

Sphere of Influence

As MCH professionals we all have a sphere of influence that we can leverage at time like this. Part of the leadership function right now is to put supports in place that collectively help our colleagues and teams regain a sense of control and calm so that they can do their best work. People want to be close to people they trust.

Adaptive change requires two key things from leaders. First is to focus attention on the priority questions to answer. You worked on this in the prior worksheet.

The second is to manage the anxiety of the group: low enough so people can function... and high enough to drive speed, team problem-solving, and commitment.

To do that, you have to manage your own anxiety and take care of yourself first, using the best of your own network and your own coping skills. Then look out to see who needs help, and who can be looped into your sphere to help voice a key perspective and do problem-solving. All of these leadership functions work better when you convey authenticity.

In public health we work through others, and we work collaboratively. We need to keep doing that of course. But the current environment is also an opportunity to reflect on what we as individuals might be able to contribute to the challenges that are arising.

How will you support and connect with community members and families via phone, face time and video conferencing? How will you stay connected to collaborative work with colleagues through videoconferencing and conference calls? And on a larger level – how can you leverage your own sphere of influence to ensure that MCH resources keep flowing to communities in need? How can you use whatever authority you have to make someone else's path easier? How might you actively remove non-essential activities and burdens from your team members' plates right now so they can re-direct where they are most needed?

We do wait for guidance from leadership for certain things, but while you wait: you can engage in working the big questions. You can contribute to a culture where strings of improvisational ideas can grow and thrive, and team members remain calm and dedicated to the mission.

We have seen, firsthand, that the influence of one positive person can lead to impressive positive change. In this moment of crisis, you can affect positive change by stepping forward and courageously offering your ideas for how we can continue to best serve mothers, families, children and babies.

So, let's talk about HOW you can put that into action.

GO ahead and download the worksheet and sketch out what your sphere of influence looks like.

Next, I'll discuss 5 key characteristics of transformational leadership and how you can unlock some of that goodness within yourself so that you can use your influence to help others to thrive in a time of uncertainty.