & Renz, 2000, p. 146). Another viewpoint presented by Bruni-Bossio, Story, and Garcea (2016) claimed that board member roles were fluid and adjustable. For this reason, they argued, the board and CEO had the flexibility to scrutinize policies and procedures related to role-performance reviews and reforms, enhance training and orientations, and strive together to achieve a positive organizational culture.

Other scholars questioned whether board members bring the right skills to the governing role. For example, Meehan and Starkey Jonker (2017b) conducted an in-depth study with more than 3,000 stakeholders from the nonprofit sector—including a robust circle of nonprofit executive and professional staff, philanthropic partners, and board members—to provide their personal experiences regarding organizational leadership and management practices. The results revealed that 56% of respondents cited weak board governance as the top issue confronting their respective organizations. Probing deeper, respondents expressed concerns ranging from board members possessing a marginal understanding of the mission and strategy to an inability to evaluate organizational performance, to disengagement from their responsibilities.

The literature cautioned against dysfunctional board behaviors that could take root, especially considering the significant responsibility granted to nonprofit board members. Straying from the critical mission, apathy, misguided motivations, and an absence of self-assessment tools were among common board problems (P. A. Johnson, 2019). Simultaneously, the board members’ needs and the degree to which board membership is fulfilling were highly relevant when considering the avenues toward leadership in a nonprofit organization (Inglis, 1994). On the other hand, research by

Olinske and Hellman (2017) indicated that board member behavior impacted the degree to which human service leaders perceived job satisfaction. They concluded that burnout correlated to what extent the leader perceived interference from board members.

Conversely, when board members were perceived as adding value and enhancement to the organization, the leader reported a higher sense of well-being.

Herman (2010) believed the relationship between the nonprofit CEO and board members was critical to organizational success. Thus, he argued the effective CEO needed to take responsibility for supporting board members by communicating the bad news and the good, acting as the backbone that supports the board structure, and promoting board productivity and achievements. Considering the research, it appears the CEO-board relationship could be strengthened when CEOs exerted influence by providing skill-building trainings, articulating a strong sense of mission and purpose that inspired board members, and viewing board members as agents of positive change.

Leading Volunteers

Providing services for no financial reward is a selfless act that generates benefits for the nonprofit and the individual. In fact, many nonprofit organizations are run entirely by volunteers (National Council of Nonprofits, n.d.). Involving volunteers helps nonprofit organizations to offset labor costs, acquire professional expertise, encourage community building, engage in advocacy, and cultivate a pipeline of future donors. The individual gains intrinsic empowerment derived from helping others, increased trust in others, and increased social and political participation (Grimm & Dietz, 2018).

According to the Urban Institute's National Center of Charitable Statistics (2020), an estimated 64.4 million adults, or 25.1% of the population, volunteered at least once in

2017. Furthermore, the time volunteers spent in 2017 was valued at \$195 billion, which helped trim nonprofit labor budgets (Urban Institute: National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2020).

As evidenced by these statistics, volunteerism plays an essential role in nonprofits' daily operations while contributing to the bottom line. Consequently, there is a growing body of literature dedicated to illuminating effective leadership methods that motivate volunteers (Allen & Mueller, 2013; Bidee et al., 2013; Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov, & Berson, 2013; Geiser, Okun, & Grano, 2014; Newton, Becker, & Bell, 2014). Within this body of literature, several motivational factors were examined to demystify why some nonprofit organizations were more successful at volunteer recruitment and retention.

One example was a study conducted by Dwyer et al. (2013) that considered the intersection of leadership and volunteerism. Their research revealed that volunteers experienced greater satisfaction when organizational leaders were inspirational, showed interest in their development, involved them in decision-making, and were focused on meaningful work. To that end, the researchers concluded that leaders who embodied transformational leadership traits strongly correlated with volunteers who viewed their experience as positive and rewarding. This evidence underscored that although nonprofit leaders must be concerned with motivating paid staff members, it would be equally beneficial to understand the nuances that inspire, motivate, and influence volunteers. Hager and Brudney (2011) offered another perspective to explain volunteer motivation based on "nature" versus "nurture" theory. They explained that nature represented the conditions the organization could not resolve. The other label, nurture, pertained to

situations that could be directly influenced by paid staff and leadership to make the organization more inviting and satisfying for volunteers, thus improving recruitment and retention. The most conclusive finding reported was that recruitment problems decreased in organizations that invested in professional development and training for the volunteer staff supervisor. Another finding from Hager and Brudney's study revealed that recruitment problems diminished when volunteers felt valued by the organization. Their study provided another example of the link between leadership and positive volunteer engagement.

In contrast, Allen and Mueller (2013) studied the impact of volunteer burnout and why volunteers quit. Their research revealed that volunteers considered leaving for two reasons. The first reason was due to a perceived lack of volunteer voice in the organizational decisions that impacted the volunteer. Role ambiguity was the second factor. In other words, the more the volunteers were uncertain about their job responsibilities, how to perform their duties or how they were expected to behave, the stronger the feelings of burnout existed. Similar to the implications cited by Hager and Brudney (2011) regarding volunteer motivation, Allen and Mueller (2013) concluded that organizations could reduce volunteer burnout by organizational leaders and staff exhibiting genuine care and consideration for their volunteers.

Individuals who volunteer build social capital while enhancing the nonprofit mission. Yet there is concern about how to properly motivate and utilize volunteers for the organization's benefit while being mindful that a positive volunteer experience produces positive side effects such as increased individual physical and mental health (Grimm & Dietz, 2018). Hence, the necessity for more research aimed at helping

nonprofit practitioners understand how to accomplish outcomes through a volunteer workforce will only continue to grow in importance (Newton et al., 2014). Given that volunteers contribute significantly to mission effectiveness, it appears that volunteer management is yet another area where nonprofit CEOs may reap the benefits of leading through influence. Tangible actions, such as providing encouragement and offering relevant volunteer training, may extend the CEO's ability to influence and empower.

Leading Philanthropic Partners

Although literature describing the prodigious contributions of individual and collective volunteer efforts continues to grow, an overwhelming body of research focuses on philanthropy's role and its dominating influence on the nonprofit sector. To understand the meaning of philanthropy, one begins with defining the word.

Philanthropy, translated from Latin and Greek origins, means "love of humankind, especially as evinced in deeds of practical beneficence and work for the good of others" ("Philanthropy," n.d., para. 1). In the nonprofit sector, philanthropy—often synonymous with charity—serves as the primary source of financial stability and sustainability.

American philanthropy represents a complex combination of monetary donations contributed by foundations, corporations, and individuals, exceeding \$390 billion in 2016 (Giving USA, 2017). According to the Giving USA report, the top three nonprofit organizational types to benefit from philanthropy in 2017 were religious organizations (\$123 billion), educational institutions (\$60 billion), and human service agencies (\$47 billion). Despite altruistic intention, however, philanthropy draws praise and scrutiny from nonprofit scholars.

One line of research presents that philanthropy enables nonprofit industry growth. Crutchfield and Grant (2012) attributed the recent growth of registered nonprofit organizations to the spurt of wealth contributed by corporate and private foundations, philanthropists, and individual donors. Meehan and Starkey Jonker (2017a) asserted that the nonprofit CEO must be able to effectively fundraise to achieve organizational impact while acknowledging that nonprofit CEOs spend half their time on fundraising efforts. Bremner (1988) noted that regardless of whether one views philanthropy in a favorable or negative light, it has been one of the chief means to advance social causes.

Other scholars expressed myriad concerns with the power structure inherent in philanthropy practices. For example, Corbin (1999) pointed out the conundrum faced by nonprofit organizations when planning strategies to fund services and operations. On one hand, Corbin contended, attracting the attention of philanthropists funds vital organizational activities but simultaneously distracts nonprofit administrators from their mission of providing services. Another viewpoint, proposed by Powers (2016), examined the competition spurred by chasing philanthropy dollars. She wrote that the constant quest for donations created a competitive environment based on the scarcity of resources, in essence, stunting collaboration and learning from failures. In a similar fashion, Boschee (1998) contended that the traditional philanthropy mindset may significantly hamper nonprofit entrepreneurship and innovation, citing the discrepancy between meeting the urgent need to expand services while holding firm to the idea that nonprofits are not supposed to make money.

An emerging body of literature explores the intersection between influence, philanthropy, and wealthy philanthropists. One reported trend is that over the last 15

years, the total amount of money contributed by small and medium donors declined (National Council of Nonprofits, 2019). This phenomenon occurred in the wake of heightened awareness of the impact of philanthrocapitalism, defined by McGoey, Thiel, and West (2018), as the emulation of for-profit business methods while incorporating the idea that capitalism can work for humankind's benefit.

Callahan (2017) contended that philanthropy, in part thanks to the wealthy elite, is on track to surpass the government's ability to shape America's societal agenda. He further commented that this power dynamic might influence public policy more than the power elected officials currently possess. Although recognizing the necessity for mega donations from the economically privileged, the author also cautioned against how power can be amassed through the act of philanthropy. Hall (2013) shared this concern, stating that "economic inequality created the very system that made big philanthropy possible" (p. 16) while pointing out the lack of will of contemporary philanthropy to address or deter growing economic inequality. Another scholar, Rogers (2015), urged social scientists to probe deeply into the intersection between philanthropy and influence. Rogers highlighted how megaphilanthropy, also referred to as philanthrocapitalism, presented advantages and perils to society. Like Callahan (2017) and Hall (2013), Rogers (2015) argued that wealthy individuals possessed the influence and power to erode democracy and undermine accountability even while advancing the public good.

Considering this literature overview that described the contrary forces undergirding philanthropy practices, the savvy human service CEO must contemplate the extent to which individuals, corporations, and foundations wield power to advance social causes through donations and grant-making policies. The CEO who leads by influence

may be able to navigate the complex and nuanced philanthropy terrain more effectively. Specifically, considering how donations support or conflict with mission values may be one method to bolster organizational assets with a clear-eyed and balanced approach.

Leading Staff

The frequent evolution and change within nonprofit agencies require the CEO to foster an organizational culture that is adaptive, supportive, innovative, and empowering. It is amid these shifting priorities that CEOs must motivate staff members, helping individuals and teams realize their full potential. Daft (2008) posited that leader and follower roles are interdependent in that they need each other to achieve a shared vision. This view aligns with the long-held contention that leaders are only as successful as their subordinates (Bennis & Townsend, 1989).

The literature revealed that nonprofit CEOs are expected to inspire staff and broad coalitions to make bold strides to end or alleviate entrenched social ills. Simultaneously, the nonprofit leader provides emotional and psychological support to enhance motivation and prevent burnout (Lewis et al., 2012). However, it appears that a significant leadership gap exists throughout nonprofit organizations. Research conducted by Leslie and Wei (2010) revealed that nonprofit leaders are not adequately prepared for today or the future based on a survey completed by 2,200 leaders from 15 organizations in three countries. They reported that four critical future skills—leadership, strategic planning, inspiring commitment, and managing change—were ranked as the most lackluster skills possessed by today’s nonprofit leaders. This conclusion was found to be consistent across countries, organizations, and organizational level. Leslie and Wei recommended that the earlier nonprofit organization leaders understood their leadership reality, the

sooner they could adapt and refocus leadership development and design new recruiting strategies.

On the other hand, Packard (2009) advised how human service CEOs could effectively lead their staff. He directed human service CEOs to assess individual followers in terms of their strengths, needs, and visions and provided avenues to help them see how their goals aligned to organizational goals. He further challenged CEOs to set challenging goals and high standards for team members and stressed that leaders needed to demonstrate confidence those aspirational goals could be reached. Finally, he recommended providing support and professional development to staff members when needed.

Similarly, Selden and Sowa (2015) contended that human service nonprofits have a built-in incentive to hire, train, and motivate high-achieving professionals because of their extensive and diverse system of stakeholders. In their study that explored the factors that contributed to voluntary turnover in the human service agencies, they found that tightly descriptive positions with little flexibility for learning or growth opportunities could lead to higher turnover. Packard (2009) and Selden and Sowa (2015) are among the many who have researched and published the importance of providing continual learning and professional development in human service organizations, underscoring that individuals desire and welcome opportunities to stretch their capabilities and mindsets. Therefore, it appears that human service CEOs looking to assemble and retain a high-performing team invest and advocate for professional development for themselves and their staff.

The Human Service Leader

There is widespread agreement that nonprofit human service leaders confront turbulent conditions caused by various social, economic, and political factors (Hasenfeld, 2009; Hopkins & Austin, 2004; Jaskyte, 2004; Mosley & Smith, 2018; Proehl, 2001). The robust nature of human service organizations, combined with an ever-increasing demand for services, contributes to the complexity of leading an effective organization capable of transforming lives and communities (Hasenfeld, 2009). Yet according to D. M. Austin (1989), a systemic examination of the human service executive's role has been given little attention, and there was not a single approach or description to adequately define the human service CEO's role. When little or no clarity is shared regarding the complexity of leading a human service organization, even talented staff members may refuse to take on more responsibility, become disheartened, or resign (Regan, 2016). Despite this role ambiguity, the literature revealed four factors frequently faced by human service leaders: managing staff burnout; exhibiting self-awareness and self-management skills; leading diversity, equity, and inclusion; and measuring organizational success.

Managing staff burnout. According to Leiter (1991), burnout began as a colloquial term to describe feelings of emotional depletion among helping professions. To understand the causes of professional burnout syndrome, Leiter developed a conceptual model of burnout as a function of the human service environment. His research with human service professionals revealed that they felt confident handling client-based problems. Instead, they attributed their apathy and disillusionment to dealing with frustrating organizational issues related to autonomy and control, conflict

with colleagues, and organizational change avoidance. These dysfunctions left human service professionals feeling harried, powerless, and beleaguered. Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) concluded that cynical and exhausted employees were less likely to be committed to their organization. To counteract these dysfunctions, Hopkins and Hyde (2002) recommended that human service leaders must first challenge themselves, then their staff, to become more skilled in pairing strategy and innovation to address systemic and structural quandaries.

More recently, basic needs organizations scrambled to repurpose program services to stop the spread of the virus and responded swiftly to constantly evolving community circumstances. During this public health crisis, human service workers demonstrated tremendous fortitude and resilience. However, a study conducted by the de Beaumont Foundation and ASTHO (2022) revealed that more than one half of public health employees reported at least one symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder, and 1 in 5 reported their mental health as either “fair” or “poor.” Furthermore, the wake of the pandemic sparked “the Great Resignation.” The U.S. labor market swung from 20 million unemployed people at the height of the pandemic, to a vast labor shortage as COVID-19 rates declined (Tappe, 2022). The reason for the worker exodus is multipronged. According to Gulati (2022), the pandemic ignited the opportunity for introspection, leaving individuals to question whether their careers aligned with their personal beliefs and values. For that reason, Gulati asserted that this era in America’s history has motivated purpose-driven individuals to seek employment with organizations that offer meaning and an inclusive culture. These recent trends indicate the opportunity

and urgency for nonprofit human service leaders to lead and nurture an exciting and empowering organizational culture.

Exhibiting self-awareness and self-management. The self-aware nonprofit leader understands the necessity to pair job competency with emotional intelligence and vulnerability. According to Bradbury and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence (EQ) is a powerful indicator of professional success. The EQ model comprises four domains, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The authors explained that these EQ domains can be measured, asserting that “emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships” (Bradbury & Greaves, 2009, p. 17). Their extensive research uncovered that 90% percent of high performers were also high in EQ, illuminating those individuals who develop their EQ tend to also be highly successful at work.

Brown (2018), the foremost authority on the subject of vulnerability, wrote about the intersection of leadership, vulnerability, and courage. Her research revealed that when leaders show vulnerability and empathy, it signals strength, not weakness. For example, one vulnerability myth highlighted by Brown is “I don’t do vulnerability” (p. 24). Brown contended that when leaders live by that myth, that it invites fear in thinking and behavior, and shuts out others who can provide productive feedback or suggestions. Therefore, it appears that EQ and vulnerability are interpersonal skills that complement a leader’s capacity to influence others.

Leading diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The business case for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within and outside of the workplace has garnered

attention from practitioners and researchers. Among the prolific descriptions of DEI in the workplace, a multitude of definitions exist. The Training Industry (2020), a company that provides professional development to business leaders, defines DEI as

a term used to describe programs and policies that encourage representation and participation of diverse groups of people, including people of different genders, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, religions, cultures, ages, and sexual orientations and people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and skills and expertise. (Training Industry, 2020, para. 1).

According to the Center for Creative Leadership Leading Effectively Staff (2022), organizations require guidance to ensure that diversity and inclusion initiatives are scalable and avoid common pitfalls. A report published by McKinsey & Company affirmed that COVID-19 increased the demand for authentic inclusion and diversity in the workplace (Dixon-Fial, Dolan, Hunt, & Prince, 2020). Dixon et al. (2020) recommended that organizations implement action steps in five areas, including ensuring the representation of diverse talent, strengthening leadership accountability and capabilities for demonstrating inclusion and diversity in their work, enabling equality of opportunity through fairness and transparency, encouraging openness and address micro-aggressions head-on, and fostering belonging so that all workers might feel confident being their whole selves at work (Dixon-Fial et al., 2020).

Measuring organizational effectiveness. With the current and future realities connected to growth and the need to quickly adapt to change, effective leadership in human service organizations will be essential (Packard, 2009). According to Patti (2009), the human service leader has experienced a shift from managing organizational

processes to managing organizational performance. Meanwhile, Martin and Kettner (2010) argued that the outcomes movement is attracting the most attention in the human service organizations.

Schalock and Bonham (2003) asserted that human service organization leaders were witnessing and reporting the advantages to develop evaluation metrics that measured quality of life outcomes. In turn, leaders and managers could review data as a method to inform organizational quality improvement. They elaborated that although measuring for outcomes was not an easy task, there were specific advantages that could be gained. These advantages included increased accountability for staff and external stakeholders and commitment to long-range strategic goals. Measuring for outcomes also led to better decision-making and drew attention to where resources could be allocated more efficiently while supporting the ultimate goal of enhancing the quality for life for the customer.

Lewis et al. (2012) pointed out the benefits of measurement and tracking inputs, outputs, and outcomes for leaders and their staff. The authors suggested that when staff members understood how to track and analyze organizational measures, they would have heightened awareness regarding how and when they achieved service results. In turn, data-driven information helped to inform the best ways to focus staff time and energy. Likewise, leaders could utilize data to celebrate with staff when milestones were reached or adjust staff efforts to produce the desired results. Grenny et al. (2013) stressed that to exert influence, leaders must understand the right measures to track and to review those measures frequently. As a result, it appears the influential human service CEO should be

concerned with collecting, analyzing, and interpreting key data to facilitate leading as an influencer.

Leadership and Influence

The wide-ranging challenges faced by nonprofit organizations are far more complex and nuanced than any individual or entity has the power to solve alone (Crutchfield & Grant, 2012; Eisenberg, 2004a; National Council of Nonprofits, 2019; Salamon, 2004). Because of the numerous roles that nonprofit CEOs must master and the multiple stakeholders to be managed, exerting influence may be a vital skill to incorporate. According to Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010), “Leadership is typically viewed as a social influence in which one or more persons affect one or more followers by clarifying what needs to be done, and providing the tools and motivation to accomplish set goals” (p. 314). Under this assumption, how leaders leverage their strengths and motivate others equals the knowledge they bring to their position (Moller, 2020). Because much of influence literature’s roots can be traced to social theory, a brief overview of the early work conducted by social behavior theorists is reviewed in the following section.

Early Work in Motivation Theory

Motivation refers to the forces placed on or within a person that activates behavior (Ball, 2012). A review of the literature revealed several theories that laid the groundwork for how job satisfaction and worker motivation are currently researched and practiced. One of the enduring seminal works in motivation theories was by Maslow, who established the hierarchy of needs theory (Acevedo, 2018). His theory stated the five needs were physiological, security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization,

with each need level dependent on satisfying the needs in a specific, sequential order (Mathes & Edwards, 1978). Maslow's motivational concepts provided the foundation for Herzberg's two-factor theory and Alderfer's existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory of motivation (Pardee, 1990). Herzberg concluded that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction depended on motivating factors (satisfiers) and hygiene factors (dissatisfiers; Pardee, 1990). His two-step approach to motivating employees consisted of eliminating the factors that caused worker displeasure and creating situations to instill worker satisfaction. In contrast, Alderfer was recognized for simplifying Maslow's hierarchy of needs into three categories: existence (material and physiological), relatedness (social and external esteem), and growth (internal esteem and self-actualization; Ball, 2012; Caulton, 2012). Alderfer's ERG theory pointed out that individuals may find satisfaction in different ways and different levels, which contrasted with Maslow's contention that satisfaction must occur sequentially (Ball, 2012).

Other researchers have examined how leaders motivated and influenced subordinates through the lens of social power. For example, in 1959, French and Raven identified five types of social power (reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent), with information power identified as a sixth power type by Raven in 1965 (Elias, 2008). Subsequently, in 1975, McClelland broke ground with his assertion that motivation was the vital component for understanding and forecasting leader performance. McClelland emphasized the leader's efforts should be dedicated toward achieving organizational results, eschewing the accumulation of power for personal grandiosity (Miner, 2005). Yet another line of research focused on empowering leadership through examining social cognitive theory. In 1986, Bandura, one of several admired social cognitive theorists,

believed the leader's positive behavior influenced subordinate behavior (Schnell, 2003). Additionally, Bandura's (2001) work toward curing phobias demonstrated how self-efficacy determined when an individual would initiate behavioral coping responses during obstacles and aversive experiences.

Finally, the literature review revealed several scholars who researched the application of persuasion to influence followers. One of the seminal authors on the topic of persuasion was Cialdini (1993) who began his career as a social psychologist intent on discovering the type of influencing techniques that would make people compliant to requests. His groundbreaking research encompassed six universal principles of influence: reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, authority, liking, and scarcity. These six universal principles continue to serve as the bedrock for understanding how each force can be employed to gain donations, concessions, votes, consent, and other requests.

The highlighted seminal authors represent a mere sample from a host of prominent social scientists who studied how motivation and behavior strategies impact organizational results. With this brief background, it is useful to examine four influence models that focus specifically on leading through influence.

Leading Through Influence

The scholarly definition of leadership is as diverse as the individuals who identify as leaders. According to Bacon (2011), a fundamental premise of leading through influence is that leaders cannot rely on their title to lead. Instead, leaders are more likely to enjoy a highly productive and motivated workforce when leading through influence rather than authority. Similarly, Blanchard (2010) believed that leadership was not about

the position but about using one's influence to affect the thoughts and actions of others. Oke, Munshi, and Walumbwa (2009) explained the role of the leader as an influencer required behaviors on a broad continuum that ranged from being inspirational, motivational, and visionary to one that affected organizational culture. In contrast, Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta (2012) studied elements of influence that they recommended for nonprofit leaders. Recognizing that nonprofit leaders served the public, they explored how compromise, persuasion, and positive influence could be applied for the benefit of multiple stakeholders. They cited behaviors such as consulting others, building alliances, persuading others, and providing transparent information were essential to leading through influence.

Four Models of Influence

An emerging area of literature examined how leaders lead through influence (Bacon, 2011; Basford & Schaninger, 2016; Bassey, 2021; Cohen & Bradford, 2005; Grenny et al., 2013; Maxwell, 2011). These researchers have contributed to leadership literature by developing models, strategies, and techniques to maximize influence to produce organizational results.

Four cylinders of positive influence. McClung and Boudier (2019) urged leaders to adopt their influence model, called the four cylinders of positive influence. The four components included developing a well-defined strategy, purposeful communication, embedded advocacy, and internal capacity. The authors encouraged leaders to effectively activate all four components to maintain an ongoing rhythm. They further contended that when leaders applied the four cylinders of positive influence within their organization,

significant strides in mission were realized. Additionally, this type of influence contributed to a positive workplace environment and increased trust in leadership.

Connected-influence model. In another four-step influence model, Goulston and Ullmen (2013) emphasized the secret behind leading through influence is not based on short-term victories. They described the difference between disconnected influence and connected influence to get organizational results without pushing or manipulating. The connected-influence model comprised four steps: go for great outcomes by being inspirational; listen past blind spots to lead with an open mind; engage them in “their there” by listening and understanding their experiences; and when enough has been done, do more by helping them achieve their outcomes. The authors contended when leaders practice all four elements of the connected-influence model, even damaged relationships could be transformed and repaired (Goulston & Ullmen, 2013).

The influence model. Developed by McKinsey & Company, this influence model called attention to key actions that changed mindsets and behavior: fostering understanding and conviction, reinforcing changes through formal mechanisms, developing talent and skills, and providing role modeling (Basford & Schaninger, 2016). According to Basford and Schaninger (2016), the influence model begins with the statement from the follower’s perspective:

I will change my mindset and behavior if . . . I see my leaders, colleagues and staff acting differently; I understand what my role is and it makes sense; I have the skills and opportunity to act in new ways; I see the structures, policies, and processes support the change I am supposed to make. (p. 2)

A recent McKinsey Global Survey revealed that when all four actions were applied simultaneously, successful transformations were nearly 8 times more likely to take root (Basford, Schaninger, & Viruleg, 2015).

Six sources of influence. Grenny et al. (2013) developed an influence model that outlined six factors of leading through influence by combining personal, social, and structural influence principles to drive motivation and ability. The six sources of influence model advocated for leaders to employ all six sources of influence together. When doing so, the researchers found that sustainable behavior improved tenfold. To assist individuals to maximize their ability to influence others, Grenny et al. developed a framework called the three keys to influence.

The first key, *focusing and measuring*, maintained that influencers must have clarity about the intended result they wanted to achieve and are zealous about measuring the goal. To that end, agents of change must set clear and compelling goals that leave no room for interpretation. The second key, *finding vital behaviors*, referred to a focus on high-leverage behaviors that produced results. Once those vital behaviors are identified, the influencer ensures team members practice the behaviors until they become habits. The third key, *engaging all six sources of influence*, meant the influencers would employ all the forces that shape the human behavior they desire to change to act for the influencers instead of acting against them. By drawing from psychology, social psychology, and organizational theory, Grenny et al. (2013) designed strategies from evidence-based influence techniques. Figure 1 shows a pictorial model of the six sources of influence.



Figure 1. Six sources of influence. From *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, by J. Grenny, K. Patterson, D. Maxfield, R. McMillan, and A. Switzler, 2013, p. 70, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

At the heart of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence model is motivation and ability. They further subdivided motivation and ability into three domains: personal, social, and structural sources. Influencers working at the personal domain connected vital behaviors to intrinsic motivation while providing the personal ability to demonstrate that behavior. The social level pertained to influencers working with groups using peer and social influence to motivate and enable behaviors. At the structural level, influencers identified appropriate incentives or deterrents to motivate people to pick up the desired behaviors and ensured the proper systems, processes, and tools supported the desired behavior.

Nonprofit human service CEOs set the course for the goals to be attained and to guide their staff toward achieving them. CEOs who rely on exerting positional power are unlikely to inspire staff to reach their optimal performance. Therefore, the ability to lead as influencers is an important skill for nonprofit human service CEOs to employ. As evidenced in the literature, there are several influence models that help leaders master

their ability to motivate their followers. The framework presented by Grenny et al. (2013) to influence and motivate others was identified as an appropriate lens through which to investigate how nonprofit human service CEOs leading as influencers.

Summary

Once considered an “academic backwater inhabited by a small band of dedicated mavericks” (Salamon, 2004, p. ix), the volume of nonprofit literature has ballooned in recent years. One prominent theme revealed in the literature pertained to leaders’ ability to guide others through uncertain times and tumultuous change (Ahn, Adamson, & Dornbusch, 2004; Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010; Ganz, 2010; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Kotter, 2001). Equally profuse was literature that focused on various leadership styles demonstrated by leaders in nonprofit settings (Freeborough & Patterson, 2015; Golensky, 2016; Jones & Jones, 2017; Riggio et al., 2004).

As nonprofit organizations and leaders have evolved, so too has the demand to increase effectiveness and efficiency (Suarez, 2010). Moreover, what is lacking in the literature is an extensive coverage of leadership in the human service literature (Packard, 2009). Meanwhile, Hopkins and Hyde (2002) pointed out that research needs to focus on why human service leaders encounter barriers when attempting to implement innovative and visionary strategies. To better inform how human service sector dilemmas might be addressed, they recommended that future research be conducted that explores how leaders approach vision attainment and innovation.

One leadership skill that could help nonprofit human service CEOs address difficult organizational goals is to lead through influence. Friedman (2013) contended that influence is essential when leading nonprofit organizations. She posited that CEOs,

by the nature of their positional power, have influence in their organization but few know how to successfully use it.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The nonprofit sector, comprising a wide array of mission-driven organizations, faces unique opportunities and challenges in a swiftly evolving world. Within the nonprofit sector, human service organizations play an essential role in alleviating or solving the nation's most complicated societal issues that undermine human potential, such as poverty, unemployment, violence, and a host of health and racial inequities. The human service CEO, as the leader of the organizational mission, must be adept at maximizing limited budgets, demonstrating positive program outcomes, and helping their often overworked and underpaid staff to avoid burnout. Given the sophisticated leadership qualities required to rise above these stark realities, there appears to be a need to understand better the 21st-century nonprofit leader and the multifaceted skill sets necessary to lead effectively.

This study focused on exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs and how they lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. Chapter I presented an introduction to the study and its significance to the fields of leadership and influence. Chapter II examined the literature to provide a context and understanding of the unique factors that nonprofit leaders, specifically human service CEOs, must operate in and navigate through when leading and applying influence.

Chapter III describes the research method and procedures used to examine the lived experiences of human service CEOs as they lead their organizations through influence. By applying qualitative research methods, the researcher collected the study's data using several tools, including individual interviews and organizational artifacts. The chapter restates the study's purpose and research questions that provided the data

organization for the study employing Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence, which served as the framework to illuminate how human service CEOs use influence to lead their organizations. The chapter also describes the study's research design, instrumentation, and procedures used to collect and analyze the data. Finally, a description of the study's setting and limitations is provided.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence?

Subquestions

1. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff love what they hate?
2. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff do what they cannot do?
3. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing encouragement?
4. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing assistance?
5. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing their economy?
6. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing the physical environment?

Research Design

This study focused on how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. In the field of social science, three general approaches form the core of research methodology: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative research utilizes numbers to draw conclusions, but a qualitative approach presents results based on themes, words, and trends (Patten, 2017). Mixed methods, on the other hand, combine qualitative and quantitative research practices (R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007).

Scant published research has described how nonprofit leaders lead their organizations in a real-life context, specifically through the lens of influence. Hence, this study required a qualitative research approach to allow for an in-depth investigation into the lived experiences of study participants. Consequently, it was necessary to conduct interviews with nonprofit human service CEOs to illuminate and understand their distinctive lived experiences as influencers. The examination of artifacts provided by the study participants provided additional data to understand their lived experience as leaders.

Because this study captured the lived experiences of CEOs, qualitative research was identified as the most appropriate method to employ. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) defined qualitative research as a “set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” and further asserted that qualitative research practices “transform the world” (p. 10). The study results were intended to elucidate how exemplary human service CEOs successfully lead their staff through influence so that other practitioners might emulate or learn from their behavior. Qualitative methods allowed the researcher

to collect and interpret vivid, personal accounts to describe the phenomenon of leading through influence.

The researcher conducted a thorough review of four influencer models, including the four cylinders of positive influence (McClung & Boudier, 2019), connected-influence (Goulston & Ullmen, 2013), the influence model (Basford et al., 2015), and six sources of influence (Grenny et al., 2013). The influence model chosen for this study was Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. This framework was identified as appropriate because it examines the context of personal, social, and structural influence, serving as an important lens through which to explore the phenomenon of leading as an influencer in human service organizations. The model shaped the data collection instruments including interviews and artifacts. The model also provided structure for how data were coded and analyzed (see Figure 1, repeated here for ease of reference).



Figure 1. Six sources of influence. From *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, by J. Grenny, K. Patterson, D. Maxfield, R. McMillan, and A. Switzler, 2013, p. 70, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.

Qualitative Research Method Comparison

The qualitative researcher must select, from a wide range of possibilities, the most appropriate qualitative method for the subject to be studied (Patton, 2015). The

researcher chose three qualitative methods to consider, carefully assessing how each method would support answering the research questions. The qualitative methods considered were ethnography, systems theory, and phenomenology.

The first method considered was an ethnographic study. Ethnographic inquiry posits that any group of people interacting together over a period of time will form a culture (Patton, 2015). This framework may help probe how human service CEOs generally assume similar leadership responsibilities, explaining their perspectives and behaviors on leading and influencing their organization.

Systems theory was the second research method examined. This theory maintains that all parts of a system are interdependent, and it can be demonstrated that if each part is taken away from the system to perform independently, the whole system will not function as effectively (Patton, 2015). Realizing that leadership does not happen in a vacuum but rather in relationship with followers, this framework could reveal holistic perspectives from participants that contribute to the literature in profound ways.

The third research method considered was a phenomenological research framework, which is employed to answer the question, “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?” (Patton, 2015, p. 115). This framework would shed light on how human service CEOs view leading through influence within the context of a phenomenon occurring within the social services sector in the United States, such as how they obtain tangible performance results from followers despite inadequate government and philanthropic financial resources.

A phenomenological framework was identified as the most appropriate method for this study based on the following reasons. First, a phenomenological approach would facilitate understanding of how leaders use influence when leading their followers. Second, Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence lent itself to a phenomenological study to gather rich stories about how leaders consider the personal, social, and structural environment as a holistic system of interactions within an organization. Finally, this method was helpful when describing how leaders may be more effective when or if several methods of influence are used simultaneously across the entire organization, and not merely aimed in isolation toward one team or a specific situation.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a population as a group of individuals matching specific criteria and served as the intention for generalizing research results. For this study, the population represented Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders[®] award recipients from 2015–2020. Since 2004, selected nonprofit organizations apply for the prestigious \$200,000, 2-year grant award through a competitive, community-driven process conducted in 49 Bank of America national markets. Approximately 75 CEOs were chosen every year between 2015-2020, totaling 449 CEOs during that time period.

To qualify for the Neighborhood Builders award, nonprofit leaders must be employed by an organization that conducts work in the fields of education, community development and neighborhood preservation, arts and culture, or human services. Once the winning nonprofits are identified from each market, the CEO joins other awardees across the nation for a series of professional development and leadership trainings.

Therefore, the population for this study was 449 nonprofit CEOs who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Target Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a qualitative sample as an information-rich, in-depth study of a group from which the data were collected. Based on the population of 449 CEOs, the target population for this study examined only CEOs who led nonprofit human service organizations. Between 2015-2020, 153 nonprofit human service CEOs received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award. Therefore, the target population was 153 nonprofit human service CEOs who received the Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a sample as “a group of individuals from whom data are collected” (p. 129). Because it was not possible to interview all award winners, the researcher selected 15 nonprofit human service CEOs who were randomly selected from the target population (see Figure 2).

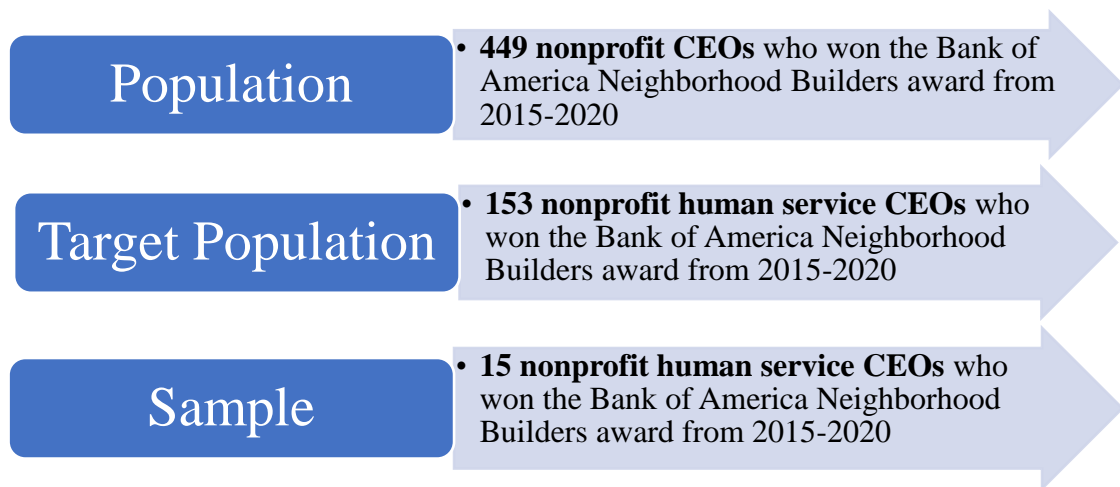


Figure 2. The population, target population, and sample of nonprofit CEOs.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher enlisted assistance from the Senior Vice President and Neighborhood Builders Program Manager at Bank of America to help identify human service CEOs who had received the Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020. The email correspondence from the researcher to the Program Manager is located in Appendix A. A database search from Bank of America Neighborhood Builders awardees from the human service category yielded 153 potential participants.

After identifying potential participants along with their e-mail addresses, the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Program Manager sent an e-mail correspondence that introduced the researcher and announced the opportunity to be part of the study (Appendix B). He also attached the researcher's one-page description of the study to the e-mail (Appendix C). The researcher's letter provided an overview of the purpose of the study, the interview process, and clarification that confidentiality would be stringently upheld. As an additional incentive to encourage participation, and as a token of gratitude for participants' time, the researcher stated that a \$25 Amazon gift card would be offered to the 15 participants selected for the study.

The researcher received a total 23 responses from the email, indicating their interest to be study participants. The researcher tracked each potential participant response in an Excel spreadsheet. Since the positive response rate exceeded 15 potential participants, the researcher utilized random sampling to select the 15 participants of the study.

Random sampling is a process whereby generalizations may be drawn from a larger population that represents a smaller sample to guard against selection bias (Patton,

2015). First, the researcher recorded all the potential eligible study participants in an Excel spreadsheet. A series of steps were used to generate a random sample:

1. added a new column to the spreadsheet and named it Random_Number,
2. typed “=RAND()” in the first cell underneath the heading row,
3. pressed “Enter.” A random number appeared in the cell,
4. copied and pasted the first cell into the other cells in this column,
5. sorted the records by Random_Number column, and
6. chose the first 15 names out of 23 potential participants.

Instrumentation

Qualitative research methods require the researcher to identify and utilize tools to capture and measure data. Instrumentation refers to all aspects of the data collection process and also guards against potential researcher biased results (Salkind, 2010). In this research study, two data collection methods were employed: individual interviews and the collection of organizational artifacts. According to Patten (2017), using more than one qualitative method contributes to the dependability and trustworthiness of the data.

Participant Interview Questions

The interview protocol served as the instrument to draw out participant stories that could be grouped into themes and words for discerning and validating responses to align with the research focus (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). To achieve this, the researcher designed a set of semistructured questions, based on Grenny et al.’s (2013) six sources of influence to allow participants to share their rich experiences. Semistructured questions are open-ended and encourage individual responses, yet questions are devised with

specific intent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, the questions were written in such a way as to prompt participants to recall and share experiences designed to yield responses that corresponded to each source of influence. The questions were written into an interview form and utilized by the researcher for each participant interview.

Participants were asked to respond to identical questions in the same sequence. Follow-up questions were posed by the researcher to gain clarity when appropriate or necessary.

The following is an alignment sample for the first subquestion:

Subquestion 1: How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff love what they hate?

1. Can you share your experiences when you helped a staff member or teams love what they hated to do?
2. Can you give me some more examples?
3. These examples you shared about how you help your staff love what they hate to do, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done?

The interview tool consisted of 12 interview questions, framed to allow participants to respond to their experience of leading through influence through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence, which corresponded to the six research subquestions. The interviews were designed to be completed within a 60-minute timeframe. The questions served as prompts for participants to reflect on their lived experience of leading as an influencer. Participants were encouraged to share their successes related to their leadership skills in the context of nonprofit human service organizations. The interview questions can be found in Appendix E.

Creswell and Poth (2018) cautioned that the research interview process might establish hierarchical roles between the researcher and the study participant. To minimize the potential power imbalance, as recommended by Creswell and Poth, the researcher attempted to establish trust and rapport with participants by clearly stating the general nature of the study before starting the interview. Furthermore, the researcher was mindful of maintaining neutrality in both tone and nonverbal communication during the interview. According to Patton (2015), researcher neutrality creates an environment of respect that allows the participants to speak freely and intimately about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Care and attention were taken to structure each question to be simple and straightforward, free from industry jargon or confusing terms. Before scheduling the participant interviews, the researcher conducted a pilot interview with a nonprofit human service CEO who was not a study participant. This vital step aided the researcher to determine whether the interview questions required modifications before conducting interviews with program participants (Majid, Othman, & Yusof, 2017).

Researcher as Instrument

Qualitative methods require the researcher to act as the instrument; therefore, the researcher must be aware of unconsciously influencing the collection of data (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). In parallel to the contention that the researcher brings bias to the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) asserted that daily life and its realities are neither objective nor neutral. Instead, reality is “shaped by ideological, class, national, gender and racial biases” (Flick, von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, p. 237). It is therefore vital to understand that researcher bias inherently exists.

For example, the researcher was nominated as a Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Emerging Leader in 2016. While conducting this study, the researcher launched a consulting company to help nonprofit organizations, social entrepreneurs, and foundation executives elevate leadership skills, conduct strategic planning, and guide transformational change initiatives. Pezalla et al. (2012) concluded that the attributes of each researcher impacted how interviews are conducted. They further asserted that individual attributes affected to what extent their study participants provided detailed, vivid accounts of their experience. To safeguard against researcher bias to the maximum extent possible in this study, the researcher consulted with an expert advisor and a qualitative research expert.

Content Expert

The role of the content expert in qualitative research is to aid the researcher to recognize bias and validate the interview questions. To qualify as a content expert, the individual met three of the five criteria:

1. 5 years as a nonprofit leader,
2. experience coaching or providing consulting services to nonprofit CEOs,
3. experience conducting qualitative research,
4. familiarity with interview question development, and
5. familiarity with data coding.

The content expert lent advice and guidance during two phases of this study. First, the content expert reviewed the interview tool developed by the researcher, explicitly examining its content and structure. Namely, the content expert assessed the interview questions to make certain they were unbiased while permitting study

participants to share relevant experiences that would lead to answering the six research subquestions.

Second, the researcher consulted with the content expert upon completion of the coding process. Coding refers to the systematic categorization of data to interpret, understand, and retrieve information for analysis (Bazeley, 2004). For example, when the researcher required another perspective concerning where certain words or phrases should be placed to correspond to the appropriate theme or themes, the discerning content expert helped the researcher to process the nuances of classifying, comparing, and making sense of the data.

Research Expert

Whereas the content expert served as a consultant who possessed a deep breadth of experience in the nonprofit sector, the research expert contributed skills steeped in conducting qualitative research. To qualify as a research expert, the individual met three of the five criteria:

1. experience conducting qualitative research,
2. completion of a doctorate,
3. knowledge and experience in conducting participant interviews,
4. expertise in data coding and analyses, and
5. published qualitative research.

The research expert provided guidance specifically concerning the researcher's interview skills. The researcher conducted an informal, simulated interview with the research expert. After completing the interview, the researcher and the research expert conferred on the clarity of the questions, the timing and delivery of the questions,

nonverbal gestures that could potentially introduce bias, and active listening skills. The researcher adjusted the interview tool based on the research expert's feedback.

After the informal practice, the researcher recorded notes in a field journal to facilitate self-reflection and examine additional threats that could impact how data would be collected or interpreted. Critical self-reflection, known as reflexivity, is a tool qualitative researchers employ to reduce researcher bias (R. B. Johnson, 1997). Consequently, the researcher applied the concept of reflexivity to examine herself as a researcher and to detect personally held values, opinions, and assumptions before conducting participant interviews.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

One succinct definition of validity means that the instrument measured what it was intended to measure (Patton, 2015; Thatcher, 2010). Another definition, as posited by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), defined validity as “the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world” (p. 330). McMillan and Schumacher pointed out that validity addressed questions concerning whether researchers actually saw or heard what they believed they observed.

In this study, interview questions served as the instrument. To enhance instrument validity and mitigate bias, the researcher called upon a content expert and a research expert to lend their expertise. The content expert provided advice concerning the appropriateness and clarity of the interview questions, and the research expert validated the researcher's interview skills during a pilot interview session.

Content validity. The content expert possessed in-depth experience in the critical roles, responsibilities, and behaviors exhibited by exemplary nonprofit leaders. The criteria for the content expert can be found under the instrumentation section. Utilizing a content expert enhanced content validity and reduced potential researcher bias:

1. Because the content expert grasped the nuances of nonprofit leadership dynamics, the individual helped the researcher with certain tasks related to enhancing instrument validity. Accordingly, the content expert examined the interview tool and provided feedback on whether the questions aligned with the research question and subquestions.
2. The content expert offered advice on the structure and flow of the questions. For example, suggestions were made to strengthen the possibility of obtaining content-rich, authentic participant conversations while adhering to the 60-minute timeframe.
3. The content expert assisted with validation during the coding and data analysis phase. When the researcher faced uncertainty on how to code a certain piece of evidence according to one theme, another theme, or both themes, the expert advisor assisted.

Pilot test. To validate the interview process, the researcher administered a pilot test with a research expert. The criteria for the research expert can be found under the instrumentation section. By conducting a pilot test, the researcher was able to simulate a realistic interview situation before commencing interviews with study participants. The pilot test provided the opportunity for the researcher to practice the timing, pacing, delivery, and sequencing of the interview questions:

1. The researcher effectuated all the steps of conducting a participant interview with the research expert.
2. After the interview, the research expert critiqued the management of the interview process, specifically pointing out when verbal or nonverbal cues from the researcher could potentially influence the participant response.
3. The research expert assessed the researcher's aptitude for asking probing questions for clarification. Probes are neutral questions or phrases that interviewers employ when asking a participant for further explanation or elaboration (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

Reliability

Whereas validity is the process for ensuring that measurements support congruence between researcher perceptions, explanation of the phenomena, and participant reality, reliability refers to the extent to which these measurements are repeatable. In essence, reliability is achieved "when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing" (Drost, 2011, p. 106). There are three ways to test whether study instruments achieve consistent, repeatable results: external, internal, and intercoder reliability.

External reliability. The extent to which study results may be generalized is an attribute of external reliability. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained that external reliability is strong when the same intervention conditions are replicated with a different set of subjects, in a different setting, yet the same results are produced. However,

external reliability was not a concern in this study because the findings were unique to the participants' lived experience and therefore not generalizable.

Internal reliability. Conversely, the purpose of internal reliability is to check for the dependability and trustworthiness of data. One technique to test the reliability of data is to employ data triangulation. Data triangulation is frequently used by qualitative researchers by deploying more than one method to collect the data from one group of participants (Patten, 2017). In enhance reliability in this study, the researcher triangulated data collected from interviews and examined organizational artifacts that included e-mails, annual reports, strategic plans, meeting notes, and organizational dashboard data.

Intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability refers to the process of conferring with independent coders who are tasked with evaluating a message or artifact to examine whether they reach the same conclusion (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Campanella Bracken, 2010). For this study, the researcher conducted the coding process. After that process was completed, the researcher identified and recruited a second coder well versed in qualitative research and coding using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software system. The NVivo software enables data to be systematically organized, stored, and analyzed. The researcher created categories, also known as themes, to assign and make sense of the data. According to Basit (2003), these categories help the researcher to “ask questions, to compare across data, to change or drop categories and to make a hierarchical order of them” (p. 144). The second coder engaged in coding approximately 10% of the data, resulting in the goal of achieving a coding accuracy of 80%, which is considered to be acceptable (Lombard et al., 2010).

Data Collection

Accurate data collection provided a vital foundation to ensure the integrity of this research study. Under requirements set by the University of Massachusetts Global, the researcher completed the Human Subject Research Course for Social-Behavior-Educational Researchers. The certificate can be found in Appendix K. Prior to data collection, the researcher applied to the University of Massachusetts Global Institutional Review Board (UMIRB) to receive approval to conduct the study (Attachment L). The purpose of this activity was to provide evidence that the study adhered to the ethical guidelines for conducting research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The first step of the data collection process began with identifying the study participants. The names of nonprofit human service CEOs who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015–2020 were retrieved and analyzed. According to the participant roster, 153 nonprofit human service CEOs were designated as Neighborhood Builders awardees.

A letter was drafted by the researcher to introduce the study and its purpose. The letter contained information about the study, a brief explanation of participant responsibilities, and a statement of encouragement to contact the researcher as a willing participant. The researcher's biography and contact information were also provided. The researcher sent the one-page study overview letter to be included as an attachment in the participant recruitment e-mail from the Bank of America Senior Vice President and Neighborhood Builders Program Manager. Once approved, the letter was sent out from the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Program Manager from his Bank of America e-mail.

After the letter was sent, the researcher received 23 e-mail responses from potential study participants. The researcher utilized Excel to randomly select 15 the final study participants. The 15 participants received notification by e-mail from the researcher that they had been selected for participation, and each participant confirmed their availability and informal consent. The study participant confirmation e-mail can be found in Appendix D. When participation was confirmed, the researcher sent the participants the interview questions, a study participant bill of rights (Appendix G) and an informed consent form for their signature (Appendix F). To establish trust and rapport before the interview process, the researcher created a short video introduction. The video link, recorded on Zoom and uploaded to YouTube, was sent to participants by e-mail. The three-minute video included the purpose of the study, the researcher's professional experience, and heartfelt appreciation for volunteering to be a study participant. The script for the video can be found in Appendix H.

Types of Data

The data collected consisted of semistructured interviews and the examination of written communications and artifacts such as e-mail, reports, and organization policies. Utilizing more than one data collection method, referred to as data triangulation, is a research validation strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Semistructured interviews. Conducting interviews with study participants is a means to encourage individuals to talk freely and openly about their personal experiences, viewpoints, and feelings (Mack et al., 2005). These in-depth interviews typically are conducted face-to-face in settings deemed comfortable and safe for the study participants. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing

measures, in addition to geographical considerations, in-person interviews were conducted via Zoom meetings.

Artifacts. Patton (2015) asserted that artifacts provide information that cannot be acquired through interviews and observations. Artifacts, he further explained, may consist of “correspondence from and to program staff, financial and budget records, and organizational rules, regulations, memoranda, charts, and any other official or unofficial documents generated by or for the program” (Patton, 2015, p. 375). For this study, the researcher collected archival data related to answering the research question and subquestions of how leaders use influence to lead their organizations. Artifacts consisted of reports, staff meeting agendas and minutes, strategic plans, organization policies and procedures, and emails.

Data Collection Procedures

The following sections outline the study procedures taken by the researcher for the dual purpose of improving the replicability of this study and providing detailed steps for collecting the two types of data collection processes.

Participant recruitment. It was essential to recruit human service CEOs with lived experiences as an influencer. Therefore, it was necessary to use recruitment strategies to find the appropriate individuals most likely to meet the study criteria. To accomplish this, the following participant recruitment procedures were followed:

1. After obtaining approval from UMIRB, the researcher contacted the senior vice president at the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to explain the purpose of the study and to request a list of CEOs selected for the Neighborhood Builders award from 2015–2020.

2. The Senior Vice President and Neighborhood Builders Program Manager sought and gained approval from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation to assist with participant recruitment.
3. The researcher obtained the entire list of the Neighborhood Builders awardees from 2015–2020 via an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contained fields that included names, titles, organizations, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
4. The researcher drafted a letter to introduce the study’s purpose and desire to recruit study participants, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. The letter also mentioned that final study participants would receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for their time.
5. The Senior Vice President of the Bank of America Foundation wrote a letter to Bank of America Neighborhood Builders CEOs between 2015-2020 explaining the purpose of the research and encouraged participation. The letter was e-mailed, along with the researcher’s one-page study overview as an attachment.
6. Potential participants were instructed to contact the researcher by e-mail to indicate their interest.
7. After approximately three weeks, the researcher collected 23 names of individuals willing to serve as study participants.
8. The researcher randomly selected 15 individuals as study participants.
9. Through LinkedIn, the researcher connected with Joseph Grenny, the lead author of *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, the book that describes the six sources of influence (Appendix I). This action by the researcher resulted in Grenny’s awareness in the study, and his invitation to send him the study results (Appendix J).

Artifact procedures. The researcher collected organizational artifacts to lend further evidence of leading as an influencer. Examples included reports, staff meeting agendas and minutes, strategic plans, organization policies and procedures, and emails. Some artifacts were publicly available on the organization website, and others were provided by the CEO and stamped with a confidential watermark.

The researcher stringently protected the confidentiality of each study participant by eliminating any identifying information that could be traced back to the human service CEO or the organization. Codes, such as “Participant #1” were used instead of actual names. The data were scrubbed to eliminate employee names and other identifying characteristics. The documents were collected and held by the researcher to assess, review, and code for analysis. Hard copy documents were stored in a safe location that was only accessible by the researcher. Digital documents, including notes and archival data, were stored on a personal computer only used and accessed by the researcher. To further ensure security, the researcher assigned a password to the digital documents. All electronic and hard copy information, including signed consent forms, will be stored for 3 years, after which time they will be securely shredded and discarded by the researcher.

Data Coding

The data coding process begins with identifying small strands of data that can stand alone, typically consisting of one to three sentences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010):

1. The researcher examined the data with an eye toward discerning the data as a whole.

This initial step helped to identify the most evident obvious commonalities between data sets.

2. The codes were scanned for themes. Specifically, given that six sources of influence served as the framework for this study, the researcher examined how the data corresponded to personal motivation, personal ability, social motivation, social ability, structural motivation, and structural ability.
3. The data were coded for frequencies using NVivo data analysis software.

Limitations

Limitations are factors that may negatively impact study results (Roberts, 2010). The extent to which findings are accepted depend on the researcher's credibility. Therefore, a vital step to counter any doubts about the researcher's predispositions is to make biases explicit (Patton, 2015). Realizing that every study has limitations, the researcher intentionally incorporated several precautions to mitigate bias and increase the study's validity.

Consequently, it is important to state that the researcher is a female who has spent 30 years either working for or working with the nonprofit sector in the fields of food systems, public health, higher education, and cultural organizations. The researcher has held positions in program development, strategy, and philanthropy with the aim of harnessing the collective energy and passion of others to enact social change. The researcher intended to use the findings from this study to contribute to nonprofit leadership literature while disseminating information to practitioners, board members, and fellow consultants about how leaders lead as influencers to support meaningful and lasting organizational results. Thus, it was important to utilize a content expert and a research expert to reduce potential researcher bias.

However, there were several features that limited the results to be generalized:

1. Researcher as instrument. When the researcher is the instrument in conducting semistructured qualitative interviews, there is an opportunity that personal bias may influence the data (Pezalla et al., 2012). This limitation was addressed by a thorough examination of the interview and subinterview questions with a content expert who possessed in-depth, nonprofit leadership knowledge. The researcher also acquired IRB approval from University of Massachusetts Global before any research was conducted.
2. The time and scope of the study limited the number of study participants. Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that interviews could only be conducted by Zoom instead of face-to-face interviews. This limitation was addressed by the researcher producing a prerecorded introduction to each study participant before the interview. The message featured the researcher in a relaxed setting and provided professional details and aspirations. The purpose of this activity was to build rapport with the participants before the formal interview.
3. The study was limited by the relatively small sample size. Because there were only 15 participants, the findings may not be generalizable to all nonprofit human service CEOs.
4. The researcher was inexperienced at conducting the interview process. To counteract this limitation, the researcher conducted a pilot interview with a human service CEO who was not a study participant. An experienced qualitative researcher audited the interview and provided feedback for refining the interview questions.

Summary

Chapter III delineated the methodology used for this study. The purpose of this phenomenological study and its research question and subquestions were reviewed. This chapter also reviewed the study's design that detailed the personal, social, and environmental influencer skills using Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence model, which provided the researcher with the conceptual framework for understanding the lived experience of how nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations as an influencer. The steps conducted to collect and analyze data were described in detail. Chapter IV reveals the results and key findings from this study. Chapter V outlines how key findings may be utilized and applied by nonprofit leaders, with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

The nonprofit sector, particularly organizations with missions that address human suffering, shoulders the responsibility for aiding millions of Americans experiencing joblessness, violence, food insecurity, and a host of health and racial inequities. In addition to responding to persistent social issues in the community, human service leaders hold responsibility for sustaining their agency's fiscal solvency and program services while being held to high accountability standards by donors, board members, staff, and volunteers. Securing resources and providing services demand a significant portion of the human service CEOs' attention, often leaving them with little time to initiate organizational capacity building projects or develop staff (Fox, 2013). Because of the numerous roles that nonprofit leaders must master and the multiple stakeholders to be managed, asserting influence effectively may be a vital skill for the 21st-century human service CEO. To better understand how nonprofit human service CEOs lead, it is important to hear their personal experiences to discern how they act as influencers to motivate and inspire their team and other stakeholders every day.

This study focused on exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs and how they lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. Chapter I introduced the purpose of the study and its significance to the fields of nonprofit leadership and influence. Chapter II provided a review of the literature that featured the historical context of the nonprofit sector and its critical role in U.S. society, the complex facets of nonprofit leadership, the factors that impact nonprofit human service leaders as they lead their staff and other constituents, and brief overview of

selected influence models. In Chapter III, the researcher explained the study's methodology as a qualitative, phenomenological study that utilized interviews and the review of organizational artifacts to capture rich stories from human service CEOs of how they lead by influence. Chapter IV describes the data collected from 15 human service CEOs identified as exemplary leaders who were recipients of the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders[®] award. This chapter includes participant responses that demonstrate their personal experiences of leading their organizations as influencers as well as the research methods, analysis, and study findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence?

Subquestions

1. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff love what they hate?
2. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff do what they cannot do?
3. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing encouragement?
4. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing assistance?
5. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing their economy?

6. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing the physical environment?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

A phenomenological framework was identified as the most appropriate method for this study based on the following reasons. First, a phenomenological approach would facilitate understanding of how leaders use influence when leading their followers. Second, Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence lent itself to a phenomenological study to gather rich stories about how leaders consider the personal, social, and structural environment as a holistic system of interactions within an organization. Finally, this method was helpful when describing how leaders may be more effective when or if several methods of influence are used simultaneously across the entire organization, and not merely aimed in isolation toward one team or a specific situation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a population as a group of individuals matching specific criteria and served as the intention for generalizing research results. For this study, the population represented Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders[®] award recipients from 2015–2020. Since 2004, selected nonprofit organizations apply for the prestigious \$200,000, 2-year grant award through a competitive, community-driven process conducted in 49 Bank of America national markets. Approximately 75 CEOs were chosen every year between 2015-2020, totaling 449 CEOs during that time period.

To qualify for the Neighborhood Builders award, nonprofit leaders must be employed by an organization that conducts work in the fields of education, community development and neighborhood preservation, arts and culture, or human services. Once the winning nonprofits are identified from each market, the CEO joins other awardees

across the nation for a series of professional development and leadership trainings. Therefore, the population for this study was 449 nonprofit CEOs who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Target Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a qualitative sample as an information-rich, in-depth study of a group from which the data were collected. Based on the population of 449 CEOs, the target population for this study examined only CEOs who led nonprofit human service organizations. Between 2015-2020, 153 nonprofit human service CEOs received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award. Therefore, the target population was 153 nonprofit human service CEOs who received the Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a sample as “a group of individuals from whom data are collected” (p. 129). Because it was not possible to interview all award winners, the researcher selected 15 nonprofit human service CEOs who were randomly selected from the target population (see Figure 2).

Demographic Data

The study included 15 nonprofit human service CEOs who met the participation eligibility criteria. Each selected participant signed a consent form indicating their agreement to be included in the study. The participants included leaders from nonprofit human service organizations based in California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. Specific demographic information was collected to describe gender, ethnicity, years of service in

the current position, and the approximate number of paid full- and part-time staff they oversee. Table 3 displays the demographic data for each participant.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Participant number	Gender	Ethnicity/race	Years held as organizational leader	Number of paid staff members
Participant 1	Female	White	4 years	20-49
Participant 2	Male	White	13 years	100-249
Participant 3	Male	White	10 years	100-249
Participant 4	Female	White	7 years	100-249
Participant 5	Male	White	6 years	20-49
Participant 6	Male	White	13 years	100-249
Participant 7	Male	White	3 years	20-49
Participant 8	Female	White	8 years	20-49
Participant 9	Female	White	9 years	100-249
Participant 10	Male	White	8 years	20-49
Participant 11	Female	White	7 years	20-49
Participant 12	Female	Black	13 years	20-49
Participant 13	Female	White	14 years	50-99
Participant 14	Female	White	12 years	20-49
Participant 15	Male	White	20 years	50-99

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The findings presented to answer the study’s research question and six subquestions are the result of more than 17 hours of semistructured, one-on-one interviews in Zoom and 5 hours of artifact collection and analysis. After 6 weeks of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, the researcher organized the data into 14 themes (see Table 4).

Table 4

Theme, Source, and Frequency Based on Grenny et al.'s (2013) Six Sources of Influence

Theme	Sources	Frequency
<i>Domain: Help Them Love What They Hate</i>		
Empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work	16	85
Sharing stories of mission success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability	17	73
<i>Domain: Help Them Do What They Can't</i>		
Leveraging the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible	15	99
Arranging and budgeting for cutting-edge trainings and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition	19	75
<i>Domain: Provide Encouragement</i>		
Consistently leading with authenticity and transparency	16	136
Ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion is foundational to the organization	19	98
Giving permission to discuss difficult topics openly and honestly	15	78
<i>Domain: Provide Assistance</i>		
Identifying opportunities for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents	15	116
Harnessing creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems	17	83
Prioritizing physical and mental health support to prevent burnout	16	41
<i>Domain: Change Their Economy</i>		
Publicly expressing praise through actions and words	20	125
Frequently challenging the board to approve competitive compensation to promote staff retention	18	54
<i>Domain: Change Their Space</i>		
Optimizing the office environment to always be efficient, clean, and safe	22	98
Routinely holding staff to be accountable to the highest level of dignity and respect with clients and guests	16	61

Empowering Staff to Claim Ownership and Control Over Their Work

This study investigated how nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. The

first source of influence focuses on how leaders help staff love what they hate to do. Within this first source of influence, the data revealed two themes. The first theme centered on empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work. This theme appeared 85 times and was seen in 16 sources (see Table 5).

Table 5

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Empowering Staff to Claim Ownership and Control Over Their Work

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work	16	85

To effectively accomplish the mission at a nonprofit human service organization, CEOs oversee a staff charged with fulfilling administrative functions ranging from the mundane to the sophisticated. Daily administrative demands sometimes require staff to engage in and complete tasks they do not like to perform but that are essential to organizational success. As the guardian of the mission, exemplary leaders spend a significant portion of their day inspiring staff at all levels of the organization to stay motivated amid uncertainty, disruption, or monotony.

During the interview sessions, participants were asked to reflect on specific experiences when they had helped their staff love what they hated to do. Some participants grappled with how to respond to this question, with Participant 14 admitting, “I just had a hard time thinking that my staff, for the most part, hated any aspect of what they did.” When further clarity was necessary, the researcher provided examples from Grenny et al.’s (2013) six sources of influence to provide additional context for the participant.

Participants 14, 3, and 1 shared that they rely on incorporating staff engagement, feedback, and suggestions as a means for empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work. Staff involvement was especially critical when designing and executing ambitious plans. Participant 14 eloquently encapsulated this value by passionately declaring, “Our staff are not cogs in the wheel. They are the wheel.” To elaborate on this sentiment, Participant 3 conveyed that including staff in the strategic planning process was vital to building project ownership by teams and individuals, sharing, “They take some ownership of those objectives, those outcomes.” Ownership was further established by staff deciding how resources would be used to accomplish the strategic plan. Participant 3 underscored the importance of including staff feedback from all levels of the organization, asserting, “It was brought up from the boots on the ground, the folks that were doing the work.” A similar experience was recounted by Participant 1, who also included staff during the strategic planning process: “I gave staff ownership of that [the strategic planning process]. Everybody speak up and participate because you already own a piece of this, and you’re going to be doing the work.”

Participants 2 and 4 thoughtfully considered how their positional power may influence the extent to which staff feels empowered to claim ownership and control over their work. For example, Participant 4 recalled when it was advantageous to intentionally “step back and allow staff to take over leadership. . . . I am always very careful to not be the loudest voice in the room.” Another interesting anecdote was shared by Participant 2, who humbly acknowledged the temptation to use positional power to “muscle it through.” Instead, Participant 2 cited that a far more effective way to motivate team

members was to “breathe confidence into them” to consistently gain cooperation and ownership:

I think the thing that’s different this time is the team owns what we’re doing more than I owned it. I think the first change was owned a lot by me driving it through the organization. They were able to follow but not own very well initially. And now, I’m incredibly proud that it’s not me driving what we’re trying to do. It’s them.

Providing clear and consistent feedback to staff emerged as another effective tactic to support staff ownership and control over their work. Participants 3, 10, and 13 highlighted techniques regularly employed to promote effective communication with teams and individual staff members. For example, to ensure work is aligned with leader expectations, Participant 10 operates from the fundamental principle of “seek first to understand and be understood.” Conversely, Participant 13 aims to “never make an assumption that they know what to say and what to do,” referring to situations when staff members take on assignments that are out of their comfort zone. According to Participant 3, staff responds positively when the reason behind unpopular decisions or tedious tasks is articulated:

This is why we’re doing it. The why many times makes more of an impact as opposed to how we’re going to do it. The why allows them to make it their own. It allows the team members to say this is the reason that I’m here. This is personal to me.

Other participants provided concrete examples for successfully motivating staff members to embrace tasks they do not like to do by giving staff control over the work

they produce. At the center of this motivation tactic by Participant 9 was the willingness to be flexible and accommodate staff preferences above their own. Participant 9 described a situation when “tweaking a person’s job description” helped build the capacity of the development department, elaborating, “If that’s just not your thing, but it’s someone else’s thing, let them do it.” Participant 5 noted that staff loves to hate meeting deadlines. In these cases, Participant 5 probes for what stands in the way of completing tasks on time. After a short pause, Participant 5 added, “Does it mean that they love doing it and don’t dread doing it when it comes around the next year? No, it doesn’t mean that either but there’s a sense of commitment to achieving agreed-upon goals.”

Another example where empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work produced a beneficial outcome came from Participant 6, who recounted a vivid experience with a staff member who did not enjoy writing reports. The goal of the project was to reimagine the way that program services and outcomes data were presented to the board of directors. The staff member was charged with the responsibility of collecting and analyzing the data that would be easily digestible and understandable for board members. At first, the staff member appeared to be stumped about how to proceed until Participant 6 proposed, “Let’s make it interesting. Can we do an infographic? Can we make it colorful?” Participant 6 then movingly shared, “I could see her eyes light up when she realized, ‘Wow, this is from me. This will be for me.’”

The antitheses of empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work was described as micromanagement by Participants 1 and 11. These participants acknowledged that they hated to be viewed as a micromanager as much as staff hated to

be micromanaged. Participant 1 lamented how staff previously had been required to document every minute of their time by logging in and logging out, taking the stance that staff were deserving of trust: “You’re either working or you’re not. If you’re not, we’re all going to know about it.” Allowing staff to make their own decisions increased leadership self-efficacy. “I would say that’s one of the things that I think where I am a strong leader is. I really trust them to figure it out,” purported Participant 11. This leadership philosophy conveys a strong sense of confidence that staff can handle problems as they arise.

Participants 3 and 2 agreed that demonstrating confidence in staff, regardless of potential failure, is an essential component of empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work. Participant 3 ranked confidence “as one of the biggest influencers that you can say, because they may not have done it exactly how I’ve done it, or what I wanted to do it.” When a health hardship required Participant 2 to lead staff from home during recovery, it required a new level of leadership trust, encouragement, and motivation. With a voice that cracked with gratitude, Participant 2 described how the team rose to the challenge by expressing:

I couldn’t have them be afraid of deciding. It was too high risk. And, to be honest, a wrong decision would be better than no decision in this instance, and the amazing thing was, they just did incredible work.

The data collected and analyzed supported the idea that nonprofit human service staff must perform duties they love to hate to do, ranging from the dull to the intricate. Participant interviews substantiated that the astute leader employs a variety of motivational tactics to empower staff to claim ownership and control over their work.

One successful tactic mentioned by participants pertained to allowing staff to participate in designing and defining organizational goals. Leaders also reported success when they provided clear, specific communication and feedback for what they wished to see in the outcome while allowing the staff to decide how to achieve the goal. Lastly, CEOs recommended that micromanaging staff was a counterproductive measure that hampered staff independence and confidence.

Sharing Stories of Mission Success and Failure as a Means of Inspiration and Accountability

The second theme under the domain of help them love what they hate featured how participants share stories of success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability. This theme appeared 73 times and appeared in 17 sources (see Table 6).

Table 6

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Sharing Stories of Mission Success and Failure as a Means of Inspiration and Accountability

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Sharing stories of mission success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability	17	73

Although the nonprofit human service field often attracts individuals intrinsically driven to help alleviate human suffering, there are times when staff members must perform tasks that they love to hate. These situations may include arduous tasks such as record-keeping, or more complicated activities related to fundraising and program development. When task aversion stands in the way of mission achievement, the conscious nonprofit leader recognizes that staff motivation may be heightened by sharing stories of mission success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability.

For the second theme under the domain of help them love what they hate, participants were asked to further elaborate on how they help staff overcome distaste for completing certain tasks. Responding with an eye roll, Participant 1 professed that staff love to hate entering data into the Efforts to Outcomes database because “it’s incredibly burdensome. Everybody hates it, everybody hates it.” Periodically, Participant 1 reminds staff of the consequences if certification requirements and contract compliance are not met, such as loss of funding and agency credibility. However, Participant 1 noted that staff entered data more consistently when the task was connected to the mission of keeping women safe from harm by talking about the difference it makes:

Because for instance, in the recent past, a woman was murdered. She was not our client at the time. But we could go into the database and discover that indeed, at one time she was. And that was helpful information for staff who research these things. So that’s why it’s important. . . . Every time you forget to write one of those points of contact, this is why it matters to us.

Top of mind for Participant 12 was the completion of a 6-month, laborious effort that required every case manager to enter client data into a new database system. Some staff members were avoiding the tedious task, causing tension among teammates. Undaunted, Participant 12 seized the opportunity to share how this task related to mission success by upholding organizational values: “We care about people who are in need, and we care about each other.” Participant 12 added, “I think a combination around that with having to enter this data was the magic bullet.” Participant 5 concurred that “agency values and how they influence the work that we do” proved successful, further elaborating, “So that what I asked for means having to do something they don’t really want to do, then they

will still do it.” Participant 3 also acknowledged the power of storytelling to inspire and hold staff accountable, even when they must complete tasks they love to hate. “I can’t give people dividends. I can’t give them stock options. But what I can give them is, I can show them the impact they’ve had,” Participant 3 replied with conviction.

Participants 13, 10, and 9 used imaginative and creative methods for telling the stories that staff needed to hear to stay motivated. Occasionally, Participant 13 brings in external community partners to share stories of mission success as a means of inspiration. To help staff examine the client journey with fresh eyes, Participant 13 invited law enforcement partners to a staff meeting to highlight the importance of their work:

Law enforcement found a woman and her two or three children and brought them to our agency. And from the agency her journey began. So following that journey is really important. People want to hear hope. They want to hear survival.

Alternatively, Participant 10 often turns to staff members to help uncover meaningful stories that provide inspiration and accountability. Participant 10 beamed while disclosing the stellar results that come from creating the time and trusting space for staff reflection and sharing stories with each other, claiming, “It’s really based on storytelling. And when the staff gets together and has the chance to discuss openly and freely tell stories, I think it’s really wonderful to see what happens.” Participant 9 suggested that sometimes staff merely want to know the leader is empathetic by “just sort of commiserating with folks that I am trying to influence. . . . Yeah, some of the things we do really stink,” concluded Participant 9 with a hint of humor.

Participant 2 and 3 explicitly pointed out that their storytelling methods were most effective when customized to the audience they wanted to influence. For example,

Participant 2 described tailoring stories of mission success or failure to inspire or hold staff accountable according to agency departments:

What motivates our service people is life transformation in a client. They are more motivated by celebrating that client than even celebrating them because it's a celebration of the work they do. And now, the development of the others, they're going to love . . . I mean, they celebrate the donors, but they're going to be thrilled about celebrating that they hit their goal. That isn't a huge motivation for someone who's doing service work. Their motivation is seeing that person who has been transformed.

Participant 3 stressed that sincerity, in addition to tailoring the message, makes a difference:

The way I tell a story is going to be different than when someone else tells a story. And what resonates with them is going to resonate differently with different folks. And that's where people can see that you can't fake it, you either have a passion and an empathy for the work that you're doing, or you don't.

Participant 3 also touted the benefit of telling stories of mission success through symbolism:

We have a big ship's bell on our wall in our kitchen. I don't know if you've ever seen the movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*? In that movie when the bell rings, an angel gets its wings. At our organization when the bell rings, someone's gotten a job.

When the bell rings, the entire staff, including guests, take a moment to celebrate the client's achievement.

While reflecting on the question of helping staff love what they hate to do, Participant 8 confided, “This is one of the things that I am a work in progress in terms of a leader.” One onerous agency task is ensuring that agency standard operating procedures (SOP) are up to date. Participant 8 engages the directors to help with this activity “because it’s their team that are writing these or updating them. But I have to keep them accountable based on our shared commitments.” Participant 8 sheepishly recalled a situation of tangible frustration when realizing that SOP updates had fallen through the cracks:

We had an unfortunate situation this summer where a staff member had to go on extended leave suddenly, and I’m backing her up. And there’s a lot of stuff I don’t know how to do, and it relates to other teams too. . . . I’m like, “I can’t find this on the SOP list. Help me out here.” So I’m a little bit in the mode, sometimes now I’m stomping my feet and like, “Look, this is why we have SOPs. Because nobody knows how to help somebody file for short term disability, or a driver just quit, and we need to repost the job, where’s the position description, you know, you’re supposed to have that in your folder kind of thing.” So, okay, it’s more than just me being grouchy.

Participants 4 and 15 expounded on their experience of using data as a means of sharing meaningful stories to influence team members. Participant 15 uses data to help staff make decisions and stated,

We don’t just get information from data, but we actually turn it into knowledge, and then we can take this and make wise decisions. Because it’s not me making

the decisions, it's going to be you all making decisions about what's working and not working.

Similarly, Participant 4 recalled how data helped inform high-stakes conversations regarding mission achievement:

When we decided we were going to start serving victims of sex trafficking, even my board was like, "I don't know, that doesn't seem like our lane." And I'm like, "14-year-olds who've been raped seven times a day, every day this year, I think is our lane to be in. And who's going to serve them, if not for us?" So I mean, it's influence. And it's also using data and experience and examples to bring people along.

Participant 4 reiterated how using data added another compelling layer to storytelling by reminding staff,

Because you guys do that data entry, and it told a story that I didn't like. So again, it's really making it part of the culture at the organization so that they hate doing it, but they understand why it's so important, both personally and financially for them.

The commitment to using data to aid in organizational storytelling was further evidenced by an organizational artifact shared by Participant 4. The artifact showed a picture of the organizational dashboard that listed each goal and strategy, accompanied by outcomes and other data points. These powerful examples suggest that CEOs who influence staff by combining facts with a compelling narrative may effectuate enhanced accountability and organizational results.

Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence served as the framework to answer this study's research question: "How do human service CEOs lead their staff through influence?" Under the first source of influence, help them love what they hate to do, two themes emerged. The first theme, empowering staff to claim ownership and control over their work, supported influence tactics related to CEOs creating staff-centered, decision-making approaches, frequently providing feedback and clear communication to staff, and avoiding micromanagement. The second theme, sharing stories of mission success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability revealed that interview participants employed a range of methods to make stories meaningful and relatable to team members, including connecting the tasks to client success, clearly communicating the consequences of avoiding dull or difficult tasks, and strategically using data to help influence staff to underscore the importance of certain programmatic and administrative tasks.

Leveraging the Strengths of Organizational Departments to Help Achieve the Impossible

Grenny et al.'s (2013) second source of influence focuses on the domain, helping staff do what they can't do. Within this second source of influence, the data revealed two themes. The first theme related to leveraging the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible. This theme appeared 99 times and was seen in 15 sources (see Table 7).

Table 7

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Leveraging the Strengths of Organizational Departments to Help Achieve the Impossible

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Leveraging the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible	15	99

Nonprofit human service CEOs bear the ultimate responsibility for every decision made by each staff member—even for actions of which they are not aware. At the same time, staff members increasingly face complex dilemmas that often entails additional assistance from other team members, training, or skill building. By leveraging the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible, exemplary CEOs quickly discern when and how team members might soar to a new level of productivity and wisdom.

Each study participant responded to the question that probed how they helped staff do what they cannot do. Participant 3 spoke of the benefits of a strengths-based approach by stating, “We’re stronger together, because each of us are going to bring us a particular strength that will resonate with that situation,” underscoring the merit of team collaboration. However, Participant 10 confessed that building a “truly collaborative process” requires time and intentionality. After further contemplation, Participant 10 added, “I’d like to say everything we try to do new here is collaborative and strengths based. And, people by and large, are trusting that now. It’s working, but it was hard for the last few years.” A point of agreement among several participants was that staff can serve as valuable resources across departments, and because of their experience, and seniority.

Participant 11 stressed the importance that “other voices are in the room,” referring to inviting management team members to periodically attend leadership-level meetings “because they really press some of the issues that we as directors don’t always see, even in a small organization.” The idea of staff interdependence also struck a chord with three other participants. Participant 12 shared that “we always talk about interdependencies” to find novel solutions to stubborn problems:

When we need to come up with a solution, we will populate a “disappearing taskforce” because it comes together just for that thing. And then it disbands.

We’ll discuss the problem. We will bring many solutions. Then we’ll actually build consensus. We don’t move forward without consensus.

Participant 4 explained that staff experienced interdependence by examining “the interconnectedness” of myriad issues related to trauma and poverty, nudging the agency to address the root causes related to their mission:

We can’t just pluck domestic violence and sexual assault out of it like it’s own thing, which, frankly, is what agencies like ours have done. . . . And we’re not looking at how everything intersects and is connected to each other. So I think it’s been really good for staff to see that.

Yet another perspective was shared by Participant 13, who mentioned that interdependency meant staff “need to be resources for one another.” These three unique perspectives underscored the collaborative nature exhibited by successful nonprofit teams.

Several participants mentioned that seemingly impossible initiatives at times needed an “all hands-on deck approach,” especially during a crisis. However, some

participants specifically mentioned that sustainable collaboration between departments cannot blossom until staff felt they could rely on each other. Participant 6 conveyed the advice given to a development team member on building trust with the operations and program team:

I always tell them, always, the way you're going to be successful, no matter what your role is in development, is to develop a relationship with the program and operations team. Let them know who you are, let them know what you do, volunteer down on the floor, help them. If you see a truck down there, and there's not enough volunteers, or staff people, put down what you're doing, and try to help them unless you've got something going on.

Participant 6 glowed with admiration for one of his team members who embraced that advice: "She's downstairs talking to participants. . . . She's down there more than I am down there. It's just amazing." Participant 6 acknowledged that this extra effort from the development team member served two purposes. First, the development team member was more attuned to clients' struggles and triumphs by hearing their stories firsthand, allowing her to be a more effective storyteller on their behalf. Second, the program staff no longer complains that "you only come to us when you want a client," which had been a long-standing bone of contention between the two departments.

The relationship between the development department and other departments spurred interesting reflections from Participants 6 and 7, who utilized the grant process as a pathway to nurture interdepartmental reliance. Participant 6 brought program leadership, the senior director of programs and operations, communications, and the grant writer together to apply for an \$800,000 grant opportunity, remarking that the cross-

functional team strategy “breathed life into the process.” Each team member contributed their expertise to produce a stellar grant proposal while empowering staff to be “super motivated to work together,” Participant 6 enthusiastically expressed.

Participant 7 reported similar success when bringing departments together to design a new program, which resulted in winning a \$200,000 grant for the organization. Arranging for the grant writer and medical staff to brainstorm how to design innovative health initiatives together pushed staff to consider “what we do and how we can do it better,” which leveraged the strengths of each team member while fostering appreciation for each other’s contributions. Participant 7 said, “The byproduct was we got really nice recognition, and then some nice money. We could hire some more services, see more patients, and provide better care for our patients.” Although grateful for the funding, it was evident that Participant 7 was equally proud that the process had enhanced reliance and trust between departments.

In addition to orchestrating opportunities for cross-department collaboration to be part of the organizational culture, the data revealed that some participants had institutionalized how to best leverage the strengths of other divisions to achieve the impossible. Participant 12 explained how team members learned new skills from each other by employing the “we do, you do” method:

When there are things solely work related, we actually do them together as a team, because we believe in the idea of the “we do, you do concept,” which is, if you don’t know how to do it, we’ll pair you with someone who’s doing it, and you will watch them do it. And then after a period of time, you will do it

together. And then after a period of time, they will step out and you will be doing it. So we do a combination.

The “we do, you do” worked particularly well with staff members who were preparing to take on new roles or stretch assignments. Participant 12 detailed how the front desk receptionist with no development experience had recently risen to the fund development manager position. Using a phased approach to avoid task overload, “we paired her with someone” on the development team where she shadowed their work over a 6-month period, “then we had them do it together.” With confidence came the ability to accomplish tasks on her own, along with her first promotion to the fund development coordinator position.

Participant 2 reported that they “find those people in the organization who are at different levels and use them as models to help others solve problems,” as evidenced in the unique peer-to-peer learning structure embedded throughout the organization.

Participant 2 shared,

Our advocates are experienced people who might have some credentials, but minimal. Primarily, they’ve gotten there because of experience. They’ve even been homeless, or they’ve been addicted, or whatever they’ve had. They have the life experience. So they work together on a team, solving the issues with the people.

The magic happens when team members with life experiences are paired with credentialed professionals or new social worker graduates with significant education but no “street cred.” Individuals with lived experience work side-by-side with team members who possess the education and best practice methodologies. Pairing these strengths

decreased perceived competition between team members and left “both of them feeling, ‘I bring something to this party.’” This peer practice established under the leadership of Participant 2 positions the organization to achieve the impossible—ending homelessness—by intentionally creating structures that allow staff to leverage their strengths across departments as they work together to help struggling men and women transition from living on the streets to temporary or permanent housing.

The nonprofit human service CEO oversees several departments that vary according to organizational size and function. On any given day, the CEO may work closely with the development department to discuss funding opportunities, consult with the programs department as they analyze client data, or problem solve with the operations team around facility logistical and safety concerns. Although nonprofit staff frequently accomplish their work within a department structure, resonant CEOs seize opportunities to bring teams together to showcase all the strengths that exist within the organization, cultivating the possibility for the impossible to become possible.

Arranging and Budgeting for Cutting-Edge Trainings and Professional Development to Position the Organization Ahead of the Competition

Grenny et al.’s (2013) second source of influence focuses on how help them do what they can’t. Within this second source of influence, the data revealed two themes. The second theme referred to arranging and budgeting for cutting-edge learning and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition. This theme appeared 75 times and was mentioned in 19 sources (see Table 8).

Table 8

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Arranging and Budgeting for Cutting-Edge Trainings and Professional Development to Position the Organization Ahead of the Competition

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Arranging and budgeting for cutting-edge trainings and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition	19	75

Nonprofit human service CEOs must constantly be aware of groundbreaking advances in the field while ensuring their staff have the credentials, skills, and knowledge necessary to support top performance. Investing in professional development for staff members is one way that CEOs might position the organization ahead of the competition. The return on investment may produce substantial results, including increased morale, heightened ability to attract and retain the best and brightest nonprofit professionals, elevating staff confidence and resiliency, and enhancing agency credibility and respect with clients and stakeholders. Therefore, the savvy CEO consistently ensures and incorporates continual learning processes throughout all aspects of the organization.

Arranging and budgeting for cutting-edge trainings and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition emerged as the second theme under the domain help them do what they can't. Each participant further described how they help staff gain the theoretical and practical tools to master tasks. Participant 14 claimed that nonprofit board members and CEOs often overlooked the importance of staff training, bemoaning, "That's one of the deficiencies in the nonprofit sector." Prioritizing professional development by allocating the time and budget "helped our staff be the experts they needed to be," concluded Participant 14. Participant 14 added,

It's not just knowledge, it's capacity. It's like if you're asking them to serve twice as many clients, and you're still not training them and supporting them, and onboarding them, and have clarification around what the role is, and our agency's way of providing intervention and best practices, they're not going to be successful. We did learn that the hard way.

As an experienced CEO who had been recruited from the private sector, Participant 2 expressed astonishment that the organization had often ignored or skimped on budgeting for professional development:

I was here probably 2 years, and I had a good friend come and do training that was really low-level training. And I can still remember, as he was training, I was in the front row. And I literally started crying because our people were so excited. And it was such basic training that I thought, "I'm glad they're excited. And I'm brokenhearted that they're excited."

Drawing from a strengths-based approach, some participants sought training and professional development courses that supported whole-person growth in addition to job skills. Participant 10 explained,

Staff are engaged in the process to learn what they are motivated by, and what they see and believe will make them a better person, rather than us naming a deficiency and saying we're going to send you this training.

A focus on whole-person growth was also practiced by Participant 12, who made it possible for several staff to attend Landmark[®] trainings that "helps to deeply understand who you are and how you got to be that way." Participant 5 said, "Learning is very

important to me, both for myself and for my team,” indicating that professional development held personal as well as professional value.

Each participant eagerly shared innovative professional development examples that ranged from low-cost options to considerable financial investment. All participants confirmed that the organization had a budget to pay for professional development but differed in how they allocated funding. Participant 5 looks “historically at how much was spent the year before, and then puts in a percentage increase” while Participant 6 allocates “between \$7,000-\$8,000 a year.” Several participants highlighted cutting-edge trainings made possible by hiring training consultants, arranging for professional leadership curricula, and organizing field trips to observe work in action at partner locations.

“The PD thing is huge,” Participant 11 confirmed. “This year we are going to focus on building our internal training team. . . . We’ve got about six people internally that we are going to invest in by giving them personal coaching.” Participant 12 also turns to hiring professional training consultants to enhance staff morale and provide interpersonal skills to productively address conflict. One staff workshop, called “How to Survive in Funkytown,” teaches staff to talk about “some tough things are happening in environment right now that people are shying away from discussing. Or maybe we just don’t have the capability through language, or maybe the skills to be able to discuss it and navigate it.” Another workshop arranged by Participant 12, offered 2 times a year, allows staff to get “sneaky deep” with each other:

We have these sneaky deep trainings where the instructor leads an array of exercises, different movements, you’re doing hand dances, you’re moving to

music, then you're talking, you're watching other people do music, you work in teams, you do different things for each other, right? And then you just talk about what's coming up for you."

Smiling widely, Participant 12 added, "I'm proud to say that 100% of us on staff are vaccinated . . . and it was through that sneaky deep training. Influencing staff by helping them to "see and experience each other in different ways" was also mentioned by Participant 15 who continued,

At staff meetings, oftentimes it's not sitting. You're out moving around, taking pictures, or a scavenger hunt, or whatever . . . all these things are happening. But then they come back and they do the processing and thinking through and talking about it.

On a quest to help manage conflict, Participant 4 and the leadership team are diving into the exercises featured in the book, *The Speed of Trust*, by Stephen M. R. Covey (2018). Participant 4 readily admitted that "we need to all be on the same page, because we need to make sure our trust is solid on this team before we can do any more work with anybody below us," after observing friction and several communication breakdowns among senior leaders.

Two other participants, Participants 2 and 8, confirmed the benefits of observing other organizations that do similar work. For example, Participant 2 arranged for staff to learn from a corporate donor who is nationally recognized for customer service excellence and innovation. These on-site observations help staff "come back into the work with a different norm," remarked Participant 2. Similarly, staff field trips help

“expose them to folks who are a little more cutting edge than we are,” Participant 8 affirmed.

Participant 9 opined that professional development “energized” staff. The dedication to professional development and learning was further evidenced by an organizational artifact that shared the responsibilities of the Impact and Learning team at the organization lead by Participant 9. The ultimate advantage of investing in cutting-edge professional training is related to showing that the leader cared for and respected staff as individuals and professionals. “I think I am encouraging them as professionals and I’m increasing the work climate, the way people feel about the job, and morale and retention,” Participant 9 passionately stated. With equal certainty, Participant 14 shared, “I tell my board, this is worth every dollar of the investment. One of the reasons I think our organization propelled so quickly from being a good organization to a great organization is investing in training,” confirming that budgeting for staff professional development was a sound business decision that could position the organization ahead of the competition.

Under the second source of influence, help them do what they can’t, two themes emerged. The first theme, leveraging the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible, supported influence tactics related to how nonprofit human service CEOs capitalize on strengthening cross-department efforts and instilling a strong sense of reliance on each other to accomplish seemingly impossible initiatives. The second theme, arranging and budgeting for cutting-edge learning and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition highlighted the importance of professional development for mission achievement and creative efforts to

inspire a culture of learning within the organization, which contributed to staff recruitment, retention, and performance.

Consistently Leading With Authenticity and Transparency

Grenny et al.'s (2013) third source of influence focuses on the domain, provide encouragement. Within this third source of influence, the data revealed three themes. The first theme related to consistently leading with authenticity and transparency. This theme appeared 136 times and was seen in 16 sources (see Table 9).

Table 9

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Consistently Leading With Authenticity and Transparency

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Consistently leading with authenticity and transparency	16	136

As nonprofit human service CEOs guide their organization through trials and tribulations that are inherently part of leadership, they must draw on myriad methods to provide encouragement to their staff. Even the most experienced and savvy leader may falter in the face of uncertainty. However, the extent to which CEOs effectively influence their staff to remain steadfast amid draining and difficult situations may stem from consistently leading with authenticity and transparency.

During the interview session, each participant was asked to describe how they provide encouragement to their staff. Participants 13, 7, and 5 recalled personal experiences of submitting to leaders who ruled with fear rather than encouragement. Participant 13 explained,

We've all had leaders, or so they'd like to call themselves that, who will say, "that was horrible, you weren't prepared. You could have spoken louder. You weren't

making eye contact with the group, so forth and so on.” That type of leader is not fit for the nonprofit. And I say that with a lot of comfort, validation, and conviction.

Likewise, Participant 7 pointed out, “Unfortunately some bosses look around and try to find people doing things wrong. I go around and try to find people doing stuff right.” Positive reinforcement is necessary to “give every person here the opportunity to succeed,” said Participant 5 earnestly. “That means giving them ongoing feedback about how things are going . . . whatever it is, we should be a place where we lift people up, and not try to cut them off at the knees,” concluded Participant 5.

Participant 2 and Participant 6 spoke to the satisfaction that bubbles from within while providing encouragement to staff. Participant 2 spoke of loving staff as a vital component of encouragement stating, “It gets back to loving and serving, which is encouraging, right? I mean, I think we believe that’s a core competency of us. We love and serve people well.” Echoing that heartfelt sentiment, Participant 6 expressed, “I think that’s the joy, just encouraging people and trying to let people experience the joy,” corroborating that providing encouragement elicits leader and follower gratification.

The leadership trait of “being transparent” surfaced as another way they demonstrate authentic and transparent leadership. Participant 1 described this perspective: “I think transparency carries you a long, long way. People may not like what they’re hearing, but down the road, when it matters, they’re going to trust and believe you, because you’ve always been up front.” Two other participants emphasized the importance of honest feedback and discussion. Participant 13 expressed, “I want

honesty all the time,” while Participant 5 encouraged staff to be honest when they encounter hurdles or struggle to meet goals:

I feel like in general, my approach is that nothing is undiscussable. . . . You know, making a space for us to be able to discuss hard stuff. I used to say a safe way, but now I say a brave way, like just creating an opportunity for us to be able to be real, and transparent with each other. And I think it does come from the topic, I need to model it so that people know that it’s okay to do it in their one-on-one meetings with their direct staff as well. And, of course, when I meet with my team members too.

Conversely, Participants 10, 11, and 4 spoke of the risks of ignoring or overlooking power dynamics related to race and gender, which could undermine transparent and authentic leadership. For example, Participant 10 recognized that as a 65-year-old White male leading predominantly young staff, being transparent meant “exercising my influence as much as possible through really collaborative processes, rather than through direct one-on-one influence.” In a similar fashion, Participant 11, a White female CEO, realized the importance of establishing “a foundation of trust,” among a staff who were mostly people of color. After a moment of further reflection, Participant 11 revealed, “I accepted the reality that some people can’t trust what I represent. It may not be about me, but they can’t trust what I represent.” Participant 4 uses “bluntness and transparency,” recognizing that she is a White woman leading a movement that disproportionately impacts people of color. She explained, “I’m like, ‘I’m a White lady, running an organization in a movement that was built by White ladies for White ladies.

And let's just be really honest about that.' You know, I'm very clear." After a brief pause, Participant 4 added,

Part of it is I think me showing up very vulnerable and very transparent and very real so that they see it modeled in our leadership team. They see us out in the community. A lot of our staff live in those communities, so they know. They hear what we're doing, and they know what we are and aren't doing. It's just critical everywhere, throughout the whole agency.

Participants 1, 2, 14, and 15 mentioned the benefits of embracing moments of vulnerability, allowing staff to witness them as a human being. "Everybody else thinks I am a seasoned businesswoman. But my staff just likes to say, 'is she going to cry again?'" Participant 1 mirthfully disclosed. In a similar vein, creating an "environment where you're not supposed to be perfect" was important to Participant 2. Participant 15 mentioned the benefit of allowing "people to balance me out," frankly admitting,

I can be frugal. But I knew someone who was over me in the previous organization I was in, that was very frugal, so frugal that I kind of had a wake-up call when I saw how he enforced that on other people. I saw the discontent that people had under him and I thought, "Okay, don't let that ever become who you are."

Consistently "leading by example" was mentioned by Participants 1, 3, 8, and 9, underscoring their actions speak volumes. Two participants indicated they lead by example by modeling that no job is beneath them. Participant 14 remarked, "I always knew enough that this job, this work, was not really very glamorous. And that's the

thing, it's really not. So part of it is I always model doing a lot of grunt work.”

Participant 3 models similar behavior, unabashedly sharing,

So I will drive by, pick up the stuff, throw it in our dumpster and be done with it.

You know, I've had several of our team members who say, “Well, you shouldn't do that. You're the CEO.” I said, “Well, that's one reason why I should do that.”

Because I tell everybody there's not a job in this organization that I have not done or that I will not do.

The data collected underscores how nonprofit human service CEOs set the tone for how encouragement is provided in the organization. The CEOs interviewed in this study unanimously agreed that consistently leading with authenticity and transparency was a leadership trait that they valued and intentionally practiced. As such, self-reflective human service leaders influence staff and other stakeholders by their actions and words.

Ensuring That Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Is Foundational to the Organization

The second source of influence under the domain of provide encouragement was ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion is foundational to the organization. This theme was captured 98 times in 19 sources (see Table 10). Four organizational artifacts submitted revealed language that demonstrated how diversity, equity, and inclusion is positioned in the organization, including a strategic plan and update (Participant 10), a communications handbook and strategic road map (Participant 12) and a newsletter (Participant 9).

Table 10

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Ensuring That Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Is Foundational to the Organization

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion is foundational to the organization	19	98

Many of the individuals who access services from nonprofit human service organizations have a history of trauma due to experiencing an array of health, racial, and economic inequities. Therefore, human service leaders, staff, and volunteers must possess an understanding of how to deliver trauma-informed services while being sensitive to the built environments where clients reside that perpetuate inequities. Concurrently, nonprofit human service CEOs must also be attuned to how they express and embody diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles with staff members. From hiring staff who reflect the communities the organization serves to leading inclusively, the extent to which a human service organization recognizes and understands the nuances of DEI starts with the CEO.

As public outrage over systemic racism erupted across the country, CEOs spoke of leading and creating trusting spaces for deep listening and reflection where staff, especially staff of color, could openly share the personal impact and consequences of racial inequities. Concurrently, several participants engaged DEI task forces to identify and advise the organization on areas ranging from narrowing compensation disparities to balancing power dynamics. These actions on the part of the CEO highlight the level of authentic modeling and commitment required for a culturally intelligent culture to flourish.

Several participants referenced the growing attention paid to ensuring that DEI was embedded throughout the organization. There appeared to be a variety of approaches that participants employed to demonstrate their personal and organizational commitment to DEI principals, and lead by finding common ground during high-stakes conversations. During the interviews, three participants expressly stated that living into DEI values require intentionality and a willingness to be uncomfortable.

For example, Participant 14 expressed regret that the organization was not “progressing quickly enough and deeply enough.” Equally difficult for Participant 4 was creating safe spaces to allow staff of color to freely discuss their struggles and disappointments with a mostly White senior leadership staff. Recalling a time when community race relations had reached a boiling point, Participant 4 recognized that “staff were really hurting.” Although several forums were offered for all staff to share their feelings and concerns about the events, “People didn’t feel safe . . . they did not feel safe to be vulnerable,” Participant 4 remorsefully stated. Similarly, Participant 8 spoke of being sensitive to the potential threat posed by police profiling that targets people of color behind the wheel. Discretely talking to the organization’s drivers, currently all men of color, Participant 12 inquired, “Hey, are you feeling you are being profiled?” and “How are you feeling about what you are seeing on the news and that kind of stuff.” Pausing briefly, Participant 8 admitted, “It wasn’t really very natural for them to talk about it.” Even so, Participant 8 felt opening the door for staff of color to talk about how they experience DEI in the workplace and in their community is beneficial, albeit uncomfortable at times.

Participants 12, 10, and 3 explained that commitment to DEI meant hiring staff and board members who either reflected or had experienced the same struggles as the clients the agency serves. Participant 12, who leads a historically Black organization, expanded program services to include immigrants and refugees from Russia, Ukraine, Croatia, China, Vietnam, and Eastern Africa because the community population had changed and evolved. In response, Participant 12 “diversified the staff to reflect that.” On the other hand, Participant 10 spoke about the importance of not only having trauma-informed program services for clients, but also to benefit staff because “most of our staff have experienced some really severe trauma in their lives.” Finally, Participant 3 considers lived experiences to be equally as valuable as skills gained through formal education, and designs pathways for individuals to access career opportunities and advancement based on life experience and personal resilience. Participant 3 recounted this poignant story about a program graduate who was hired as a staff member:

When we hired him, he looked me in the eye. He says, “You know, my mom told me that the only thing I was ever going to get right was wrong.” Now he was 45 years old. He probably spent 20 years in prison. We are a member of United Way and many times we are asked to come out to give testimonies [to companies for fundraising purposes], but also talk about the work that we’re doing and the impact it’s having. . . . He went in there [to the company headquarters] and he amazed them. Wowed them.

Participants 5, 7, and 12 indicated ways they bring staff voices forward to balance power dynamics, a vital component of ensuring that DEI is foundational to the organization. Building a culture of inclusion is a goal that Participant 5 strives to

accomplish as a leader of a small organization, understanding that “word gets around fast, so there’s no reason to exclude people.” A method employed by Participant 7 is to invite a different staff member to present at each board meeting. When staff personally present information and answer questions, board members gain a deeper understanding of staff skills and talents as they learn the reasons behind “here’s what I do, and here’s why I do it,” Participant 7 purported. Likewise, Participant 12 arranges for board members and line staff to work together on strategic planning initiatives throughout the year. Everyone agrees in advance that “titles are left at the door. Everyone has equal value. Everyone has equal say,” explained Participant 12.

In addition to balancing potential power dynamics between the board and staff members, four participants pointed out that organizational policies related to salary and benefits reflect a commitment to DEI principals. To examine and benchmark equitable staff compensation policies within their organizations, Participants 8 and 14 utilized Compensation Task Forces. The organization led by Participant 8 established a Compensation Task Force comprised of board and staff. Working together, they combed through salaries and benefits to bring forward a set of recommendations. “Some of the recommendations we didn’t accept, but some we did,” explained Participant 8. On the other hand, Participant 14 appointed HR experts to form a benefits committee then followed up with hiring a consultant to examine all staff salaries. The result was that each staff position was “weighted with other similar organizations in the community and then nationally ranked them . . . where their salaries were in the acceptable range and whose wasn’t,” prompting the organization to chart a path toward offering more equitable salaries. Participant 10 established a DEI team that examines organizational and program

policies from an equity lens, “creating the freedom for the norms to be created by cross-cutting groups of people.” All proposed work flows through this team for review as part of the decision-making process.

Customizing benefits, as opposed to offering every individual the same benefit, was mentioned by Participants 12 and 13. Participant 12 shared that customizing benefits to match the need of the individual sparked controversy from the senior leadership team. “What’s meaningful for one might not be meaningful to another,” Participant 12 confidently stated. In the same vein, Participant 13 referred to the necessity of balancing rewards to accommodate staff who worked out of co-located services or manned the hotline during the evening shift:

Whether you’re shutting down and taking them all out to lunch, or you’re making sure you’re sending over coffee and breakfast, that consistency of saying, “Hey, I know you’re there. You may not be here in the main headquarters, but I know you’re there.” It is a juggling factor.

The organizational recruitment process arose as another demonstration of commitment to DEI principles for Participants 5, 4, and 14. For Participant 5, that meant hiring staff members with talent from different sectors or professional fields to avoid “hiring people who look like you or may have already had the opportunities that you had to be in the roles that they’ve been in,” and applying a similar lens for board member recruitment. Participant 4 established a recruitment process that specifically included the transgender community, while Participant 14 spoke of being “generationally sensitive.”

The data collected and analyzed supported the idea that nonprofit human service leaders must model and ensure that DEI is embedded throughout the organization; thus, it

is a motivational technique for how CEOs provide encouragement. Participant interviews substantiated that human service leaders employ a variety of opportunities for staff to feel a deep sense of belonging and safety to be themselves at work, and they have outlets to express their thoughts and opinions about how work is executed. Additionally, CEOs must be willing to frankly and transparently discuss inequities that occur in communities of color and within the four walls of the organization and find opportunities to narrow the disparity gaps.

Giving Permission to Discuss Difficult Topics Openly and Honestly

The third theme under the domain of provide encouragement is giving permission to discuss difficult topics openly and honestly. This theme was mentioned 78 times through 15 sources (see Table 11).

Table 11

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Giving Permission to Discuss Difficult Topics Openly and Honestly

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Giving permission to discuss difficult topics openly and honestly	15	78

Within nonprofit institutions, human service CEOs encounter situations where disagreement and conflict will inevitably arise. Rather than squelch dialogue, CEOs must model and demonstrate a willingness for staff to discuss difficult topics openly and honestly. By doing so, leaders provide encouragement.

Four participants communicated that they utilize one-on-one meetings and team meetings to openly discuss difficult topics with staff. Participant 1 shared the technique of starting meetings with the question “What is the most difficult part of your day?” as an

invitation for staff to discuss and grieve tragic client experiences. When engaging in potentially high-stakes exchanges, Participant 10 probes for areas where disagreement might exist by “parsing this out over a series of conversations so that there’s time [to] breathe and think.” This strategy gives staff members time to reflect and adequately express their thoughts and feelings while considering opposing viewpoints. Similarly, Participant 6 holds individual meetings with direct reports and all-staff quarterly meetings, with a focus on “How can we do things better?” Participant 6 noted that the organization’s senior leaders and directors use supervision meetings to uncover problems and “provide encouragement and hear feedback,” allowing issues to arise and be examined from all organizational ranks.

When Participant 5 heard staff becoming anxious about organizational turnover, the issue was brought to light at a staff meeting. Participant 5 reassured troubled staff members by openly discussing their discomfort and “make space for us to be able to discuss hard stuff.” Participant 5 also recognized the importance of modeling that it is acceptable to discuss difficult topics:

I used to say a safe way, but now I say a brave way, like just creating an opportunity for us to be able to be real and transparent with each other. . . . I need to model it so that people know that it’s okay to do it in their one-on-one meetings with their direct staff as well. And, of course, when I meet with my team members too.

Avoiding conflict or allowing problems to fester may lead to blaming among staff. Participants 10 and 11 mentioned the necessity of identifying the core issue of conflict before it becomes part of the culture. Participant 10 explained that when

resolving differences, “it’s about questioning and trying to get them [staff] to understand what the core issue is here, and how can we resolve this?” Participant 11 disclosed that a prevailing fear for staff stemmed from the possible failure of meeting organizational goals, despite consistently communicating that “if we don’t meet our goals, that’s information for us.” Participant 11 pointed out that the antidote to blame and fear was open communication and confronting difficult topics.

On the other hand, Participant 7 and Participant 13 articulated that leaders often encounter negativity and must become adept at redirecting criticism. Laughing, Participant 7 admitted that “people tell me bad stuff all the time.” To avoid becoming immersed in pessimism and blame, Participant 7 consciously chooses to believe that everyone is doing the best they can, then “helps them through it the next time.” Participant 13 posited that being a leader means that “you’re going to have to accept some of the negativity,” but recommends setting expectations, such as honesty and respect, as organizational norms.

Before staff can feel psychologically safe to discuss difficult topics with another, engage in productive conflict, or hold each other accountable, a foundation of trust must exist. Participants 12, 4, 6, and 2 shared how they cultivated an environment that promoted trust building. For example, Participant 12 arms staff with skill building and training on “emotional intelligence and being good teammates.” Accordingly, Participant 4 arranges 2-day staff retreats to provide the environment for teammates to do “deep, deep, sharing of themselves . . . it bonds them with their fellow employees.” Pausing, Participant 4 added, “which I think is kind of a reward for people.” These team-building

opportunities indicate yet another technique for how participants provide encouragement to their staff.

Participants 6 and 2 shared how they promote consistency and a unified understanding of expected staff behavior. As an illustration, Participant 6 instituted the five dysfunctions of a team model created by Patrick Lencioni (2002). Subscription to this model enabled the team to “have shared commitments and mutual accountability, trust building and comfort with conflict,” Participant 6 explained. In a like manner, Participant 2 chose the Lead Like Jesus Leadership Academy for Organizations curriculum to influence and model expected organizational behavior. According to Participant 6, the leadership model profoundly changed how team members protect each other while consistently being accountable:

It’s being truthful and promoting and protecting people. But it’s also holding people accountable, so that’s been a big plus in teaching our organization. It gets to the behaviors of how you’re acting that are not consistent. Why? Are you afraid? Is it a fear reaction? Is that a pride reaction? What are you doing that might make you not listen or might put you down? And so that’s been a big help for us.

Grenny et al.’s (2013) third source of influence served as the framework to answer this study’s subresearch question: “How do nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations by providing encouragement?” Under this third source of influence, three themes were revealed based on the participant responses. In the first theme, participants shared techniques for influencing others by consistently leading with authenticity and transparency. The second theme, ensuring diversity, equity, and

inclusion is foundational to the organization described the importance of how the participants model inclusive leadership and demonstrate their commitment to reducing organizational and community health, racial, and economic disparities. Lastly, the third topic pertained to giving permission to discuss topics openly and honestly. In this theme, participants cited how they motivate staff by modeling and allowing high-stakes conversations to occur so that staff felt their opinions and recommendations were heard and considered as part of quality improvement and organizational decision-making.

Identifying Opportunities for Staff to Thrive by Optimizing Their Strengths and Talents

Provide assistance is Grenny et al.’s (2013) fourth source of influence. Within this fourth source of influence, three themes were identified. The first theme under the provide assistance domain was identifying opportunities for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents. This theme was noted 116 times in 15 sources (see Table 12).

Table 12

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Identifying Opportunities for Staff to Thrive by Optimizing Their Strengths and Talents

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Identifying opportunities for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents	15	116

With the variety of tasks that must be accomplished, nonprofit organizations offer a rich learning environment for staff to expand their skills and talents. As influencers, human service CEOs who understand the full breadth of talent exhibited by staff members are better positioned to leverage those strengths toward mission achievement. In this study, several participants created winning situations for staff members to

optimize their strengths and talents, leading to improved outcomes of staff satisfaction and goal attainment.

Participants characterized winning situations as giving staff the tools they needed to succeed, designing jobs aligned with their unique skillset, and creating promotion pathways. The benefits of approaching leadership through a strengths-based approach helped staff learn from mistakes and accept feedback, as voiced by Participants 3 and 11. For example, Participant 3 asserted that homing in on staff strengths “speaks volumes to the team and allows them to recognize the strengths they have.” At the organization led by Participant 11, quarterly staff check-in’s give supervisors and team members dedicated time to assess progress toward goal achievement. However, each supervisor is coached to start the conversation with “here’s what’s going really well . . . never just integrating in criticism without recognizing a person’s strengths,” Participant 11 clarified.

On the other hand, Participant 15 orchestrated a winning situation for a recently hired senior leader charged with facility management. By empowering her to have decision-making authority in collaboration with staff, along with a project budget, Participant 15 aimed to set the staff member up for “some wins early, and people would look up to her with respect and trust.” Participant 15 added, “I know that has a positive effect on everyone.” For Participant 4, creating a winning situation meant retooling a position specifically designed for a staff member who exhibited outstanding experience in community engagement and advancing DEI work. Despite hesitating to create a new position tailored to the individual, Participant 4 was happy with the outcome, sharing, “I realized we needed to take her talents and skills . . . if we are really committed to doing

this work, we need somebody whose job it is to make sure that we're moving this [diversity, equity, and inclusion] forward.”

Another example of how winning situations are created for staff so they might maximize their strengths and talents was shared by Participant 5, who plays an active role in helping the team “to grow in their positions [to] achieve future accomplishments.” To underscore how this support is actualized, Participant 5 acknowledged that one of the senior leaders possesses the skills to secure an executive director position at another organization. However, the individual required more experience in fundraising, a critical competency that most nonprofit board members look for when hiring a new executive director. “Over the past few years, we’ve been working on broadening her exposure to fundraising so that she’s better prepared to take responsibility for those areas as an executive director,” Participant 5 explained.

In addition to ensuring that team members had the knowledge, tools, and leadership assistance to succeed in their positions, two participants commented that promoting staff helped staff thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents. According to Participants 10 and 11, one does not have to possess a mastery of every qualification outlined in the job description to receive the promotion. Instead, they have promoted staff members who exhibited a growth mindset and aptitude to assume more responsibility. To demonstrate this viewpoint, Participant 10 recalled promoting a case manager within 6 months of hire after noticing his natural skills and leadership for project management. “Here, the human resources lens is to really understand that everything we are doing is developing people and that it is a talent pipeline,” Participant 10 said with conviction. Participant 11 recounted a similar experience with a staff member who

demonstrated a remarkable flair for creating program models from scratch. This innate ability contributed to her promotion to become a senior manager, and Participant 11 anticipates she will be promoted to be the program director in the future. “Her creativity, her supervision, her recognition of what needs to get done has just been phenomenal,” Participant 11 enthusiastically commented.

Finally, the practice of utilizing staff as peer-to-peer coaches helped staff to thrive, according to Participants 15 and 2. By purposefully embedding a peer-to-peer learning structure within the organization, team members help new employees become acclimated to the culture by modeling expected behavior or teaching specific skills to other team members. For example, Participant 15 offered, “The people who’ve been around longer who ‘get it’ can then help to educate and bring up to speed others who maybe don’t fully comprehend what we’re trying to get at.” Likewise, Participant 2 “finds those who are at mastery level to help others.” Pairing masters with novices based on a particular skill helps bring out each team member’s strengths, regardless of their title. “They might have a mastery right here, but they’re a novice here,” Participant 2 opined.

Data collected and analyzed from the study participants indicated that CEOs who lead with influence identified opportunity for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents. Furthermore, this influence technique allowed staff to hone their hard and soft skills for themselves and other teammates. As a result, CEOs provide assistance to staff when they applied this specific influence tactic, which participants felt contributed to an increase in staff confidence and stronger bonds with colleagues.

Harnessing Creativity and Innovation as Catalysts for Change When Faced With Complex Problems

The second theme under the domain of provide assistance pertained to how study participants harnessed creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems. This theme appeared 83 times and was seen in 17 sources (see Table 13).

Table 13

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Harnessing Creativity and Innovation as Catalysts for Change When Faced With Complex Problems

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Harnessing creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems	17	83

Because of the interconnectedness of social issues encountered in the human service milieu, the nonprofit human service CEO leads their organization within a complex ecosystem. It is becoming increasingly difficult for one human service organization to address the root causes that perpetuate inequities related to their mission. Instead, more organizations are creating community partnerships that leverage the strengths of multiple organizations to address systemic problems and achieve outcomes that cannot be accomplished alone. Likewise, the internal collaboration within a nonprofit human service organization operates similarly. When cross-department teammates come together to design catalytic approaches for the organization, it can yield better results than one department can achieve working in isolation.

However, a culture of innovation cannot take root without leadership commitment and support. Participants 2, 4, and 15 pointed out how they lead through influence by

assisting staff to think and behave imaginatively to catalyze change within the organization. Participant 2 asserted that “courageous innovation” has become an embedded organizational value, also asserting, “It’s not easy to innovate. It’s much easier to stay the same.” Consequently, Participant 2 helps staff to view organizational change and quality improvement initiatives as a learning experience and never a failure. Similarly, Participant 4 confirmed that “we definitely have a culture of innovation around here.” To reward creativity and innovation, Participant 4 provides “kudos” to staff at all levels of the organization, bolstering their confidence to adopt new approaches. Likewise, Participant 15 demonstrates leadership by providing “the inspiration piece” to spur program innovation. By consistently reiterating, “There’s nothing too big, nothing too challenging, that we can’t do together,” Participant 15 supports staff when solving complex problems by harnessing creativity and innovation as catalysts for change.

Human service organizations are charged with solving complex and intractable societal woes that rarely remain static, requiring leaders and staff to be agile and adaptable in response. However, agility and adaptability are not always the default mindset for nonprofit staff members. Therefore, leaders must assist staff in eschewing stale practices and procedures that no longer serve the clients or the organization, frequently using data to pinpoint the areas ripe for innovation. In addition, internal change processes require team alignment and encouraging staff to “think differently using the data we had and the understanding,” according to Participant 2.

On the other hand, Participants 10 and 11 discussed the benefits and hardships of program innovation and its impact on the staff who manage and direct client services. Participant 10, harnessing the knowledge and skills of staff, produced a new business

model to provide consulting, training, and coaching to private companies and nonprofit organizations aiming to improve outcomes for LGBTQ youth. When considering how to make program services more sustainable and outcome-driven, Participant 10 challenged staff to answer the question, “How can we help other organizations serve the LGBTQ children and youth that show up on their doorstep?” Working together, the team created a curriculum that allows staff members to act as consultants, resulting in a new revenue stream for the organization. Most importantly, the consulting business model arms staff with additional skills to teach and coach other professionals so they might tailor support for LGBTQ youth within their organizations.

Sometimes leaders must assist staff in accelerating innovation during turbulent times, as Participant 11 recently discovered during the pandemic. Leading a “phenomenal” management team, Participant 11 boasted that when the team needed to “shift and direct for a kind of hair on fire opportunity,” the team quickly responded. Cognizant that staff would have to assume additional duties and responsibilities to fulfill the new program requirements, Participant 11 assisted staff by redirecting tasks that did not align with the new program direction:

I’m always one that says, “If we’re going to take this on, we’ve got to figure out what we’re not going to do. We’re not going to just keep dumping things on everybody’s plate.” . . . So when the opportunity came, we talked internally about how we could accomplish it and what we needed to do differently.

Three participants elaborated how they lead by influence and authority to bravely confront organizational barriers and blind spots that hinder creativity and innovation. For example, Participant 12 recalled leading an organizational turnaround early in her CEO

tenure that required firing managers and appointing new board members. “I was not well-liked for a period of time,” Participant 12 reminisced. Regardless, Participant 12 believed the turmoil was necessary to infuse creativity and innovation as an organizational norm.

Another method employed by Participant 4 to address complex, systemic issues related to ending domestic violence within two generations required hiring a new chief program officer with experience in the child abuse field. Previously, understanding how to offer programming that builds bonds between mothers and children enrolled in transitional housing programs had eluded the organization. Hiring a new staff member who possessed the relevant expertise eliminated an organizational blind spot. “She saw all these connections, but we just had never gone after the money, nor did we feel like we had the expertise to do it,” Participant 4 explained. Conversely, Participant 8 authorized an “all-hands-on-deck” call to action during the pandemic, bringing all staff members, volunteers, donors, private businesses, community partners, and county health officials together to distribute food to families sheltering in place. “I would say, creating, not out of nothing, because we had some experiences, but we cobbled it together in a new way,” Participant 8 recounted.

When asked to reflect on how they provide assistance to staff, six participants mentioned fundraising and bringing in organizational resources as a critical component of helping staff accomplish organizational goals. To garner the financial aid necessary to support innovation, Participant 15 suggested focusing on creating value: “I always said if we create value, it will generate resources.” This abundance mentality may be uncommon in nonprofit organizations, as evidenced by Participant 8: “We had a major

scarcity mentality which was out of whack with our financial situation.” Participant 8 confessed it took at least 2 years to establish “a prosperity mindset” so that staff understood that worthy, innovative ideas could be funded. Participant 9 confirmed that the scarcity mentality ran deep among the staff along with the belief that “every single penny had to be spent on direct services for clients.” Over time, Participant 9 significantly increased funding to hire additional staff, invest in marketing and communications, and make brick-and-mortar improvements that contributed to organizational sustainability.

Participants 4, 8, 12, and 13 mentioned that they were more equipped to address organizational needs, enhance client services, and invest in innovative solutions after completing a capital fundraising campaign. For Participant 12, launching a \$12 million campaign was the largest effort in the organization’s history: “We had never had to raise funds for a capital project. In fact, it was new to me.” Undaunted, Participant 12 sought advice from trusted community partners with success in conducting large-scale fundraising campaigns by “shadowing them for a year to understand how to do capital campaigns really well.” That example of “I do, we do, you do” was a helpful tool for raising organizational funds.

A capital fundraising campaign also provides the opportunity for leaders, staff, and community stakeholders to envision and plan audacious initiatives that improve and save lives. Appropriate financial investment and coordinated planning fuel innovation and organizational growth while increasing the quantity and quality of client services. For example, Participant 13 recounted the intensity of planning and leadership during a capital campaign that supported expanding the domestic violence safe house:

Programmatically, we did our homework to say, “What is it that we need to hear from clients and what do we need to hear from the staff?” And then my job is to work for the staff and the clients to get to that goal line. But providing that consistency of what we know that works and what doesn’t work? What do we need? Asking the hard questions, tell me what it is, if we could do it differently, what it should look like?

Participant 8 also successfully launched and completed a capital campaign to efficiently serve clients and address the space limitations that restricted program innovation.

Laughing, Participant 8 said, “We literally had three people to a cube designed for one. I didn’t have an office. I was in the conference room, which was also the copier room.”

Participant 8 further explained that the capital campaign goals reflected the outcomes of an organizational strategic plan that included input from staff, volunteers, and the community. As a result of a new building, the organization led by Participant 8 now offers additional capacity and enhanced connection with clients.

Alternatively, Participant 4 referenced the burden of responsibility a leader assumes during a capital campaign, which on average can last from 2 to 5 years. While a capital campaign may infuse organizations with increased financial capital, program expansion, and building improvements, CEOs and the development staff must continue to raise money for current operations. Participant 9 reminded staff and board members, “We still have to raise our annual fund here. We can’t divert all of our funding to the capital campaign.” Despite several obstacles, Participant 9 rallied staff, board members, philanthropic partners, and community stakeholders by helping them become comfortable with fundraising: “I think I was able to instill confidence in staff and in the board that,

‘Hey, we can do this. We got this. It’s important that we do it,’” indicating the level of determination CEOs must draw upon when solving complex, high-stakes organizational problems with creativity and innovation.

The CEOs in this study provided several examples of how they support staff to harness creativity and innovation as catalysts for change. Ensuring that teammates have the full support to work across multiple departments emerged as an influence tactic that lifted the organization to new heights. As a result, the 21st-century nonprofit human service CEO capable of leading and assembling cross-functional teams who work cooperatively together for a common purpose will be better positioned to respond to change and keep pace with innovation.

Prioritizing Physical and Mental Health Support to Prevent Burnout

The third theme under the domain provide assistance referred to how CEOs prioritize physical and mental health support to prevent staff burnout. This theme was seen 41 times in 16 sources (see Table 14).

Table 14

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Prioritizing Physical and Mental Health Support to Prevent Burnout

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Prioritizing physical and mental health support to prevent burnout	16	41

Working in a human service organization is rewarding yet can be draining. Frontline workers who provide direct services to clients in crisis may experience secondary trauma. Moreover, professional and support staff may work long hours and are frequently called upon to juggle a variety of tasks throughout the day that require

rapid shifts in concentration and focus. When asked how they provide assistance, several participants responded that they felt responsible for ensuring the physical and mental health of their staff members. As a result, several participants spoke of how they assist staff in recognizing the signs of fatigue and stress before reaching the burnout stage, considering “they’re in a very high trauma job.” (Participant 13).

Six participants shared techniques for prioritizing and safeguarding team physical and mental health. As a leader, Participant 12 accepts full responsibility for “replenishing” staff when their own “cups are empty.” Paying for massages every month, a benefit offered to every employee is one stress-relieving activity that Participant 12 believes is a worthwhile investment. Likewise, Participant 5 makes meditation and Reiki classes available during work hours to reduce secondary trauma and “create opportunities for relationship development that might facilitate greater collaboration.” Participant 5 acknowledged that stress had always been a factor to consider, but the pandemic contributed to a heightened concern for staff health and well-being. Participant 13 assisted staff to prioritize their health by “bringing in someone to do music and someone to do neck massages.”

Going one step further, Participant 13 incentivizes staff to utilize the wellness studio and engage in staff yoga and meditation. Each month, staff who participated in these stress-relieving activities are entered into a drawing to receive a \$100 Amazon gift card. Providing staff with the opportunity to refresh themselves between client interactions was mentioned by Participant 4, who shared, “There’s a healing garden patio for staff.” Participant 4 indicated that this peaceful, dedicated staff space contributed to

their well-being and health, decreasing the potential for staff to succumb to burnout and mental fatigue.

Participants 3 and 14 assisted staff in prioritizing health by increasing their time spent outside the office. Participant 3, recognizing that many staff members were working 7 days a week without rest during the height of the pandemic, instituted 6 “wellness days.” On designated wellness days, office operations were halted to benefit all employees. When possible, the wellness days were added to 3-day weekends, giving staff an extra day to relax. In like manner, Participant 14 “gave sabbatical to every single staff as self-care.” Staff could apply for 2 consecutive days that were not considered vacation time, with the condition that they spend the time caring for themselves and taking a break from everyday routines. Making sabbaticals available so that staff might gain perspective was one way Participant 14 demonstrated that staff are treated “as full human beings” by prioritizing their well-being.

The CEOs in this study expressed that they provided assistance to their staff by prioritizing their physical and mental well-being. In doing so, CEOs believed they were showing staff that they cared about them as people, recognizing they had families and lives outside of work. The data collected underscored how CEOs provided pathways for staff to recuperate and practice self-care before they reached the burnout stage, which may lead to an increase in voluntary staff turnover.

Grenny et al.’s (2013) fourth source of influence is provide assistance. When participants were asked how they provide assistance to staff, three themes emerged. The first theme, identify opportunities for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents revealed that study participants lead from a strengths-based perspective.

Whenever possible, they match organizational tasks and projects to complement staff interests and skills. The second theme, harnessing creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems, brought to life how the participants engage and lead cross-department teamwork to address problems holistically.

Participants used this influence tactic to help eliminate department silos and bring different perspectives to problem solving so that innovation can be born. Prioritizing physical and mental health support to prevent burnout was the third theme under the provide assistance domain. In this theme, CEOs shared how they demonstrated to staff that their health and well-being was a priority, reinforcing the human factor of leadership.

Publicly Expressing Praise Through Actions and Words

Grenny et al.’s (2013) fifth source of influence pertains to change their economy. The data pointed to two themes in this domain. The first theme encompassed how nonprofit human service CEOs express praise to staff through their actions and words. This theme appeared 125 times and was identified in 20 sources (see Table 15). There were 5 artifacts analyzed that provided further evidence of how study participants expressed praise, including emails to staff (Participant 4 and 9), strategic plan (Participant 6), and staff meeting notes and a personal letter to the CEO from a staff member (Participant 5).

Table 15

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Publicly Expressing Praise Through Actions and Words

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Publicly expressing praise through actions and words	20	125

According to Grenny et al. (2013), the fifth source of influence, change their economy, refers to how influencers use rewards to help people stay focused and engaged when attaining goals. Like their for-profit counterparts, nonprofit staff yearn to be recognized for their contributions and achievements. However, budget constraints combined with a dominant public perception that every dollar should be spent toward program services limit the extent to which nonprofit leaders might show their appreciation. Whereas the for-profit leader has more flexibility for bestowing large bonuses, significant raises, or perks to incentivize their staff, the nonprofit leader often turns to low-cost but meaningful ways to demonstrate their appreciation, and to reinforce the type of behavior that sustains a positive organizational culture. Therefore, when human service leaders publicly expressing praise through actions and words, it is a form of changing the economy for staff.

The CEOs in this study expressed that giving staff praise through their actions and words was an influence tactic that contributed to high staff motivation and engagement. Several participants mentioned that a simple and free method to reward staff was giving compliments on the spot when they “caught” a staff member in the act of stellar performance. For example, Participant 1 said, “I regularly compliment people . . . and I listen and I hear my director praising people generously.” Similarly, Participant 11 believes an important role of leadership is to “champion staff” by always “praising in public and criticizing in private.” The primary purpose for publicly praising staff for Participant 11 was to create a positive organizational culture that would attract and retain staff, because staff “is just as valuable as the people we are serving.” These examples

pointed out how publicly praising staff members contributed to staff confidence and a positive work environment.

Participants 5, 6, and 7 agreed that giving specific praise was essential for reinforcing the desired behavior, and benefitted the staff member and other team members. When celebrating small wins, Participant 5 coaches team members to “be very specific about the kind of gratitude we want to show each other.” In addition, Participant 5 recommended “call out programs, and call people out by name.” Participant 6 shared this sentiment by saying, “You have to really be clear about what they’ve achieved are not just generalities. You have to be specific.” Finally, Participant 7 reiterated that specific praise reinforces positive behaviors and establishes a bar for performance excellence. “If you recognize people that go above and beyond, in other words, somebody staying late to deal with a patient, and you tell that story to somebody else, all of a sudden, it becomes sort of our culture,” stated Participant 7, underscoring how public praise is a cost-free but a powerful motivator to reinforce desired organizational behavior.

In addition to providing praise vocally, eight participants shared how they changed the economy for team members through specific actions. Namely, these participants used a combination of presenting organizational awards and monetary stipends for team members who accomplished a goal and exhibited excellent leadership. An example was voiced by Participant 2 who awards a staff member with a President’s Award every year for “inspirational leadership.” Publicly recognizing that individual is not necessarily tied to the accomplishment, but rather to “how they did it,” provides evidence that the behavior traits that staff exhibit in their work is as important as achieving the goal. Participant 3 connects staff behavior to organizational core values by

giving out the coveted Can Award, which is a repurposed vegetable can with a propped-up lid. Inside the can is a scroll that has the recipient's name, date, and "the core value they were recognized for." Participant 8 also uses symbolism to mark positive staff behavior with the You Rock Award:

Every month, we give an actual rock to somebody. You know the saying, "you rock?" Well, we're like, "Okay, this month who rocks it, and it gets passed on." So there's an actual rock. But you also get a gift card, and whoever gets picked is praised by other people and that kind of thing.

Four participants reported that in addition to publicly recognizing individuals, they also award monetary stipends. In the organization led by Participant 6, individuals receive milestone awards for tenure based on 5, 10, 15, and 20 years of service. "We just had two staff here reach their 20 years in the organization. We gave them \$1,000 gift cards," Participant 6 proudly stated. Likewise, Participant 13 remarked that the individual who is "voted in by their peers" as Employee of the Year receives a \$500.00 check from the organization. Two participants, Participants 13 and 14 commented that they reward individuals for serving on special committees, such as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and the Sunshine Committee, by offering a combination of refreshments and paid time off. Realizing the extra work required of an individual who volunteered to serve on a workgroup, Participant 8 reported that monetary stipends were provided. In return, workgroup members "delivered certain recommendations by a certain time," and individuals were rewarded for their time and expertise.

The nonprofit human service CEOs in this study described several no-cost, low-cost, and meaningful ways to reinforce and reward positive employee behavior while also

expressing gratitude for staff dedication and organizational results. Through these methods, these leaders influence their staff by changing their economy. By employing these influence tactics, the leaders reported that staff felt recognized and appreciated. Most importantly, however, staff members gained clarity regarding the type of desired behavior that the leader wanted to be emulated; hence, publicly praising staff through actions and words is a vital influence driver that impacts organizational culture.

Frequently Challenging the Board to Approve Competitive Compensation to Promote Staff Retention

The second theme that emerged under the domain of change their economy was frequently challenging the board to approve competitive compensation to promote staff retention. This theme was mentioned 54 times and seen in 18 sources (see Table 16).

Table 16

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Frequently Challenging the Board to Approve Competitive Compensation to Promote Staff Retention

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Frequently challenging the board to approve competitive compensation to promote staff retention	18	54

The 21st-century nonprofit human service CEO must possess multifaceted skills to effectively lead their organization through times of scarcity and abundance. Within this role, the CEO not only upholds the vision but is also responsible for overseeing fundraising and managing the organizational budget. Commonly, CEOs enlist the help of board members and staff to draft an annual budget that details the operating costs of the organization, including the cost of staff salaries, bonuses, cost-of-living increases, and benefits. However, the nonprofit’s board of directors, as the governing of body of the

organization, typically grants the final approval for budget allocations and the policies that guide those decisions. Therefore, the human service CEO acts as the frontline influencer between the staff and the board, consistently advocating that when organizational financial resources are available, staff are well-compensated with a generous benefits package, which promotes staff retention.

When participants considered how they lead by influence by changing the economy for team members, every leader spoke of the vital responsibility for ensuring that their staff was fairly compensated in a way that promoted financial health and overall well-being. Participant 14 encapsulated this sentiment with conviction, saying, “You have to make an argument to your board that investing in staff and salaries and training is a critical part of the budget.” After a thoughtful pause, Participant 14 added,

That always rubbed me the wrong way, organizations that work in poverty. If their staff is impoverished . . . you can’t say you’re fighting poverty unless you’re doing it for staff. So always try to pay people well, give them good benefits and help them with their mindset for self-care, to feel rewarded and feel trained.

Three participants imparted their commitment to raising salaries, especially for frontline workers at risk of falling into poverty if wages do not outpace inflation. To demonstrate this value, Participant 2 replied, “We had people working the hotline, who were afraid somebody would die on their watch, and they were making \$11.25 an hour.” A combination of successful fundraising that brought the organization out of the red and gaining board approval enabled Participant 2 to provide a rate of \$15.00 an hour and increase staff salaries to be closer to a living wage. Likewise, offering a living wage to every staff member was under consideration at the organization led by Participant 10,

who cited that an “equity lens” determines how the organization distributes salaries and benefits. “We’re now looking at how do we establish a living wage as the lowest wage that we pay anybody in the organization,” explained Participant 10. Similarly, Participant 3 stated, “Our strategic plan states we want to move our entire workforce to the top quartile of salaries in the Feeding America network,” underscoring the organizational leadership commitment to ensure financial health for all team members.

Despite the CEO commitment to offer attractive compensation packages, Participants 2, 9, 11, 12, and 15 mentioned the difficulty of attracting and retaining individuals with the skills and talents suited to the salary ranges and other benefits offered for nonprofit positions. “We’re still a nonprofit, but we are way better than we used to be,” Participant 11 shared. Participant 9 pointed out the region’s high cost of living, recognizing that the organization would “have to pay people a lot more to really be where they need to be” to be able to compete for talent with for-profit companies. Participant 2 recognized the limitations of nonprofit compensation, positing that staff are “paid fairly, but not what most people could make externally if they chose to go externally,” while Participant 12 confirmed, “We’re not able to compete with the for-profit market on salaries.” Participant 15 also commented that competing for talent, especially against the for-profit sector, is becoming more prevalent because “people, especially millennials will ask, ‘What’s your package?’” These examples illuminate how salaries and benefits factor into the organization’s ability to recruit and retain qualified staff.

To offset the salary ceiling reality, all participants discussed that they frequently encouraged the board to expand benefits that help staff build wealth and support well-

being. For example, all participants stated that their organization provides health benefits, with Participant 2 exclaiming, “We are hands down benefits rich!” Although the mix of benefits offered in each organization differed, a common benefit included paid time off (PTO) and sick days. Participants 8, 11, and 15 called attention to providing an investment benefit, a 401(K), where the organization matches employee monetary contributions. “We try to make up for things we can’t do,” Participant 11 admitted.

However, merit increases and bonuses—specifically the decision-making process for allocating these financial incentives—were the most widely discussed ways that CEOs and the board work together to boost annual salaries, which is one essential strategy to promote staff retention. Seven participants explained the process and rationale for increasing staff salaries on an annual basis, which they established with board approval. Participant 8 admitted giving intentional thought to “compensation dilemmas,” finally concluding that “rewards and benefits feel different to people, depending on what kind of classification you have.” Participants 3, 8, 13, and 14 developed a merit-based system based on a percentage range to determine salary increases. To be eligible for merit increases in the organizations led by Participants 3, 13, and 14, raises are contingent on meeting individual performance, team goals, and the organizational business plan. Conversely, Participant 5, with board approval, allocates a 3%-4% increase in the annual budget for “the entire team, every single year” because if a team member failed to “perform up to the level that they should have performed to, they shouldn’t make it to the next anniversary when they get a raise.”

In nonprofit organizations, the CEO acts as the chief negotiator and champion for securing a competitive salary and benefits for staff. To accomplish this, it is incumbent

for CEOs to encourage the board to approve a salary structure and benefits package that considers equity and wealth building for all staff members while balancing the overall annual budget requirements. Moreover, the CEOs in this study acknowledged it was their responsibility to ensure that the organization secured adequate financial resources to fund the staff positions, and to persuade the board to approve the salary and benefits plan so that staff were fairly compensated, with the ability to build wealth. Lastly, although many factors impact staff retention, CEOs agreed that frequently challenging the board to upgrade compensation and benefits was an influence lever they pulled to incentivize performance and retain staff in their organization.

Grenny et al.'s (2013) fifth source of influence is described as change their economy, referring to actions related to rewards and monetary incentives to promote focus and goal attainment. When participants were asked how they change the economy for staff, two themes emerged. The first theme, publicly expressing praise through actions and words unearthed that study participants keep staff motivated by calling attention to positive staff behavior the leader desires to be emulated. When other staff understand that behavior is respected and embrace it as a personal value, an organizational culture forms based on that behavior trait. The second theme, frequently challenging the board to approve competitive compensation to promote staff retention revealed that CEOs acknowledge that advocating that their staff receive a competitive compensation package for their work is equally important to providing excellent program services. Therefore, it is incumbent that CEOs play an active role in fundraising and managing the annual budget so they have the required financial resources to change the economy for staff, which is an influence tactic to help retain staff.

Optimizing the Office Environment to Always be Efficient, Clean, and Safe

The sixth source of influence described by Grenny et al. (2013) is the domain that refers to change their space. This theme was noted 98 times and seen in 22 sources (see Table 17).

Table 17

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Optimizing the Office Environment to Always be Efficient, Clean, and Safe

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Optimizing the office environment to always be efficient, clean, and safe	22	98

Grenny et al. (2013) described this source of influence as moving away from the human factors to explore how the environment, space, sound, and other sensory experiences impact motivation and ability. Considering that employees spend 8 to 10 hours or more in the office, the overall environment and personal workstations contribute to staff productivity, collaboration, and sense of well-being. When asked how they lead their organization by changing their space, all participants shared how they had made facility improvements to be more responsive to staff and client needs. Regardless of the size of the human service organization, the participants expressed that their staff deserved a workplace that meets a high standard of efficiency, cleanliness, and safety.

Several participants cited staff safety as a top priority, which was heightened during the pandemic. When COVID-19 struck, Participant 3 quickly sprang into action by providing staff with ample personal protective equipment (PPE), installing plexiglass to reduce exposure, hiring additional staff to enhance cleaning procedures, and adjusting how clients were served, stating, “There was a low touch or no touch model for the

families, but it was also for the safety of our own staff as well.” Participant 8 echoed the importance of staff safety during the pandemic by asserting that “for health and safety, we spare no expense.” Beyond the safety requirements established to protect staff, Participant 4 expressed concern about the legal aspects related to COVID-19, sharing that “I had a lawyer come in and talk about what’s legal and not legal and bringing people back with COVID,” another indication that CEOs must consider many facets to protect their staff, clients, and guests in the facility.

With a sense of longing, Participant 5 voiced how COVID-19 had eroded collaboration and connection among staff members because of “the physical distance we have to keep and limiting the number of people that are in a room at the same time.” However, Participant 8 discovered a way to celebrate the sacrifices made by staff amid safety concerns:

I tried to talk to them as if they were humanitarians. And I was like, you know, you guys are putting yourselves on the line. And in return, not only will we make sure that you can stay safe, but also, we’re going to share your stories.

When describing the environment of their facilities before COVID-19, participants spoke enthusiastically about the unique attributes their facilities offered. Each of the 15 participants had leveraged a capital campaign to expand, enhance, or renovate their facility with the last 5 years. A deep sense of pride appeared on participant faces as they detailed how building improvements enabled staff to be productive and efficient.

Participant 1 recounted what the facility looked like before the renovation saying, “The level of expectation for their working conditions was just so low, you couldn’t measure

it.” After a pause, Participant 1 added, “We always get it done. But we can do it with some grace and some dignity. And I think my staff has earned that. They deserve that.”

Participant 4 shared that their crisis line, the most utilized service by staff and volunteers, was “literally in a closet.” With a note of satisfaction, Participant 4 described how a facility remodel helped staff to transform “how that program operated and how staff interacted with clients” by investing in a well-lighted rotunda with comfortable, private office space and beautiful furniture. Realizing the importance of office environment customization, Participant 14 commented, “Social workers need privacy, and they need to close their door,” making every effort to accommodate staff needs to ensure productivity and adhere to client confidentiality. According to Participant 7, “If the building’s nice, then they’re going to want to come to work and keep their workspace nice,” underscoring that the office aesthetic contributes to worker satisfaction and productivity.

Despite efforts to maintain a clean, safe, and productive work environment, six participants admitted they were grappling with how to accommodate the uptick of staff requests to work from home. Participant 3 shared that during the height of COVID, “40-45% of our workforce was working completely remotely.” The reduction of an in-person presence helped stop the spread of the virus, and staff were given laptops to accomplish work from home. The organization led by Participant 12 also proposed a hybrid model that asked staff to work “2 days per week at the in-person location and 2 days when we get the other office where we don’t see clients, then 1 day we can work from home.” Some form of a work-from-home or hybrid strategy was implemented by all participants during the height of COVID. However, Participants 9 and 13 expressed doubt that

working remotely or offering a hybrid model was feasible for social services staff members after the threat of COVID is no longer prevalent. According to Participant 9,

We try to listen to what staff have to say. Sometimes I struggle with that because we're a social service agency. We're not a tech company, so the services are going to happen on site. People make all sorts of arguments as to why it so great during lockdown. "We did our jobs perfectly. We don't ever need to come back on site." And that's rough.

Participant 13 confirmed that off-site work options were important to team members:

"60% said that it's going to be really important that once a month I get to work remotely if I can. But if you're a counselor, you can't really do that." Moreover, two participants

indicated that remote working conditions contributed to staff feeling isolated and eroded

team collaboration opportunities. For example, Participant 5 lamented that the

organization was not able to arrange team social events, making it difficult to "develop strong interpersonal relationships that also facilitate strong collaboration." Likewise,

Participant 10 felt that the positive organizational culture resulted from staff being in the facility together that inspired "joy and a sense of connectedness" that is not able to be

replicated when most staff were working from home. These reflections indicate that

safety transcends the physical space that staff occupy. Safety encompasses to what extent staff feel psychologically safe when they are at work, which is bolstered by collaboration

and the open sharing of ideas. In the absence of psychological safety, staff may be

reluctant to come to work and be fully engaged, as corroborated by Participant 14 who

said, "I remember thinking very consciously that I will never have staff that comes to work with a knot in their stomach."

Nonprofit human service CEOs are guardians of the organization mission and set the tone for the organizational culture. The CEOs interviewed in this study indicated that maintaining a clean, efficient, and safe environment reaped benefits such as enhanced staff collaboration and a source of pride for all who enter the facility. Therefore, CEOs who want to lead through influence examine how the environment—specifically the facilities where staff, clients, and other guests gather to work on solving social problems—impacts staff motivation and mission accomplishment.

Routinely Holding Staff Accountable to the Highest Level of Dignity and Respect With Clients and Guests

The second theme under the change their space domain is routinely holding staff accountable to the highest level of dignity and respect with clients and guests. This theme was referred to 61 times and was seen in 16 sources (see Table 18).

Table 18

Theme, Source, and Frequency—Routinely Holding Staff Accountable for the Highest Level of Dignity and Respect With Clients and Guests

Theme	Sources	Frequency
Routinely holding staff accountable to the highest level of dignity and respect with clients	16	61

During the interview sessions, each participant was asked to convey how they applied influence by changing the physical environment and workspace. After proudly sharing how they had invested in upgrading and renovating organizational facilities, all study participants eschewed the common public perception that human service agencies are “shabby.” Participant 8 passionately stated,

These families have been given the message all their lives that they're worth nothing and that they're marginalized. And, we want to create a space where they feel appreciated, and they feel "I do matter. I am important." The staff benefit from that as well.

Four participants spoke about their commitment to instill a high bar of dignity and respect when delivering program services, which often began with holding staff accountable for exceptional customer service. To demonstrate this value, Participant 12 recommended that leaders must look first to "attending to your team internally." When asked to elaborate on that advice, Participant 12 responded, "If you expect [the team] to express the best level of service and to be as hospitable as possible to our clients, we have to practice it internally," emphasizing that when team members find joy in working together, they are more likely to be joyous when working with clients. Participant 12, recalling the experience of accessing social services as a young, struggling, single parent added, "I look at it from when I was a client walking through the doors. What would have been supportive of me?" Participant 3 examines customer service through a similar empathy lens by challenging team members to reimagine "the kind of service that we think we deserve," asking staff members to think about "how would you feel if you were in this situation?" Encouraging staff to consider this question when designing and delivering client services led to a new level of accountability and "what it meant to the work that we do, and the end result was that we established a DEI Council," Participant 3 shared.

In the same vein, to Participant 4, who leads an organization that operates a recycled clothing boutique, customer service means training store clerks to interact with

clients shopping for clothes by making suggestions like, “Oh, you know, this sweater would look cute with that.” This technique helps clients feel like they are shopping in a “regular store,” and they are seen as valued customers. Equally compelling, Participant 4 reported that an emphasis on customer service helped to increase store revenues and elevate the agency’s community reputation. Likewise, the implementation of a “choice concept” enabled clients accessing food at Participant 8’s organization to choose the quantity and quality of food items they wanted to take home and cook. Although this required a shift in how the operations team conducted food distribution events, adjusting the space to improve the client experience meant that clients were able to choose food that they could easily enjoy at home and “it was more dignified for them too,” shared Participant 8.

Four participants spoke about how the physical environment coupled with a positive attitude supported a richer experience between staff and clients. For example, Participant 13 believed hospitality contributed to a positive experience, like how clients and guests were greeted upon entering the building: “That is usually coming from the top. It comes from your supervisor, and you [the CEO] have to set the tone.” Participant 13 paused for a moment, then added, “It’s the approach. It’s the customer service piece. It’s the attitude.” Participant 1 shared a similar philosophy, constantly reminding staff that “We all have the same power. We all can make this the greatest day of the kid’s life, or we can totally ruin their day.” Participant 4 shared how changing the physical space from being “run like a prison” to a facility that inspired beauty, healing, and function “made a big difference in how staff interacted with each other and with clients, and the whole client experience.” Yet another example was described by Participant 2, who throws a

Super Bowl Party at the facility every year as a catalyst to encourage deeper relationships between clients and staff. The annual event has grown into a popular activity that everyone looks forward to celebrating together. This special interaction also helps staff to think of clients as real people and friends, not just clients to be served. Participant 2 added,

One of the biggest challenges of the clients we serve is their environment and their belief they're not worth it. So when you walk into a building that reinforces you're not worth it, then you start with a negative versus giving people a chance to start positive. So for us, it's been working since I've been here, improving our facilities to create that environment.

Participant 15 shared a moving story that reflects the spirit or feeling that one experiences when visiting the organization. A prominent community leader praised Participant 15 for providing valuable and effective program services but also raved about the reception he received from the staff, who did not know who he was: "They were smiling. They were engaged. They're joyful to be here. By the way, I see you've kept it clean and painted, too!" That observation indicated to Participant 15 the importance of training staff to treat every member who walks through the door with dignity and respect, which contributes to the "whole experience" and "all aspects of what we present."

These examples suggest that nonprofit human service CEOs who desire to lead with influence foster a positive physical environment. The stories shared by study participants indicated that a connection exists between how teammates treat each other, how they treat clients and guests, and the space where these collective energies converge.

Therefore, it appears that the relationship between space and fostering an organizational culture of respect and dignity has merit.

Grenny et al. (2013) described the sixth source of influence as change their space, advising leaders to look beyond the human factor to observe how the physical environment might inspire or hamper individuals from achieving organizational goals. When participants were asked how they exert influence by changing the physical environment, two themes emerged. The first theme, optimizing the office environment to always be efficient, clean, and safe, featured how CEOs consistently updated and maintained constructive and customized spaces according to the task, which contributed to staff, clients, and guests experiencing productivity and a sense of well-being. The second theme, routinely holding staff to be accountable to the highest level of dignity and respect with clients and guests, further elaborated on how the physical space influences team dynamics, strengthens staff-client relationships, and instills a tone of dignity and respect for all people congregated within the facility.

Summary

This qualitative, phenomenological study illuminated the experience of 15 nonprofit human service CEOs, analyzing how they lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. The semistructured interviews were designed to capture the compelling ways in which CEOs apply six sources of influence, acting as an influencer as they lead their organizations to seize on opportunities and navigate through organizational risks.

The population drew from approximately 449 CEOs who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020. The target population was

formed by identifying only those CEOs who lead basic needs organizations, reducing the number of eligible participants to 153 individuals. From this group, 15 individuals were selected as study participants.

The data collected and analyzed from 15 semistructured interviews and 13 organizational artifacts produced 14 themes. Two themes applied to the domain help them love what they hate, two themes applied to the domain help them do what they can't, three themes emerged under the domain provide encouragement, three themes under the domain provide assistance, two themes applied to the domain change their economy, and two themes applied to the domain change their space. The complete summary of the research study, including findings, conclusions, implications for action, the researcher's recommendations for future research, and final reflections are detailed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Today's nonprofit human service organizations operate in an open system that must continually adapt and evolve to respond to America's thorniest social issues. The robust network of nonprofit human service organizations offers a lifeline to millions of individuals experiencing physical, mental, and economic hardships. Amidst an ever-rising demand for assistance, the constant strain on human service staff, budgets, and facilities has compelled human service CEOs to quickly reimagine organizational growth strategies and program delivery methods (Mosley & Smith, 2018). In the wake of seismic shifts, human service CEOs act as the organizational anchor to motivate their workforce and arm them with the necessary skills required to rise to new heights.

Accordingly, leaders who are adept at persuading others to behave in ways to achieve desired organizational outcomes are influencers (Grenny et al., 2013). The effective influencer, by tapping into multiple sources of influences, provides followers with both the motivation and ability to perform their individual and team tasks to achieve long-lasting organizational results. Consequently, it appears that CEOs who possess an influencer mindset and understand how to influence others by exhibiting key behaviors will be better prepared to lead the 21st-century human service organization.

Chapter I introduced the study, its purpose, and the research background. A comprehensive literature review that examined the nature and history of nonprofit organizations, the characteristics of leading human service organizations, and leadership and influence was presented in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the researcher described the study's purpose, research questions, population, target population, and sample utilized to

conduct the study. In addition, the researcher explained the study's methodology and clarified the research design, including the instrumentation, data collection methods, and data analysis. Chapter IV described and detailed the lived experiences of nonprofit human service CEOs leading their organization through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence by analyzing data obtained from conducting semistructured interviews with 15 study participants. Chapter V delves into the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for action that emerged from this study, concluding with personal remarks and reflections from the researcher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do exemplary nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence?

Subquestions

1. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff love what they hate?
2. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by helping staff do what they cannot do?
3. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing encouragement?

4. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by providing assistance?
5. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing their economy?
6. How do nonprofit CEOs lead their organizations by changing the physical environment?

Research Methodology

To capture nonprofit human service CEOs' rich tapestry of lived experiences for how they lead their organization using influence, qualitative research was identified as the most appropriate method to employ. Semistructured interviews and the examination of organizational artifacts ensured robust data collection from more than one data collection method. The 12 interview questions and prompts were crafted to garner answers to the central research question and subquestions.

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher obtained voluntary, written consent from each study participant and confirmed permission to record the interview. In addition, the interview questions were sent at least 3 days before the interview so that participants would have time to reflect on their relevant experiences. Finally, to further build trust and cordiality, the researcher sent a short video explaining her professional background, the purpose of the study, what participants could expect in the interview process, and an invitation to ask questions or share concerns. Because of COVID-19 and geographical limitations, interviews were conducted and recorded in Zoom, a video conferencing platform.

Each interview commenced after the researcher reminded participants that the session would be recorded. Next, the researcher asked each participant a series of contextual questions, including describing the mission, the length of their tenure at the

organization, number of staff, and the size of their annual operating budget. Once these preliminary inquiries were answered, the researcher initiated the study's interview questions. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. After the interviews were conducted, the interviews were transcribed so the researcher could analyze and make sense of the data. The researcher created codes that corresponded to each domain of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. An online software program, NVivo, allowed the researcher to organize the interviews and collected artifacts, identify common themes, and analyze the data individually and collectively. Finally, interrater reliability with a research expert was conducted to ensure data consistency.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a population as a group of individuals matching specific criteria and served as the intention for generalizing research results. For this study, the population represented Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders[®] award recipients from 2015–2020. Since 2004, selected nonprofit organizations apply for the prestigious \$200,000, 2-year grant award through a competitive, community-driven process conducted in 49 Bank of America national markets. Approximately 75 CEOs were chosen every year between 2015-2020, totaling 449 CEOs during that time period.

To qualify for the Neighborhood Builders award, nonprofit leaders must be employed by an organization that conducts work in the fields of education, community development and neighborhood preservation, arts and culture, or human services. Once the winning nonprofits are identified from each market, the CEO joins other awardees across the nation for a series of professional development and leadership trainings.

Therefore, the population for this study was 449 nonprofit CEOs who received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Target Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a qualitative sample as an information-rich, in-depth study of a group from which the data were collected. Based on the population of 449 CEOs, the target population for this study examined only CEOs who led nonprofit human service organizations. Between 2015-2020, 153 nonprofit human service CEOs received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders award. Therefore, the target population was 153 nonprofit human service CEOs who received the Neighborhood Builders award from 2015-2020.

Sample

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a sample as “a group of individuals from whom data are collected” (p. 129). Because it was not possible to interview all award winners, the researcher selected 15 nonprofit human service CEOs who were randomly selected from the target population (see Figure 2).

Major Findings

The intent of this study was to examine nonprofit human service CEOs and how they lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.’s (2013) six sources of influence. The major findings presented in this section reflect Chapter IV’s research, data collection, and findings collected from semistructured interviews with 15 nonprofit human service CEOs and the examination of 13 organizational artifacts. Nine major findings were revealed based on participant interviews that organized shared experiences

according to the central research question and subquestions developed from Grenny et al.'s (2013) six source of influence domains.

- Domain: Help them love what they hate
- Domain: Help them do what they can't
- Domain: Provide encouragement
- Domain: Provide assistance
- Domain: Change their economy
- Domain: Change their space

Research Subquestion 1: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Helping Staff Love What They Hate?

Major Finding 1: Nonprofit human service CEOs empower staff ownership and control for performing their job responsibilities. Based on the responses from 14 participants and one organization artifact, study participants referenced 85 times that empowering staff to feel ownership and allowing them to control how their work was executed is a leadership influence behavior that aligned with help them love what they hate. When this leadership behavior was applied, participants believed staff was more likely to perform their job responsibilities diligently and listen intently to clear and specific feedback from their supervisors. Furthermore, this leadership action allowed the leader to delegate projects to subordinates, allowing CEOs to confidently focus on high-level organizational initiatives.

Major Finding 2: Nonprofit human service CEOs share stories of mission success and failure as a means of inspiration and accountability. When staff understood how the task correlated to the organizational mission, participants maintained

that staff members were more likely to perform job responsibilities consistently and reliably, even those tasks they did not like. Of the participants, 100% mentioned 73 times that they regularly shared organizational stories of success and shortcomings to reinforce positive behaviors and minimize errors related to tedious but necessary tasks, such as data entry and repetitive operational duties. Furthermore, storytelling proved to be a successful tactic for motivating the team to delve into complex undertakings that required cross-department cooperation and collaboration.

Participants applied various techniques to help the staff tune into the mission through storytelling. Inviting community members to provide personal testimony for how program interventions improved or saved lives was cited as one method that motivated teammates across all organizational levels. Another leader institutionalized a symbol to spark celebration: when a bell rings in the kitchen, it is an auditory cue that a client secured employment. The sound of the bell prompts staff, clients, and guests to acknowledge the achievement together with applause and congratulations. Other leaders turned to data sources to demonstrate organizational impact or build a case for implementing program modifications based on community statistics. Overall, CEOs unanimously agreed that using storytelling to illustrate impact helped staff love what they hate to do.

Research Subquestion 2: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Helping Staff Do What They Cannot Do?

Major Finding 3: Nonprofit human service CEOs leverage strengths across organizational departments to help achieve the impossible. Fourteen participants and one organizational artifact mentioned 99 times that CEOs structure cross-team

collaboration to tackle complex dilemmas and maximize opportunities to apply the full range of organizational strengths. Participants utilized cross-department training and collaboration when one department did not possess the knowledge to accomplish an initiative on their own. In these cases, CEOs used creativity and intentionality to bring together expertise from multiple departments to help staff do what they could not do by themselves.

One example involved bringing the fundraising, program, finance, and operations teams together to brainstorm novel program delivery approaches when applying for grant opportunities. Another method established a peer-to-peer learning model that identified individuals with mastery in a particular aspect of their job to serve as a model and help other teammates learn the skill and problem-solve. Regardless of the process, participants unanimously agreed that knocking down department silos created a sense of interdependency that bolstered team members' trust in each other, built resiliency, and promoted accountability. Hence, the organization was better positioned to achieve seemingly impossible initiatives.

Major Finding 4: Nonprofit human service CEOs invest in professional development opportunities for all staff to gain competitive advantages. Fifteen participants and four artifacts referenced 75 times that allocating a budget and carving out time for staff to participate in professional development opportunities elevated their ability to perform at higher levels, thereby contributing to the organization gaining a competitive edge. CEOs unanimously believed they should be active, top-down champions of professional development and make certain that all staff had the time and financial resources to participate in professional development opportunities, regardless of

their position in the organization. One participant lamented that neglecting professional development is “one of the deficiencies in the nonprofit sector,” attributing recent organizational success to prioritizing staff skill building and training.

All participants expressed that generously investing in staff professional development groomed staff to be continual learners and equipped them with the skills and knowledge to function in a constantly shifting ecosystem. Additionally, participants believed a competitive organizational advantage was gained when their staff members possessed a growth mindset and felt prepared to be early adopters of cutting-edge practices. Furthermore, leaders believed that access to professional development energized staff, contributed to trust building, and increased organizational capacity.

Research Subquestion 3: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Providing Encouragement?

Major Finding 5: Nonprofit human service CEOs consistently embody authentic and transparent leadership. Based on the responses from 15 participants and one organization artifact, 100% of the study participants referenced 136 times that displaying authentic, transparent leadership was a vital influence behavior that encouraged staff. All participants stressed that leading by example meant consistently demonstrating steadfastness, especially during high-stakes conversations and problematic situations. Rather than appearing weak, these CEOs espoused that allowing staff to see them as human beings, who sometimes falter or make mistakes, encourages staff. Participants believed that bringing their authentic selves to the workplace and being honest about hardships and challenges occurring within the organization influenced and motivated staff members to emulate the same behavior, thus encouraging them.

Major Finding 6: Nonprofit human service CEOs always ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are foundational to the organization.

Intentionally including DEI as foundational to the organization was referenced by 13 participants and six artifacts, totaling 98 times. Thirteen of 15 CEOs referenced how they championed and modeled DEI as a foundational organizational value. Although participants utilized several methods to bring DEI to life within their organizations, participants acknowledged that actualizing these practices required intentionality and a willingness to be uncomfortable. The leaders also spoke of the need for creating safe spaces so that staff and community members felt psychologically safe enough to discuss DEI issues within open forums and group settings.

To reinforce inclusive leadership, CEOs identified opportunities for staff at all levels of the organization to speak up by participating in strategic planning, board meetings, and performance management meetings. In addition, participants described how they embedded DEI practices within the board and staff recruitment processes by considering lived experiences and diversity of perspectives. In sum, by ensuring that DEI was foundational to the organization, CEOs encouraged staff by demonstrating respect, fostering trusting spaces for belonging and connectedness to flourish, and providing platforms so that different perspectives might be heard and considered.

Major Finding 7: Nonprofit human service CEOs permit difficult topics to be discussed openly and honestly. Fourteen of 15 participants and one artifact referenced 78 times that discussing difficult issues openly and honestly encouraged staff to take risks. When this behavior was consistently modeled, participants noted that team trust and accountability increased, and fear of failure decreased. Leaders encouraged

discussing difficult topics at all staff meetings, department meetings, and one-on-one meetings. Within these settings, the leader strived to make staff feel comfortable raising questions, talking about potential obstacles, and challenging practices that no longer produced fruitful results. Participants expressed that conflict avoidance contributed to a toxic organizational culture, pointing out that open communication was an effective antidote to fear. Therefore, participants believed that providing staff with the psychological safety to voice opposition and discuss seemingly undiscussable topics was an influence tactic that applied to how they encourage staff.

Research Subquestion 4: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Providing Assistance?

Major Finding 8: Nonprofit human service CEOs help staff thrive by identifying opportunities that optimize their talents and strengths. Adopting a multipronged, strengths-based leadership approach allowed CEOs to lead by providing assistance. Leaders in this study empowered staff to determine what tools were necessary to perform their jobs, ensured that job responsibilities aligned with staff capabilities and interests, and created pathways for stretch assignments and job promotions. Fourteen of 15 participants and one organizational artifact referenced 116 times that playing to staff strengths increased organizational goal attainment and produced high staff satisfaction. This influence tactic assisted staff to perform to the best of their abilities.

Participants admitted they had to be flexible when leading their staff with a strengths-based mindset. For example, leaders were willing to rewrite job descriptions and shuffle positions so that individuals might spend most of their time engaged in duties that play to their strengths. Therefore, leaders who prioritize employee growth,

development, and professional advancement employ an influence tactic that assists staff. Moreover, leaders who maximize the full breadth of individual strengths that drive collective organizational impact contributes to staff retention and creates high-performing teams. Overall, participants expressed that optimizing opportunities for staff to perform duties that suited their innate strengths and capabilities was an influence tactic that assisted staff.

Major Finding 9: Nonprofit human service CEOs harness creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems. Based on 14 participant responses and three organizational artifacts, CEOs cited 83 times that they assist staff by urging them to use their imagination and ingenuity to overcome roadblocks and setbacks. Participants spoke of the constantly shifting landscape of the human service field and the communities they served, which often sparked an urgency for program and operations innovation. However, participants recognized their role in creating a culture of innovation so the organization could more quickly identify and respond to change. In these cases, leaders must reiterate that innovation is a “trial-and-error” process and that mistakes are encouraged and not punished.

Participants believed their role during the innovation process was to provide inspiration and assist staff, which could take the form of coaching and convening cross-department task forces. Supporting innovation initiatives also required the CEO to obtain new funding sources and hire additional staff with the expertise to develop and sustain the innovation. All participants believed that assisting the team to be creative and innovative when solving complex, systemic issues required the leader to possess a strong desire for innovation to take root in their organization.

Major Finding 10: Nonprofit human service CEOs always prioritize staff physical and mental health to prevent burnout. Prioritizing staff physical and mental health to avoid burnout and fatigue was referenced by 10 participants and six artifacts, totaling 98 times. Leaders were conscious that staff provided better care to clients when they felt they were “taken care of” by the organization. These CEOs accepted full responsibility for ensuring that team members had the time, access, and confidence to replenish their minds, bodies, and spirits regularly. All participants cited employing a range of perks and practices specifically designed to relieve stress and minimize staff exposure to secondary trauma.

For example, some participants hired massage therapists to give staff neck massages every month while other leaders arranged for on-site yoga classes. Several participants allocated extra “wellness days” to increase staff-accrued vacation and sick time. Other participants noted the importance of providing a peaceful space where staff could unwind and take breaks away from clients and office distractions. Additionally, participants spoke of providing perks like nutritious food and gift card giveaways as tokens of appreciation and buoying well-being. All participants asserted that their organization offered ample vacation and sick time as a benefit. To build on that benefit, some participants mentioned they increased paid time off (PTO) to accommodate the heightened stress that staff experienced during the pandemic. In sum, participants reported they carefully considered the extent to which their physical and mental health of impacted staff. As a result, CEOs regularly reviewed how additional perks, expansion of staff benefits, and treating staff “as whole individuals” contributed to preventing staff burnout.

Research Subquestion 5: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Changing Their Economy?

Major Finding 11: Nonprofit human service CEOs publicly praise staff contributions through actions and words. Although nonprofit CEOs may not have the ability or flexibility to provide massive monetary incentives for individuals or department teams that achieve organizational goals, they can provide a meaningful, no-cost reward by publicly and regularly expressing praise for staff contributions. Of the study participants, 100% and three organizational artifacts mentioned 125 times how they changed the economy of their staff members by showing appreciation and giving praise through actions and words.

All study participants agreed that giving public praise to individuals and teams that emulated the leader's desired behavior reinforced organizational core values and culture. Several participants stressed that public recognition with words was most beneficial when the appreciation was specific to the behavior and not spoken in general terms. Upon hearing the praise, team members understood that particular behavior would be desirable to replicate. To demonstrate distinction through actions, eight of the 15 participants mentioned that they give a combination of awards and monetary stipends to recognize stellar leadership and performance. Awards, such as the President's Award or Employee of the Year, were presented to the individual at a public event, at all-staff meetings or annual dinner events. Awardees were given a trophy or organizational symbol to commemorate the honor. Monetary stipends given to individuals by participants were attached to milestone anniversaries. One participant cited that

additional compensation was provided to staff members who participated on a special advisory committee.

All study participants believed the tokens of appreciation and words they bestowed to recognize individual and team goal achievement resulted in staff members feeling noticed for their contributions. Moreover, participants pointed out that when praise was given frequently and specifically, followers understood the behaviors the leader desired to be repeated. The desired behaviors were woven into the organizational culture with time and repetition. Therefore, even when no money or tangible goods were exchanged, the leader's heartfelt and authentic gestures of gratitude emerged as an influence tactic that changed the economy for followers.

Major Finding 12: Nonprofit human service CEOs frequently challenge the governing board to approve competitive compensation packages to help promote staff retention. Fifteen participants and three artifacts referenced 54 times how they advocated and ensured that their team members were fairly compensated with access to benefits, including overall health and well-being and pathways to build personal wealth. Every CEO interviewed recognized the vital leadership role advocating for staff. As a result, participants influenced their board by making the case that employees should always be appropriately compensated. One tactic to measure appropriate compensation involved hiring consultants to examine and recommend organizational salary structure, cost-of-living increases, merit increases, and bonuses based on those at other organizations with similar revenues, staff qualifications, and other benchmarks. Conversely, other CEOs tied merit increases to be contingent on individual, team, and organizational benchmarks and goals.

Despite these different approaches, CEOs unanimously believed they were duty bound to create pathways for staff to increase their long-term personal wealth potential. For example, several participants pointed out their commitment to providing the 401(k) benefit with an organizational match to help employees accumulate financial savings for the future. Study participants also mentioned the hardship they encountered to retain talented staff members if the board was reluctant to invest in the staff in terms of competitive salaries, benefits, and professional development opportunities. Finally, the CEOs in this study unanimously agreed that it was their responsibility to ensure that adequate financial resources flowed into the organization to support the overhead costs related to salaries and benefits and oversee the proper management and allocation of philanthropy and grant funds.

Research Subquestion 6: How Do Nonprofit CEOs Lead Their Organizations by Changing the Physical Environment?

Major Finding 13: Nonprofit human service CEOs design and maintain efficient, clean, and safe office environments. The facility where staff conducts their work and clients receive program services contributes to effective collaboration, productivity, and a sense of well-being. Of the study participants, 100% and seven organizational artifacts mentioned 98 times that maintaining an efficient, clean, and safe facility was a top priority for the CEO and the organization. Additionally, the participants asserted that a well-maintained facility was a source of pride for the staff and the community.

All participants expressed that safety was essential to keeping staff, clients, and guests, especially during the height of the pandemic. The leaders cited several examples

that enacted new operations and procedures to protect staff and clients. Examples included arranging for enhanced cleaning procedures, obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE) for all who entered the building, and arranging for team members to have laptops for remote work.

When asked about the office environment before COVID-19 disrupted the workplace, several participants talked with pride about their facility and the work culture. During their tenure, all participants had conducted a major gift campaign or capital campaign to significantly renovate, purchase, or construct a new building, retrofitting the building specifically to the needs of the staff and clients who receive program services. Consequently, many participants felt a keen sense of pride and ownership to ensure that the facilities were maintained.

Of particular interest was to learn that eight participants were uncertain how the office environment would be structured after COVID-19 was no longer a threat. Two participants stated that many of their staff members were asking to continue to work remotely or asking the organization to consider a hybrid model. These leaders were reconciling how to balance the staff requests for working off-site while providing exceptional client services—especially when the responsibilities required working face-to-face with clients. In sum, CEOs unanimously agreed that keeping an efficient, clean, and safe environment was an influence tactic that resulted in staff feeling well cared for and contributed to a cohesive and collaborative work environment.

Major Finding 14: Nonprofit human service CEOs routinely hold staff accountable for exhibiting dignity and respect with clients and guests. The examples shared by study participants suggest that a positive physical environment is connected to

showing dignity and respect. Twelve participants and four organizational artifacts mentioned 62 times how they routinely hold staff accountable for exhibiting dignity and respect with clients and guests. The stories shared by the study participants indicated that a connection exists between how teammates treat others, how they treat clients and guests, and the space where these collective energies converge. Therefore, study participants contended that the benefits of the relationship between space and fostering an organizational culture of respect and dignity for all should not be overlooked.

Unexpected Findings

The researcher uncovered one unexpected finding while investigating how nonprofit human service CEOs lead their organization through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence: Nonprofit human service CEOs unconsciously employ multiple sources of influence simultaneously.

Grenny et al. (2013) explained that the six sources of influence model bring the best results when the influencer uses more than one influence at a time. The researcher found the same phenomenon to be true in this study. When asked to reflect on a situation that required influence to be applied simultaneously, many participants expressed surprise to discover they had unconsciously applied influences across all influence domains. Furthermore, the data revealed that participants asserted influence organically, and it rarely occurred exclusively in one domain.

To illustrate this point, suppose a leader decides to enhance the technology used to track program outcomes. To prepare the staff for this transition, the leader announces how the technology will enhance the mission (help them love what they hate, provide encouragement) and promises to provide training so that everyone knows how to use the

technology (help them do what they can't, provide assistance). To ensure that staff are entering the appropriate data, the leader and the staff decide on accountability processes that are tied to their performance review (change their economy, provide encouragement). The leader analyzes the generated reports with the team leaders, and together they interpret an emerging issue that requires cross-department cooperation and collaboration to solve (help them love what they hate, help them do what they can't, provide encouragement, provide assistance, change their economy, change their space). This example underscores how all six sources of influence can be applied when executing complex initiatives.

Conclusions

The researcher conducted a study with 15 nonprofit human service CEOs to investigate how they lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. As a result of the study, the researcher formulated 10 conclusions based on the findings, unexpected findings, and supporting literature.

Conclusion 1: Nonprofit Human Service CEOs Constantly Seek to Improve Their Emotional Intelligence and Frequently Model Vulnerability

Based on the finding that nonprofit leaders increase their influence with staff when they consistently lead with authenticity and transparency, it is concluded that CEOs constantly seek ways to improve their emotional intelligence (EQ) and frequently model vulnerability. In addition, all participants recognized that leading with authenticity and transparency was an influence behavior that encouraged staff to remain steadfast even under trying circumstances.

When asked how they encouraged their staff, the participants from this study looked inwardly and reflected on their use of EQ to self-regulate their behavior. Furthermore, they expressed that they intentionally model vulnerability to show that it is okay to make mistakes, underscoring that the organization thrives when mistakes are shared and celebrated so that a growth mindset might emerge. This approach parallels the work of Brené Brown (2018), who made the profound claim that the quest for perfection heightens self-blame, whereas showing vulnerability contributes to brave leadership.

Conclusion 2: CEOs Routinely Allow Staff to Decide How to Execute Their Day-to-Day Responsibilities

Based on the finding that staff is empowered when they claim ownership and control over how their work is performed, it is concluded that CEOs routinely allow staff to make their own decisions on how to execute their day-to-day responsibilities. For example, when asked how they motivate staff to perform tasks they do not like, leaders pointed out that once the project goal or task assignments were communicated clearly and agreed upon, the individual or team had the freedom to decide how to execute the work.

The participants shared that when they allowed individuals to tap into their source of creativity and ingenuity to execute the task, it often produced results beyond the leader's expectations. Concurrently, these leaders reported that their team members felt a deep sense of pride and ownership for their work, which fostered a cycle of trust between the leader and follower. Consequently, the CEOs in this study believed that empowered, confident teammates were more capable and equipped to make independent, on-the-spot decisions and creatively solve challenges. Furthermore, when mistakes occurred or goals

fell short of expectations, leaders viewed the efforts as valuable information and an opportunity to problem-solve with the staff member. This leadership influence tactic helped build leader-follower trust.

Conclusion 3: To Promote a Culture of Innovation and Self-Efficacy, CEOs Consistently Demonstrate That They Trust Staff to Take Calculated Risks and Initiative

Based on the finding that nonprofit leaders empower their staff to claim ownership and control over their work, it can be concluded that CEOs consistently demonstrate that they trust staff to take calculated risks and initiative. All participants believed that when staff has permission to experiment with cutting-edge approaches that could improve organizational impact, it increases staff confidence and self-efficacy. Rather than chastising or penalizing staff when results fell short of expectations, Participant 2 chose to “breathe confidence” so that team members were not afraid to fail. Participants unequivocally agreed that giving staff autonomy to experiment with concepts that could positively impact the organization be recognized and rewarded. This conclusion parallels the work of Hopkins and Austin (2004) who asserted that human service agencies must encourage learning, experimentation, and innovation to offer high-quality services that meet the diverse needs of clients.

Conclusion 4: To Strengthen Trust and Respect, CEOs Frequently Encourage Staff to Debate, Ask Questions, and Express Differences of Opinion

Based on the finding that nonprofit leaders permit difficult topics to be discussed openly and honestly, it can be concluded that CEOs frequently encourage opportunities for team members to debate, ask questions, and generate new ideas to strengthen trust and

respect. The CEOs in this study shared that high-stakes conversations were an uncomfortable but necessary aspect of leadership. Consequently, when participants were asked how they provide encouragement to staff, leaders cited that inviting voices and opinions from all organizational ranks helped to identify “blind spots.”

Additionally, the leaders believed that individuals felt valued and respected when included during planning sessions and as part of the decision-making process, especially when the decisions being considered impacted their job responsibilities. Furthermore, several participants recognized that staff did not innately possess the trust with each other, nor did they have the personal ability, to engage in courageous conversations effectively. In these cases, CEOs either led trust-building sessions themselves or hired professional consultants to deliver workshops and trainings to build trust, respect, and confidence for engaging in productive conflict.

Conclusion 5: CEOs Champion and Model Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Lead Inclusively and Drive Innovation

Based on the finding that CEOs ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are foundational to the organization, it is concluded that CEOs constantly nurture an environment that allows DEI to manifest profoundly throughout all organizational policies, procedures, and program services. All participants recognized that modeling and demonstrating DEI was an indisputable 21st-century leadership quality that cannot be disingenuous or ignored. Nonprofit leaders who profess commitment to DEI values but flagrantly disregard their own or others’ behavior that constricts or inhibits DEI principles do so at their professional peril. Furthermore, failure to apply the full scope of

DEI stymies innovation from taking root, ultimately placing the organization's long-term sustainability at risk.

As the head of the organization, the nonprofit CEO sets the tone for championing DEI initiatives. The board, staff, and stakeholders frequently observe and emulate the mindset and behaviors modeled by the CEO, gauging how supportive and receptive the CEO will be to move the organizational DEI needle progressively. Moreover, CEOs must apply a broad lens when carrying out DEI initiatives. For example, the culturally intelligent CEO understands that recruiting staff, board members, and volunteers who represent the community demographically (i.e., race, gender, age, etc.) is merely one aspect of demonstrating a commitment to DEI.

Equally important is leading inclusively by actively seeking individuals who have lived experience or hold divergent opinions, and they are invited to participate in vital planning and decision-making processes. CEOs cannot overlook how equity is evidenced in staff retainment practices, access to promotions, and advocating for compensation where no staff member has to live at or below the poverty line. These conclusions underscore that nonprofit human service CEOs who lead with influence diligently monitor and champion DEI initiatives so that innovation can thrive.

Conclusion 6: Nonprofit Staff Requires “Sandbox Time” to Imagine How Internal Capacities and Expertise Can Be Creatively Repurposed

Based on the finding that CEOs leverage the strengths of individuals and cross-department collaboration to achieve the impossible, it can be concluded that nonprofit staff requires “sandbox time” to imagine how internal capacities and expertise can be creatively repurposed. The study showed that leaders frequently devised opportunities

for cross-team collaboration to accomplish tasks that one department could not achieve independently. All participants agreed that strategically assigning projects comprised of individuals with complementary talents and experience fueled curiosity and generated new ideas for answering the question, “How can we solve this problem?”

When asked how they help staff do what they cannot do, CEOs in this study pointed out the interdependency of social service departments. Each team grew more robust when they understood and incorporated other individuals or teams’ knowledge. However, for cross-collaboration to happen seamlessly, CEOs mentioned that a foundation of trust needed to exist within the organization. The participants unanimously agreed that this foundation of trust became stronger when team members spent time collaborating in brainstorming and planning sessions where they could imagine the possibilities and celebrate small wins.

Conclusion 7: To Attract and Retain Talent, CEOs Ensure Staff Receive Flexible Funding and Allocate Time to Attend Trainings and Professional Development

Based on the finding that CEOs arrange and budget cutting-edge trainings and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition, it is concluded that CEOs ensure that staff receive flexible funding and allocate time so they can take advantage of learning opportunities. In addition, all participants believed that investing in professional development was a worthy investment that harvested many benefits for staff members and the organization; chiefly, a well-trained and prepared workforce correlated to gaining an edge over other nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, the participants in this study believed that investing in staff development allowed the organization to attract and retain talented human service

professionals. High-performing staff appreciated the opportunity to gain knowledge and network with their peers in other organizations. The powerful combination of enhanced learning and personal connections often spark imagination and produce fruitful community partnerships. Simultaneously, providing training to entry-level staff improved their confidence to master operational tasks critical to their responsibilities, such as learning how to enter and analyze database reports or adhere to food safety regulations. All CEOs agreed that it was the leader's responsibility to ensure that staff had regular access to learning activities that upgraded their skills and increased whole person self-awareness. To that extent, the leaders in this study also unanimously agreed that staff members should be offered a range of opportunities that suit individual learning styles and career goals.

These conclusions were further supported by the recommendations made by Hopkins et al. (2014) who indicated that it is imperative that nonprofit human service organizations invest in leadership development to keep pace with the speed of innovation and skills required in today's evolving world. Furthermore, the authors pointed out the benefits of peer coaching models, and ongoing individual coaching to reinforce the behaviors and knowledge gained from professional development courses.

Conclusion 8: CEOs Prioritize Staff Physical and Mental Health so They Can Provide Exceptional Client Care

Based on the finding that CEOs prioritize staff physical and mental health to prevent burnout, it is concluded that leaders place staff health and wellness as a top priority so that they might offer exceptional care to clients. When asked how they assisted staff members, there was overwhelming evidence that CEOs recognized that the

staff could not provide outstanding care to clients if they did not feel taken care of by the organization. This conclusion was supported by Participant 12, who accepted full responsibility for “replenishing” staff when their own “cups were empty,” demonstrating that staff members could not perform at high levels if they felt overwhelmed or overworked. The conclusion is further supported by a recent study that revealed more than half of America’s public health workers reported that COVID-19 produced heightened levels of stress and burnout. Furthermore, a staggering one in five study participants reported their mental health as either “fair” or “poor” (de Beaumont Foundation and ASTHO, 2022). Whether it be mental health outside the workplace or fostering a climate of psychological safety within the workplace, issues of mental health are gaining traction as a rising concern.

The CEOs in this study highlighted a variety of perks and benefits to promote staff health and wellness, emphasizing that a one-size-fits-all approach does not always resonate with each staff member. Instead, these leaders believed that tailoring benefits and perks to match staff’s unique health goals helped guard against burnout while supporting employee satisfaction and a sense of well-being.

Conclusion 9: To Improve Employee Engagement and Consistently Deliver Excellent Client Services, CEOs Uphold Dignity and Respect as a Core Organizational Value

Based on the finding that CEOs routinely hold staff to be accountable for the highest level of dignity and respect with clients and guests, it is concluded that CEOs uphold a culture of dignity and respect to improve employee engagement and consistently deliver excellent client services.

When asked how they influence their staff by changing the physical environment, CEOs asserted that the facility's condition reflected how the organization valued staff, clients, and guests through a lens of dignity and respect. All participants recognized that shabby facilities signal a sense of disregard and neglect, further eroding the confidence and self-efficacy of all who served or contributed to the mission. Therefore, these CEOs believed the facility's state and how it impacted the quality of client services directly contributed to the extent to which dignity and respect were upheld as an organizational value. This conclusion was further confirmed by Frumkin (2009) who contended that clients have the power to choose whether or not to accept services from nonprofits. This assertion underscores that moral imperative while considering that clients may seek services from other nonprofits that offer a better experience.

Conclusion 10: The CEO and the Board Pledge to be an Industry Leader for Staff Compensation Within Their Geography, Mission, and Organizational Size to Reduce Voluntary Staff Turnover and Decrease Salary Inequities.

Based on the finding that CEOs frequently challenge the governing board to approve competitive compensation to promote staff retention, it can be concluded that the CEO and the board pledge to be an industry leader within their geography, mission, and organizational size. By doing so, voluntary staff turnover will be reduced, and salary equity will increase. Furthermore, 100% of the study participants recognized that it was their duty and responsibility to courageously influence board members to approve fair compensation on behalf of their staff and keep abreast of how their organization salaries compare to others.

When asked how they influence behavior by changing their economy, the participants from this study admitted that competing for talented staff members with a heart for nonprofit work was growing increasingly challenging, especially when competing against for-profit companies that offer enticing compensation and benefits packages. However, the CEOs unanimously expressed commitment to ensuring that the organization had the financial resources to provide competitive pay and benefits for nonprofit staff. Furthermore, the participants actively worked to dispel the long-standing myth that nonprofit organizations must continually be operating with a “poverty mindset.” They realized the importance of calculating and articulating the actual costs of running a financially sustainable organization to philanthropic partners and stakeholders. This approach parallels the work of Gregory and Howard (2009), who emphatically argued that nonprofit organizations run the risk of a constant cycle of starvation unless the CEO communicates the realistic cost of operating and overhead costs that comprise staff salaries and benefits.

Implications for Action

The prior conclusions indicate that this study’s nonprofit human service CEOs are adept at motivating and influencing multiple stakeholders to work together to achieve organizational goals. The recommendations described in the following sections aim to support nonprofit human service CEOs as they hone their influence and leadership skills to sustain an empowered organizational culture. The recommendations also illuminate opportunities for staff and board members to partner with CEOs so that collaboration and innovation may flourish.

Implication 1: CEOs Practice Self-Awareness and Set Aside Time to Reflect on Their Actions and Emotions Daily. In Addition, They Frequently Seek Input From Team Members on the Extent to Which Their Actions Reflect Their Commitment to Self-Awareness, Emotional Intelligence, and Modeling Vulnerability.

CEOs in this study consistently shared the importance of demonstrating empathy and compassion through their words and actions, especially during stressful situations and confronting problems. Based on the finding that CEOs positively influence team members when they embody authenticity and transparency, it is recommended that CEOs practice self-awareness and self-regulation by setting aside time to reflect on their actions and emotions daily. Leaders may consider methods such as journaling, mindfulness, or using an app to track daily emotions to measure the consistency of their actions, feelings, and emotional triggers over time.

To heighten their EQ, the data suggested that CEOs identify workshops to broaden their perspective on self-managing and self-regulating their actions and emotions. EQ can stagnate without constant vigilance and a deep desire to understand oneself. Identifying and committing to a method of continually improving EQ parallels the work of Bradbury and Greaves (2009) who asserted that it is when an individual understands themselves that outstanding leadership emerges. Leaders who do not regularly practice or value introspection may not be aware that they act in unreasonable, demanding, or hurtful manners. These actions lead to a toxic work environment that breeds fear and anxiety for the staff and, ultimately, every individual interacting with the organization. Finally, it was concluded that CEOs establish a process for frequent, open-

ended feedback from multiple sources to model vulnerability and improve performance, including direct and indirect reports.

Implication 2: Every 2 Years, the Nonprofit Board Hires an External Consultant to Analyze and Provide Guidance on How to Increase Inclusive Board Governance and Organizational Leadership

Based on the finding that diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational to the organization, it is recommended that nonprofit board members hire an external consultant to analyze and provide guidance on how to increase inclusive board governance and organizational leadership. Since DEI initiatives are most effective when modeled and championed at the top levels of the organization, the researcher recommends that the board and the leadership team work together, guided by the consultant, to create an intentional DEI strategy for the organization. Furthermore, the researcher recommends expanding DEI to include examining and embracing social justice as an organizational value. By committing to the pursuit of social justice, human service organizations transform into injustice disruptors that become the catalyst for solutions; disruptors are champions for change in the face of systemic problems. When the pursuit for social justice is included as an organizational value, working lockstep with DEI, the acronym becomes JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion). Far more than a compliance checklist, or a plan that sits on the shelf, the JEDI strategy and action plan informs the breadth and depth of how individuals embrace and promote diversity conscious leadership.

There are several benefits to hiring an independent consultant to steer a strategy specifically targeting JEDI initiatives. First, a professional consultant who is well-versed

in community issues points out opportunities to enhance JEDI in the lives of those serving (i.e., staff, volunteers, partner organizations, etc.) and those who are served (i.e., clients, community members experiencing hardship, etc.), expanding the narrative by including multiple perspectives. A comprehensive audit, conducted by the consultant, would shed light on areas for improvement to advance JEDI within all organizational practices and procedures that go beyond analyzing representation or hiring practices. For example, after perusing the organization's communications, the consultant could recommend that the organization move away from exploitive stories that undermine human dignity and include stories of client strength and resilience.

Secondly, the consultant would execute a thorough fact-finding and data-gathering process by examining the board and organizational composition, policies, and governance and its intended and unintended impact on the staff members and clients. It is recommended that the consultant engages in qualitative and quantitative data collection methods across all levels of the organizations to illuminate the current state of JEDI practices in the organization and help the organization articulate how its desired future could become a reality.

Thirdly, an independent consultant would identify potential conscious and unconscious bias in the organization and bring clarity to intentions and actions. For example, the consultant could enhance the leaders' perspective, helping them gain insight into whether the organization is setting the standard or falling behind other community boards and nonprofit organizations upholding JEDI. Most importantly, the consultant would lead an action planning process co-created with all team members and relevant stakeholders, setting benchmarks and measures to provide accountability and clarity

around the JEDI objectives and goals the organization has agreed to pursue.

Implementation of this process would reflect the organization's genuine commitment to advancing JEDI initiatives and magnify the beauty of leading a diverse staff.

Implication 3: Nonprofit Organizations Create an "Inclusion Task Force" that Leads Annual Listening Tours, Seeking Input Throughout the Organization to Help Steer Significant Decisions for the CEO

Based on the finding that CEOs give permission to discuss difficult topics openly and honestly, it is recommended that nonprofit organizations create an inclusion task force that leads annual listening tours, seeking input throughout the organization to help steer significant decisions for the CEO. The inclusion task force hosts trusting spaces where stakeholders can voice concerns, bring forward ideas, and highlight the field's best practices. This task force's primary motivation is to support and encourage a culture of ownership and transparency and root out practices of blame and silence. Convened by a senior leadership team member, the inclusion task force comprises a cross-section of staff, board members, and volunteers committed to serve in this capacity.

Before conducting the listening tour, it is recommended that inclusion task force members set goals, objectives, and decide on success factors that will be conveyed and celebrated with the entire staff. Careful preparation and transparent communication from the CEO set the stage for the staff to understand why and how the collected information will help inform opportunities for inclusive leadership. Once the listening tour is completed, the inclusion task force synthesizes the multiple perspectives and topics raised and presents the central themes to the CEO. Finally, the CEO and the inclusion task

force choose the top three areas for opportunity or improvement to incorporate as strategic organizational initiatives.

Implication 4: CEOs and Human Resources Conduct an Annual Needs Assessment With Staff to Determine the Organization’s Three Top Challenges, Then Use “Talent Matching” to Form Workgroups to Address the Problems

Based on the finding that CEOs identify opportunities for staff to thrive by optimizing their strengths and talents, it is recommended that CEOs and human resources conduct an annual needs assessment with staff to determine the organization’s top three challenges, then use talent matching to form workgroups to address the problem. When performing the talent matching process, the researcher recommends widening the net of talent to include board members, volunteers, corporate and industry partners, regulatory experts, community partners, and consultants to augment the skills and talents within the organization.

Implication 5: A Community Advisory Board Is Established and Convenes Quarterly to Engage in Discussions, Brainstorming, and Feedback to Strengthen Dignity and Respect

Based on the finding that CEOs routinely hold staff to be accountable for exhibiting dignity and respect with clients and guests, the researcher recommends that a community advisory board (CAB) be established and convened quarterly to engage in discussions, brainstorming, and feedback to strengthen dignity and respect throughout the organization. CAB appointees would possess the skills, knowledge, or experiences that do not exist or are underrepresented in the organization. Comprised of a cross-section of

clients and community partners who have local knowledge and lived experience, the CAB serves as a trusted sounding board for the administrative staff.

The CAB is charged with the responsibility for helping staff to interpret and craft responses that could impact program services in the future. Convened under the leadership of the CEO or a designated senior leadership team member, the CAB sheds light on how the organization might assess and improve program services to ensure that clients and their families do not have to overcome needless barriers to gain access to basic needs or empowerment programs. For example, this group could help the organization develop or provide advice on making services more accessible, discreet, or hassle free.

Concurrently, the CAB brings plays an integral role in broadening organizational and community awareness around systemic racial, economic, and social injustices that impact people of color. With their unique skills and voices, the CAB members act as consultants to help the CEO and the organization to find common ground, uncover blind spots, and identify opportunities that encourage a sense of belonging and value for everyone who encounters the organization. The CAB also points out opportunities for revising organizational practices that contribute to conscious and unconscious bias, and advocates for multiple perspectives and narratives to be heard and included. With these actions, the CAB reinforces the manifestation of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational to the organization.

The CAB need not compete with the governing functions performed by the board of directors, but rather complement the gaps in the organization's perspective and experience. One way to differentiate the CAB from other volunteer positions is to offer a

stipend for their time and expertise. Every hour of a participant's time should minimally equate to the region's living wage hourly rate. This token of appreciation enables individuals representing the client's perspective to participate while honoring their time and distinctive viewpoints with financial compensation.

Implication 6: Nonprofit Organizations Engage in Bi-Yearly “Design Sprints” to Help Staff Bring Forward Innovative Approaches and Ideas

Based on the finding that CEOs leverage the strengths of organizational departments to help achieve the impossible, the researcher recommends that nonprofit organizations engage in bi-yearly design sprints to help staff develop innovative approaches and bold ideas. Design sprints are a structured, collaborative practice for cross-department teams to combine expertise and quickly create new responses to stubborn problems. The sprint design model consists of a rapid, 5-day process where team members come together to solve a problem by engaging in planning and discovery, ideation, prototyping, and testing the proposed solution. Engaging in design sprints or similar collaboration exercises provides a framework for vision and operations to align, which speaks to research conducted by Hopkins and Hyde (2002) that called for addressing the chasm between leader vision and innovation that can stymie human service organizations. Therefore, scheduling two design sprint activities per year would boost cross-functional team capacity while unearthing feasible opportunities to encourage innovation.

Implication 7: Nonprofit Organizations Earmark Money for a "Creativity and Innovation Grant" to Assist Team Members in Implementing Innovative Ideas

Based on the finding that CEOs harness creativity and innovation as catalysts for change when faced with complex problems, it is recommended that organizations earmark money for a creativity and innovation grant to assist team members in implementing innovative ideas. By designating an innovation fund, CEOs demonstrate their personal desire to ensure that the organization stretches its imagination for overcoming innovation constraints. In addition, an innovation fund sends a clear signal that the CEO is willing to rejuvenate “sacred cow” programs that may be part of the organizational DNA but no longer serve the client’s best interests or address the root causes.

The Creativity and Innovation Grant provides strategic financial investments in ideas that have been untested but hold great promise or are emerging best practices in other markets. It is recommended that nonprofit organizations set aside dedicated funding so that when new ideas emerge, staff members can obtain the financial resources needed to test ideas or conduct pilot programs without going through a formal grant process. To foster equitable access to the grant from all levels of the organization, nonprofits might consider designing an application process that clearly outlines the criteria for how much funding is available and how the funding will be awarded. The criteria for how awards are distributed must be transparent during all phases of the application and program implementation process. It is advised that the development team be included to assist with projecting a realistic sum to be raised to sustain the funding. They would be charged with finding angel investors eager to fund nontraditional

approaches. Furthermore, the development team can produce aspirational messages and design strategies to encourage philanthropic partners to invest in this process. Or, suppose a nonprofit is thinking about establishing an endowment fund or already has an endowment in place. A portion of the interest gained could be allocated to the Creativity and Innovation Fund.

A final consideration involves appropriate staffing and evaluating the efficacy of the innovation. First, if the innovation requires significant staff time to implement, roles and responsibilities are shifted accordingly to support the effort without heaping on additional tasks. Secondly, evaluation is an important element to determine if the innovation realizes its intended goals and if additional funding should be pursued. If the organization does not have internal evaluation capacity, partnering with local universities or contracting with professional program evaluators is an alternative. In addition, a preliminary evaluation could help the organization gain a competitive edge when submitting grant applications to public and private foundations and corporations.

Implication 8: Nonprofit Organizations Incorporate “Whole Human Development” Into Organizational Professional Development and Learning Practices to Increase Employee Engagement and Motivation

Based on the finding that CEOs arrange and budget cutting-edge trainings and professional development to position the organization ahead of the competition, it is recommended that nonprofit organizations incorporate whole human development when seeking professional development and learning practices so that employees continue to be engaged and motivated on the job. Whole human development is based on the notion that employees’ work and home life are fluid and can no longer be compartmentalized.

Therefore, it is recommended that organizations consider offering employee flexibility as they identify the experiences and professional development courses they want to pursue, even if they do not apply to their current job responsibilities.

Professional development is a perk that benefits the organization and the staff members. Leaders cannot underestimate the value of investing in staff members by tangibly showing them that they genuinely care about their advancement as human beings and professionals. Therefore, nonprofit organizations should continue to invest in individual technical skills required for certification and ongoing skill building. However, the researcher recommends that each employee receive a stipend so they can explore opportunities that pique their personal interest. For example, instead of offering a gym membership to every employee, a wellness stipend could give team members the flexibility to attend a yoga studio or take martial arts classes. Likewise, a whole human development approach allows the employee flexibility when exploring professional development pursuits. By providing this flexibility, the worker will feel supported based on their unique circumstances and goals. Nonprofit organizations that do not establish a generous professional development program will significantly diminish their opportunity to attract, develop, and retain the most qualified professionals.

Implication 9: CEOs Frequently Assess and Make Facility Improvements That Enhance Staff Physical and Mental Health

Based on the finding that CEOs optimize the office environment always to be efficient, clean, and safe, it is recommended that CEOs frequently assess and make facility improvements that enhance staff physical and mental health. A clean and well-organized facility benefits staff members, clients, and visitors. CEOs, working with their

facilities and operations staff, explore how the office configuration, lighting, and workstations contribute to overall worker physical and mental health. However, to maximize their influence in this area, CEOs might consider an even broader interpretation when designing spaces within the facility to contribute to staff's physical and mental health. For example, CEOs might brainstorm with the staff to improve the conditions of the break room that do not require significant upgrades, such as purchasing a second microwave to reduce the wait time for the team to warm up their lunch. An outdoor space with picnic tables becomes a gathering place for staff to eat together and be outdoors when the weather permits. Many workplaces have adopted pet-friendly policies that allow the team to bring their dogs to work, which has been found to alleviate stress, promote collaboration, and enhance life balance.

Nonprofits often struggle with space constraints and opt for cubicles and open floor plans to accommodate the organization's growth. Although this structure enables more staff to sit at a designated workspace, the open concept undoubtedly contributes to excess noise and a lack of privacy. In these cases, the CEO might consider purchasing pods that resemble a telephone booth. The pods offer staff the ability to have a private telephone conversation or momentary silence, a low-cost but effective alternative to providing single offices.

Concurrently, the identification of special needs should also be factored into improving spaces. Ensuring that the facility can welcome staff and volunteers with all physical abilities should be scrutinized and exceed what the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires is one indication that the organization respects and values all people. Considering special needs might also pertain to providing lactation stations that offer

comfortable, private spaces for breastfeeding mothers. These examples represent the creativity that CEOs might exercise when contemplating how to improve the facilities to support mental and physical health. The researcher recommends the CEO utilize the team's input to brainstorm and prioritize facility improvements and ensure that the cost of the facility improvement plans is allocated in the annual budget.

Implication 10: Nonprofit Organizations Develop a Workplace Health Optimization Plan That Aligns With Organizational Goals and Staff Health Needs and Interests

Based on the finding that CEOs prioritize physical and mental health support to prevent staff burnout, it is recommended that nonprofit organizations develop a workplace health optimization plan that aligns with organizational and staff health needs and interests. When possible, CEOs can establish a "health and well-being committee" to identify health benefits that allow the whole person's health to flourish. The plan would outline various activities and products that contribute to the mind, body, and spirit experience.

For example, suppose several team members share a goal of incorporating more fruits and vegetables into their diet, or increasing the amount of time they move their body. In that case, the organization may support that goal by stocking the refrigerator with fruit or sponsoring physical activities such as lunchtime yoga. The goal is to craft a plan that aids team members to take ownership of their health, and the organization strives to reduce barriers that hinder their motivation or ability to accomplish their goals. The data suggest that in doing so, the organization could see a reduction in sick time logged, a reduction in stress, and notable differences in energy levels throughout the day.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study investigated how nonprofit human resources CEOs lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends 12 areas for future research to understand how leader influence amplifies mission impact within the nonprofit ecosystem.

Recommendation 1

This study examined how human service CEOs lead by influence, focusing on motivating and assisting staff in reaching new heights of job effectiveness and satisfaction. Further research should be conducted with nonprofit CEOs of color in historically minoritized organizations to investigate how they lead by influence. The study would contribute to nonprofit literature that describes the lived experiences of exemplary leaders of color as they lead their staff and community stakeholders to address a host of issues related to racial injustice in marginalized communities.

Recommendation 2

Examine how human service CEOs lead their board members by exerting influence. Insights would shed light on how human service CEOs “manage up” to their governing and supervisory board by exercising influence, then compare if influence tactics are similar or different than those used to influence subordinates.

Recommendation 3

Conduct a qualitative study to examine how exemplary nonprofit director-level licensed social workers use influence to motivate and support midlevel and entry-level teammates. Exploring this perspective would aid social worker professional membership organizations like the National Association for Social Workers (NASW) to develop

professional development courses and continuing education units (CEUs) to boost social worker influence and leadership skills.

Recommendation 4

Conduct a mixed methods study with frontline social service professionals responsible for case management to analyze how and to what extent they use influence to motivate and empower client attainment of mutually agreed-upon goals. A study would inform social service leaders on the training needed for entry-level case managers to enhance influence competencies, such as improving EQ and engaging in self-reflection. In addition, assessing how case worker influence impacts client self-efficacy would expand the knowledge base of social work outcomes.

Recommendation 5

Investigate how CEOs lead through influence in nonprofit missions such as economic mobility, workforce development, policy and advocacy, and social justice. Examining how leader influence is demonstrated throughout various nonprofit settings would guide nonprofit credentialing organizations like the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (NLA) to incorporate influence as a leadership competency for becoming a Certified Nonprofit Professional.

Recommendation 6

Conduct systems theory research with nonprofit coalitions to investigate how influence is wielded when several organizations work together to achieve social change and outcomes they could not solve independently. Findings would inform nonprofit professionals about the nature of how influence may positively or negatively impact nonprofit coalition relationship management, accountability, and trust.

Recommendation 7

Conduct a comparative case study between a CEO at a nonprofit human service organization and a for-profit human service agency to examine similar or deviating tactics of leading with influence. Insights gained would produce a cross-pollination of leadership and influence methods that nonprofit and for-profit human service practitioners could adapt to improve organizational dynamics, culture, and career satisfaction in the human service field.

Recommendation 8

Using Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence as a lens, conduct a phenomenological study with nonprofit human service CEOs leading organizations located in rural communities. Data from this study would illuminate whether and how rural CEOs describing the application of influence are distinguishable from their urban colleagues, contributing to the literature on the contrast between urban and rural leadership practices.

Recommendation 9

Conduct a study with human service CEOs leading a staff of up to ten paid staff. Study results would aid nonprofit leaders who lead start-up nonprofits or are poised for growth, contributing to nonprofit literature describing leadership practices in small, grassroots organizations.

Recommendation 10

Conduct a study on how nonprofit leaders advance and promote justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace through the lens of psychological safety. The study would shed light on how nonprofit leaders intentionally create a culture of

belonging so that staff and other stakeholders feel safe to share ideas and concerns without fear of ridicule or retaliation.

Recommendation 11

Using Grenny et al.'s (2013) six sources of influence, conduct a qualitative study with nonprofit CEOs who have been selected for national leadership awards, such as the Classy Awards, a competitive award process that recognizes nonprofits performing exemplary work around the world. Conversely, the study population could be drawn from local leadership programs offered by foundations and civic organizations.

Recommendation 12

Investigate how grant makers fund and measure the effectiveness of nonprofit leadership programs. This information would provide successful approaches so that other foundations might adopt and build leadership as a core funding commitment. A dedicated focus on elevating leadership would contribute to helping nonprofits thrive and be sustainable.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

My internal process for choosing a dissertation topic that would contribute to the body of nonprofit leadership literature proved to be everything but linear. As I analyzed the existing research, I discovered prolific evidence of the challenges faced by nonprofit professionals, but few studies held up the strengths and resilience of nonprofit leaders. For the past 30 years of my career, I have lived the challenges that plague the nonprofit sector. The common themes underscored in the literature, such as the cycle of scarcity, the acceptance of lackluster leadership, and the reluctance to innovate, are undeniably

real. Therefore, I was eager to build on a line of research that would further point out the weaknesses in the nonprofit sector to spur action and catalyze change.

However, this approach did not feel authentic to me. Instead, I contemplated the social justice pioneers, the scores of iconic leaders throughout history who, against all odds, brought injustice out of the shadows and sparked social revolutions. What if they and the people who followed them had only focused on the factors that limit growth? What if they had decided that the fight was too arduous?

Then, I thought about the consummate professionals I know who bring passion, compassion, and courage to their work. With relentless conviction, they bust through the boulders that threaten to deter them from improving the human condition. How might I illuminate opportunities to enhance their efforts? Next, I considered the mentors who nurtured me personally and professionally, realizing my life would not be as fulfilling without their influence and leadership. How might I honor their profound impact on my life and the countless others they touched?

Finally, I reflected on the skills and knowledge the next generation of nonprofit warriors will need to thrive as they take up the mantle of human service. What do I know now that I wish I had known at the beginning of my career? Regrettably, I do not have a time machine to shuttle me back to 1991 when the nonprofit sector captured my heart and soul. However, the wisdom gained from my field experience as a nonprofit leader, overlaid with my academic perspective, fuels my bold and daring dreams for how the nonprofit sector can be leaders and champions of America's next social evolution frontier.

As I embark on this visioning voyage, I see a nonprofit sector that pursues organizational missions with confidence and clarity. The community turns to the nonprofit sector not out of charity, but out of a deep desire for restorative justice. Radical collaboration exists between the nonprofit, private, and government sectors, transforming the broken systems that no longer benefit our society. Nonprofit board members reflect the face and the lived experience of the community, encouraging and empowering their CEOs to fearlessly tackle the root causes of inequities. Moreover, foundations and philanthropists engage in equitable and community-centered funding in partnership with community-based organizations. Understanding that social change and sustainable outcomes may take generations to improve, funders with the financial capability make monetary commitments to organizations and coalitions that span decades.

Likewise, nonprofit leaders face every day with an unbridled passion that exudes from their pores. They believe with every fiber of their being that their mission can be achieved. In turn, their unwavering belief captures the imagination of others. They want to contribute their strengths to this bold new vision. The leaders continually invest in their own leadership growth and ensure professional development is a core organizational value. They recognize and value staff members. They look for opportunities to help their staff grow personally and professionally. As a result, nonprofit employees feel supported by their leaders; therefore, they have the motivation and ability to help heal individuals and families. Programs and services provide pathways that empower all people, providing trauma-informed services co-designed by the people impacted. The demand for services has dropped because, as a society, we have invested in equitable practices that allow all individuals the opportunity to pursue a self-determined life.

Some would say the vision I described is unachievable. Yet, I contend there are no impossible dreams. One person makes a difference. A few people can spark a movement. A ripple of influence creates a tidal wave of positive change.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Request to Conduct Research – Bank of America Foundation

Sent Via Email – June 10, 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for our conversation yesterday about my research study. It was wonderful to connect with you again!

As a follow-up from our discussion, I am summarizing my research goals:

- My phenomenological study will shed light on the lived experiences of how 15 exemplar nonprofit human service CEOs lead through the application of influence.
- These collective stories will expand the current nonprofit leadership literature and illuminate strategies utilized by effective human services leaders so that other leaders might emulate similar behaviors. Study results may enlighten leadership development professionals on how to teach and promote the use of influence as a key leadership skill. Nonprofit board members may find the results helpful as they consider succession plans.
- I am in the stage of identifying the “best of the best” nonprofit human service CEOs in the country to interview to collect their unique stories.
- Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builders, by its rigorous awardee selection process, presents an excellent sample for this study. Other characteristics, such as professional tenure, size of the organization, education, thought leadership, and evidence of successful relationships with followers, will also be considered.
- The sample would draw from Basic Needs CEOs selected for the Neighborhood Builders Award over the last five years (2015 – 2020).
- The estimated timeline for conducting interviews (through Zoom, due to social distancing) would be mid- to late- fall.

I request your help to identify the Basic Needs CEOs and serve as a bridge to connect with them. With so many challenges nonprofit leaders face today, a warm hand-off from you may capture their attention and place it higher on their priority list. In return, I would love to share my research findings with you. I would be delighted and honored to do so!

Thank you for your important and impactful work. Should you or your President have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely yours,

Lucinda Perry Jones

Lucinda Perry Jones
Doctoral Candidate, Organizational Leadership
University of Massachusetts Global

APPENDIX B

**Study Recruitment Letter from
Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders Program Manager**

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 9:47 AM

Subject: RE: Neighborhood Builders Opportunity to Contribute to the Field

Dear Neighborhood Builders Leaders,

As you know, Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders® Signature Program is one of the nation's largest philanthropic investments in nonprofit leadership development, strengthening the network of nonprofit leaders that are critical to helping our communities thrive. We are very proud of the achievements each of you have made in the communities you serve!

I am reaching out to share a unique opportunity for you to contribute your important insight and experience as a nonprofit leader. Lucinda Perry Jones, a 2016 Neighborhood Builders Emerging Leader, is conducting an important research study that examines how nonprofit human service CEOs lead by influence. Because she is aware that the best and brightest nonprofit executives are chosen as Neighborhood Builders, she is requesting that you respond to her invitation to be a potential study participant.

Attached is a letter from Lucinda that explains more about the study and how you can volunteer to participate. I strongly encourage you to give thoughtful consideration to her request because your personal insight will benefit the nonprofit sector. If you are interested in volunteering for the study, please contact Lucinda directly. Participants will be compensated for their time.

Thanks for your continued engaged in and support of Bank of America's Neighborhood Builders.

George Thorn

Neighborhood Builders Program Manager

APPENDIX C

Participant Recruitment Letter

As a nationally recognized nonprofit leader, your unique leadership experiences must be shared with the world so that others might learn and benefit from your example!

Dear Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Awardees:

My name is Lucinda Perry Jones and I am a nonprofit professional who was selected as a 2016 Bank of America Neighborhood Builders, Emerging Leader, from the St. Louis market. The professional development and networking opportunities I gained from that experience contributed to my decision to pursue a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership, which I am currently pursuing.

I am writing a dissertation that will contribute to nonprofit leadership literature and practices. My study, “The Nonprofit Human Service CEO: The Experience of Leading Through Influence,” will shed light on how leaders like you inspire, motivate, and assist your staff to achieve your organizational mission. Every day – consciously and unconsciously – you use influence in some form to bring about the best results for your staff, community stakeholders, and improve the quality of life for the people you serve. My study provides an opportunity for you to share your unique stories that will help current and future leaders to recognize and harness the use of influence to obtain organizational results.

I am seeking human service CEOs/Executive Directors to participate in my study. If selected, you will participate in a 60-minute interview via Zoom. To thank you for your time, you will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Qualifying participants must meet the following criteria:

- Received the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders® Signature Program Award from 2015-2020
- Currently hold or have previously held the top leadership position in a human services organization (titles may be CEO, Executive Director, or Director).
- Previously work or currently work in an organization that addresses human needs such as hunger relief, housing, youth enrichment, senior services, second chance programs, etc.
- Have organizational leadership responsibility for a minimum of five paid staff

If you agree to participate in this study, or if you have questions about what participation means, please contact me. Interviews will be scheduled during the month of July and early August at a time that is convenient for you.

Should you be selected as a study participant, your information will remain completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes, transcriptions or records from the interview and any identifying information will remain in locked files, accessible only to me. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of my request, and thank you for the tremendous impact you make through your leadership and service to your community.

Sincerely yours,
Lucinda Perry Jones

APPENDIX D

Confirmation Letter to Participants

Thank you so much for volunteering to be a study participant for my dissertation, “The Nonprofit Human Service CEO: The Experience of Leading Through Influence.” I am very excited to hear your stories – they need to be heard so that other leaders might better understand how to leverage their influence to benefit their organization. I am so honored to meet you and soak in all your rich experiences as a nonprofit professional.

- Our first step is to schedule a time for a 60 minute interview through Zoom. Please see available meeting times and dates below.
 - I will send the questions to you in advance so you have time to reflect on your experiences of leading through influence.
- Once we have a date and time scheduled, I will email you two documents:
 - Participant Bill of Rights (for your records)
 - Research Study Participant Consent Form (you will sign and send back to me for my records)
- I will also send along a brief introduction of myself and why I am passionate about elevating the topic of leadership and influence in the nonprofit sector.

In the meantime, please select three dates and times that will work for you. I will respond back as quickly as possible with a Zoom link, as I know how quickly your schedule can be filled! There will be 15 participants in my study. I am attempting to schedule all interviews during August.

Note:

- If you need additional September dates (preferably no later than September 10) please let me know and I’ll send additional dates.
- All times are listed in Central Standard Time.

Please let me know if you have any questions by email or my cell phone. Again, I am so grateful for your time and expertise. There will be more information forthcoming!

Warmly,
Lucinda Perry Jones
Doctoral Candidate, Organizational Leadership
University of Massachusetts Global

APPENDIX E

Study Participant Interview Questions

Prompt: Thank you for being willing to participate in this study. You have been chosen to participate in this study because you are one of the few exemplary leaders named as a Bank of America Neighborhood Builders in the basic needs category. As such, I am interested in how you lead individuals and teams in your organization. The work you are engaged in is incredibly important and relevant to the people and communities you serve. By participating in this study, your experiences will also help future nonprofit leaders and nonprofit leadership scholars to strengthen understanding about how human service leaders lead by influence. With that said, there may be cases where you used several influence tactics at once. When that is the case, please share how you leveraged these actions to produce desired behaviors.

When I designed this study, I identified several leadership frameworks. As I considered each one, it was apparent that the most appropriate one for my study was Grenny's Six Sources of Influence. Joseph Grenny, a highly regarded leadership scholar and author, described the six sources of influence which are: 1) help them love what they hate, 2) help them do what they can't, 3) provide encouragement, 4) provide assistance, 5) change their economy, and 6) change their environment.

Today, I will walk through some questions related to each of these six sources of influence to see if you might use them as a leader of your organization. I will also ask at the end if you use these sources of influence singularly or if you have used multiple influences simultaneously. I want to encourage you to share openly. Please know my role is not to evaluate your performance as a leader. Rather, it is your opportunity to share your unique stories that others will benefit from hearing. Your stories can really help shape the outcome of this study, and in return help advance our profession. Are you ready to get started?

Personal Motivation

We will start with Grenny's first source of influence, which is to help them do what they hate to do. When Grenny talks about this first influence, he explains that sometimes leaders do things like: allow for choice, create direct experiences (connect the work to the mission), tell meaningful stories, or make it a game. I am sure that in your leadership experience, you have been in situations where individuals or teams must conduct work they do not like but must do.

Interview Questions:

- 1) Can you share your experiences when you helped a staff member or teams love what they hated to do?
- 2) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how you help your staff love what they hate to do, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)
- As you help your staff love what they hate to do, is this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps?)
- Why was that important to help this staff member love what they hated to do?

Personal Ability

The second source of influence is helping staff do what they can't do. Grenny pointed out that people are more likely to be engaged when they have the confidence to perform required tasks. Some examples of helping staff do what they can't do include: learning new skills; providing for real-world application of skills and deliberate practice; coaching and feedback against a clear standard; breaking big goals into mini goals; and helping them recover from failure.

Interview Questions:

- 3) Can you share your experiences when you helped your staff do what they couldn't do?
- 4) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how you help your staff do what they couldn't do, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)
- As you help your staff do what couldn't do, is this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps?)
- Why was it important to help your staff do what they can't do?

Social Influence

The third source of influence is providing encouragement. Grenny wrote about the persuasive power that fellow beings hold over one another because of our deeply felt desire to be accepted, respected, and connected to others. Some of the techniques Grenny described to provide encouragement included: leading by example; engaging formal and opinion leaders as models; creating new norms; making the undiscussable become discussable; and creating accountability.

Interview Questions:

- 5) Can you share your experiences when you provided encouragement to your staff?
- 6) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how to provide encouragement to your staff, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)

- As you encourage your staff, is this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps?)
- Why was it important to provide encouragement to your staff?

Social Ability

The fourth source of influence is to provide assistance. In this case, think about how you tap into organizational and professional networks to help accomplish something that cannot be accomplished in isolation. In other words, taking a “me” problem and turning into a “we” problem. Some examples Grenny provided for applying this type of influence included: developing people’s ability to work as a team through interdependence, brainstorming, identifying blind spots, and promoting solidarity (giving up individual agendas for the good of all).

Interview Questions

- 7) Can you share your experiences when you provided assistance to your staff?
- 8) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how to provide assistance, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)
- As you provide assistance to your staff, is this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps?)
- Why was it important to provide assistance to your staff?

Structural Motivation

The fifth source of influence is changing their economy. Whereas before we talked about human factors, the last two sources of influence focus on things, such as rewards, bonuses, perks, salaries, and even the occasional “kick in the pants.” In short, it means how do you employ positive and negative incentives with your staff? Some examples Grenny provided for applying this type of influence included: identifying how you use incentives to support positive behavior; how you reward vital behaviors, not just results; linking rewards to specific actions that need to be repeated; letting staff know the consequences before punishment.

Interview Questions

- 9) Can you share your experiences when you changed their economy?
- 10) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how you changed their economy, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)
- When you change their economy, is this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps)
- Why was it important to change their economy?

Structural Ability

The final source of influence pertains to structure. Let's turn our focus on how buildings, space, sound, sight, etc. might be an influence you use when leading. Grenny referred to some examples that included: identifying the influence of physical aspects of space (related to offices, workspaces, the building); drawing attention to critical data points; and evaluating the proximity of staff to each other.

Interview Questions

- 11) Can you share any your experiences you have had when you changed the physical environment?
- 12) Can you give me some more examples?

Probes (if needed):

- These examples you shared about how you changed the physical environment, may I ask how often you do these things? Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Is there a set time they are done? (when do you do it?)
- As you changed the physical environment, was this process done by you only? Or do you have help from others in your organization to accomplish this? (who helps?)
- Why was it important to change their physical environment?

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: The Nonprofit Human Service CEO: The Experience of Leading Through Influence

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Lucinda Perry Jones, Organizational Leadership Doctoral Candidate, University of Massachusetts Global

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary nonprofit human service CEO's lead their organizations through the lens of Grenny et al. (2013) six sources of influence.

What will happen if I take part in this research? The study will fill in the gap in the research concerning nonprofit leadership and influence. The results of the study may assist nonprofit leaders when exploring effective ways to motivate and build the skills of their staff. Nonprofit board members could use the results to determine key leadership attributes during the hiring process. The study could also point out the benefits of including influence techniques in professional trainings and coaching for nonprofit professionals.

By participating in this study, you agree to participate in a face-to-face interview with the researcher. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes and will be conducted by Zoom. During the interview, the researcher will review the purpose of the study, the research interview process, and the consent and assent forms required for participation. Time will be available to ask questions about the study and receive answers. The researcher will ask a series of questions designed to help you share your experience of leading through influence.

Confidentiality: All study participants will be identified by number, not by name. Furthermore, when the research is discussed or published, no study participant will be identified by name.

During the interview process, the researcher will use an electronic recording device during interview sessions to ensure accuracy during transcription. However, all responses will be kept completely confidential. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. Upon completion of the study all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

Decision to quit at any time: My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study, and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative

consequences. I also understand the Research Investigator may stop the study at any time. No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed and my consent will be obtained.

How the findings will be used: The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes. The results from the study may be presented at professional conferences and could be published in a professional journal. The results will also be used to identify further studies for other researchers to pursue regarding leadership and influence. Lastly, the results could be used to design professional development curriculum for nonprofit leaders.

Benefits of the study: By participating in this study, your personal experience will help add to the research related to the nonprofit sector, human services leaders, and the field of influence. Upon completion of the study, at participants' request, the researcher will provide a bound copy of the completed dissertation. You will also receive a \$25.00 Amazon gift card to honor your time and attention.

Study participant potential risks: While there are no known major risks to your participation in this research study, minor potential risks may include inconvenience due to the timing of the interview session, or a question(s) may cause emotional discomfort while discussing how you lead your staff through influence. Therefore, the interview questions and protocol were sent prior to the interview. If you have any questions before the interview begins, please feel free to contact the researcher for explanation.

Contact information: If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher, Lucinda Perry Jones, at lperryjo@mail.umassglobal.edu or telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also contact Dr. Jeffrey Lee, Dissertation Chair, at jlee1@umassglobal.edu.

SIGNATURE OF STUDY PARTICIPANT: I acknowledge I received a copy of the Research Participant Bill of Rights. I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in the study.

Study Participant Name

Study Participant Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

Study Participant Bill of Rights

University of Massachusetts Global Institutional Review Board

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the UMass Global Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The UMass Global Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, University of Massachusetts Global, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX H

Video Script Introduction to Confirmed Study Participants

Hello. My name is Lucinda Perry Jones, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Organizational Leadership Program at UMass Global.

First, I want you to know how grateful I am that you are taking time out of your busy schedule to contribute to my dissertation, “The Nonprofit Human Service CEO: The Experience of Leading Through Influence.” You are one of 15 participants chosen to participate in this study because of your status as a Bank of America Neighborhood Builders awardee, and because of your exemplary performance as a nonprofit leader.

Although I am sorry we can’t meet face to face, I have found that Zoom meetings afford the ability for deep listening and interaction. To kick-off our time together, I wanted to give a brief overview of my background and why I am so fascinated with the leadership topic of leading through influence.

I have had the great fortune of holding positions across all three sectors – nonprofit, corporate, and government. By far my greatest passion is devoted to the nonprofit sector where I have held various positions encompassing programs, policy, and administration. I started a consulting business this year called Accelerate Change. I work with organizations engaged in social evolution missions to power up leadership, change management, and strategic planning. Before that, I spent more than 10 years working in hunger relief and food systems. As [REDACTED] mentioned in his email, I was the 2016 Bank of America Emerging Leader from the St. Louis Market. My participation in the leadership program was the spark that led me to pursue to a doctorate in Organizational Leadership.

That is me. Now let’s turn to you. Undoubtedly, your leadership in the human service field has never been more important or relevant. The literature focused on human services challenges is abundant. There is ample research about the many challenges faced by nonprofit leaders today – from working with limited human and financial capital, from showing donors that you are moving from outputs to outcomes, to navigating huge systems change. What is in short supply, however, are the assets that nonprofit leaders hold within themselves: the capacity and ability to lead their staff through influence. Every day, both consciously and unconsciously, you influence how your staff connect to the mission. Through your leadership, you motivate and inspire your staff to achieve daunting and courageous goals. Your personal, lived experience of how you lead your staff through influence needs to be shared widely, so that current and future leaders can emulate your example.

That’s where I come in! Our time together will be for 60 minutes. Before our meeting, you will receive a list of interview questions for you to consider. There is no right or wrong answer! Even if you think an influence tactic is simple or evident, others who read the dissertation may be hearing it for the first time. Also, COVID obviously dominates our entire landscape today, and you may be using your influencing skills even more frequently than before. However, think about ways you used influence before COVID as well, as these experiences are still very relevant and transferrable.

Please look over the Participant Bill of Rights and sign the Participant Consent Form. This informs you of your rights as a participant and is a written agreement that everything you share with me will stay confidential. Your name will not be associated with any of the data so please know that I value your authentic and lived experiences – the good, the bad, and the ugly!

I hope this brief video gives you greater insight into my background and interests and provides a layer of connection to each other. If you have questions about any aspect of this study, please do not hesitate to contact me and we will discuss your concerns.

Again, thank you for the leadership you bring to the people you serve, and thank you for your willingness to be a study participant. It means the world to me and will be an important contribution to the nonprofit field of leaders, practitioners, and researchers.

I look forward to our time together!

APPENDIX I

Letter to Joseph Grenny, VitalSmarts

June 10, 2020

Mr. Joseph Grenny
VitalSmarts Headquarters
282 River Bend Lane
Provo, UT 84604 USA

Dear Mr. Grenny:

I recently read *Influencers: The New Science of Leading Change* and was inspired by your research methods and the powerful impact of the six sources of influence. As a nonprofit professional working in the field of hunger relief, I strive to apply the concepts in your book when planning or implementing organizational and community change initiatives. I am also a doctoral candidate studying Organizational Leadership at the University of Massachusetts Global. I am deeply passionate about understanding how nonprofit leaders lead change in their organizations through the application of influence. After careful consideration of several change models, I identified the six sources of influence as the framework to use in my phenomenological study.

Your cutting-edge research, and the six sources of influence model, represents a significant opportunity for nonprofit professionals to sharpen their effectiveness. The reality is that many nonprofit leaders lack access to professional development. When they do, the art and science of applying influence are rarely discussed. Therefore, my goal is to expand the current nonprofit leadership literature and illuminate strategies utilized by effective human service leaders so that other leaders might emulate similar behaviors. Additionally, nonprofit board members may find the results helpful as they consider succession plans.

I am writing to you for two reasons. Because the six sources of influence is trademarked, I wanted to perform due diligence and make sure there are no restrictions for using the model as the lens for my study. The second reason is to offer to share my research findings with you. I would be delighted and honored to do so!

Thank you for your important and impactful work. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Lucinda Perry Jones

Lucinda Perry Jones
Doctoral Candidate, Organizational Leadership
University of Massachusetts Global

APPENDIX J

Email from Joseph Grenny to Researcher

Dear Lucinda,

Thank you for your kind letter. I have shared it with my co-authors. We are always so gratified to learn that our work has been useful to others. I am especially happy for the worthy ends you are putting it toward. Best of luck in your doctoral work. And please let me know if I can be helpful in any other way.

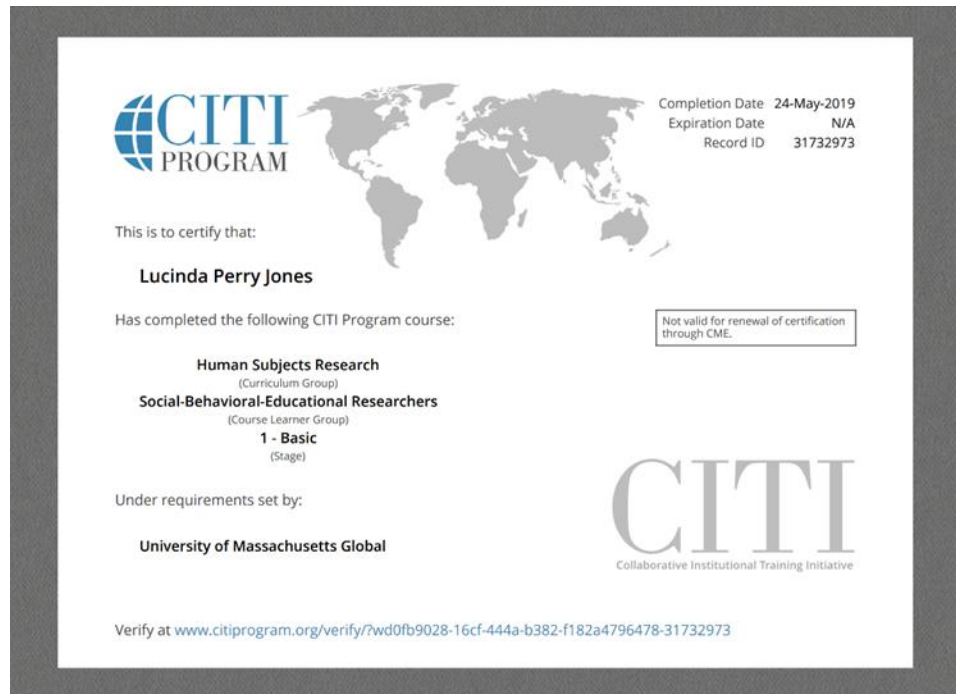
You may consider this email to be formal authorization to cite our Influencer model and associated intellectual property in your doctoral studies. And, if you are so inclined, I would welcome a copy of the ultimate thesis.

Warmly,

Joseph Grenny
VitalSmarts

APPENDIX K

**Certificate of Completion of Training by National Institute of Health (NIH)- Office
of Extramural Research Protecting Human Research Participants**



APPENDIX L

Institutional Review Board Approval

Institutional Review Board <my@brandman.edu>

Jun 11, 2021,
8:59 AM

Dear Lucinda Perry Jones,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at the following link: <https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf>.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,

Doug DeVore, Ed.D.

Professor

Organizational Leadership

BUIRB Chair

ddevore@brandman.edu

www.brandman.edu

APPENDIX M

Synthesis Matrix

References	Nonprofit Sector	Human Service Organizations	Nonprofit Leadership	Human Service Leadership	Influence and Leadership
Abramson, A. J. (2018, June 19). Today's charitable sector and its roots and challenges [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://ssir.org/articles/entry/todays_charitable_sector_and_its_roots_and_challenges#	X		X		
Acevedo, A. (2018). A personalistic appraisal of Maslow's needs theory of motivation: From "humanistic" psychology to integral humanism. <i>Journal of Business Ethics, 148</i> (4), 741–763.					X
Ahn, M. J., Adamson, J. S., & Dornbusch, D. (2004). From leaders to leadership: Managing change. <i>Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 10</i> (4), 112–123.					X
Akingbola, K. (2015). <i>Managing human resources for nonprofits</i> . New York, NY: Routledge.		X			
Allen, J. A., & Mueller, S. L. (2013). The revolving door: A closer look at major factors in volunteers' intention to quit. <i>Journal of Community Psychology, 41</i> (2), 139–155.	X	X			
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forces-strengthen-human-services-america.aspx					
Anderson, D., & Ackerman Anderson, L. (2010). <i>Beyond change management: How to achieve breakthrough results through conscious change leadership</i> . San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.					X
Anheier, H. K. (2014). <i>Nonprofit organizations: Theory, management, policy</i> . New York, NY: Routledge.	X		X		
Austin, D. M. (1989). The human services executive. In Y. Hasenfeld (Ed.), <i>Administrative leadership in the social services: The next challenge</i> (pp. 13-36). New York, NY: Haworth Press.	X	X		X	
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Austin, M. J., Regan, K., Samples, M. W., Schwartz, S. L., & Carnochan, S. (2011). Building managerial and organizational capacity in nonprofit human services organizations through a leadership development program. <i>Administration in Social Work, 35</i> (3), 258–281.		X		X	
Babcock-Roberson, M. E., & Strickland, O. J. (2010). The relationship between charismatic leadership, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviors. <i>The Journal of Psychology, 144</i> (3), 313–326.					X
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Ball, B. (2012). <i>A summary of motivation theories</i> . Retrieved from					X

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Bennis, W. G., & Townsend, R. (1989). <i>On becoming a leader</i> (Vol. 36). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.					X
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Bradbury, T., & Greaves, J. (2009). <i>Emotional intelligence 2.0</i> . San Diego, CA: TalentSmart.					X
Brown, B. (2018). <i>Dare to lead: Brave work. Tough conversations. Whole hearts</i> . New York, NY: Random House.					X
Callahan, D. (2017). <i>The givers: Wealth, power, and philanthropy in a new gilded age</i> . New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.	X		X		
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de Beaumont Foundation and ASTHO. (2022). Rising stress and burnout in public health: Results of a national survey of the public health workforce. Retrieved from https://debeaumont.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2022/03/Stress-and-Burnout-Brief_final.pdf	X	X	X	X	
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Epstein, M. J., & McFarlan, F. W. (2011). Measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of a nonprofit's performance. <i>Strategic Finance</i> , 93(4), 27–34.	X		X		
Fisher, A. (2017). <i>Big hunger: The unholy alliance between corporate America</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.	X	X	X	X	X
Fox, H. L. (2013). The promise of organizational development in nonprofit human services organizations. <i>Organization Development Journal</i> , 31(2), 72.	X	X	X	X	
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Goulston, M., & Ullmen, J. B. (2013). <i>Real influence: Persuade without pushing and gain without giving in</i> . New York, NY: AMACOM.					X
Gregory, A. G., & Howard, D. (2009). The nonprofit starvation cycle. <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i> , 7(4), 49–53.	X	X	X	X	X
Grenny, J., Patterson, K., Maxfield, D., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2013). <i>Influencer: The new science of leading change</i> . New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.					X
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Hasenfeld, Y. (2010). The attributes of human services organizations.	X	X	X	X	

<i>Human Services as Complex Organizations</i> , 2, 9–32.					
Hasenfeld, Y. (2015). What exactly is human services management? <i>Human services Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance</i> , 39(1), 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2015.1007773	X	X	X	X	
Heifetz, R., & Linsky, M. (2017). <i>Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of change</i> . Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press.					X
Herman, R. D. (2010). Executive leadership. In D. O. Renz (Ed.), <i>The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management</i> (3rd ed., pp. 157–177. Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=q7S9ky7LFyoC&oi=fnd&pg=PA157&dq=related:JU52d2YyoqIJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=pR8swGHe1F&sig=aQl2IccfO2JpPpPHeUcD9JuML-I#v=onepage&q&f=false	X	X	X	X	X
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and old solutions. <i>Administration in Social Work</i> , 26(3), 1–15.					
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Hunter, D. J. (2009). Leading for health and wellbeing: The need for a new paradigm. <i>Journal of Public Health</i> , 31(2), 202–204. https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdp036	X	X	X	X	
Independent Sector. (2015). <i>Threads: Insights from the charitable community</i> . Retrieved from Independent Sector website: https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ThreadsReport_April16.pdf	X				
Jaskyte, K. (2004). Transformational leadership, organizational culture, and innovativeness in nonprofit organizations. <i>Nonprofit Management & Leadership</i> , 15(2), 153–168. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.59	X	X	X	X	X
Kotter, J. P. (2001). What leaders really do. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 79, 85–98.					X
Leiter, M. (1991). The dream denied: Professional burnout and the constraints of human services organizations. <i>Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne</i> , 32(4), 547.	X	X	X	X	
Lencioni, P. (2002). <i>The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable</i> . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.					X
Leslie, J. B., & Wei, R. (2010). Assessing leadership and the leadership gap. In M. G. Rothstein &	X		X		

R. J. Burke (Eds.), <i>Self-management and leadership development</i> (pp. 129–159). Cheltenham, United Kingdom: Edward Elgar.					
Lewis, J. A., Packard, T., & Lewis, M. D. (2012). <i>Management of human services programs</i> (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.		X		X	
Martin, L. L., & Kettner, P. M. (2010). <i>Measuring the performance of human services programs</i> (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.		X		X	
McClung, L., & Boudier, S. (2019). <i>Influence on all cylinders: The complete guide to sharing your story, shaping opinions, winning allies, & furthering your mission</i> . Cleveland, OH: Advocacy and Communications Solutions.	X	X	X	X	X
Meehan, W. F., III, & Starkey Jonker, K. (2017a). <i>Engine of impact: Essentials of strategic leadership in the nonprofit sector</i> . Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.	X	X	X	X	X
Mosley, J. E., & Smith, S. R. (2018). Human services agencies and the question of impact: Lessons for theory, policy, and practice. <i>Human Services Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance</i> , 42(2), 113–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2018.1425953		X		X	
National Council of Nonprofits. (2019). <i>Nonprofit impact matters: How America's charitable nonprofits strengthen communities and improve lives</i> . Retrieved from National Council of Nonprofits website: https://www.nonprofitimpactmatters.org/	X		X		
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<i>Human Services Administration</i> , 37(3), 304–326.					
Northouse, P. G. (2016). <i>Leadership: Theory and practice</i> (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.					X
Oke, A., Munshi, N., & Walumbwa, F. O. (2009). The influence of leadership on innovation processes and activities. <i>Journal of Organizational Dynamics</i> , 38(1), 64–72.	X		X		X
Olinske, J. L., & Hellman, C. M. (2017). Leadership in the human services nonprofit organization: The influence of the board of directors on executive director well-being and burnout. <i>Human Services Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance</i> , 41(2), 95–105.	X	X	X	X	X
Packard, T. (2009). Leadership and performance in human services organizations. In R. J. Patti (Ed.), <i>The handbook of human services management</i> (2nd ed., pp. 143–164). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.	X	X	X	X	
Pallotta, D. (2009). <i>Uncharitable: How restraints on nonprofits undermine their potential</i> . Medford, MA: Tufts University Press.	X	X	X	X	
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Paynter, S., & Berner, M. (2014). Organizational capacity of nonprofit social service agencies. <i>Journal of Health & Human Services Administration</i> , 37(1), 111–145.	X	X	X	X	
Powers, J. (2016). <i>Special report: America's food banks say charity won't end hunger</i> . Retrieved from		X	X		

https://whyhunger.org/images/publications/Special-Report.pdf					
Renz, D. O., & Herman, R. D. (Eds.). (2016). <i>The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management</i> (4th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119176558.fmatter	X	X	X	X	X
Riggio, R. E., Bass, B. M., & Orr, S. S. (2004). Transformational leadership in nonprofit organizations. In R. E. Riggio & S. S. Orr (Eds.), <i>Improving leadership in nonprofit organizations</i> (Vol. 49, pp. 49–62). Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=SIu8xjYU5IMC&oi=fnd&pg=PA49&dq=BM+Bass+and+nonprofit+executives&ots=JkYyf7le-R&sig=KQ6sCyUjS3pnwQPYsdtSTcnNeU#v=onepage&q=BM%20Bass%20and%20nonprofit%20executives&f=false	X	X	X	X	X
Ronquillo, J. C., Hein, W. E., & Carpenter, H. L. (2012). Reviewing the literature on leadership in nonprofit organizations. In R. J. Burke & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), <i>Human resource management in the nonprofit sector: Passion, purpose, and professionalism</i> (pp. 97–116). Northampton, MA: Edgar Elger.	X		X		
Salamon, L. M. (2004). <i>The state of nonprofit America</i> . Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.	X	X	X	X	
Salamon, L. M., & Toepler, S. (2015). Government-nonprofit cooperation: Anomaly or necessity? <i>Voluntas</i> , 26(6), 2155–2177. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-015-9651-6	X	X	X	X	
Sargeant, A., & Day, H. (2018). <i>A study of nonprofit leadership in the U.S. and its impending crisis</i> . Retrieved from Sustainable Philanthropy with Plymouth	X		X		

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