

THE NEW “G” MOVEMENT



Strategies to Achieve Alignment, Collaboration and Synergy across Delivery and Financing Systems

*Research-in-Progress Webinar
October 15, 2025
12pm ET*

colorado school of
public health



Presenter:

Thomas C. Cotton III

Thomas is a pioneering leader in systems transformation, reentry innovation, and community empowerment. As founder of Redemption & Advancement Alliance (RAA) and Next Level Freedom, LLC, he has spent over 25 years developing pathways out of incarceration and poverty by advancing dignity, equity, and opportunity for historically excluded communities. Mr. Cotton is the initiator of the New G Movement, an initiative rooted in lived experience that reimagines gang structures as networks for leadership, healing, and systems change.

He holds a master's degree in Justice-Involved Healthcare from Morehouse School of Medicine, where he also serves as Vice Chair of the Prevention Research Center's Community Coalition Board and as a member of the Institutional Review Board. A published author, national speaker, and trusted partner in public health, justice reform, and education, Mr. Cotton's work equips individuals and institutions to build new systems where equity, purpose, and impact can thrive.



Commentary: Dr. Larry Washington

Dr. Washington, a committed community advocate with a Doctorate in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, researches Black undergraduates' sense of belonging, focusing on a Black cultural center that supports student agency, identity, and well-being. He has contributed to a wide range of evaluation projects across education, STEM, arts and culture, and youth development, specializes in mixed-methods research, and leads culturally responsive, community-centered projects within BIPOC communities.

His work has been featured at national conferences, including the American Evaluation Association (AEA), Emergent Voices in Evaluation (EViE), and the Scholarly Consortium for Innovative Psychology in Education (SCIPIE). He has also served as an external evaluator for Champaign School District 4, helping develop logic models, collect data, and analyze results for student support.

Agenda

Welcome: Systems for Action

Presenter: Thomas C. Cotton III, MA

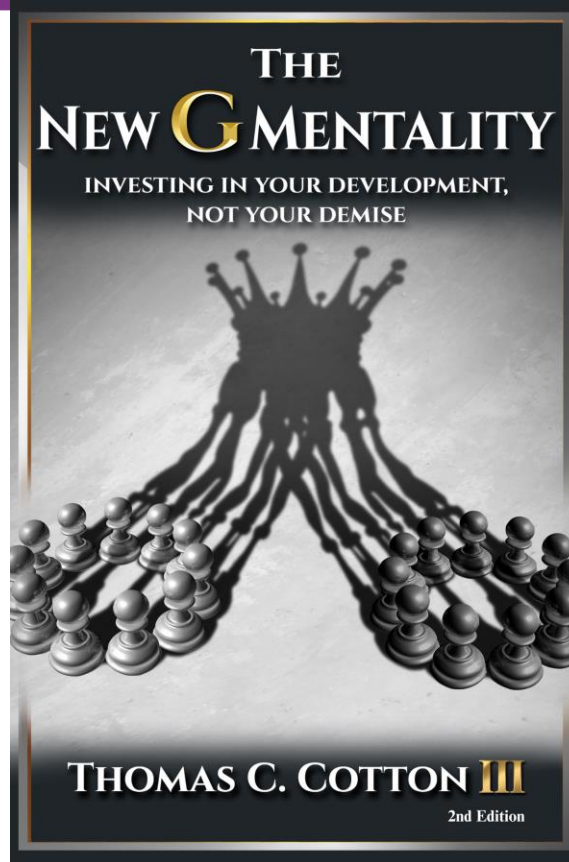
Commentary: Dr. Larry Washington

Q&A: Systems for Action

Goal: To redevelop gangs to improve leadership, restore communities, and redefine power by transforming how society understands and engages with gangs.

Objectives:

- Identify issues and gaps in the existing gang intervention system.
- Why the current systems fail.
- Introduce The New G Movement: A compassionate and trustworthy approach that examines the creation of new options, the redevelopment of gangs, and a systems alignment approach.



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www.newgmentality.com

The System at Work

- Society functions through visible and invisible layers of inclusion and exclusion.
- Institutions hold the keys to opportunity, legitimacy, power, education, capital, networks, and resources.
- Most people remain on the lower levels with limited voice and access.
- Value is often judged by compliance and assimilation to dominant norms.

The Consequences

- Those furthest from power are stigmatized, policed, and marginalized.
- Exclusion pushes people to build alternative systems of belonging and survival.

Why Gangs Emerge

- Gangs form as parallel structures that provide:
 - Safety
 - Provision
 - Belonging when society excludes.
 - Leadership and protection when systems fail.
 - Agency and purpose, even if constrained.



Society tries to dismantle the structure without healing the exclusion, which treats the symptom, not the cause.

Key Data Points: The Scale of Gang Systems in the U.S.

- Over 30,000 gangs exist nationwide, which is a 15% increase since 2006, the highest level since the mid-1990s (*National Gang Center*).
- The U.S. has averaged 25,000–27,000 gangs each year over the past decade (*Youth.gov / National Gang Center*).
- The FBI identifies about 33,000 violent street, motorcycle, and prison gangs operating today.
- There are an estimated 750,000 active gang members across the country (*Youth.gov*).
- From 2021–2024, law enforcement documented 69,000+ violent gang incidents, many involving youth ages 13-16 (*FBI*).

Gang structures are widespread, adaptive, and deeply rooted, and are likely to persist rather than diminish.

Suppression and dismantling produce counterproductive effects

- Reinforcement and regeneration of structure
- Suppression efforts sometimes strengthen internal cohesion of gangs, making leadership more centralized, members more loyal, and operations more secretive.
- When dominant gangs are disrupted, it breeds smaller hybrid or sub-hybrid gangs that are sometimes more volatile than before.
- Overreach, stigmatization, and collateral harm leading to suppressive strategies often lead to over-policing of communities of color, broad surveillance, and arrests of persons with *perceived* gang associations.

The Principles New G Movement

KEY POINTS:

- Reimagine gangs as systems of protection, belonging, and potential.
- A focus on redevelopment and not dismantling.
- Generate new forms of knowledge grounded in lived experience and community wisdom.
- Develop evaluative models that focus on dignity.
- Create transferable learning frameworks for health equity.
- Collaboration around economic redevelopment and social enterprise.
- Align Public Health, Education, Social Services, Medical, and Criminal Legal systems around human dignity and purpose.

Systems Alignment Approach

System	Why They Matter	How They Engage
Citizens/Street-Connected Individuals	Natural leaders who can reshape community culture. The core of transformation possesses leadership potential and credibility in communities.	Join the New G for leadership skills and development. Focus on recruitment, peer mentorship, entrepreneurship, and local projects.
Faith & Community Leaders	Provide moral authority, trust, and spaces for restoration.	Host gatherings, mentor leaders, resources, and align outreach missions.
Social-services	Organizations Already Doing the Work. Foundation of progress in their communities.	Use the New G Collaborative System to share resources and amplify impact.
Philanthropic & Corporate Partners	Provide support, investment, funding, credibility, and sustainability.	Business development, internships, fellowships, sponsorships, and storytelling are vital for success and maximizing impact.
Academic & Policy Institutions	Generate evidence, training, and legitimacy	Research collaborations, evaluation, workforce pipelines
Public Systems (Health, Education, Social Services, Medical, Criminal Legal)	Shape the conditions where transformation thrives.	Align efforts and support community-led innovation.



The New G Movement

- Intentional development with the most important part of the process – the individual.
- Interventions aimed at building alternate pathways, relationships, identity change, and support.
- Focused deterrence, which depends heavily on credible alternatives and system alignment.
- Long-term strategies.
- Whole life prevention that develops the family system.
- Each one teach one-hundred.

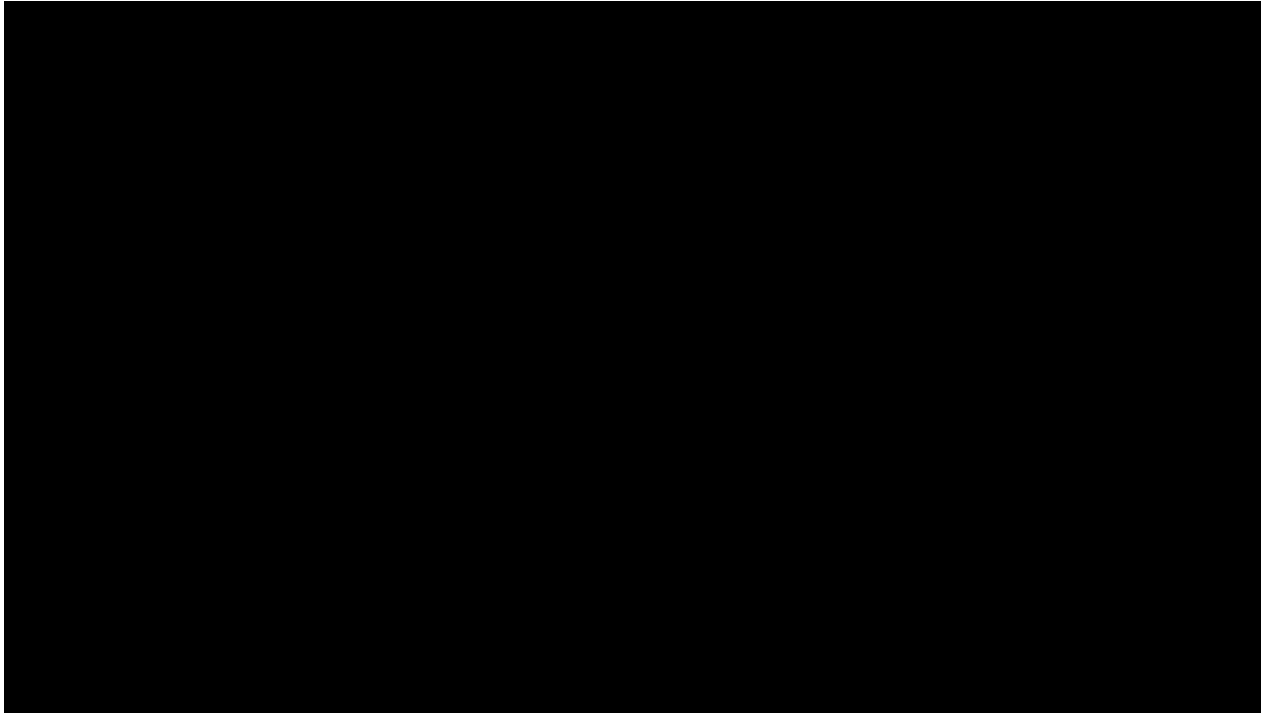
The Progression of the New G Movement

KEY POINTS:

- **Phase 1**
 - **Transformation:** Personal growth and mindset change.
- **Phase 2**
 - **Elevation:** Launch of New G Academy Hubs for leadership and entrepreneurship.
- **Phase 3**
 - **Collaboration:** Aligning systems to foster support around the Social Determinants of Health.
- **Phase 4**
 - **Redevelopment:** Community-led projects that train, employ, and empower local leaders.

VIDEO

Crips and Bloods, Made in America



Redevelopment Works

CRACK CHOICES
The Human Toll of Crack Cocaine



Thomas Cotton III, 25, of Bakersfield, Calif. He launched a million-dollar drug operation in Omaha while awaiting sentencing for a botched robbery. Cotton made James Burnett a top man in the crack ring. Cotton is now in federal prison in Arizona for distributing crack.

...the mid-1980s, and had moved back to Omaha from Bakersfield and Bakersfield, Calif. Cotton formed alliances with each other and with rival gangs in the city. The 4th Avenue Crips, the South Family Bloods and the Crenshaw Mafia Bloods, a subset of the Bloods — to cooperate in the local crack trade. Some dealers were red, and some

...college, Cotton and a cousin were caught robbing a fast-food restaurant, one where Cotton had been fired two months earlier. Facing a robbery charge, Cotton needed about \$1,000 to pay for an attorney. So he began selling \$500 quantities of crack to a network of private dealers called "linging." While in jail, he came up with a plan to buy powder cocaine in California, cook it into crack and sell it in Omaha at a handsome profit. Through his Crips connections, he knew Penn, the

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Robert Penn Jr., who grew up in Omaha, was a key figure in establishing the Omaha-Bakersfield crack link. Brian Duke, a Bakersfield crack distributor, recruited dealers in Omaha and coordinated their activities. Wama Smith of Bakersfield was the expert at cooking powder cocaine into crack. Thomas Cotton III of Bakersfield ran the ring with Duke and Smith, his partners. Smith recruited Penn to sell the crack on Crenshaw houses for

...for robbing and elude Robert Penn, 25, of Omaha, he was a Crips gangster who helped Bakersfield crack dealers get started in Omaha. Penn filed for a gang conviction, but was also convicted of distributing crack.

Core Premise

The New G Movement operates on the understanding that transformation is not achieved through dismantling existing systems but by redeveloping the people and processes within them. The model also reorients disconnected institutions in healthcare, criminal legal, education, social services, and medical systems toward a unified purpose: human dignity and collective advancement.



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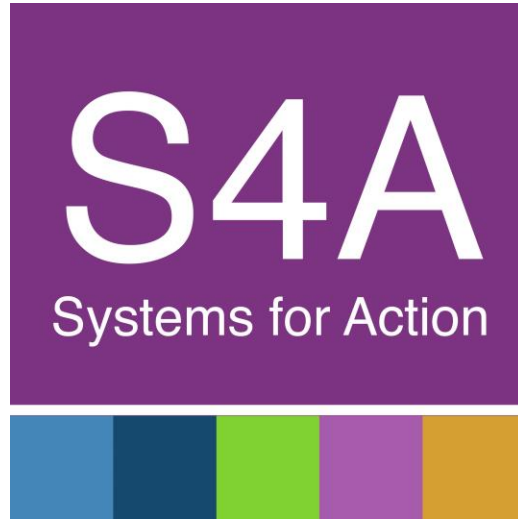
Dr. Larry Washington

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www.newgmovement.com

Questions?



www.systemsforaction.org

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Reimagining Equity and Autonomy in Disability Justice

Oct. 29th at 12pm ET



Register at:

<https://systemsforaction.org/research-progress-webinars>

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