

Tips

1. Be kind.

How are you letting your sphere of influence know that you care and that you are being responsive to a changing landscape? I ask myself- how am I exhibiting kindness and helping people stay well? Communicate as clearly and as much as you can as it provides reassurance. Be kind to yourself as well... The current situation is a lot to manage. Remember that you are human.

2. Give grace to leaders making difficult decisions

This is an opportunity for us to learn how to be better decision makers and communicators. I am personally giving a lot of encouragement and emotional support to the leaders at the front lines of this crisis as I know they are just people too with same fears and worries that I have. Most people are showing anxiety for how decisions will affect their personal worlds and it is our job as leaders to help people see the larger picture and community benefits to some decisions. And if you are thinking to yourself that more input is needed on a decision... consider that maybe you are the one who needs to provide that input, in a graceful way.

3. Plan but don't panic

Is this the time for contingency plans? Yes! Is this the time to think through possible scenarios and the mitigation strategies for each, yes. As you move through idea generation for how you will adjust to meet the most pressing issue think through what the possible opportunities and tradeoffs might be for each. Do this for each stakeholder. Put it on paper! Think through if this happens, we will mitigate by doing Y.

4. Help others. Do not stigmatize others.

Pointing fingers at others is not helpful on many levels. We are a global society, and everyone is at risk. It's important as leaders to be thoughtful about how we talk about this crisis. This is preaching to the choir here, because we know this as public health professionals.... But how can you take that a step further and model this? Leadership is getting *everyone* to a better place—resist language or approaches that get one group to a better place only at the expense of some other subgroup.

5. Be open to reframing, repositioning, and reimagining.

Be open to new possibilities and try to find ways to think and design solutions differently. Know that things might not get done in the same way as usual and that it is OK. In other words, start with yourself first- and give yourself a pep talk that your own expectations are going to likely need to shift. Improvise!

6. Recover quickly, adjust.

Adaptive leaders don't spend a lot of energy lamenting why things didn't go as planned. Instead they acknowledge and accept the new reality as it comes and develop and deliver new plans. Learning is the rocket fuel of adaptive leadership; expect and welcome mistakes, fix them, move on.

7. Model well

This is the time to engage with your people (your sphere of influence) as they want to hear from trusted resources. Model flexibility. Providing reassurance and reinforcing positive thinking can be very helpful to many. Be adaptive and hopeful (be alert enough to manage your own anxiety and defensiveness).

8. Tune out so you can Tune in

We have information and messaging coming at us from so many different sources. In times of crisis or change it's good to tune out the barrage of information so that your brain space is freed up for the important work you need to do. It's okay to tune in briefly to stay up to speed, but then intentionally lean back into the work in front of you.

9. Lean into your networks and relationships

Gathering different perspectives on both the challenges and options will create opportunities. Now is the time to generate connections and options. Engage with community members, stakeholder, and families (using remote methods) to help encourage better thinking.

10. Find your confidence in the uncomfortable place of the unknown

Self-awareness about what aspects of the current situation are making you feel out of sorts is helpful so that you find support and maintain confidence. Demonstrating authenticity reflects confidence in yourself and provides reassurance to those around you. Moving forward, consider how to position yourself, make connections and see the new opportunities before us.

Go ahead and download the 10 tips for easy reference as you navigate the days and weeks ahead.

I hope this was helpful in helping you as you carry out your important MCH work in new ways at this time. It was our sincere pleasure to offer these practical strategies to help you move your collective work towards positive change in a time of crisis.

If you would like to talk through the specifics of your situation further or learn more about how to navigate complex change in a time of crisis and stay resilient please do reach out to the MCH WFD Center.