



Now What?

In an opinion piece titled “So Now What? A Clarity Offering From Sero Leadership,” Tami Haught and Kamaria Laffrey, co-executive directors of Sero Project, offer words of wisdom for advocacy today. Below is an edited excerpt.

March 24, 2025 By Tami Haught and Kamaria Laffrey

Our feelings are valid. Sit with them; name them. We have a wide range of emotions that are then managed by our choices, intentionality and impact. Our feelings can be what we use as fuel to get through the next four years in protecting our community and sustaining our organizations, pushing back with strategy and substance—without evoking further harm to ourselves or one another. How? We are still grappling with concrete steps as we hear from our most trusted subject matter experts—you.

For one, we are feeling the fear and anxiety and want to encourage you that this is not a time to be reactive to the onslaught of every single tactic that comes out of the White House. We know that they are coming for all of us, but we must believe that they won't succeed, and we won't be quiet about it. It is their goal to keep us trapped in our feelings, being solely reactive and not having the capacity, resources or clarity on how to strategize and fight back. This is a time to leverage the anger and be responsive to what the community needs in light of what we're being threatened with.

This is a time to acknowledge the feeling of defeat but not give in to it. Channel it by taking a moment to assess the bandwidth of your coalitions, networks, organizations, advisory boards, etc. Focus on what you can influence, collaborate with those doing things that you aren't able to identify capacity for and be flexible with those who are offering time and energy as a resource. We all have a lane; we all have a role to play—we can only swallow this bitter pill of our crumbling democracy one sip at a time.

We have to stop playing it safe. We have never been safe. Some of us have been more privileged in our movement than others to identify progress as proximity to safety, but we are a society that repeats history no matter the harm, and we have to stop being complicit in that. For people living with HIV, we can look back and find so many similarities in our struggle made more difficult by the lack of support from elected officials. It hasn't stopped. Our job is not to solely focus on what the government can do for us. It isn't going to save us. We have to save ourselves.

We must be willing to make sacrifices and peel back the layers of our ego to examine what has kept us rooted in this work. We should ask ourselves what more we can do differently, with a clear intention toward the future we envision and for the people we care about—people who may not share our geographical, racial or gender identity. Accountability to one another is essential.

Our specific work at [Sero Project](#) is through our mission to remain committed to people living with HIV who have experienced criminalization, the threat of criminalization, discrimination or violence because of their HIV status and to the networks, coalitions and stakeholders that make moves and throw down in their various states to change laws.

We are in this with you. Every staff person at Sero is a part of a network or coalition in their home state. Every staff member at Sero is a person living with HIV. We are charged by our history, our ancestors and our integrity to stay rooted in our dedication to end the criminalization of people living with HIV. The people have always been and will always be our why. Because we are the people.