



**UNIT IV:
Community/
Public Policy
Leadership
Skills**

Module 1: Dealing With Change

Change has always been part of the human condition. What is different now, however, is the pace of change, and the prospect that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life. The age in which we live is changing so fast that we often feel we do not have time to adjust before more change takes place.

Change can be defined as any planned or unplanned alteration in the status quo of an organism, situation or process. Change may happen through transmission — without deliberate or conscious social actions or decisions — or through transformation, which occurs as a result of planned or conscious social decisions or action.

Planned change is an intended, designed, or purposeful attempt by an individual, group, organization or larger social system to directly influence the status quo of itself, another organism or a situation.

Leadership and Change

One of the key parts of the leadership process is dealing with change. Individuals face change in many different ways. This may vary with the nature of the change and whether it is voluntary (i.e., chosen), or involuntary, happening without control or choice. Sometime it is possible to predict a change, while others occur in an unpredictable fashion.

Communities and organizations also experience transitions and changes. The culture of an organization or community is a composite of the individuals who live, work or belong. Organizational change is any planned or unplanned alteration of the status quo which affects the structure, technology and human resources of the total organization.

Stages of Change

Three stages of change can usually be identified: endings, the neutral zone, and new beginning.^{1,2} Change can often be examined by starting with an ending.

• Endings

The ending is actually the beginning of the transition. An end marks the death of the old — old habits are given up. Loss of a spouse, close friends moving, children leaving home, a committee finishing its projects, or a change in jobs are just a few examples of what could be described as endings.

In each of the above examples, something is given up. In other examples, even when the change will involve a new opportunity such as getting a grant, being elected to an office or getting a new job, there is an ending to an existing pattern of behavior.

• Neutral Zone

The bridge between the ending and a new beginning is characterized as the neutral zone. Typically, there is a struggle with the situation, and there is mourning. It should be a time when you talk with others about what has happened and process your experience and feelings.

Information is gathered about the situation. Options and their probable consequences are identified. Experimenting with the new beginning starts, and new plans are made.

• **Beginning**

New goals result from the planning process. New relationships are established. New or different ways of using time, money, or other resources are developed.

Gradually, different patterns of goals and behavior develop, possibly with different sources of satisfaction.

Reactions to Change

Accepting the neutral zone is critical. Individuals can reduce the feeling of being trapped by finding productive things to do. It's important to maintain health and allow time for reflection and discussion. Remember that transition tends to bring on a crisis of identity for everyone, as an individual or as a member of a group. A community going through change may experience a similar crisis. You can influence transitions and/or changes in your life, in your community, and in your group.

Many attitudes about change and diversity are formed in childhood. Diversity in the sense of recognizing and valuing the differences among people and cultures has many dimensions: some are visible — others are not. Many changes involve becoming more inclusive in our relationships. As people become more aware of these multiple dimensions, they can better appreciate and value others. Analysis of the reasons for one's beliefs can begin with thinking about roles and role models in a variety of situations. Personality types also differ in their attitudes and acceptance of change.³

Most people find it helpful to have strategies for dealing with change. A plan can help in coping with unpredictable changes as well as the predictable ones. During times of change and transition, values may be examined and either affirmed or revised.

Organizational Change

The principles in dealing with personal change and organizational change are very similar. Organizations are composed of individuals. When change occurs within an organization, individuals are affected. They can resist or accept the change that is proposed.⁴ Some typical reactions include:

Resistance to Change

- Tradition is threatened: "We have always done it this way" is a common comment.
- It is perceived as illogical: Costs seem greater than benefits.
- It is perceived as self-serving: Who is promoting it? Is there a personal benefit?
- It lacks clear intention and direction: Change evolves slowly. Rarely are all parts in place at the very beginning.
- It brings on fear of the unknown: This fear can produce a reluctance to trade the known (the way things are now) for an uncertain, new way.
- Positions are threatened: Will the change bring reorganization? Will power positions change?

Acceptance of Change

- The need for change is recognized.
- It is logical: Its merits are understood.
- People are involved in the change: Because they are part of it, they support it.
- It is non–threatening: For example, jobs will not be lost and there will be no pay cut. If this is not possible, there will at least be recognition of the problem and some strategies to help those affected.
- Its intention is very clear.
- It is perceived to have a low risk level.

Strategies for Dealing with Changes

Groups can make changes in many ways. Two very different styles for initiating change are summarized here. A variety of activities for each shows the difference between these styles.^{4,5}

Collaborative Strategies

A collaborative strategy is one in which you work with the group to identify needs and generate new ideas to solve a problem. Collaborative strategy may involve the following activities:

- Providing information about the problem.
- Presenting alternative courses of action (such as programs and procedures).
- Requesting support for new approaches to the problem (such as new forms of service delivery).
- Appointing a task force to study and recommend alternative approaches to the problem.
- Creating new opportunities to express ideas and feelings, build trust, and learn better ways to communicate with each other.
- Appealing to conscience, ethics and values, with a focus on the common good.
- Persuading by logical argument and presentation of data.
- Pointing out the negative consequences of continuing a specific policy.

Adversary Strategies

To bring about change using adversary strategies, you must work against the group — trying to influence people to adopt proposed changes. Adversary strategy may involve the following activities:

- Submitting petitions which set forth demands.
- Confronting the group openly in agency meetings and public forums.
- Bringing sanctions against the agency through external funding, standard–setting and professional agencies.
- Publicly criticizing and exposing organizational practices through the communications media.
- Calling strikes or picketing.
- Engaging in litigation.
- Bargaining to negotiate differences and to develop compromise solutions.

Adversary strategies commonly result in win/lose situations that hamper positive relationships in organizations or communities.

Conditions for Change

Three conditions must exist for effective, planned change to take place within an organization or community:

1. Surplus resources must exist or be created.
These resources may come in a variety of forms and can be developed in a variety of ways. They might include dollars, skills, time, information, etc. They can be in place as surplus resources, or be created through such actions as a budget cut or reallocating, or attainment of a grant or other donations.
2. The implications of change must be clear.
A lack of clarity will bring resistance.
3. Time must be available.
Time is critical in decision-making patterns. When many people must be involved in reaching an agreement, a long-term plan will be needed.

Leadership and Organizational Change

Understanding how organizational change takes place is not easy. Knowing how decisions are made, and who is making them, is critical in working toward implementing change within an organization. The first step in understanding organizational change is to identify or classify the types of organizations according to their decision-making patterns.⁴

Three types of organizations can be distinguished: directive, mixed and developmental organizations.

1. Directive: Decision-making takes a minimum of time because participation in decision-making is limited.

Change comes through:

- Use of authority or coercion.
- Directives “from the top.”
- Establishment of emergency rules to deal with crises.

2. Mixed: Decisions require a moderate amount of time. More people are involved, so decision-making takes more time than in directive groups.

Change comes through:

- Bargaining more than coercion.
- Some exploitation.
- Compromise over difficult issues.

3. Developmental: Decision-making is usually the slowest in this type of organization. More people are involved, and there are more decision-making levels.

Change comes through:

- Cooperation (team-oriented).
- More creative alternatives or solutions.
- Pressure for action from the bottom up.
- Reciprocal adjustments.

Becoming a Change Agent

Three categories of people are often involved in making changes in an organization: change initiators, change implementers and change adopters.^{4,5}

Change Agent Categories:

1. **CHANGE INITIATORS** – see that something needs to be done. Convert issues into a need for change.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
FIRST LINERS: The first to confront resistance to it.	<i>Present a topic on child abuse at a club meeting.</i>
PATRONS: Give money and endorsements.	<i>Organizational sponsorship of a candidate.</i>
DEMONSTRATORS: Promote public discussion.	<i>Working mothers petition school board for after-school daycare facilities.</i>

2. **CHANGE IMPLEMENTERS** – work to make the change an accepted practice.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
EXTERNAL EXPERTS: Have special knowledge.	<i>Include public policy topic into every meeting.</i>
EXTERNAL/INTERNAL EXPERTS: Know the internal system. Come as external consultants.	<i>Hold series of meetings on topics featuring inside and outside speakers.</i>
INTERNAL EXPERTS: Work with members to implement the change over a long period.	<i>Select committee project to work on during the year.</i>

3. **CHANGE ADOPTERS** – practice new behavior.

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Examples</u>
EXPERIMENTERS: Will try it. Normalize the change.	<i>Try and use a new method of evaluation.</i>
MAINTAINERS: Don't want to fight it.	<i>Implement new program approaches.</i>
USERS: Accept changed product or service.	<i>Select a chairperson to institutionalize change.</i>

Summary

Change has always been a part of the human condition. What is different now is the pace of change and the prospect that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life. No one can escape change. Today's society is changing so fast that people feel they do not have time to adjust before more change takes place. Traditions and customary ways of doing things no longer work. Communities where everyone knew everyone else are giving way to new neighborhoods where there seem to be many strangers. A strong community requires a broad base of leadership, that provides the ability to combine the expertise of many different people and with a spirit of caring and connectedness.

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A project of the
K-State Research and Extension
Developing Effective Leadership Program Team

Katey Walker, Co-chair
Extension Specialist
Family Resource & Public Policy

Margaret Phillips,
Co-chair
Extension Specialist
FACS, South Central Area

Stan McAdoo,
Co-chair
Extension PRIDE
Program Coordinator

Ann Domsch
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Southeast Area

Diane Mack
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs
Northeast Area

Sharolyn Flaming
Jackson
County Extension Agent
FACS, Riley County

Glenn Newdigger
County Extension Agent
Barber County

Pat Fultz
Extension Specialist
4-H and Youth Programs

Ron Wilson
Huck Boyd National Institute
for Rural Development

Dan Kahl
Extension Associate
Kansas Environmental
Leadership Program
(KELP)

Tracy Rutherford
Assistant Professor
Agricultural Communications
and Journalism

Michele Crago
County Extension Agent,
4-H
Wyandotte County

Connie Hoch
County Extension Agent
FACS, Lyon County

Ray Ladd
County Extension Agent
Atchison County

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