



International Leadership Association

## ILA Global: Pre-Conference Submission: Leading Through the VUCA Labyrinth: Voices from Canadian Women Leaders Currently Navigating the VUCA Labyrinth

Pre-Conference Workshop: Dr. Rob Elkington, Dr. Jennifer Moss Breen, Dr. Suzanne Martin, Dr. Almarie Munley.

28<sup>th</sup> October, 9 am – 12 pm

### Leading Through the VUCA Labyrinth: Voices from Canadian Women Leaders Currently Navigating the VUCA Labyrinth

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#### Expanded Event Description (approx. 200 words)

In a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), women leaders often find themselves navigating what resembles a labyrinth—nonlinear, shifting, and without an established map. This highly interactive workshop brings together accomplished Canadian women leaders who share their lived experiences of navigating complex systems, advancing into leadership roles, and sustaining resilience amid uncertainty.

Participants will engage in structured learning through three key modalities: **leadership storytelling**, **mentoring circles**, and **coaching triads**. This facilitates not only inspiration but also practical, actionable development. The workshop amplifies the voices of women leaders across sectors—public safety, education, healthcare, corporate, and nonprofit—

while fostering a collaborative environment in which participants co-construct leadership pathways for their own contexts.

Participants will choose leaders for small-group mentoring, followed by facilitated coaching sessions with ICF-certified coaches who guide them through their personal VUCA leadership challenges. By combining narrative inquiry, mentoring, and developmental coaching, the workshop equips participants with greater clarity, increased confidence, and a robust peer support network that extends beyond the conference. The workshop concludes with collective action planning and opportunities for sustained collaborative engagement.

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## Expanded Detailed Timeline and Section Descriptions

### 9:00 AM – Land Acknowledgement and Welcome

A reflective and inclusive opening will set the tone for the workshop. Facilitators acknowledge the land, introduce the session's purpose, and invite participants to consider their own personal “labyrinths” as leaders. This segment uses grounding techniques (brief mindfulness/reflection) to prepare participants for a day of relational and developmental learning.

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### 9:10 AM – Journeys to Leadership (Leadership Storytelling)

*Confirmed Leader Speakers:* Dr. Cathy Bruce (President, Trent U), Dr. Taryn Eickmeier (VP Grandview Kids), Dr. Tiffany Castell (Det. Toronto Police), Deputy Chief Carrie Harder (York Paramedics), Deputy Chief Natalie Kedzierski (York Region Paramedics), Sue Stinson (VP Deloitte Canada), Aissatou Diajate (Mastercard Canada)

#### Expanded Explanation

Each invited leader shares a **7–8 minute narrative** focusing on:

- A key turning point or obstacle in their leadership journey
- How they navigated professional ambiguity or disruption
- The role of identity (gender, role, intersectionality) in their leadership formation
- Leadership lessons gained from crisis or complexity
- How they continue to lead in the current VUCA landscape

This storytelling segment leverages narrative leadership principles: stories create shared meaning, model resilience, and enable participants to see themselves in others' leadership trajectories.

Speakers come from diverse sectors, including policing, education, tech entrepreneurship, healthcare, and social services, ensuring broad applicability.

Participants are encouraged to capture themes and insights using the provided reflection prompts:

- What part of this story resonates with your own leadership path?
- What strategies did the speaker use that you can adopt?
- How do these stories illuminate your own leadership labyrinth?

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## **10:00 AM – Break**

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## **10:10 AM – Ad-Hoc Group Mentoring (Mentoring Circles)**

### **Expanded Mentoring Structure and Process**

Participants select a leader whose story particularly resonated with them, forming small mentoring circles (6–10 participants per leader).

### **Mentoring Format (30 minutes)**

#### **1. Opening (5 minutes)**

The mentor briefly restates her key leadership themes, sets expectations, and invites participants to contribute to a psychologically safe conversation.

#### **2. Participant Questions and Dialogue (20 minutes)**

Mentoring circles operate using a semi-structured, inquiry-based format:

- Participants pose questions about navigating workplace politics, managing VUCA environments, leading teams, breaking through leadership barriers, or building influence.
- Mentors respond with insights, tools, frameworks, and reflections from their lived experiences.
- Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing is encouraged.

### **3. Synthesis and Takeaways (5 minutes)**

Each group identifies:

- 2–3 takeaways
- 1 actionable step participants can implement within one week
- Opportunities for continued networking beyond the conference

#### **Purpose of Mentoring Segment**

- Provides real-time access to high-level women leaders
  - Creates community through shared challenges
  - Bridges experience gaps
  - Encourages informal sponsorship and connection
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### **10:40 AM – Sharing Insights (Collective Wisdom)**

Groups share their most powerful takeaways with the full room. Facilitators cluster insights into themes such as:

- Resilience and adaptability
- Managing ambiguity
- Strategic relationship-building
- Confidence and influence
- Navigating gender-based barriers in leadership pathways

This collective sensemaking helps participants recognize common patterns across leadership contexts.

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### **11:00 AM – Break**

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### **11:10 AM – Ad-Hoc Group Coaching (Coaching Triads Model)**

*Confirmed Leader Coaches:* Dr. Kirsten Redmond, Judith Tait, Talyaa Varda, Kerri Brock, Maggie Perotin, Lucy Shenouda, Abirambika Ravivarman

## Expanded Coaching Structure and Methodology

Participants choose a **leader/coach pair** to form coaching groups (8–10 participants each). Each group is co-facilitated by an ICF-certified coach/experienced leadership coach and a senior leader.

### Coaching Framework (40 minutes)

Coaching uses a blend of:

- **GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, Way forward)**
- **Solution-Focused Coaching**
- **Systems Leadership Coaching**
- **Reflective Dialogue**

#### 1. Opening and Norms (3–5 minutes)

Coach sets expectations:

- Confidentiality
- Non-judgment
- Equal voice
- Present-focused engagement

#### 2. Participant Challenges (10 minutes)

Participants identify a real leadership challenge they face, such as:

- Leading through volatility
- Managing conflict
- Burnout
- Imposter feelings
- Change resistance
- Strategic decision-making under uncertainty

#### 3. Guided Coaching Dialogue (20 minutes)

The coach leads the group through:

- Clarifying the challenge
- Identifying underlying assumptions
- Exploring alternatives
- Reframing limiting beliefs
- Co-creating strategies

The leader partner shares experience-based insight without dominating the process.

#### **4. Commitment and Accountability (5 minutes)**

Participants articulate:

- A concrete next step
- Accountability partner (optional)
- Resources they need
- What success will look like

#### **Purpose of Coaching Segment**

- Provides structured, personalized leadership development
- Helps participants process their own VUCA challenges in real time
- Integrates lived leadership experience with professional coaching disciplines
- Supports clarity and confidence moving forward

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### **11:50 AM – Wrap-Up and Next Steps: Collaboratively Navigating the Labyrinth**

Facilitators guide a closing reflection:

- Key themes of the day
- Emerging networks and support structures
- Opportunities for ongoing connection (WhatsApp group, LinkedIn circle, virtual follow-up)
- Invitation for continued mentorship or coaching

Participants leave with:

- A personalized leadership insight summary
  - A short-term action plan
  - New peer and leader connections
  - Optional follow-up touchpoints
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