



# CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



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# PREFACE

## THE GUIDE AND ITS INTENDED USE

The purpose of this change management resource (herein, the guide) is to provide organizations in the child and youth mental health sector with information, tools and resources to undertake and/or lead the process of change management. This guide provides practical, evidence-informed information and resources for use/reference by agencies and organizations in the field.

The guide introduces change management theory and practice, the drivers for change and the importance of managing change effectively within organizations across the child and youth mental health sector.

Underpinning this guide is a framework based on a focused literature review on change management theories and practices in the social service/community sector, and key stakeholders' input on identified needs related to change management in the field of child and youth mental health. The framework proposes five elements of effective change management, including:

- Assessment
- Planning
- Sustaining
- Resistance
- Communication

The first three elements, Assessment, Planning and Sustaining, are considered foundational and are sequential. Communication and Resistance are relevant throughout the entire change process.

This guide also includes tools, templates and other change management resources. These resources have been provided to help you ask the right questions at key points in the change process. Also, activities, including worksheets and reference documents, are included for download.

### **Limitations for use**

This guide was developed by using evidence and common themes that emerged from stakeholder consultation. Evidence development related to system-level change management in child and youth mental health is at an early stage and thus limited. As such, this guide is not intended to be all-inclusive and is not an all-encompassing review of change management theories and practices in the health and social service fields.

# INTRODUCTION

## GOAL

Understand drivers and key concepts in change management

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- describe key concepts in change management
- identify drivers for change and ineffective change management practices
- recognize common roles involved in change within organizations
- identify positive aspects of organizational change
- describe negative effects of organizational change

## KEYWORDS

<b>Change</b>	A shift from status quo to a desired state. A change management process is directly responsive to this shift.
<b>Change goal</b>	The outcome that the change is hoping to achieve; the why behind the change action. Example: by implementing the new client intake system (change) we aim to reduce wait times by 30% (goal).
<b>Resistance</b>	Behaviour or viewpoints that are counter to the change. Resistance can be managed during the change management process, but are challenges that must be addressed.
<b>Barriers</b>	Barriers are constructs or gaps that prevent the change from fully taking place. Barriers can come because of resistance (e.g. during implementation) but can also be related to resources and other feasibility concerns.

## Change management

As a process, change management is designed to increase the effectiveness of your planning and execution and help you achieve your goals as an organization by making changes as smoothly and comprehensively as possible.

The ways that change can touch an organization are limitless. When we think of change management, we tend to think of a scenario in which a decision is made, and a team immediately adapts to the new way of doing things. In reality, this is seldom the case.

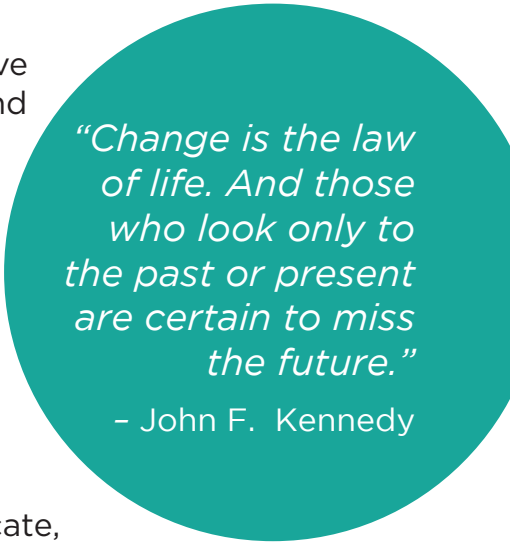
Organizations are constantly faced with change which can come from a variety of sources, all with their own varying degree of intensity, complexity and impact. Change can be major and intricate, such as a fundamental redesign of the service delivery process, or minor, such as the hiring of a new staff member. Taking the time to acknowledge and plan for these changes is critical to success.

Throughout this guide, we will refer to numerous terms and definitions. Please familiarize yourself with the key terms found at the beginning of each section as they are essential to the change management process.

### Helpful knowledge: Leading change management theories

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with some of the leading models in change management theory. These theories will be referenced throughout the guide; however, they are not vital to its utilization.

- [Kotter eight step change model](#)
- [NIRN implementation science](#)
- [Prochaska and DiClemente's transtheoretical model](#)
- [Kübler-Ross model](#)
- [De Caluwé and Vermaak's typology](#)
- [William Bridges' transitional model](#)



*“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”*

– John F. Kennedy

## **Change in child and youth mental health organizations**

Change comes in all shapes and sizes. Examples include amalgamations, technology and leadership changes (Bourne, 2015). In Ontario's child and youth mental health sector, changes can be in service definitions and processes, performance expectations, organizational roles and others.

This sector recognizes change is beneficial. Research has shown that organizations focused on learning and research understand the need for change to stay relevant in their sectors, to respond to client needs and provide service, and for overall organization effectiveness (Lindberg & Meredith, 2012).

With change, there are hurdles along the way. Everyone reacts to change differently. In many cases, individuals undergoing a change in this sector are likely to be reluctant to many kinds of change when they are confronted with it (McWilliam, Kothari, Kloseck, Ward-Griffin, & Forbes, 2008). Examples of change management challenges can be found below. Acknowledgement and acceptance of these potential roadblocks and effective change management practices can help make the process smooth and beneficial.

## **Change management challenges in the child and youth mental health sector**

- implementing a change without understanding its impacts
- implementing a change with unclear process or path
- resources for change management are limited
- inability to accurately assess individuals' readiness and appetite for change
- frequency of change
- unrealistic timelines for change
- cross-sectoral changes
- anxiety, stress and other emotional considerations
- potential for cascading failures
- challenges in coordinating resources and avoiding duplication
- lack of support in evidence-based strategies, tools, and techniques

## Reasons for managing change

Change management processes and theories, when put into practice, increase the likelihood of completing a successful change. Research has demonstrated that failing to properly manage change has a direct influence on the ability to achieve the objectives of the change (i) and thus, the goals and effectiveness of your organization. Failure to address the complexities of a new change can lead to taxing your resources and staff, long and confusing implementation, and loss of morale (Kotter, 1996; Lewis and Grosser, 2012; Lundgren, Amodeo, Chassler, Krull & Sullivan, 2013; Schurer, Kohl, & Bellamy, 2010). All this can affect the quality of service and experiences of clients and their families. However, when change is managed effectively, the negative effects can be reduced, while gaining many benefits and positive outcomes.

Examples of benefits include:

- having a higher chance of achieving the change objectives (i)
- strengthening morale and team inclusiveness (ii)
- achieving better outcomes, as well as enjoying increased employee cooperation (Claiborne, Auerbach, Lawrence & Schudrich, 2013)
- allowing teams to anticipate stresses on resources and staff (Grenier & Bidgoli, 2015)
- successful completion of change can be a source of pride for stakeholders

## Who is involved in change management?

Before detailing the essential elements of change management, it is helpful to familiarize yourself with the different individuals involved.

### Change Sponsors

- determine the change mandate and make decisions regarding the change
- may not be a member of the change management team but have formal/positional authority

### Change management team

- enact and steer the change management process
- comprised of influencers, critics and experts across the organization to leverage diverse perspectives

### Change champions

- possess high levels of social influence in an organization
- actively and visibly support and promote the change
- can be a member of the change management team but are not always consulted throughout the process

### Change recipients

- are directly affected by the change, and may also be responsible for implementing the change
- can include management, service delivery staff, clinicians, children, youth, their families and others

### Stakeholders

- will be affected by the change directly or indirectly such as children/youth, their families, community partners and others



## Introduction to the five key elements of change

The five key elements framework below is based on evidence-informed literature, stakeholder perspectives from 15 children and youth mental health organizations across Ontario, and widely used elements from change management theories and models.

### Foundational/sequential stages

<b>Assessment:</b>	Examining the reasons and goals of the change, as well as identifying potential impacts, stakeholders and processes that may be affected.
<b>Planning:</b>	Laying out a clear path for those affected and leading changes as they move through the process using insights gathered in the assessment.
<b>Sustaining:</b>	Ensuring the new elements of the change occur and plans are followed through.

### Pivotal/all stages

<b>Resistance:</b>	Types of oppositional issues and concerns related to the change and how to manage/address them through the change management process.
<b>Communication:</b>	Effective communication touches all aspects of the change management process and is key to effective change management.

Once you have familiarized yourself with the principles and terminology associated with change management highlighted in this section, begin with Part 1: Assessment. Also, consider the reflection point below.

### Reflection: Now and then

Perceptions at the beginning and at the end of the change management process can be quite different. Take a moment to reflect about how you think you would deal (or have dealt) with a change now so that you can revisit it once you have finished reviewing this guide. Note your thoughts regarding timelines, who you feel would be involved in the process, the best way to communicate and plan changes and how you would handle teams and individuals who exhibit signs of resistance to change.

## References

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## Endnotes

i Adapted from aggregate literature review and change management best practices, with terminology and structural acknowledgements to Prosci Inc.P.(Ed.).(n.d.). *Why Change Management?* Retrieved January 09, 2017, from <https://www.prosci.com/change-management/why-change-management>

ii *ibid.*

iii *ibid.*

# 1. ASSESSMENT

## GOAL

Analyze organizational readiness for change

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- identify change
- examine change from different perspectives
- engage stakeholders to determine impact of change
- assess readiness and capacity for change
- assess organizational social contexts and culture readiness
- use tools to analyze change, and to engage stakeholders

## KEYWORDS

<b>Perception of transparency</b>	The tendency for people to see their communications as clear and honest, even though their audiences may not feel the same.
<b>Sense of urgency</b>	Increased awareness for change expressed as a burst of energy and activities toward a common goal.
<b>Appetite for change</b>	The desire of an individual or team to change.
<b>Capacity</b>	In a change process, the capacity to change refers to the available time, financial and human resources to support the change. This can include the required time, outside of the day-to-day responsibilities, to plan for the change.
<b>Capability</b>	Capability to change refers to the ability or competence that can be developed to support a person in a change process. Consider this to be the technical know-how to adapt to a new environment.

**Cognitive dissonance**

Negative emotions that arise from the result of differences and oppositions in thoughts.

**Organizational culture**

The norms, practices, and values of an organization. Organizational culture can be informative to stakeholders' change readiness.

**Rationalization**

When an individual demonstrates that they understand the reasons and rationale for a change, but do not indicate whether they agree with the change or the reasons presented.

**Readiness to change**

The degree of preparedness for change (can be emotional, technological, organizational, etc.).

Assessment is a foundational step in a change management process, and allows you to understand the change you are about to undertake. It is also where the impacts of the change are anticipated and noted so they can be addressed in the planning process. Taking the time to truly understand the goals and complexities of the change provides you with a stable foundation upon which to execute. For example, depending on how Moving on Mental Health is implemented, it has potential impacts for individual or organizational roles, access and intake processes, information collection and reporting, and service standards and performance expectations. Each staff may be affected differently, and these impacts will need to be carefully considered. A comprehensive change assessment leads to an effective change management plan.

*“The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding”*

- Leonardo da Vinci

**Reflection: Understanding a change's goal**

The goals behind a change are not necessarily written in stone. When conducting assessments, new perspectives and ideas can be added to the mix. It is important to keep an open mind as new perspectives arise while retaining the essence of the original goal. What are some examples you have encountered in the past where you have had to course-correct while maintaining an original vision? Which were successful? Why? Why not?

## 1. Identify the need and define the change

Before change management can occur, change leaders need to develop a clear vision and definition of the change they seek to implement. The first step is to ensure there is a clear vision and definition of the change, as well as defining a compelling reason for why the change is happening. Complete the following critical reflection activity using the [change identification worksheet](#) available for download.

When defining the change, keep the following goals in mind to facilitate the change process:

### Provide evidence

Use empirical and quantitative evidence to demonstrate the need for change and ensure the change mandate is clear.

Use metrics to provide evidence; also, serve as performance indicators for the change. Observe any counter-evidence to think through compelling and valid reasons to proceed with the change.

### Undercover underlying assumptions

Perception of transparency refers to a bias in assuming we are transparent, but, in fact, we are not. This is a common challenge for change leaders.

Change leaders can combat this by asking, are all details available to the parties who need to be informed? Change leaders need to overcome this perception from those affected. Seek to uncover any assumptions when conducting assessments.

Use the downloadable worksheet [change identification - current and future state](#) to understand different perspectives involving a change.

## TOOLS

- [Change identification](#)
- [Change identification - current and future state](#)

## 2. Engaging stakeholders and assessing impacts

Assessment includes anticipating the impacts of change. Try to leverage a variety of stakeholders to attain a wide view of potential impacts; this ensures your assessment is realistic and allows greater accuracy in later steps.

Leveraging a variety of stakeholders helps you to:

- identify perceived benefits and downsides of the change.
- receive inputs on change approaches, tools and communications.
- create a sense of urgency as it helps foster a sense of need for the change and provides persuasive peer acceptance for those who may oppose. Create a sense of urgency by peer and environmental pressure, speaking from the client's perspective, and aligning to external deadlines or milestones.
- communicate compelling reasons for the change.
- understand the appetite for change for different stakeholders.
- leverage the client's perspective - this invigorates passion for the improvements.
- promote system-thinking. Understanding the perspectives of the organization, community partners and funders enable change (Pereira, Contant, Barton & Klinger, 2016).
- look for early signs of resistance during the assessment (see page 44). Consider the drivers behind the resistance and plan to address them, where appropriate.

To determine how to engage teams and individuals, please use the [selecting stakeholders to engage](#) tool. A [stakeholder engagement](#) worksheet has also been provided to guide you through some key questions and elements of the process.

To help visualize the forces for and against the change, please see the [force field analysis](#) worksheet.

## TOOLS

- [Selecting stakeholders to engage](#)
- [Stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Force field analysis](#)

### **Best practice: Be open to other perspectives**

By being open to and understanding other perspectives, change leaders can ensure stakeholders can discuss their concerns openly. This facilitates trusting relationships and reveals any potential blind spots not previously considered.

### **Positive vs. negative sense of urgency**

Creating a sense of urgency is a great way to increase appetite for change; by showing change recipients what they and other stakeholders should gain from the change, the motivation to *get things going* can begin to take root.

Ontario's child and youth mental health sector is at risk of change fatigue. However, when done strategically, a sense of urgency can cut through the fatigue and mobilize efforts to achieve better outcomes for children, youth and their families.

Urgency with a focus on the positive impact refreshes and motivates those affected to work towards the desired outcome. In contrast, urgency solely based on avoiding the negatives of change can inadvertently reinforce existing change fatigue.

Be careful not to confuse *urgency* with *panic*. Panic undermines the legitimacy of the reason to change, and it places additional and unnecessary stress on individuals; this perpetuates change fatigue. Look to drive urgency through positive benefits and outcomes rather than anxiety. This can be accomplished by putting checks and feedback mechanisms in place to monitor and observe anxiety by change recipients during assessment and implementation.

Monitoring anxiety can be accomplished in several ways, some of which are included in the resources included in this guide. For example, you can reflect on survey results that express team members' perceptions of stress, you can ask management to engage in discussions during coaching sessions to monitor anxiety levels, or you could engage key influencers in a stakeholder engagement session and explore the levels of stress in their formal and informal networks.

### 3. Organizational readiness and capabilities to change

Once stakeholders have been engaged, the following recommended actions will enable a smooth transition to the next step in the assessment process:

- 1 Compile a list of all affected stakeholders and anticipate their potential perspectives including resistance and barriers.
- 2 Identify evidence and benefits to support the need for change.
- 3 Through stakeholder engagement, estimate impacts of the change (e.g. costs of new equipment, results of increased workloads, effect on perception of various stakeholders).
- 4 Explore preferences for planning, communication style, and learning.

The final step of the assessment process is to understand stakeholders' capability to change, which will be crucial for planning. Be mindful of the following aspects:

- professional competencies and experiences (e.g. an individual's professional career stage – those nearing retirement may not have energy or appetite for radical changes)
- personal values and attitudes
- resources available to support roles and work (e.g. technical knowledge both current and potential)

Where there may be gaps in capabilities to change, change leaders need to determine the necessary support required by the affected stakeholders to assist them in overcoming the perceived barriers.



## Organizational culture

Organizational culture can make or break a change management process. A review of organizational culture provides a change management team with a sense of how their proposed change will be received by the organization. It can also establish a foundation for change management planning and identify potential areas of resistance.

Below are a few examples of organizational culture components (i) that can help you understand how members view themselves and the organization when presented with change.

### Members' ability to influence decision-making

- In autocratic cultures, people may be fine when there are limited opportunities to influence decision-making.
- In democratic cultures, a change process must include sufficient opportunities for input and demonstrate due consideration to reduce change resistance.

### Ambiguity, uncertainty and risk-taking

- An organization with a low tolerance for ambiguity may require a different communications strategy than one with a high tolerance.
- The level of comfort with risk may influence discussions regarding goals and a sense of urgency.

### Goal-oriented / Achievement-based

- Leverage an achievement-based culture to stimulate motivation.
- Tackling a new project/initiative can be seen as an exciting challenge.

### Individual vs. Collective Mindset

- Organizations with a high degree of individual mindset may face challenges with a change that is perceived to reduce individual autonomy.
- Highlighting system-level benefits can motivate groups with a collective mindset.

## Constructive organizational culture

Organizational culture influences attitudes and values of all stakeholders and should be examined as a potential indicator of change readiness (Kotter, 1996). In his book, *Leading Change*, Kotter (1996) states that if cultural impact is not considered, it can influence and erode the effects of change. A constructive organizational culture is full of opportunities for stimulating change.

Features of a constructive organizational culture include:

- The culture encourages evolution and new ideas.
- The culture is well established, well defined and articulated.
- Leadership supports new initiatives and ideas and this is well known in the organization.

If these characteristics are not present, change leaders will need to introduce these elements into the organization through communication, managerial support, and training.

The [organizational culture survey](#) is a tool provided to assess your organization's cultural features. Additionally, the [organizational readiness for change survey](#) can be used to measure key cultural indicators that show whether your organization's culture is ready to undertake a change.

## TOOLS

- [Organizational culture survey](#)
- [Organizational readiness for change](#)

## Perception of transparency and early signs of resistance

Be mindful of the perception of transparency when assessing the change and engaging stakeholders. Plan your messaging in advance based on their needs and what is important to them. Consider the underlying anxieties, cognitive dissonance, and the drivers behind them.

## Early indicators of resistance

In the assessment process, there are key behaviours and attitudes that may not appear to be red flags, but could be indicative of potential resistance. During your engagement with stakeholders, keep an eye out for early indicators like the ones below.

- *Mentality of making it work:*  
Individuals might be willing to adapt to the change; however, the underlying dissonance may lead to burnout.
- *Rationalization as perceived buy-in:*  
Individuals might magically understand the reason for the change; however, look for visual signs of anxiety or distress to identify rationalization (Grenier & Bidgoli).
- Phrasing such as “that’s not how we do things” as this is indicative of a cultural barrier.
- Lack of participation and silence doesn’t mean stakeholders are happy and onboard.

### **Helpful tip: Readiness checklist**

Use the following checklist to gauge your organization's perspective on the impending change (Clairborne et al., 2013). Is the team demonstrating the following behaviours?

- Understanding the benefits
- Asking questions and expressing concerns about change
- Willingness to try new ideas
- Encouraging regular discussions
- Adapting quickly

### **Conclusion**

Assessment can provide ample information to help you plan for your change management process. The next section, planning, examines how findings generated through the assessment can be translated into effective, relevant change management planning for all. The planning section will reference steps taken during assessment, so refer to worksheets, exercises and key terminology as necessary.

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## Endnotes

- i Examples adapted using suggested framework from Maligner, M., Goodwin, D., & O'Hara, T. (2009). Recognizing Organizational Culture in Managing Change.Retrieved January 19, 2017, from <https://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/08/recognizing-organizational-culture-in-managing-change/>

# 2. PLANNING

## GOAL

Design a path for planning and facilitating the change process

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- identify major steps and benefits of effective planning
- develop standards and indicators for measuring and testing change
- assess organizational interdependence in planning
- select change champions and a transition team
- communicate expectations for successful change
- examine key components of effective training and common pitfalls in planning

## KEYWORDS

<b>Project management team</b>	A group of individuals tasked with the technical aspect of implementing a change initiative such as tracking key dates, working through dependencies, developing action plans and managing skills.
<b>Change management team</b>	A group of individuals tasked with the people aspect of a change initiative such as developing a change management plan, communicating with stakeholders, assessing the appetite for change, identifying and managing resistance and ensuring the change process goes smoothly.
<b>Visualizations and metaphors</b>	Techniques through which change leaders can demonstrate the effects of a change from a new perspective to dramatically illustrate a point.
<b>Quick win</b>	A minor but visible victory during the change management process to demonstrate success.

**Pressure to change**

Forces that compel organizations and individuals to change.

**Opinion leaders**

Individuals within an organization or industry known for their thought leadership or influence. Opinion leaders are not necessarily leaders in the traditional sense (such as managers or executive directors).

Planning is used to establish a clear path through the change for recipients and stakeholders. Planning provides change management teams with the opportunity to determine the necessary steps undertaken during the change process.

Effective change management planning can:

- help change leaders and recipients work together to consider different perspectives, build a shared vision and implement change effectively. Collaboratively building a shared vision will lead to increased likelihood of obtaining buy-in as well as ownership in program success (Bryce, Islam, Nelson, Gamage, Wilson, Welsh, & Han, 2014).
- create opportunities for change recipients to own the change and spread it through the organization.



*“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now”*

– Alan Lakein

## Steps to build an effective plan

While the nature of your change will steer the direction of your planning process, the following can be considered as part of any change management planning process.

- 1 Select change champions and build/expand your change management team to support the process (see enlisting change champions on page 25) .
- 2 Understand the results of your assessment:
  - a List the possible barriers based on the level of change readiness.
  - b Identify the required financial and human resource costs.
  - c Prepare your case – compile evidence and craft key messages to address questions or concerns.
- 3 Develop plans with your change management team to complement and address the information uncovered during the assessment. A comprehensive change management plan should include the following:

### Communication plan

- a Plan to communicate how and when the change will unfold throughout the change process. This will differ for those who will be engaged versus those who will be informed. Please refer to the worksheet [selecting stakeholders to engage](#) on page 13 to work through this categorization.
- b Address the reasons for the change, provide supporting evidence and introduce the key terms associated with the change.
- c Establish the change as part of the new status quo to gain legitimacy and credibility.

### Training requirements plan

- a Address any technical/knowledge gaps and formulate the necessary training activities to provide the means to gain the required skills.



## Coaching plan

- a Identify the coaching approach, roles and coaching focus. For example, what will be done with the resources and capacity in teams (leverage the expertise of the change management team in assessing cross-organizational needs).

## Resistance management plan

- a Provide guidance on how to address resistance discovered during assessment.
- b Include strategies and tactics to support change leaders and champions when faced with resistance.

Be sure to refer to the managing resistance while planning section of the guide located on page 48.

## Sponsor roadmap

- a Support change management team with knowing when and how to engage change sponsors, including a plan for leadership visibility.

# TOOLS

- [Communication plan](#)
- [Training requirements plan](#)
- [Coaching plan](#)
- [Resistance management plan](#)
- [Sample sponsor roadmap](#)

## Building your change management team

Through the course of the change, leaders will need to expand the change management team beyond themselves and seek new members to aid in planning. This may occur in the assessment phase, but should be addressed in the planning phase to ensure adequate resources are available.

This group should be comprised of individuals selected by change leaders to help guide the change management process. Like change champions, members of the team should be influential, supportive of the change, have the power to control outcomes, and be prepared to take an active role in the planning of the change management process. While change champions will support and inform the change management team, additional members will be responsible for managing the plans (see steps to an effective plan on page 29) throughout the process.

When selecting members of the team, change leaders should seek to include individuals who are proactive, enthusiastic and passionate about the change journey and achieving a change goal. It is also important to select members from diverse backgrounds (e.g. individuals from different departments, with varying skills, expertise, etc.).

## Enlisting change champions

Enlisting and leveraging change champions will facilitate an inclusive and participatory change process. Change champions come from all levels of an organization and may possess many of the characteristics seen below, regardless of their formal role.

- skilled presenter or charismatic (Xu, Payne, Horner & Alexander, 2016)
- power to control outcomes (Xu et al., 2016)
- good standing with large groups of staff (Lewis & Grosser, 2012) as they can help overcome resistance later (Pereira et al., 2016)
- have social influence across organization or team
- currently in a leadership role or position (Xu et al., 2016)
- supportive of and passionate about the change and the goals of the change (Xu et al., 2016)

Individuals who are hesitant to adopt the change can also be leveraged as change champions (Xu et al., 2016). Their opinions and perspectives are critical to identifying gaps and prompting innovative solutions to stakeholder concerns. Involving them also allows them to speak from the perspective of someone who has been convinced, adding credibility to the change.

Selecting and engaging change champions should be an integral part of your planning. The benefits of using change champions include:

- positively affect employee's perspectives of fairness and foster favorable reactions to change.
- observe and report on the change's effects, promote the change and encourage others to accept and appreciate the change.
- develop an organization-based view of the change.
- reinforce the benefits and role of the change in organizational culture.
- take ownership of the change and persevere until the change is complete.

#### **Four key success factors of a change management plan**

While the design and implementation of a plan will vary widely based on the change your organization is undertaking, there are several guiding principles to effective plans that you can leverage. Effective plans establish clear expectations, articulate measurements to demonstrate success, encourage buy-in, and support people through training. Each of these will be discussed in greater detail in the next few pages.

#### **Establish clear expectations**

When undertaking the planning process, it is important to understand the future vision you are aiming to achieve. With a clear goal, you can establish expectations that are accurate, transparent and relevant by:

- communicating core values and evidence supporting the change.
- establishing realistic performance targets and communicating them. (See evaluating your change initiative on page 28 for further details).
- establishing an expectation for some failure in the process of implementation and using a recovery approach when failure occurs.
- sharing the project implementation plan for input and to demonstrate transparency. This should be supported by the project management team.

Communicating expectations is also a great opportunity to address gaps identified during the assessment process by providing clear answers to raised concerns. For example:

- If your stakeholders expressed concern over available resources during your assessment, communicate how you plan to address this.
- Prepare managers to resolve relevant concerns through coaching.
- Reiterate with your change sponsor areas of ambiguity for the team and that require management direction.

Use the worksheet, [establishing expectations](#), to work through your change and anticipate how your stakeholders' expectations may be addressed.

## TOOLS

- [Establishing expectations](#)

## Evaluate your change initiative

A robust change management plan includes tangible measurements. The following is an exploration of measurement in the child and youth mental health sector, including suggested resources for consideration.

Effectively measuring change starts in the planning phase. The goal of measuring is to motivate employees and provide pathways to achieving the goal and vision. It also allows change leaders to address issues during implementation in cases where the course deviates from the plan.

Outlining a clear picture of what you are trying to accomplish starts with setting quality standards. In the child and youth mental health context, the [MCYS Community-Based Child and Youth Mental Health Program Guidelines and Requirements #01: Core Services and Key Processes](#) (2015) provides information on continuous improvement priorities such as wait-list and wait-time management, as well as other mandatory measures based on pre-determined definitions (standards) and indicators.

Performance indicators have already been developed and should be reviewed in the planning stage of change. Similarly, the Program Guidelines and Requirements document mentioned about outlines the key processes and minimum expectations for core services delivery and is a key reference for measuring change. Use the [standards and indicators](#) worksheet to develop your quality standards and performance indicators.

## CCA performance measures

The Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA) has developed a common set of organizational standards, and standards specific to organizations' child and youth mental health programs and services for those organizations wishing to undergo accreditation. The CCA standards may also be useful for organizations undergoing change to help change/transition teams measure changes in services and/or in key processes.

## TOOLS

- [Standards and indicators](#)

## Encourage buy-in

An effective plan should encourage buy-in for the change. Best practices for fostering buy-in include the following:

- Define and reiterate common goals, values and benefits.
  - Consider highlighting the benefits to end users, alignments with the goals of the organization and any supporting empirical evidence.
  - Share a common goal to shift the focus from an individual's personal needs to those of the organization.
  - Use anecdotal stories focusing on children, youth and their families to demonstrate needs.
  - Use creative visualizations and metaphors (e.g., if your change goal is to reduce long wait times, express current wait times cumulatively: "Last year, parents of children/youth spent 5,000 minutes waiting. That's like driving from the CN Tower to the Lion's Gate Bridge and back again").
- Position the change to be applicable in wide-ranging applications (Simpson, 2009).
- Highlight and celebrate direct organizational benefits, milestones, and quick wins (Kotter, 1996; Lindberg & Meredith, 2012).
- Create urgency by highlighting/emphasizing the pressure to change (Schurer et al., 2010).
- Actively facilitate engagement (Lindberg & Meredith, 2012; McWilliam et al., 2008) by:
  - making research evidence easy to use.
  - ensuring staff is continually involved by scheduling follow-ups and updates.
  - providing opportunities for group membership – let those who volunteer to help assist when possible.
  - encouraging participation in meetings with activities, exercises and Q&A.
  - providing exposure to opinion leaders and experts in your organization and industry who support the change.

## Training

The training and implementation component of a plan is one that will directly affect stakeholders who are carrying out the change. The goal of training should be to make it clear how the impending change can be accommodated and executed, and provide solutions for gaps that may hinder this process. It is important to consider inputs from affected staff in this process, particularly those who will be benefiting directly from the training to ensure the required technical competencies are incorporated and training materials have the greatest appeal (Simpson, 2009). A few more tips:

- Effective training addresses knowledge gaps and required competencies, which would be identified through stakeholder engagement during the assessment phase.
- Training plans should incorporate a logical sequence that is built from change recipients' input from the assessment phase.
- Internal training has shown limited effectiveness (Schurer et al., 2010). When possible, use an external training or educator.
- Design training sessions so they are easy to accommodate in staff schedules.
- Factors that influence trainee attendance include relevance to their needs, location, cost, scheduling and credibility of the education (Simpson, 2009).

The [training needs assessment](#) worksheet can be used by the change management team to plan and organize training needs.

## TOOLS

- [Training needs assessment](#)

## **Trials of change**

Often, change requires multiple trials and evaluation to determine its effectiveness. It is recommended that small-scale trials be used to allow for observation on how smaller groups will react (Simpson, 2009). This is an opportunity to identify unanticipated barriers, enthusiastic individuals to leverage in the later stages, and improvements that can optimize the change. Change trials require coordination with the project management team to discuss implementation strategies and timing, and confirm the trials are an accurate or useful representation of the intended change.

To design your change trial, use the [Plan, Do, Study, Act \(PDSA\) model](#) in the worksheet provided.

### **Reflection: Organizational interdependence exercise**

How interdependent is your system? In his book, *Leading Change*, Kotter suggests that the more a system or organization is interdependent, the more planning will be necessary (Kotter, 1996).

Try sketching out involved teams as a web for your organization. Next, draw arrows connecting two teams wherever the actions of one team influences another. How complicated is your drawing? This is a helpful way to identify the effects of a change.

Now use different coloured arrows to indicate relationships that are direct (i.e., process related), indirect (i.e., involve communications but not a formal process) or social. Use different types of arrows to indicate the nature of these relationships (i.e., tenuous, average, strong or conflict).

Try to create another diagram illustrating a future state you think is ideal. This helps define the change required to achieve this as well as where the change management team will need to focus their efforts.

## **TOOLS**

- [Plan, Do, Study, Act \(PDSA\) model](#)



## Common pitfalls in planning

- lack of consistency or infrequent leadership participation can create resistance and barriers to change (Schurer et al., 2010)
- neglecting to run trials of change on a smaller scale (Simpson, 2009)
- even if there are support and desire for change, limitation in resources and capacity can be barriers (Schurer et al., 2010).
- biasing or prioritizing proactive and engaged staff

## Reflection: Past experiences with planning

Take some time to consider the elements discussed in this section, either as an individual or in a group. Use these reflection questions to think about how your past experiences, both personally and as a member of your organization, can inform the planning stage for your next change.

- Were you aware of the influence of change champions?
- Were you aware of the formal and informal social networks in your organization?
- Who had influence on various groups?
- Can you think of an instance in which a planning exercise contributed to a successful change?
- Can you think of an instance in which a planning exercise did not result in a successful change?
- What other change barriers have you had in the past that could have been mitigated by an effective planning process?

## Conclusion

By leveraging a strong foundational assessment and all opportunities offered in the planning phase, you can begin to implement your change on a trial basis, and eventually scale up to full implementation. The next section deals with how you can make sure your efforts at this stage transfer and carry over beyond the implementation phase and sustain the change and its effects well into the future.

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# 3. SUSTAINING

## GOAL

Reinforce behaviours and attitudes for supporting long-term organizational change

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- assess post-implementation risks
- maintain change momentum
- reinforce implemented changes

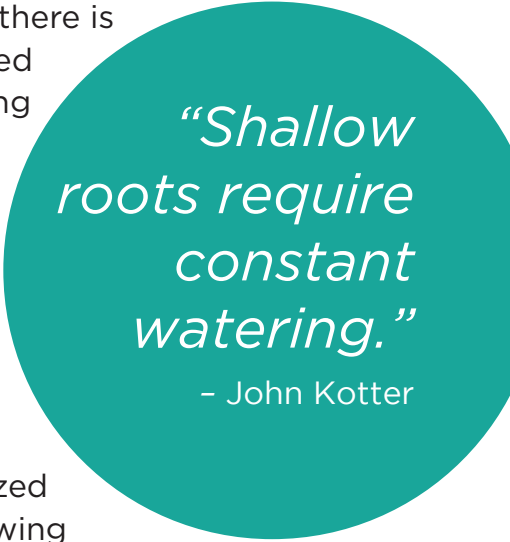
## KEYWORDS

<b>Early adopters</b>	Embrace the proposed change at the beginning of the process.
<b>Positivity bias</b>	The tendency of individuals to only focus on / remember the positive outcomes and benefits of a change process, while downplaying the negatives.
<b>Slippage</b>	Signs of an organization, team or individual reverting to the pre-change status quo.
<b>Emergent leaders and advocates</b>	Establish themselves as proponents for the change and take it upon themselves to ensure the change is being enacted.

Once a plan for change has been developed and put in practice, there is a tendency for change sponsors, leaders and recipients to proceed as though the change management process is over. But, sustaining change is a crucial step in ensuring the change takes deep root. This will also ensure new processes, behaviours and attitudes persist past the initial implementation. This step is often overlooked, which means recipients and the organization can fall back into the old way of doing things.

This can happen for a variety reasons including that many change leaders don't focus on sustainment because they are already planning for the next change. Individuals who are energized by change can focus on new challenges instead and risk not allowing the change to take root. Sustaining can also be over looked because early adopters of change often suffer from positivity bias. They tend to view the change in a positive light and neglect the need to continually address the negative aspects of the change.

Given the scarcity of resources and the frequency of change in the child and youth mental health sector, it is especially important to use techniques that help to sustain change.



*“Shallow roots require constant watering.”*

– John Kotter

## Signs of slippage

Slippage refers to an organization or environment starting to revert to the *old* ways. The following are common signs of slippage and how to observe or monitor them.

Signs of slippage	How to observe or monitor for it
Performance indicators are not met	Collect data and evaluate measurements developed with the change management team to confirm performance.
New behaviours not adopted	Actively monitor for signs that all or part of a new process is not occurring.
Resurgence of old behaviour	Through observation and soliciting feedback, assess whether discouraged behaviours have returned.
Increasing references to how things used to be	Look for key sentiments while engaging with employees, such as the old process was better.
No increase in cohesion between the change management team	This process should get smoother with time - if it gets increasingly difficult, intervene.
Tasks assigned that broaden the change so it takes longer	Tasks pertaining to this should start to take less time, if they don't, intervene.
Obvious signs of resistance	Look for sources and signs identified in the assessment phase or potentially new signs.

### Reflection: Reverting to status quo

Can you think of a time where a large-scale change was implemented well but your organization reverted to the old status quo? Why did it happen? What efforts were made to sustain the change? What was used to monitor and track change progress? What were the signs of slippage?

## Momentum and culture

One function of sustaining the change is to keep the momentum going. While performance metrics, status updates and other checks and balances may have been a component of the planning process, keeping the energy and commitment to the change is a primary driver of the entrenching process.

Persistence of the following actions is recommended:

- Continue with regular face-to-face meetings, teleconferences and frequent communication with staff and clients (Pereira et al., 2016).
- Expand the change management team to encourage change championship and ownership (Lindberg & Meredith, 2012). Increase the number of those involved where possible as this has been shown to aid in sustaining the change.
- Establish baseline measures to help demonstrate success and continue improving.
- Emphasize that change leadership exists at all levels. Praise and celebrate any newfound feelings of inclusivity and pride from the change. As leaders and advocates emerge, let them take ownership of change initiatives and recognize their contributions.

## Culture and change

It is important to recognize the role of culture in sustaining the change, particularly the tendency for other aspects of an organization's culture to overshadow the effects of change (Kotter, 1996). The effects of cultural elements can be influential throughout the change management process. Due to the complex nature of cultural change, it comes last in the process of transformation and is challenging to alter.

Refer to the [Organizational Readiness for Change Survey](#) and [Stakeholder Engagement Exercise](#) completed as part of the assessment section to identify cultural areas that were addressed in the assessment phase. Tailoring the approach based on an assessment is important. Below are several ways to overcome some cultural barriers and to ingrain the change in your organization:

### Demonstrate and share data and results

- Demonstrating that the change has had positive effects on overall culture will reinforce belief in the initial change. (Kotter, 1996).

### Continue verbal instruction and support

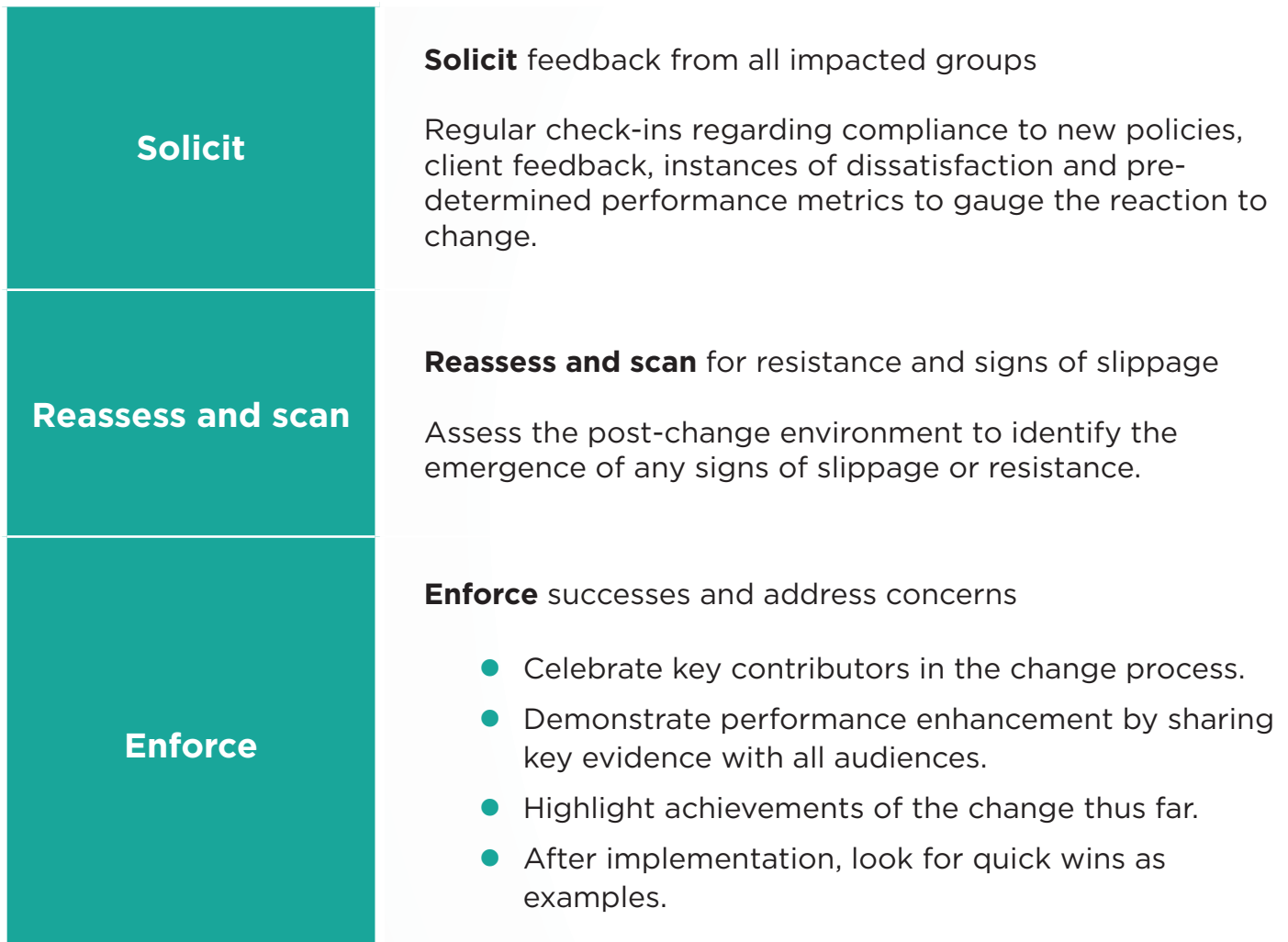
- Individuals are sometimes reluctant to acknowledge the results of change without verbal reinforcement and discussion (Kotter, 1996).

### Include expectations from the change in formal performance management plans and organizational mandate.

- Helps individuals to internalize the change through formal structures.
- Demonstrates how success in the change will be directly relevant to those involved.

## Active sustainment of change

The following illustrates a framework to sustain the change. Remember that active sustainment should be considered an iterative process until significant sources of gaps or signs of slippage are no longer prevalent.



The tools provided in the assessment section can be leveraged again in the sustaining phase. Complete the [force field](#) and [stakeholder engagement](#) worksheet once more, only now applied to a post-change environment.



## TOOLS

- [Sustaining - force field](#)
- [Sustaining - stakeholder engagement](#)

### Conclusion

Sustaining the change is the process stage where all positive achievements of the prior steps can be cemented or lost. This step is crucial in ensuring the original vision for the change is carried through to implementation and beyond, and that the process and change is successful and beneficial.

By observing and assessing for signs of slippage, sustaining momentum and incorporating a strong understanding of organizational cultural indicators, you can best prepare yourself to recognize when sustaining the change is succeeding or in jeopardy of failing.

Having now familiarized yourself with the foundational aspects of the change management process, it is recommended you read both Part 4: Resistance and Part 5: Communication. These are pivotal concepts that influence all aspects of the change management process.

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# 4. RESISTANCE

## GOAL

Address resistance that occurs during the change management process

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- examine the emotional aspects of change and cognitive dissonance
- assess signs and underlying causes of resistance
- select appropriate strategies for mitigating resistance
- apply project management principles in the change management process

## KEYWORDS

<b>Resistance</b>	Behaviour or viewpoints that are counter to the change. Active resistance refers to explicitly stated, often vocal opposition to a change, and passive resistance can be demonstrated through disengagement or desires to not participate in tasks, activities or responsibilities associated with a change.
<b>The stages of grief</b>	A model adopted by Kübler-Ross to demonstrate the psychological and emotional reactions associated with loss, or change in an applied context.
<b>Cognitive dissonance</b>	Negative emotions that arise from the result of differences in thoughts that are connected to the change.
<b>Dispositional resistance</b>	A type of resistance that stems from the result of differences in thoughts that are connected to the change.
<b>Disengagement</b>	Behaviour exhibited by some who may be experiencing resistance that includes; lack of participation in discussions during stakeholder meetings or coaching sessions, disinterest in the change itself or, in a broader sense, showing general signs of apathy towards their role.

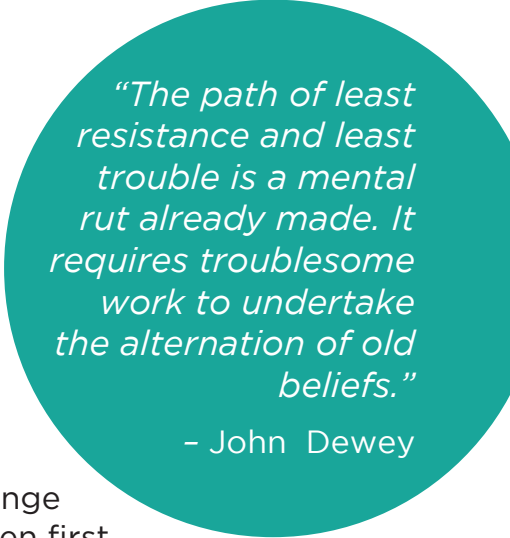
**Shared conceptual framework**

Common knowledge or understanding amongst a group of people.

**Client-centric view**

The end user's or client's view to contextualize change.

Resistance is important to consider throughout the change management process. When a change is proposed, resistance from individuals and teams in some shape or form is common. Resistance is not necessarily an opposition to the change itself; resistance can emerge simply from moving away from status quo or individuals' comfort zones. Think about a change at a personal level, such as going to the gym for an hour daily. You understand the importance of exercise and being fit, however you may find it difficult to change your habits and start going to the gym every day. It takes constant effort and various attempts to make exercising a long-term routine. Resistance can also be caused by an emotional reaction to the environment and the change process itself. Individuals may find the process overwhelming when first hearing it.



*“The path of least resistance and least trouble is a mental rut already made. It requires troublesome work to undertake the alternation of old beliefs.”*

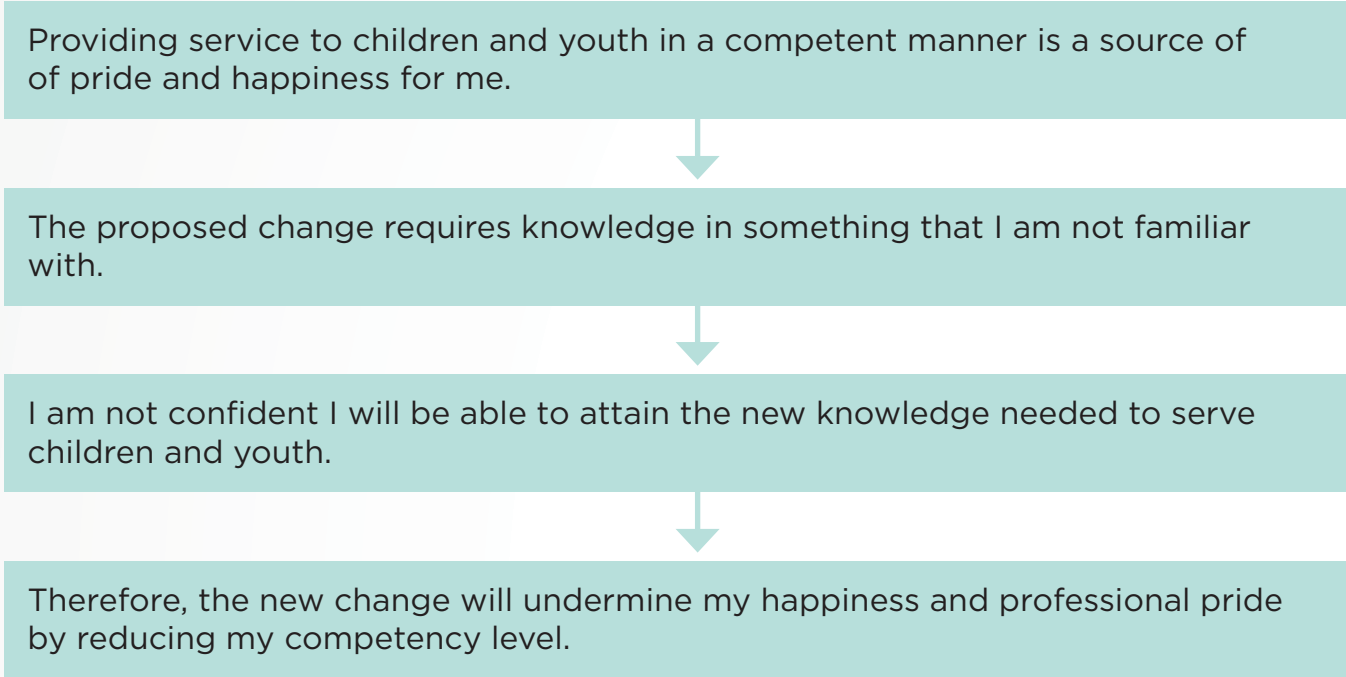
– John Dewey

While some may be quick to classify an emotional reaction as a temporary or minor consideration in the context of a change management process, research states otherwise. Emotional reactions to change are parallel to the experience of loss; individuals involved in a change process can exhibit high levels of emotional distress (Grenier & Bidgoli, 2015). An emotional reaction to change can drastically affect the wellbeing of those experiencing these feelings. Feelings of resistance, when not addressed, can significantly slow or prevent a change from happening.

**Kübler-Ross model**

Many people are familiar with the stages of grief expressed by the Kübler-Ross model; it is a model that explains the emotional process of going through a change. Refer to the downloadable summarized version of the [Kübler-Ross model](#) for more information.

The experience of change resistance is related to the theory of cognitive dissonance – negative feelings that arise from the result of differences in thought (i). Below is an example of the thought process behind an individual’s resistant behaviour.



This is a very simplistic illustration but serves to demonstrate that managing and overcoming resistance involves, at its core, understanding and addressing the direct issues that cause dissonance. No organization is immune to resistance no matter how clear, transparent or relatable change leaders perceive the change management process to be.

Developing a strategy to manage resistance is an integral part of the change management process. When encountering resistance as a change leader, it is important to identify and understand the underlying thought process and employ techniques to help manage resistance. Please download the activities entitled the [change game](#) and [changing places](#) to help understand resistance.

### **Constructive resistance**

Resistance is not always an emotional reaction to change. Resistance that comes from a source of valid reasoning, such as flaws in the change itself, or the implementation strategy or plan, can be a useful tool in fine-tuning the change

## TOOLS

- [The change game](#)
- [Changing places](#)

It is important to not simply resolve the signs of resistance (i.e., through performance management), but to understand the reason behind the behaviours and attitudes toward a change and work together to address it.

### Signs of resistance

Resistance can be expressed in both active and passive ways. *Active* resistance is oppositional, direct and, in extreme cases, confrontational; active resistance is easy to observe. *Passive* resistance includes a lack of fulfilling obligations or participation and is harder to observe. The following signs may be exhibited on their own or in combination with one another:

- habitual resistance: Some individuals are habitually uncomfortable with change as a part of their personality. Individuals with dispositional resistance are likely to exhibit active resistance (Xu et al., 2016).
- emotional challenges including:
  - absenteeism, decline or fluctuation in performance
  - feelings of being overwhelmed (Grenier & Bidgoli, 2015)
  - feeling of fatigue and reduced willingness to assist others (Grenier & Bidgoli, 2015)
- seeing the change as just “another fad” with little lasting value (Taylor, Coates, Brewster, Mountain, Wessels & Hawley, 2015). Long-tenured individuals or individuals with negative experiences with prior changes may verbally oppose the change.
- lack of interaction with change, change management process or role. Disengagement can include a lack of participation or minimal inquiries about the change; this is a form of passive resistance against the change process or the change itself.
- referencing evidence counter to the change. Resistance can be constructive. Counter-evidence can be leveraged to strengthen or refine the change by addressing its gaps.

## Reasons for resistance

The causes of resistance are not often expressed explicitly by those exhibiting the signs. Change leaders need to familiarize themselves with the common reasons for resistance to better understand how to focus their efforts in managing it. Common causes of change resistance are provided below to aid change leaders in investigating the root causes and creating a corresponding plan to address them.

- unclear purpose for change
- inadequate training and support of the implementation process (Simpson, 2009)
- lack of faith or confidence in personal ability to learn new skills
- a perceived impact on the individual's role or professional authority
- lack of team synergy (Nyström, Höög, Garvare, Weinehall & Ivarsson, 2013)
- If a team is already experiencing a lack of cohesion, the disruptive nature of a change can exacerbate pre-existing team challenges (Kotter, 1996).
- perceived unfairness because of change such as loss of responsibilities, role change, prioritization of one group over another, etc. (Dahl, 2011)
- individual believes that there are flaws in the change (goal, implementation, results, etc.)
- concern over lack of resources or capacity
- experiencing feelings of change overload
- fear of the unknown and uncertainty such as loss of job security, direction or future of the organization, definition of individual's role and competencies required

## Managing resistance

Managing resistance is a difficult task, even for the most experienced change leaders. Any process that involves strong, differing opinions can be emotionally charged. By being familiar with the signs of and reasons for resistance, change leaders can apply proven methods and establish support structures to discuss and manage resistance. Along the way, it is important to ask for feedback to uncover the reasons behind resistance.

## Ways to manage resistance

Make a conscious and clear effort to provide a safe environment in which individuals can feel comfortable expressing themselves.

- Incorporate as many of the individual's preferences as possible when scheduling the discussion (i.e. let them decide if the meeting will take place in a private/public place, if they would like to set an agenda, etc.).
- Consider consulting with them without their supervisor present; if appropriate, convene meetings outside of typical meeting spaces.

Add goals and measures related to the adoption of the change into performance management.

- Signal formal commitment to the change by entrenching the change and rewarding change adoption.

Involve individuals who are opposed to the change actively in the change management process. When appropriate, look to leverage and engage individuals who are both influential and show signs of resistance to the change, utilizing them as resources in developing plans and exercises to leverage their perspective. Specifically, involve those who are influential in the organization. By including these individuals, it allows the change leaders to frequently interact with them, which strengthens the process and can facilitate buy-in.

Schedule frequent and consistent communication at the organizational level. Establish a shared conceptual framework, as well as the repetition of new terminology, concepts, and goals.

Reinforce benefits and successes.

- Communicate and celebrate quick wins and individuals enacting the change to reinforce benefits.
- Celebrate desired behaviours where possible. Using this approach, over time, change leaders can encourage a positive habit.

Actively elicit feedback from a diverse range of staff, including quieter individuals.

- Listen (refer to the reference sheet [effective listening](#) for more details) and seek to understand.
- Actively attempt to suspend fear by ensuring a safe space for dialogue.
- Reach common ground by leveraging and focusing on the benefits to clients.
- Be transparent of how concerns and criticisms received are considered.
- Always thank individuals for presenting concerns and inputs against the change.

Leverage a champion from the senior management level.

- Engage a senior leader to provide the change with credibility; normalize the new environment and signal management support.

Leverage change champions and key influencers.

- Use peer-to-peer culture and informal networks to help reiterate the benefits and outcomes within the organizational culture.

Recognize when resistance is impossible to overcome.

- Sometimes, change leaders will need to work around resistance. In these cases, change leaders need to develop a strategy to contain the influence of individuals opposed to the change and to contain the negative attitudes toward the change.
- Consider adopting a majority view to move the plan forward when there is a critical mass of support.

## TOOLS

- [Effective listening](#)



## Managing resistance while planning

You can mitigate the impacts of resistance through effective change management planning. Some of the ways to do this are outlined below. Refer to the planning section on page 21 for more details.

- Minimize the perceived level of change by dividing the change into manageable portions. Working with smaller changes reduces the level of stress.
- Use the change management team and change champions to generate buy-in across the organization, thus building increasing pressure for change.
- Planning for change with realistic expectations based on available capacity and knowledge requirements.
- Enable the ability to change by providing managerial support (McWilliam et al., 2008).

If managers are not already part of the change leadership process, they should be consulted and engaged to provide support.

See [sponsor roadmap](#) on page 24 for details on this consideration

### Reflection: Managing resistance

Think of an instance in which you have opposed a change. The change can be big or small; maybe a new member was added to your team, responsibilities were delegated in a way you didn't agree with, or a new system or form of technology was adopted.

Write down a few of the initial reactions and thoughts you had when you first encountered this change, and then again later once the change had become commonplace. What were the causes of your concerns? How could your organization have supported you during this time to address them?

## Conclusion

Please download the [resistance management strategy](#) reference sheet and keep it for your reference. This includes a chart with many common signs of resistance and recommended management strategies to work through them. This worksheet can be useful during the assessment phase, when looking for early signs of resistance, the planning phase when formulating a resistance management plan and during the phase of sustaining your change to identify possible signs of impending slippage.

## TOOLS

- [Resistance management strategy](#)

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## Endnotes

- i Adapted using concepts illustrated in Barker, P.(2003, September).Cognitive Dissonance. Retrieved January 19, 2017, from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/cognitive-dissonance>

# 5. COMMUNICATION

## GOAL

Apply critical elements of communication that contribute to change management success

## OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this section you will be able to:

- examine communication issues associated with the change process in the child and youth mental health context.
- assess the clarity of communication practices within your change environment.
- select appropriate best practice communication strategies.

## KEYWORDS

**Effective / active listening** A form of listening that requires the listener to absorb, reflect and synthesize based on the content of the stakeholder's message.

Effective communication supports all elements of the change management process and developing a plan for how you will communicate is an essential step. A communication plan should be revisited any time a change recipient or stakeholder is engaged, to ensure consistency and clarity of your message. Communication can also be used strategically to frame changes and challenges, speak directly to resistant perspectives and reiterate the benefits associated with a change at every opportunity.

*“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”*

– George Bernard Shaw

## Elements of effective communication

Effective communication has several common elements that change leaders and management teams can utilize to maximize their communication strategy. The following elements should be incorporated when developing any communication.

### Consistent

Communication conveys a consistent message. Messaging can build or elaborate on previously messages, but should never contradict them. Continuity in message, vocabulary and tone will increase the credibility of the communication and content.

### Frequent

Change management is an evolving process; communications should evolve and be conveyed frequently and in a timely manner (Bradley & Griffin, 2015). Frequent communications help everyone understand the change at their pace (Xu et al., 2016). To understand what the right amount of communication is, refer to information from the organizational culture assessment and stakeholder feedback to guide decisions.

### Transparent

Transparent, accurate and complete communication is required to help people understand the reasons for a change (Bourne, 2015). Ensure that the information provided addresses any concerns that have been raised by stakeholders. Sufficient information can also reduce unsubstantiated or speculative concerns (Xu, et al., 2016).

### Clear

Communications should be credible, simple and complete. Leverage evidence-informed data to establish credibility. Avoid long, complex messaging; aim to provide information in a simple and digestible manner.

### Tailored

Create messaging that is designed to engage a specific audience (Bradley & Griffin, 2015) and speak to a specific goal. Assessment results can be leveraged to create tailored messaging. Defining the scope and reason for communication can help articulate the goal more clearly. Sample goals include: Raise awareness, promote and deepen understanding, provide support, encourage and facilitate involvement, and develop and reaffirm commitment.

## Common communication issues

It is easy to overestimate how clear communication is during a change process (Lewis & Grosser, 2012), as well as how much communication is required or desired by recipients. Common communication issues that may arise include:

- inconsistent vocabulary or multiple definitions of key nomenclatures.
- assuming audiences share the same background knowledge as the change management team.
- absence of a credible source of information.
- false information, distorted information or rumours.
- incomplete understanding or inadequate explanation of the change.

### Reflection: How do you communicate?

How does your organization communicate? Think about formal communications (e.g. newsletter, email or verbally during an all-staff presentation), as well as informal communication (e.g. while waiting for the elevator, walking down a hallway). Are there any unwritten rules or understandings that are not directly discussed? Can you think of a time where you read something and felt like you didn't have all the facts? Have you ever received a communication with too much information? Does information flow clearly and quickly through your organization, or is it more like a game of broken telephone?

## Effective communication best practices

With the elements of effective communication in place, several best practices can be used to prevent the communication from being ignored or undermined. Below are a few communication best practices. Refer to the reference document labelled [effective listening](#) for more information about the concept and use of active listening.

Address false information through direct communication:

- Select appropriate communication channels strategically to achieve the desired impact.
- To address rumours, consider leveraging influencers and informal networks.
- Support individuals who speak about the change with key and consistent messages for both formal and informal discussions (Lindberg & Meredith, 2012).

Address the experience and age levels of your audience.

- Communications should transcend generational groups but the preferences for style and method of communication may not align across those groups. You may need to tailor communication methods for different generations (Bourne, 2015).
- Analyze and criticize your intended messaging while adopting multiple perspectives, including age and generational viewpoints and preferences.

## TOOLS

- [Effective listening](#)

## **Communicating about failures**

Not every change effort will result in positive outcomes; this is particularly true when implementing small trials of change. As discussed in previous chapters, it is important to manage change expectations when communicating. Below are tips to assist in communications when a change has not been successful:

### **Be clear about why a change is not successful**

Being clear reinforces (or establishes) how success will be measured. Being clear about success indicators supports the evaluation process of identifying the causality between actions and outcomes.

### **Remind those affected to expect failures**

This creates a psychological safety net that allows those affected to feel encouraged to try new solutions.

### **Take ownership of the failure**

Change sponsors should convey a sense of ownership for the lack of success to create a sense of shared ownership and foster a collective mindset. This redirects the groups energy towards a renewed common goal.

### **Celebrate the change effort**

While the intended outcomes were not achieved, there are many valuable lessons to be learned and the efforts that were put in need to be applauded. This establishes a strong foundation for course correction and future attempts.

## **Communicating to sustain the change**

To ensure lasting change, effective communication after implementation is crucial and needs to speak to the following:

- goals established at project onset and cumulative outcomes achieved to date
- positive impacts on children, youth and their families
- reiterate the “what’s in it for me” for those affected by the change
- communications to sustain the change serve to celebrate the change effort and positive outcomes; it also refreshes morale and mitigates change fatigue



## Conclusion

Communication best practices can be used at any step in the change management process. In the assessment phase, the vocabulary of change can be established, in addition to presenting the case for your change in a clear, effective manner. In the planning stage, communication can be used strategically to address sources of resistance and provide stakeholders with the information that is directly relevant to their change management experience, not to mention inform your communication plan. Finally, when a change is being sustained, frequent and clear communication can be engaged to truly engrain the change in your organization, as well as calling attention to positive examples of implementation.

Refer to this section through all aspects of your change management process to ensure your communications are relevant, well-defined and beneficial to all change recipients and leaders.

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