

CASE STUDY

Equipping Educators to Lead Through Change at Mitchell Community Schools

Lead at Any Level® • Leaders can be anywhere and should be everywhere.

CLIENT

Mitchell Community Schools

INDUSTRY / SECTOR

K-12 Public Education (rural Indiana)

AUDIENCE

~110 certified staff — teachers, counselors, and school social workers

ENGAGEMENT TYPE

In-person keynote, delivered as a Youth Worker Café in partnership with the Indiana Youth Institute

PROGRAMS DELIVERED

Moving from Panic to Purpose: Surviving & Thriving during Unrelenting Change

01 RESULTS AT A GLANCE

9 / 10

CLIENT
SATISFACTION

~110

CERTIFIED STAFF
REACHED

100%

FOUND IT VALUABLE

02 THE CHALLENGE

Teachers and school staff have absorbed a decade of relentless change — curriculum overhauls, pandemic disruptions, shifting state mandates, staffing instability, and evolving community expectations. For Mitchell's staff, those pressures were compounded by **simultaneous transitions at both the superintendent and high school principal levels** during the same school year.

The district's wellness coordinators — School Health Coordinator **Meagan Shipley** and School Social Worker **Krista Kirk** — recognized that their staff needed more than inspiration. They needed **a shared framework, practical tools, and permission to name what they were feeling**. Their bar for success was concrete: if staff walked out feeling like the day had been worth their time and gave them something usable, the session worked.

Coordinating the day added its own pressure. The engagement was funded as a Youth Worker Café through a partnership with the **Indiana Youth Institute**, scheduled for a district-wide Professional Development Day — a date that remained uncertain until days before the event due to potential weather makeup days following a week of e-learning closures.

03 THE APPROACH

Lead at Any Level® delivered a one-hour in-person keynote — *Moving from Panic to Purpose: Surviving & Thriving during Unrelenting Change* — for approximately 110 certified staff in the Mitchell High School auditorium on February 27, 2026.

Because the session was in a traditional auditorium with no tables, Amy C. Waninger designed the experience for that format from the start — and grounded delivery in the realities of rural Indiana, drawing on her upbringing in Santa Claus, Indiana, to build credibility with an audience that, as Meagan and Krista put it, can quickly tell when a speaker doesn't understand their world.

Each participant received a curated organza bag of session materials waiting on their seat — a deliberate choice that signaled the session would be interactive, not passive, before Amy said a word.

Within the keynote, Amy moved the audience through five connected segments. She opened with why change is hard, drawing on neuroscience and emotional frameworks for both thinkers and feelers. The Balloon Activity invited participants to name a current change, draw it on a balloon, and work through what they were meant to learn from it — and when they could let it go. A self-care segment offered strategies for navigating change. The Crystal Ball Activity used a structured postcard exercise to identify what's on the horizon, how it might affect them, and one immediate step they could take to prepare. Each participant left with a personal action plan in hand.

What we delivered:

- 60-minute in-person keynote: *Moving from Panic to Purpose* — auditorium-style audience of ~110 certified staff
- Curated session materials in organza bags, one waiting on every seat
- Balloon Activity and Crystal Ball Activity — two participatory exercises anchoring the framework in personal application
- Personal action plan worksheet, in-hand at session close — plus a post-event debrief with the wellness coordinators

04 THE RESULTS

Participant feedback was strong across every dimension Mitchell cared about. Both wellness coordinators rated the session a **9 out of 10** and named two outcomes that mattered most: staff left with concrete tools for self-regulating their response to change, and the personal stories Amy told – including navigating career disruption – landed especially deeply with the predominantly female staff.

Counselors and social-emotional learning leads in the room described the session as aligned with the SEL frameworks the district already values. One school counselor – unprompted – asked whether the content could be adapted for students. By the bar Megan and Krista had set going in – staff walking out feeling the day had been worth their time, with something usable in hand – the session delivered.

Measured outcomes:

- 9 / 10 client satisfaction rating from the wellness coordinators in the post-event wrap call
- ~110 certified staff reached in a single Professional Development Day session
- Audience-feedback survey results: 100% rated the session valuable, 96% rated it relevant, 95% rated it engaging, interactive, and practical (n=18 responses)
- Two potential extensions surfaced: a student-facing adaptation of the keynote, and a regional Lawrence County return through the Indiana Youth Institute

05 IN THE CLIENT'S WORDS

"You gave them tools to work on regulating when they feel like they're not able to control the change – specifically this year, because we've had big admin changes."

– Krista Kirk, School Social Worker, Mitchell Community Schools

ABOUT LEAD AT ANY LEVEL®

Lead at Any Level® is a professional speaking and consulting firm founded by Amy C. Waninger. We help new and developing leaders build practical skills and frameworks they can use immediately – so they can lead confidently through constant change. We work across three distinct buying contexts – conferences and events, corporate learning and development, and nonprofit leadership programs – using one core methodology applied with precision to each context.

Lead at Any Level, LLC is a certified Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) and LGBTBE-certified organization.