From Prevention to Possibility: *Building Campus Environments Where Students Can Thrive*

Presented by:

Raphael Florestal-Kevelier, PhD, MPH, FACHA

July 22, 2026 | NECPA Statewide Convening

Learning Objectives

Explain how the current higher education and public policy landscape is shaping prevention and student wellbeing efforts on college campuses.

Apply a systems-level framework to align prevention, mental health promotion, and campus engagement efforts with broader institutional priorities.

Distinguish between traditional, programmatic prevention approaches and integrated, institution-wide strategies that position wellbeing and belonging as foundational to student success.

Identify practical, scalable strategies for advancing prevention and student wellbeing initiatives within complex and evolving campus environments.

Movement I: A Personal Transformation

Before we talk about prevention, I’d Like to tell you a story.

2015: Student Voices Spark a National Conversation

How can I support you?

“I'm not sure you can... because you're an administrator, and the administration is part of the problem...

...I am tired of being resilient."

- Student

We created space.

Healthy campuses don’t happen by chance. They are intentionally cultivated.

Movement II: Seeing the Campus as a Living System

CHANGES IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

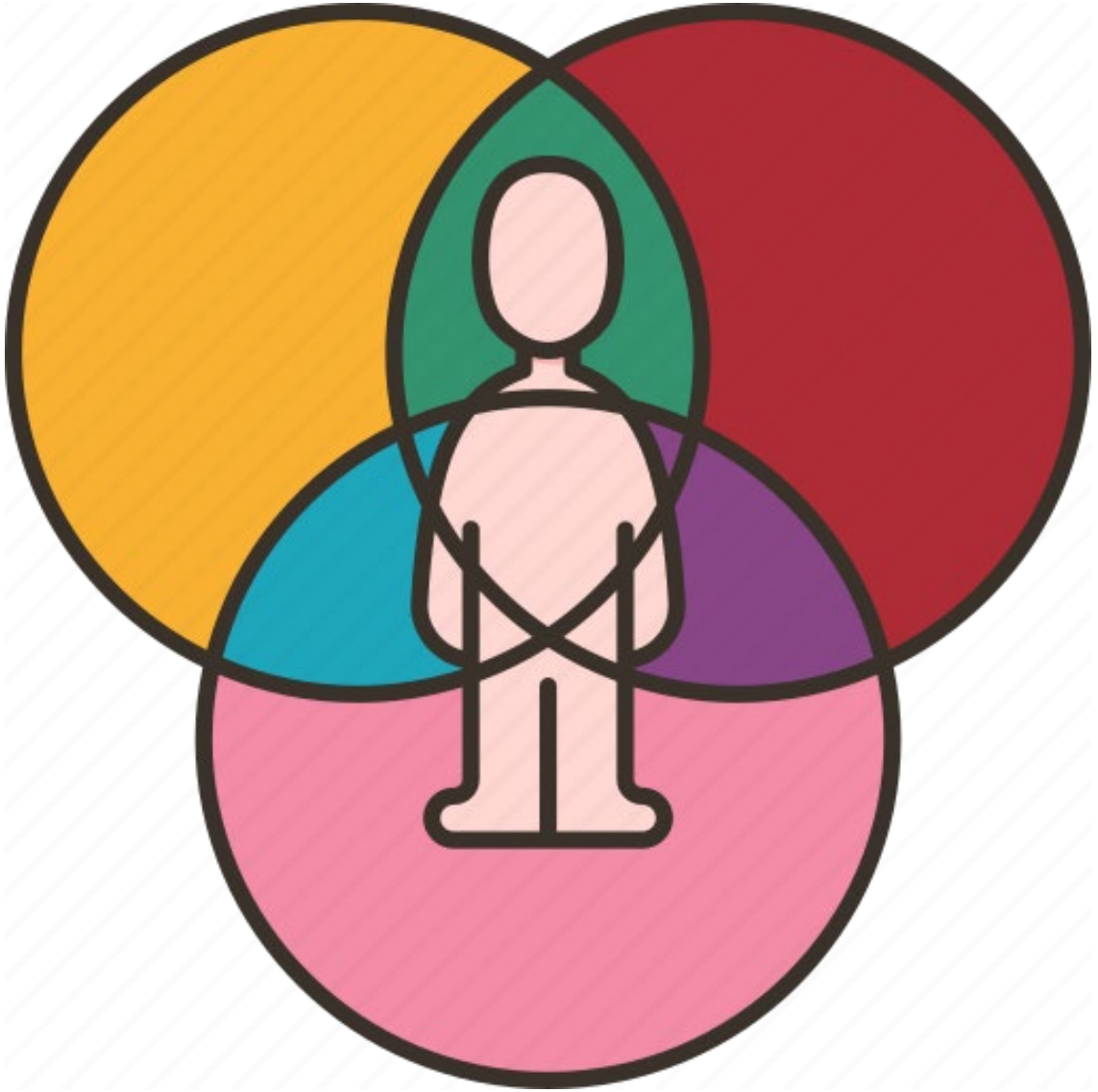
Pandemic
Climate
War
Inequities

Fear
Anxiety
Uncertainty
Racism

Xenophobia
Preparedness
Trauma/PTSD

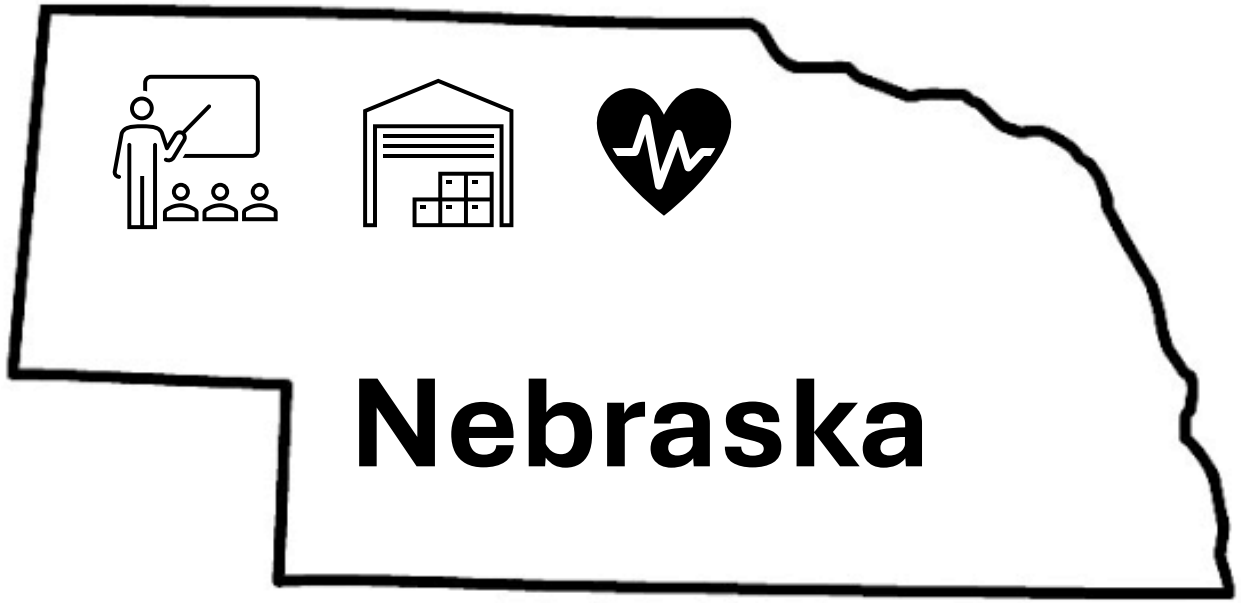
Intersectionality
Healthcare
Politics

Students don’t live single issue lives.

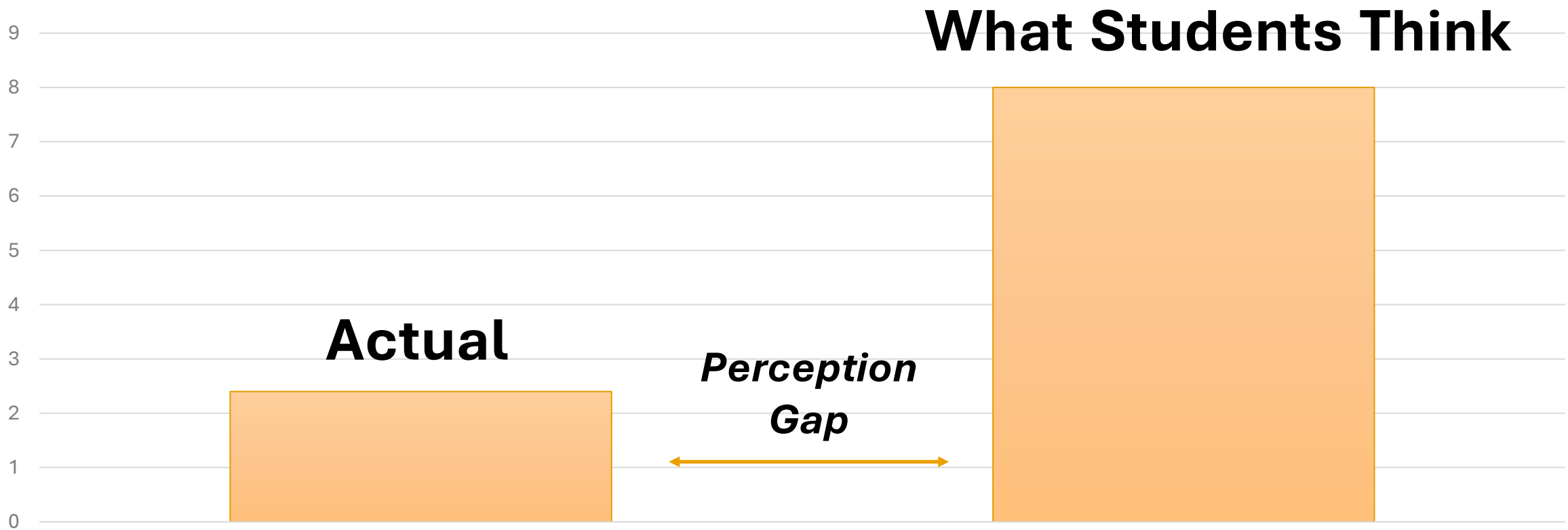


Start With Strengths

73.8% of entering students abstain from alcohol.



Perception Influences Behavior



Programs matter. Healthy conditions amplify their impact.

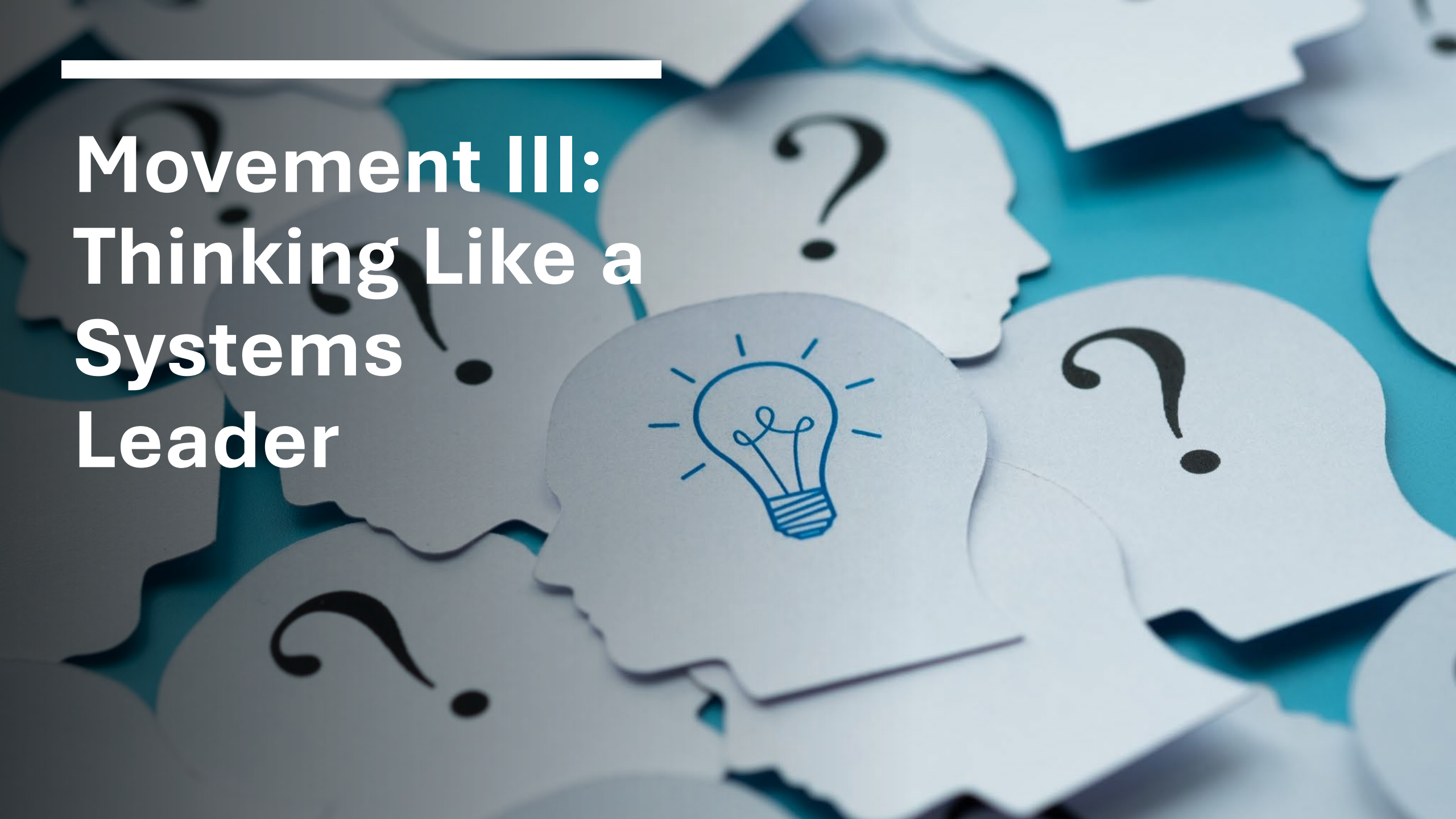
Program Thinking

- Focus on interventions
- Change behavior
- Individual office
- Success = participation

Conditions Thinking

- Focus on environments
- Shape the conditions that influence behavior
- Shared institutional responsibility
- Success = healthier campus conditions

Movement III: Thinking Like a Systems Leader



The questions we ask determine the solutions we build.

Systems thinking begins with better questions.

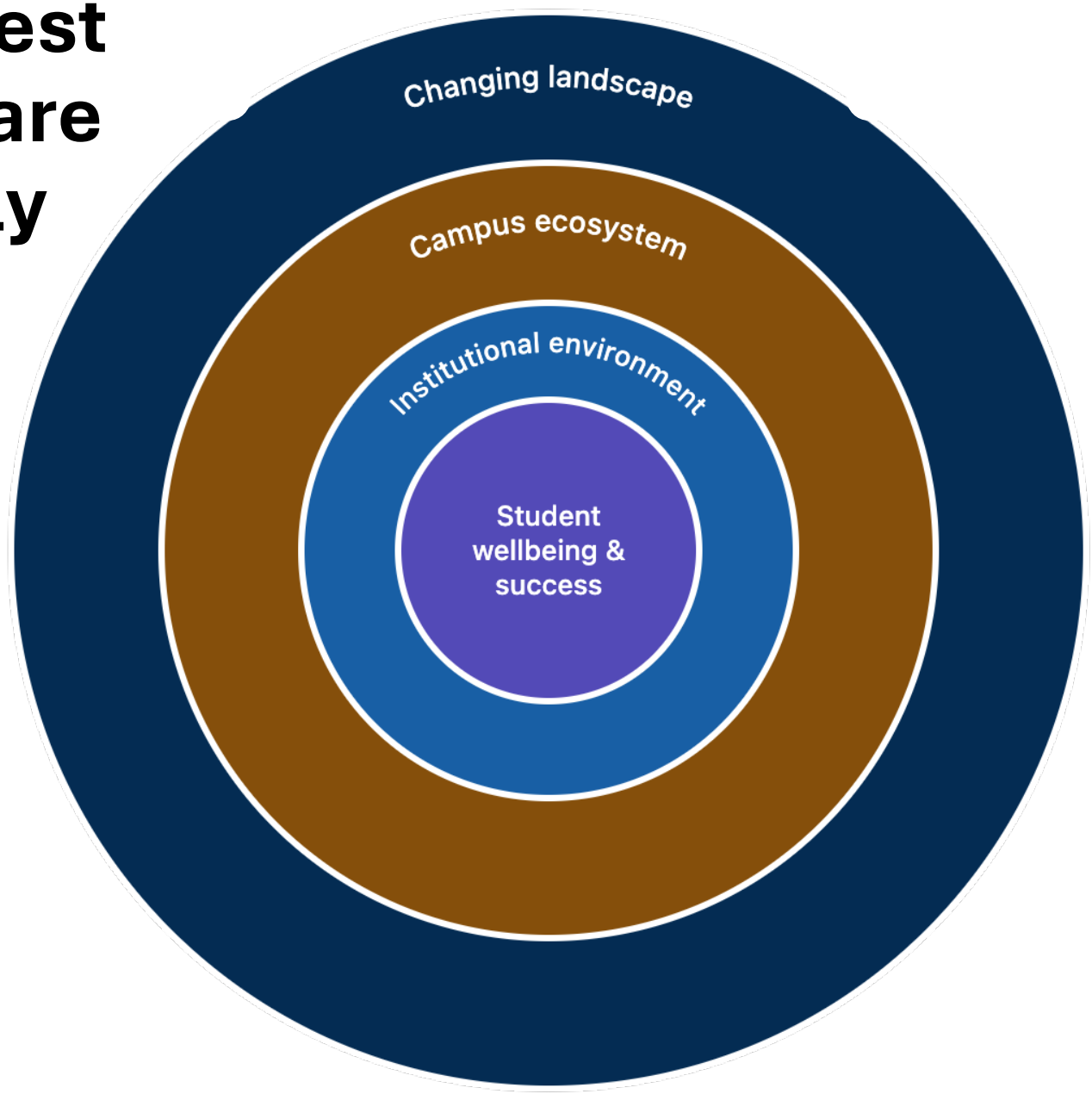
Traditional Question	Systems Question
How many students attended?	**What condition changed because students participated?**
How many referrals were made?	**How easy is it for students to find and trust care?**
What program should we build next?	**What environment are we trying to cultivate?**
Whose responsibility is this?	**How do we share responsibility across the institution?**

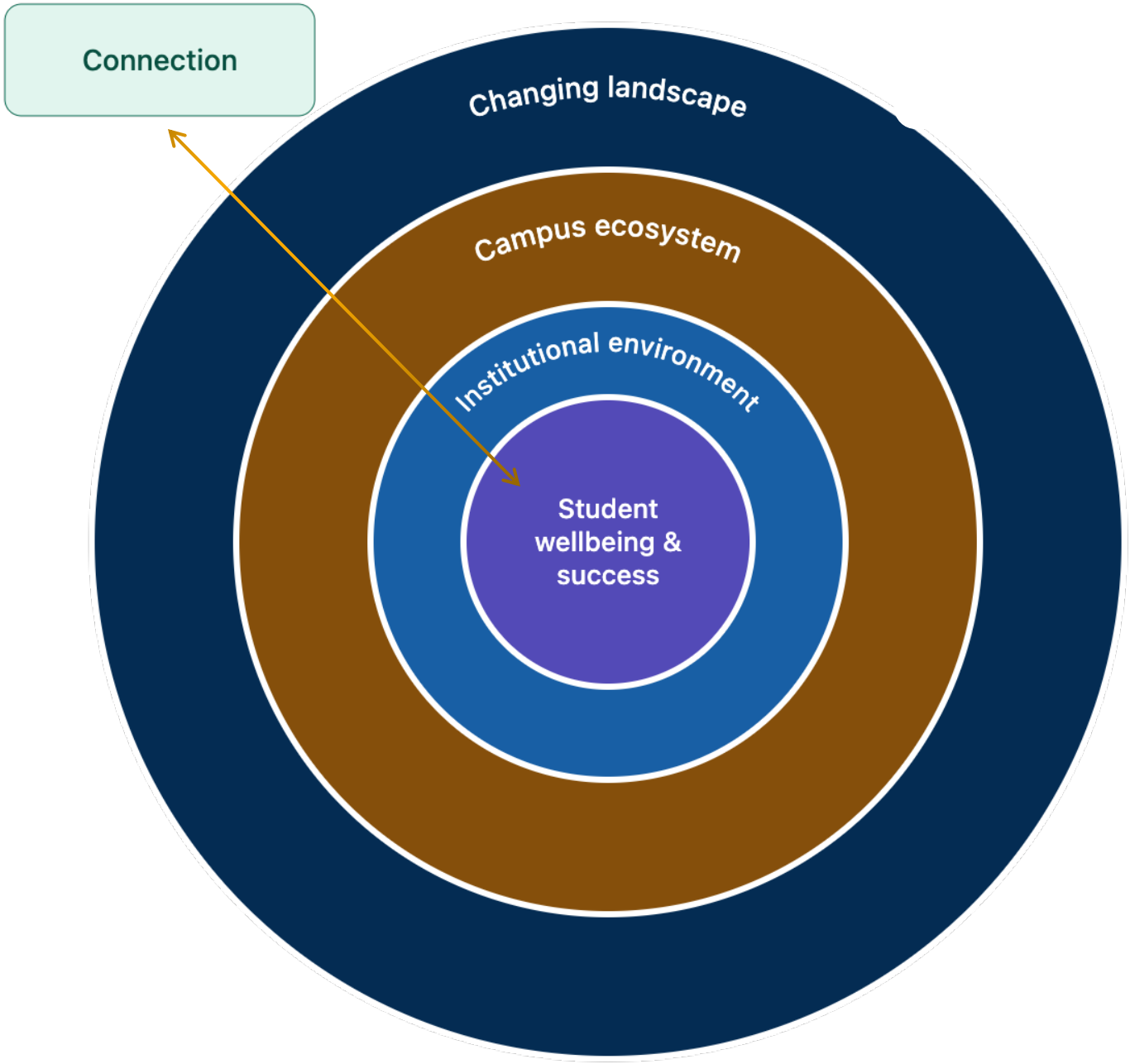
Belonging is a health outcome.

The healthiest campuses are intentionally cultivated.

Movement IV: An Institutional Transformation

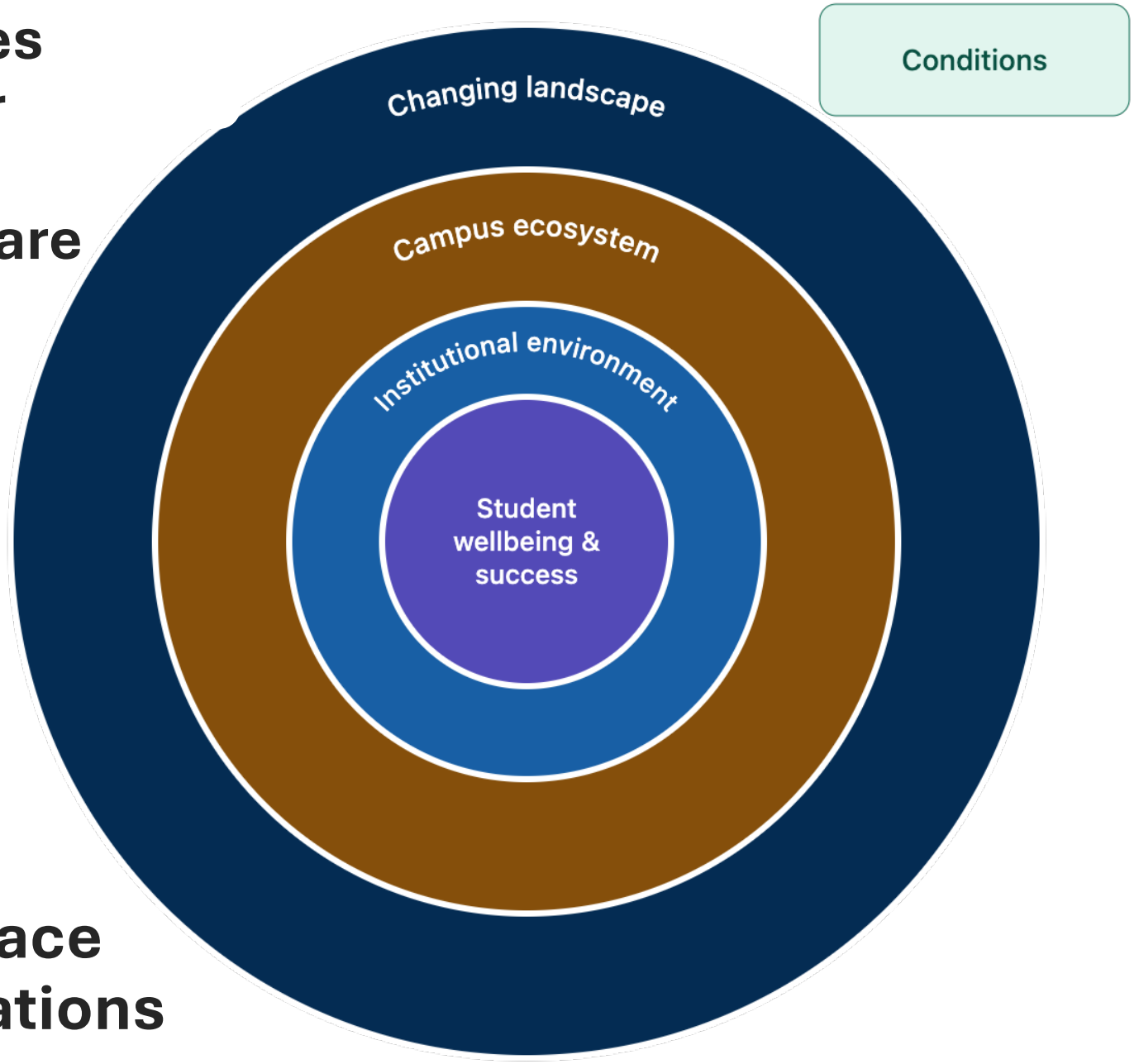
The healthiest campuses are intentionally cultivated.





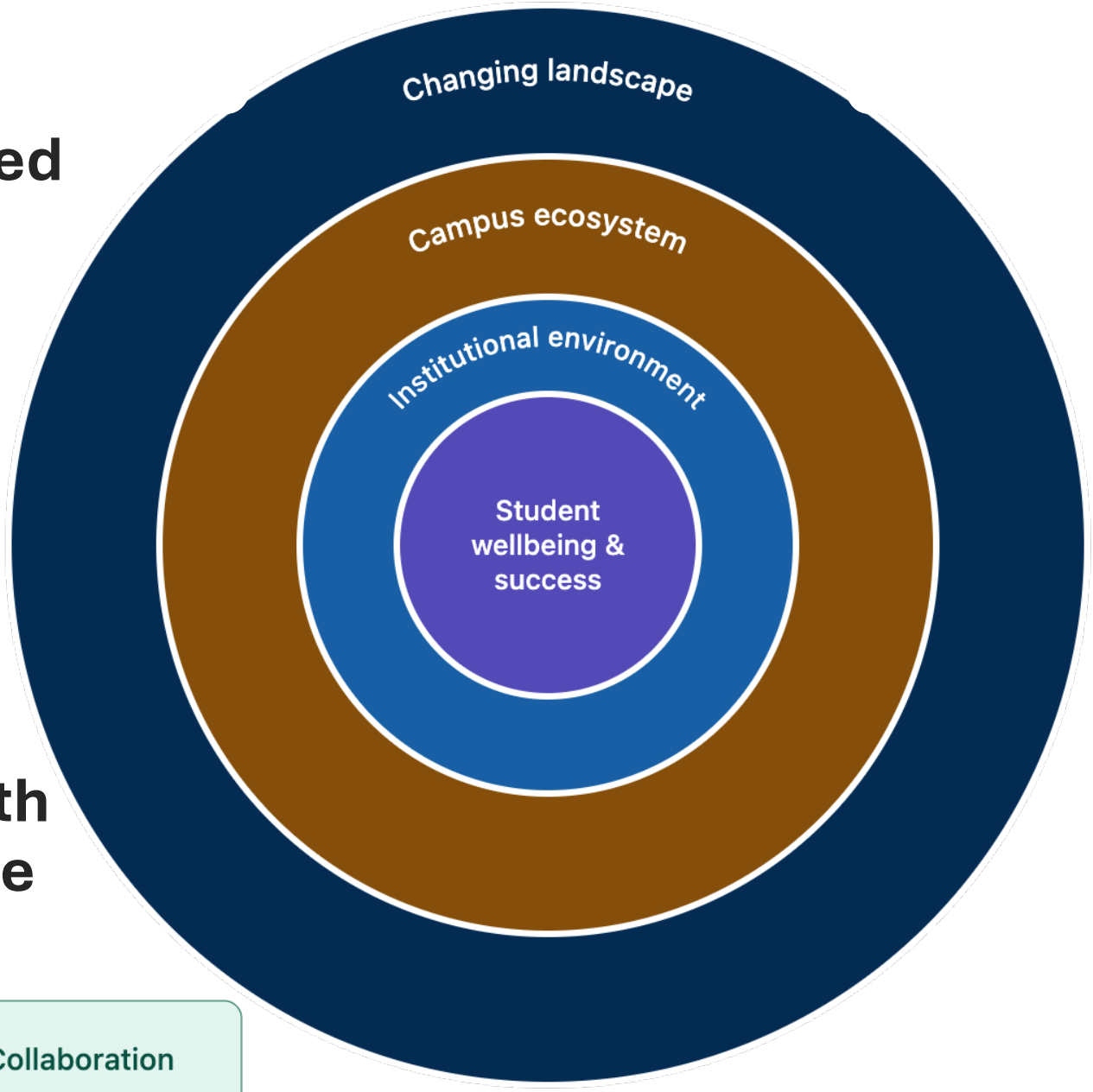
Trust before crisis.

Healthy choices become easier when healthy environments are intentionally designed.



- Policy
- Technology
- Scheduling
- Culture
- Physical Space
- Communications

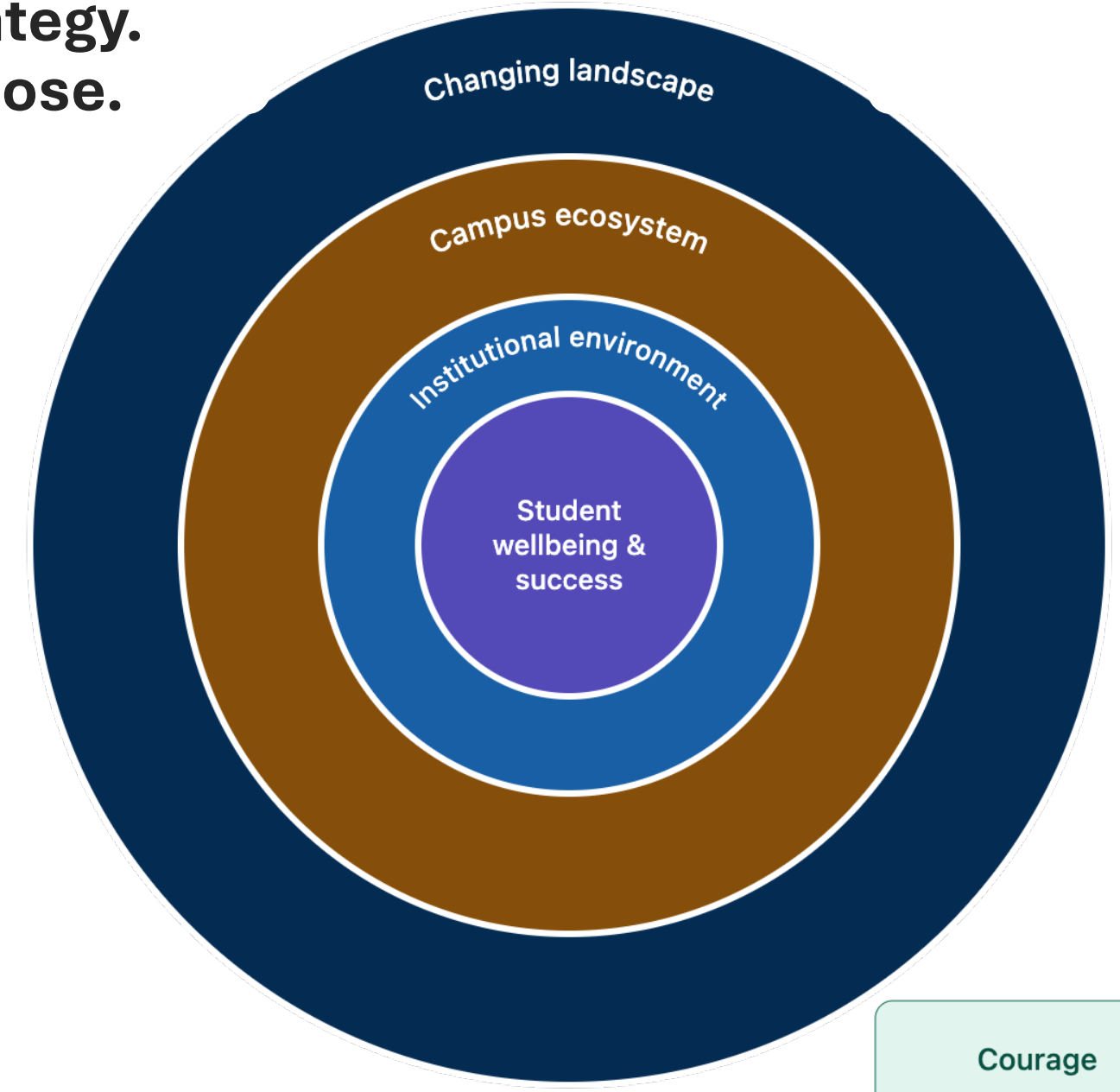
Shared responsibility produces shared outcomes.



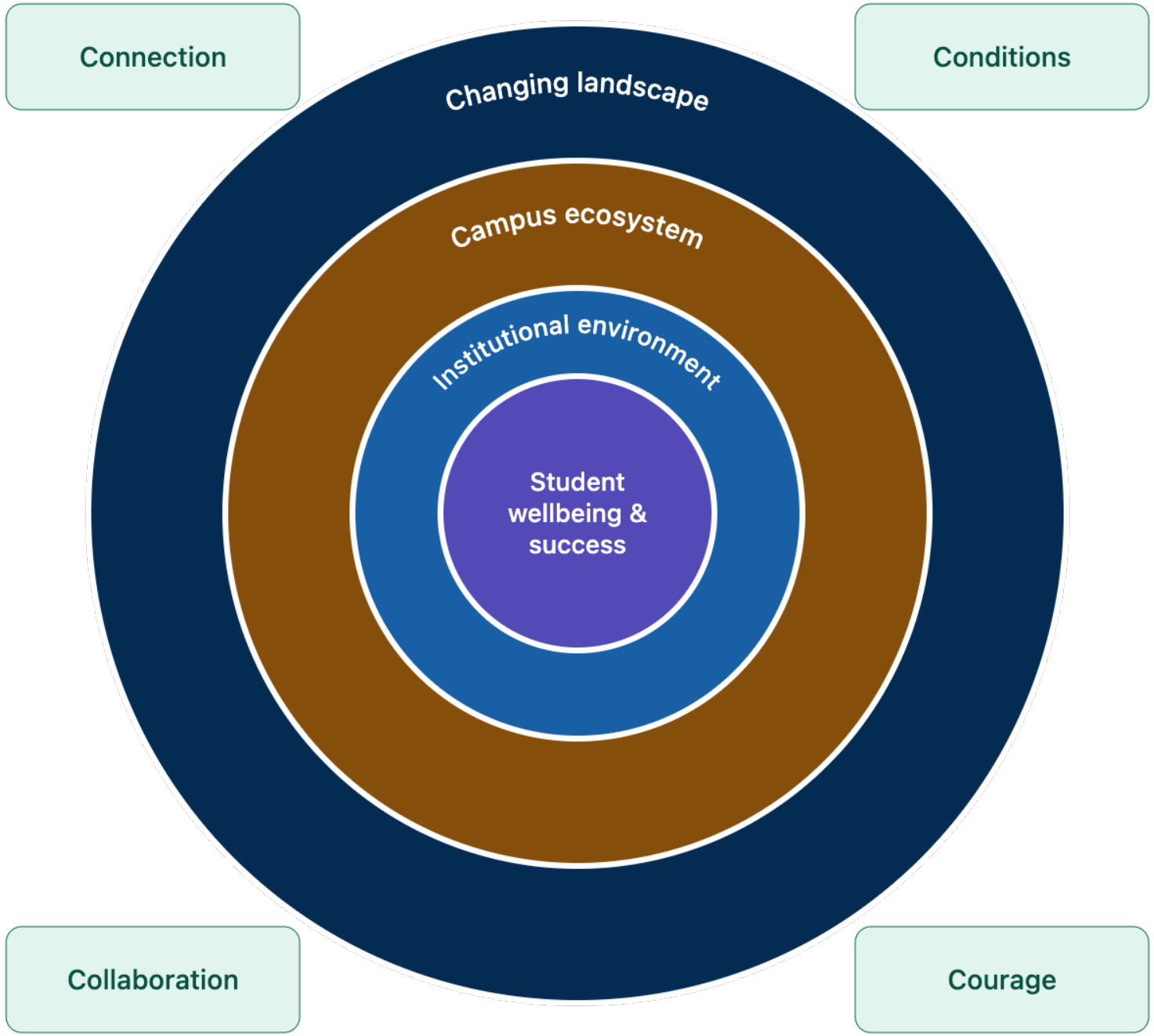
- Faculty
- Students
- Counseling
- Student Health
- Residence Life
- Community Partners...

Collaboration

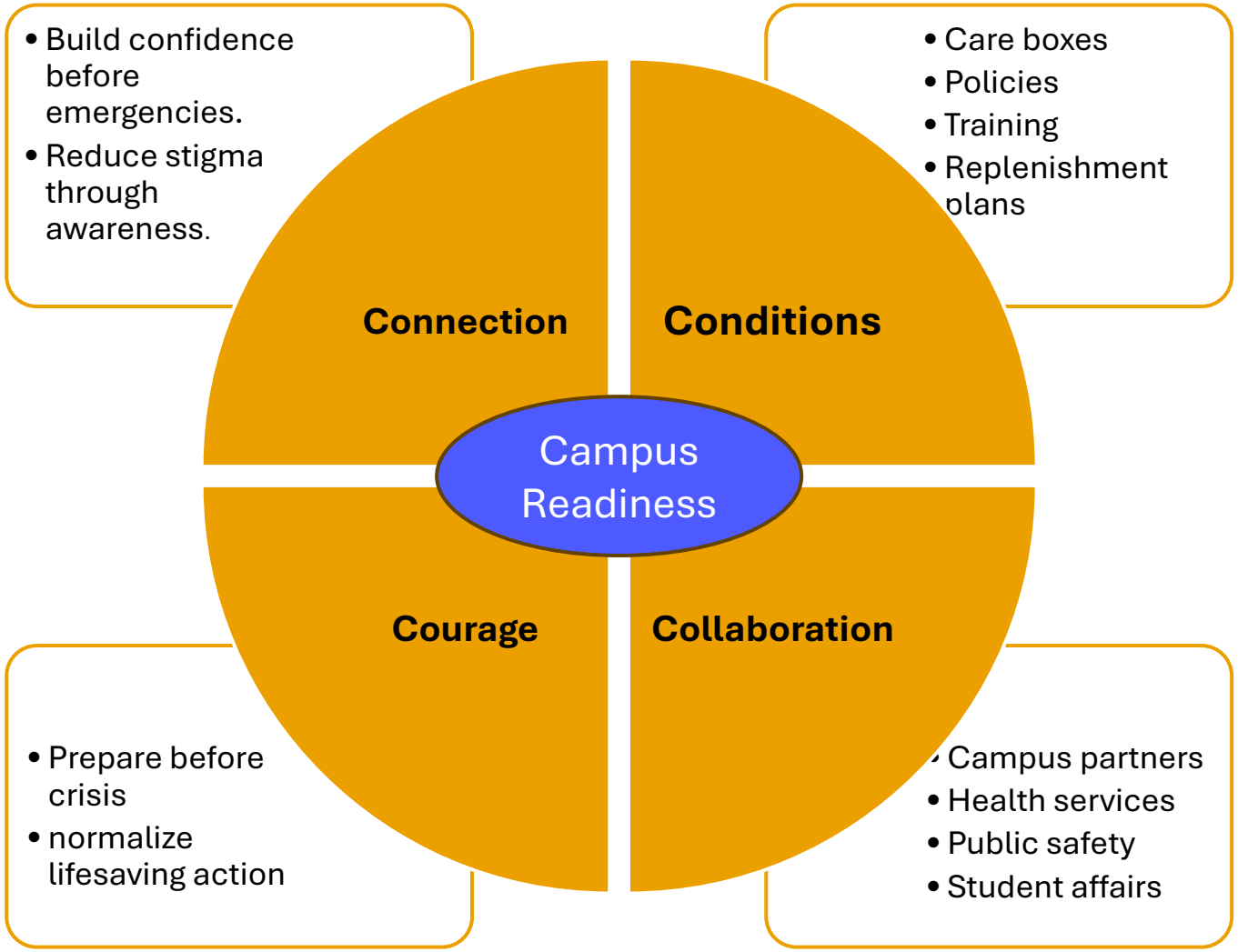
Adapt the strategy.
Keep the purpose.



Courage


Connection
Conditions
Changing landscape
Campus ecosystem
Institutional environment
Student wellbeing & success
Collaboration
Courage

Readiness is intentionally cultivated.

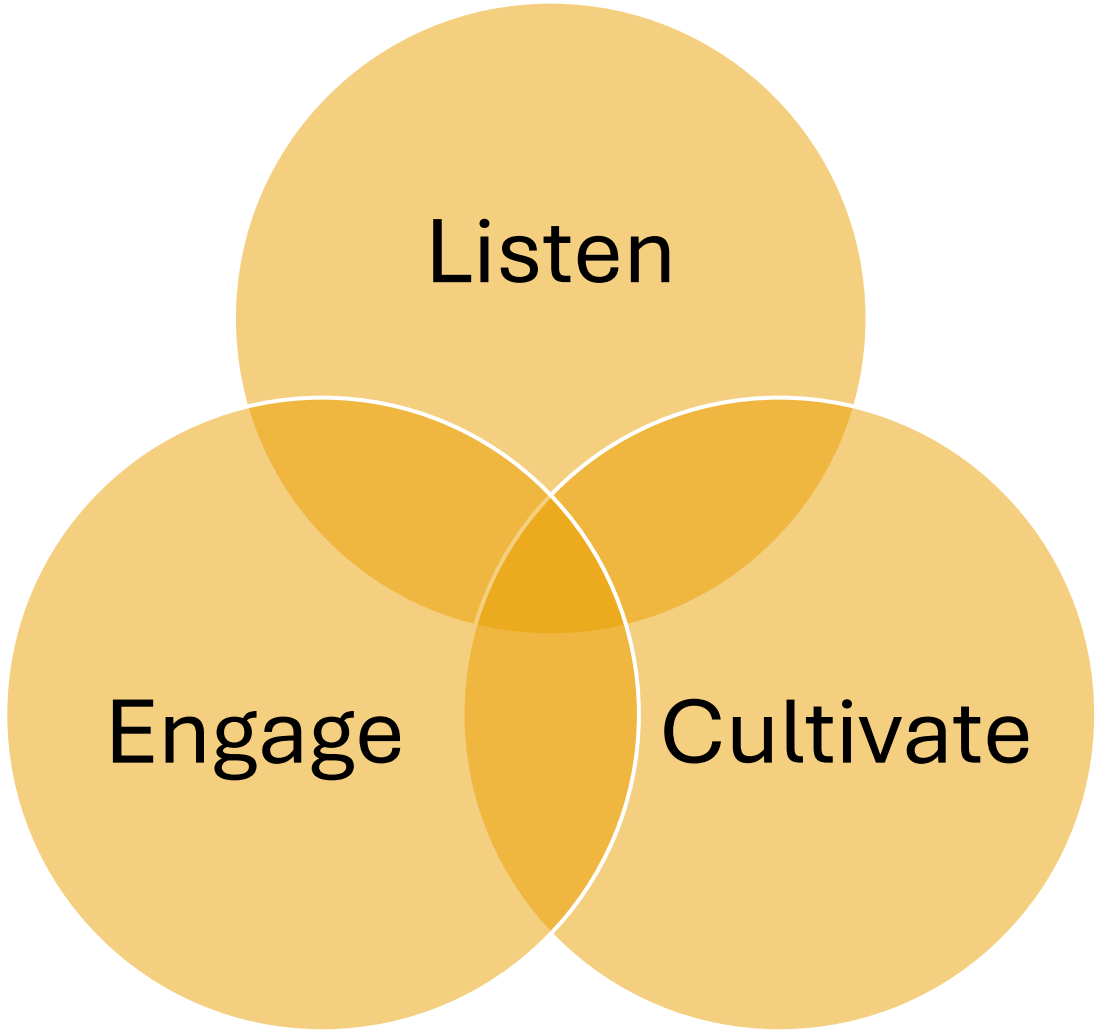


No office can do this alone. ***Institutions cultivate wellbeing together.***

Movement V: Becoming A Cultivator

How does institutional transformation begin?

Relationships before solutions.



Which commitment needs the most attention on your campus?

Monday Morning Leadership:

A Call to Action

- Be curious before being certain.
- Invite voices that are missing.
- Strengthen one relationship.
- Remove one unnecessary barrier.
- Leave one interaction stronger than you found it.

Healthy campus environments are intentionally cultivated.

Every decision.
Every Relationship.
Every Environment.

Connections → Conditions→ Collaboration→ Courage

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Thank you

What condition are we trying to cultivate?

Raphael Florestal-Kevelier, PhD, MPH, FACHA
CEO, American College Health Association
Raphael@acha.org