

## Thinking Through Change as a Preference and a Process

We have all heard change is hard, right? We are witnessing on a large scale the stress, anxiety and fear that many people are having with sudden change to the routines of their lives. Did you know that we all have specific preferences on how we like to do change work? Give some thought and consideration to how you prefer “to do change.” Now give some thought to how your colleagues and the teams we lead or support have different preferences for how they like to do change work.

Your preferences about change can affect how easy or hard it might be for you to shift to an adaptive mindset. Leaders who are adaptable understand that change is always happening and sometimes it can be all consuming (like now). They are comfortable knowing that they have to build the plane as they fly it... that they can learn new bits and pieces, apply them immediately to their work and then over time reflect and refine to make improvements. People who are less adaptable prefer to have things detailed, predictable and step-by-step. Adaptive leadership doesn't start out that way. Regardless of our change style preference, now is the time to step forward and rely on our adaptive, neuroplastic, flexible selves.

All this is to just say..... this is a moment to think creatively, leverage opportunities and pivot where appropriate- and help others to do the same. For most of us, this means working in that uncomfortable place of not knowing how things will go exactly.

So, how do you put some of this in action?

-Reflect on your own preferences for change. Put supports in place to help you get comfortable in an uncomfortable place. Pair yourself with people who compliment your strengths. In other words, find others to collaborate with that have strengths in areas you don't related to change.

-Recognize and be nurturing and encouraging to yourself and others as you have little wins in assuming an adaptive mindset. I know that while I work to build this capacity in others, I certainly find myself struggling sometimes with it and so I intentionally set time to pause and reflect on the small wins I make each day or week.

-Ask yourself- if your MCH work thrived during this time, what might that look like? How is that different than the current state today? What strengths do you already offer that could be enhanced or maximized to be helpful to your colleagues, staff and populations you serve as they navigate change right now? Remember, people want to hear from people they trust- what can you offer them so they can continue to reach their goals?

-Positioning is half the battle in creating new ways of working. Reflect on the relationships you have established and the ways you have established yourself in your area of work. How can those established connections help you pivot to something new? How can you bring them into your brainstorming/ idea generation stage to help you visualize new paths that you had not previously imagined? Adaptive leaders know that gaining diverse perspectives is what facilitates them being able to jump from one change effort to the next.

We are big believers in helping leaders take stock of their strengths and the strengths of their team and using that as a springboard for how they approach transformative change. All change efforts go through stages-- including helping others understand why the change is necessary, planning for change, increasing adaptive resiliency for change, and implementing the change. You can see all this in action

with how effects of the current crisis are being handled. Now, looking at your own scope of work, how might you map out activities for each stage of the change process if you are going to make some adjustments?

Download the worksheet to reflect on your preferences related to change and how you can apply best practices in change management to any adjustments or new offerings you are considering to your area of work.

Next, I will briefly discuss how to phase your change effort.