

Trust and Creative Problem-Solving

If you don't have trust you can't influence or affect positive change. As an MCH professional, it's likely that you've worked hard to establish yourself as an authentic voice, a technical expert in your area and a trusted partner as a result. Lean into that and provide some reassurance and ideas for how your particular area can shift from a feeling of fear, stress and anxiety to one of opportunity. Revisit what your core values are that drive you to do the work you do and draw strength from those. For example, *integrity* is the value I center my leadership development work around. I'm taking time now to reflect on how I can help leaders in a time of crisis be true to their word as decisions are shifting by the moment and how they can help entire populations demonstrate compassion and humanity as opposed to an "every person for themselves" perspective.

Adaptive leaders know how to draw out voices with different perspectives. Get some new perspectives on your particular problem. Talk to the people around you to see what's foremost on their minds. Or, make a list of 10 people with very different perspectives and ask them a series of questions to see what possibilities might exist. Try to keep these informational interviews focused on idea generation and don't let the dialogue shift to thinking through why an idea may or may not work.

Ask open-ended questions and listen for creative ideas that could lead to creative solutions.

How might you pivot and refocus your attention in new ways, at least for a period of time? Take some quiet time to yourself and brainstorm how you might best leverage your own skills. Ask yourself how you might be able to best support your colleagues and staff.

Make a list of the top problems the people you serve are facing right now. For each current problem related to the current crisis spend some time considering the ROOT CAUSES of the problem. Ask yourself and your informants- why is this a problem now? Then, take each of those causes you identify and ask again- why is this a problem? Maybe a third round? This will help you identify the root causes of your current problem- then you can take those root causes to your informants and quickly generate a list of possible solutions. Taking action to address root causes is MUCH more effective than working to address the symptoms of the problem but it takes intention because when we are in crisis-mode the symptoms are calling for attention. You likely will have to restructure some offerings but if you embrace a flexible mindset you might just discover that you can do things you hadn't previously imagined.

One last point about trust.... If you are going to lead change efforts it is important to reflect on one's own sphere of influence and ask ourselves- am I leading in a way that reflect the values I want to put out there into the world? Each of us in both our personal and professional lives have the opportunity to choose what energy and perspective we want to put out there. Positive, effective leaders understand the gravity of this and are thoughtful in their approaches.

[Download the worksheet to help you dive deep into current problems or issues your population is facing.](#)

Next, I'll discuss why now is the time to step forward.