

CHILD SUPPORT LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR IV-D DIRECTORS



August 2019



Administration for Children & Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Pre-Training Preparation

Bring Your Own Challenges

Trainees submit their "Bring Your Own Challenge" forms to trainers no later than September 5, 2019. Trainers will review these to prepare for issues that are significant to trainees. In addition, trainers will group trainees into small groups for exercises based on commonality of problems and goals identified in the forms.

Training Manual

INTRODUCTION

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement is sponsoring this training for child support directors and their executive staff. It builds on earlier leadership training programs OCSE developed. This portion of the training focuses on leadership competencies.

Objectives for Training

Directors and executive staff in child support programs will:

- Improve their effectiveness to lead change in the child support program.
- Develop an understanding of the essential elements of a strong foundation for leading a child support agency.
- Lead people both within and outside the child support program to achieve excellence for the child support program.
- Connect with a network of peers with whom to share knowledge and experience for advancing the leadership of the child support program.

Schedule

<u>Leading Change for a Child Support Director</u>	
<u>Day 1</u>	
1:00 – 1:15 pm	Introductions and Logistics
1:15 – 1:45 pm	Cynthia Longest – State Systems for Newer Directors
1:45 – 2:15 pm	Linda Boyer – Federal Systems for Newer Directors
2:15 – 2:45 pm	Transformational Leadership and Meeting Newbie and Team
2:45 – 3:00 pm	Break
3:00 – 4:00 pm	Vision and Values
4:00 – 5:00 pm	Challenge Brainstorm
<u>Day Two</u>	
8:00 – 8:15	Quick Review
8:15 – 9:15	Gaining Insight for Change
9:15 – 10:15	Support and Strategy
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:30	Support and Strategy continued
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30	Inspire and Build Urgency
1:30 – 2:30	Operationalize, Implement, and Make the New the New Normal
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:30	Questions and Review
3:30 – 4:30	Challenge Brainstorm Part Two

Key Competencies

Our focus will be on three key competences for effective leadership:

- Leading change
- Leading people
- Building a strong foundation for leadership

Experiential Learning

This training program aims to create conditions that will support individual learning. The program follows a case study methodology that has become the hallmark of higher-level learning at leading universities and executive education courses across the country. This approach rests on the principle that adults learn best when they have the opportunity to draw upon their own rich experiences (experiential learning), immediately apply new information, and have a chance to discuss their experiences with others to integrate old and new ideas. Therefore, this program combines content-centered learning with individual and peer-focused learning.

In the case study we encounter “Newbie,” a fledgling IV-D director, and the staff of the IV-D agency headed by Newbie. We encourage you to work through the problems and issues that Newbie encounters as if you were Newbie. Your job at various points may be defining key issues, interrelationships, and problems, or it may be considering alternatives and their possible consequences. As with real life, the presenting problem may not be the actual problem and symptoms are not causation. You may be asked to identify leadership challenges Newbie faces, provide advice to this new director, and propose a course of action. Also, as with real life, there will rarely be just one possible diagnosis or solution, so consideration of alternatives will always be important.

LEADING CHANGE

Modern thinking on leadership emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, and focuses on “transformational” leaders. Simply put, transformational leaders motivate others to perform beyond expectations and accomplish extraordinary goals for the good of the whole organization and not just for the individual.

Leadership is not the same as management, although these concepts are often used interchangeably or synonymously. *The primary function of transformational leaders is to produce meaningful change.* In contrast, the primary function of a manager is to create orderly results, keeping organizations working efficiently. One is not better than the other – simply different. Although both are critical in today’s organizations, many organizations are over-managed and under-led.

John Kotter explains the differences between management and leadership this way:

“Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem-solving. Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles....”

Change and the Child Support Program

The IV-D program has changed dramatically since its inception over 40 years ago. Indeed, change has been constant. Although we welcome the improvements that change has brought, the pace of change can be dizzying and disruptive. How do child support directors and executive staff – especially those new to their positions – lead a program that continues to face so much change? Consider Newbie, a newly appointed IV-D director and the program that Newbie leads.

Case Study: Newbie and the Program

New Director

Newbie was appointed IV-D Director less than six months ago by the agency head, Zephyr, who is a gubernatorial appointee. The previous Director did not want to go through another administration change and retired following defeat of the former Governor in the last election. Another basis for the previous Director's retirement may have been the stagnating performance of the program. During the election campaign, the newly-elected governor held a press conference calling for improvements in the child support program and citing "minimal gains" of only 3% improvement in the percentage of current support collected over the past four years and declining performance in Gigopolis, the largest jurisdiction. In the months between the former Director's retirement announcement and the appointment of the new IV-D Director, everything froze in place. Newbie has child support experience as an attorney/manager in a large jurisdiction, but no experience as a director of a government program at the state level.

Zephyr is also annoyed about receiving "many calls a month" from parents who feel mistreated by the attitudes and actions of child support staff and supervisors. Zephyr also reminds Newbie of the need to fully implement the federal "ability to pay" regulation from the Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support rule.

Finally, Newbie knows that the statewide automated system that staff rely on (an older mainframe, COBOL code one) is in dire need of help. Field staff and the IT team all inundate Newbie with complaints and suggestions – often conflicting. And the vendors all have ideas about what to do as well. Newbie suspects that another reason the previous Director retired is that he didn't want to go through the hassle of a system project. Newbie knows that something needs to happen, but doesn't know how much funding might be available, and doesn't really know where to begin or to whom to listen. One positive aspect is that the program's IT Director, even though new to child support, reports to Newbie directly rather than to another agency head.

State Profile

Newbie leads a mid-size, state-operated program with field offices in 20 locations across the state. It has one major urban jurisdiction with a history of below-average performance.

The total IV-D caseload for the state is 300,000, with the following breakdown by case type:

- Current assistance 11%
- Medicaid 10%
- Former assistance 47%
- Never assistance 32%

For FFY18, the state's federal performance measures stood at:

- PEP/statewide 97%
- % cases with orders 79%
- % current support paid 62%
- % cases with arrears collection 62%
- Cost to collections ratio \$5.02
- Undistributed collections/pending 59%
- Undistributed collections /unresolved 40%
- % cases with med sup ordered 80%
- % cases with med sup provided as ordered 23%

Total budget for the IV-D program is \$130M/year.

Executive Staff

Newbie has gathered the following impressions of the group of managers reporting directly to the Director:

Able, manager of administrative operations: near retirement, very experienced and effective, not interested in volunteering for new assignments or challenges, but handles them well if assigned. Responsible for budget, performance reporting, personnel, and facilities.

Baker, manager of program operations: mid-career hot-shot, very competent, deep program knowledge, impatient with peer managers who lack program knowledge, recent hire with extensive child support knowledge from the private sector. Responsible for project planning and development, as well as external relationships with local and state government entities. Also, responsible for managing outsourced contracts for program functions like SDU, FIDM.

Charles, manager of information technology: near retirement, recent transfer from another agency, very experienced in technology, but new to child support, very protective of IT staff who are criticized by other staff as insufficiently responsive to needed changes in IT system. Responsible for operations, maintenance, and improvements to computer system.

Derrick, manager of field operations: mid-career, recently selected for this post, supervisor of managers who used to be peers, deep field-level knowledge but has never functioned in a staff position before. Responsible for management of all field-level staff; all field-level staff report to Derrick through local office managers.

Elias, manager of policy and legal affairs: mid-career attorney personally respected as problem-solver with a staff that is notorious for obstruction and delay. Responsible for development of policy and procedures consistent with state and federal law.

French, internal auditor: mid-career, experienced with child support and financial auditing, feels underutilized, seen as a “necessary evil” by others. Responsible for internal audits, federal self-assessment, and for managing external audits by state and federal auditors.

Gordon, head of customer service: experienced front-line worker and supervisor recently selected for this post, has responsibility for dealing with customer concerns and no authority to act directly on customers’ cases, which are handled by Derrick’s front-line staff.

Executive Staff Conflict

Upon arrival, Newbie immediately noticed that conflict between Baker and Charles seems to occur in about half of the executive staff meetings and recently staff below the executive level have seen a confrontation between these two managers. Newbie is aware of this conflict but doesn’t know the source of the difficulty between these two and hasn’t come to a view on whether or how to address it.

Reflection: Newbie’s Challenges

Discuss Newbie and the program, including:

- 1. Describe in no more than five words the situation that Newbie faces.*
- 2. Considering both the state profile and the staff descriptions, how would you define the issues/problems associated with coming into this IV-D program as its new leader?*
- 3. On a scale of relative importance, what issues rise to the top, demanding the attention of this new IV-D director?*

Perception of Leadership

For Newbie to become an effective, transformational leader, others must think of Newbie as the program's leader. Indeed, that perception of leadership begins with Newbie.

New leaders promote themselves. Skills, strategies, and achievements from the past likely contributed to a new leader's promotion. However, these successes are double-edged swords. They certainly help but they may also be the cause for defeat or for skepticism of new leaders. Letting go of past trappings, even those that have led to success, allows Newbie to self-promote into the new situation. For example, Newbie is a lawyer. Consequently, Newbie is likely comfortable approaching problems from a legal perspective. However, Newbie may need to let that go in order to effectively "promote" into the position of director. One way to figure out what to let go of is to think about "problem preferences." Does a new leader tend to take a technical approach to functional areas such as IT, Legal, Operations? Where does a new leader tend to avoid focus, and where does a new leader love to plunge in head first? Do these preferences create vulnerabilities, traps, or blind-spots for a new leader?

Everyone is watching the leaders. Good or bad, the early actions of new leaders get translated into stories and passed around to people who weren't witnesses to these critical moments. According to Michael Watkins (2003), people assess new leaders by these standards: 1) observable insights and demonstrated steadiness to make tough decisions, 2) values manifested through actions, 3) the type of energy leaders bring into the setting, and 4) the modeling of expectations about performance and quality. People assess more seasoned leaders the same ways. Watson asserts that the most credible leaders exhibit a balance of these characteristics:

- demanding but able to be satisfied
- accessible but not too familiar
- decisive but judicious
- focused but flexible
- active without causing commotion
- tough but humane

With everyone watching – staff, partners, bosses – new leaders become the most effective advertisement for the vision of the organization they are seeking to create. By acting the way they want others to act, leaders themselves communicate the values and message reflected in the organization of the future. They must "walk the walk."

Case Study: The Context and the Boss

Zephyr: Newbie’s boss; political appointee of the Governor to head this large state agency and who expects to be in this position for between two and four years. Zephyr hopes to use success in this position as a springboard to positions of higher prestige and political involvement in the executive branch. Because the Governor’s campaign commitments included improvements to child support, Zephyr is eager to show change that the public can see, and even more eager to avoid problems and conflicts that the public and the Governor would see as evidence that things have not changed in child support.

The Child Support office is perceived as an uncaring collection agency that focuses on the enforcement of support at the expense of the well-being of the parent who owes support and that parents’ new family.

At the same time, collections have remained relatively unchanged in recent years despite what is seen by the governor, Zephyr, and the public as a practically unlimited tool chest of collection remedies.

To complicate matters further, the relatively new “ability to pay” (Fleming, 2017) federal regulations have not been embraced by line staff or most prosecutor offices.

Zephyr has worked in executive positions in human services and in court administration in local government in Gigopolis, the state’s largest jurisdiction. Zephyr became acquainted with Newbie when Newbie served as child support attorney/manager in a local jurisdiction. Despite the Governor’s commitment to child support, Zephyr knows that child support is the least of the Governor’s problems. Other divisions have significantly larger budgets and larger potential risks, including the agency’s troubled foster care division and the ever-increasing budgets for the health services division which includes the Medicaid and CHIP programs. Zephyr is looking to Newbie both to fix the negative perceptions of child support and to improvements collections.

Reflection: Context and the Boss

Discuss the context of Newbie’s agency, including these issues:

- 1. How would you characterize the context in which Newbie’s IV-D agency operates?*
- 2. What would you like for Newbie to learn about the context and how can Newbie gain this understanding?*
- 3. What characteristics does the context of Newbie’s IV-D agency have in common with your own agency’s context?*

Transformational Leaders are Adaptive Leaders

What occurs when organisms face dramatic change in their surroundings? Science tells us that they must adapt to changing environments and thrive, or else they will struggle, flounder, or even fail. Similarly, for organizations to thrive in the face of change, they too must resist solutions that arise from their usual operations. Instead, they must focus on adding value, encouraging innovation and flexibility, and expecting and working toward significant achievement and performance.

Transformational leaders are adaptive. In describing adaptive leadership, Heifetz and his colleagues Laurie and Linsky suggest that getting people to do adaptive work is the most pressing leadership challenge of our time. Adaptive leaders appreciate that people need to participate and have the ability to adapt if they, and the organization they are part of, are to thrive in times of change. This approach is very different from the top-down focus that characterizes most organizations that rely on command and control to ensure that the business of the organization gets done. Leaders accustomed to hierarchical structure and accountability may find adaptive leadership uncomfortable, at least at first. Necessarily, adaptive leaders often challenge deeply held beliefs. For leaders accustomed to leading in a familiar world and staff used to doing things the way they have always been done, it can be uncomfortable to move beyond authoritative expertise and ready answers.

To lead adaptively, IV-D directors need to gather information from two perspectives. Heifetz and his colleagues illustrate the two perspectives through the metaphor of a balcony at a dance hall or ballroom. Imagine the music playing and people all around, forming a knot of rhythmic motion. Your partner looks wonderful and your partner and the music capture all of your attention for the evening. Later, when a friend asks about the evening at the dance hall you say that it was great and that everybody had a wonderful time. A second friend observed the evening from a balcony above the dance floor. Hearing your description, this friend immediately objects. From your friend's vantage point above the dance floor, it seems that dancers around you seemed to enjoy themselves. However, across the dance floor participation was sporadic, the DJ played only one kind of music, and many of the people coming into the room turned around and left within five or ten minutes.

Achieving a balcony perspective means taking yourself out of the dance, in your mind, even if only for a moment. Certainly, separating oneself from the dance floor, from day-to-day reality, provides a clearer view of reality as well as some perspective on the bigger picture. However, to affect the action, you must return to the dance floor. Effective leaders must keep both perspectives in mind.

The VISION Model of Change Management

Overview

Throughout this workshop we will refer to the VISION model of change management. A quick search in your favorite search engine will reveal many change management models and they all offer helpful ideas and strategies, not to mention classes, certificates, and degrees in the subject. The VISION model provides you with a simple framework we can discuss in this overview.

We call it the VISION model for two reasons. It provides a simple mnemonic to help you remember the parts and at the same time emphasizes the idea of forming and articulating a vision of where you want to take the organization. Visions are powerful tools that keep you and your team focused.

The VISION Model

V ision and V alues	Develop a vision based on your organization's values.
I nsight	Share the vision and gain insight from your staff and stakeholders.
S trategy and S upport	Develop a strategy to move toward your vision that works in concert with the interests of your stakeholders.
I nspire	Inspire your leaders, your team, and those concerned and affected by keeping them engaged and focused on the vision and strategy.
O perational	Ensure everyone has the knowledge, skills, ability, infrastructure, and tools needed to implement the strategy.
N ormalize	Ensure the implemented plan is the new normal.

Vision and Values

Vision – where we want to go – provides programs with meaning and purpose. Vision drives transformational change. A strategic plan describes the path from the present to the vision. Goals and objectives guide the path to the future vision. By systematically monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives, the organization assures that it is proceeding toward the vision and that challenges along the way are dealt with. All this means that the vision is the fundamental building block of the strategic planning process. A “change vision” is not the same as your overall vision (Kotter 2011), but it needs to logically flow from your overall vision and values.

Foundational: Vision

Vision must be intertwined with your organization’s values. Perhaps these values come from your umbrella organization or perhaps you wrote them yourself. Either way, your entire team should not only be aware of these values but they should be expected to incorporate them in their approach to their work. You and your leaders should be role models of the values and they should provide some direction in the development of your vision. For example, if Respect for Everyone is a value, does your vision reflect the fundamental respect of your employees and the parents and children in your caseload?

Entrepreneur Ari Weinzweig describes vision this way: “A vision, quite simply, is a picture of what success will be at a particular time in the future.” To help stimulate creativity in visioning, consider asking questions like these for what your program should look like in five years (or in whatever long-term you choose):

- What are you most proud of about your agency?
- If parents were asked to list three noteworthy things about your agency, what would they be?
- What are the top reasons that your staff is happy to work in your agency?
- What does your daily work look like?
- What do leading child support experts say about your agency?
- What do child support staff in other jurisdictions say about your agency?

Reflection: Vision

Working quickly in small groups, draft a short vision statement for Newbie’s child support program. Feel free to use your own program as a model. Be creative and truly visionary!

Insight

Developing your vision is only a first step, like having a great idea. Now comes the exciting part: you tell people and see what they think. You find out their fears and concerns and suggestions. You engage them in a conversation.

In order to get them to see the need for change, though, and begin to see the importance of the vision, delivery is important. Describe what is good about the status quo and what can be better, using data and stories. Explain that you want their input and that nothing is final right now. Paint the picture as best you can about what could be and how they can contribute to this better future and that you need their help.

This goes for everyone affected. It might include:

- Your boss
- Sister agencies
- Your employees
- Community based organizations
- The legislature
- Parents in the caseload
- The public

Listen to what they have to say on the spot and give them avenues for feedback later. If there are deadlines, let them know that. Once you begin deciding which suggestions you will implement, let them know either how their suggestions were incorporated or why you decided not to use them. Thank them and keep the doors open.

The better and more trusting your relationship with the affected groups before these discussions begin, the better received you'll be and the more engaged your audience will be. Developing these relationships and keeping them healthy is an element to having a strong leadership foundation.

For major changes to policy or your organization, it is important to keep the communication going from here on throughout the entire process. Use various avenues for communicating what is happening and delegate to your leaders, so they can act as two-way conduits and first line problem solvers.

Even talking about the vision will stir some anxiety and apprehension in some people and cynicism or outright resistance in others. We'll cover ways to deal with resistance in the next section, but by engaging your team and stakeholders early and asking for their input, you will help alleviate a great deal of resistance right from the beginning.

Reflection: Insight – Newbie Communicates the Vision

Working together at your tables, come up with an idea of how to frame the vision you came up with earlier.

- What kinds of information should Newbie share to help staff adjust to the idea of changing?
- What different ways can Newbie use to communicate the new vision?
- What channels can Newbie use to get feedback?

Strategy and Support

Now that you have all that feedback it's time to develop a strategy, and you need on-going support for that strategy. You need a plan. You need support for the plan. You need help implementing the plan.

To gain that kind of support, people have to trust you; they have to believe your plan has value and is feasible. To do that, they have to relate to you and to the plan at an emotional level. For that to happen, you have to be genuine or authentic in your leadership. People will see through a contrived attempt at being open and authentic.

Foundational: Strategic Planning

Most of the changes you make will be shorter in duration than any strategic plan you have. This information is provided as a starting point in case you decide at some point to make a long-range strategic plan. Short term plans should fit into your existing strategic plan.

Fundamentally, the strategic planning process involves asking and answering these questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go?
- How can we get from here to there?
- How will we know if we're actually headed in the right direction?

Strategic planning is different from other types of planning. First, it is a formal, structured process and, ideally, one that involves the entire organization. It provides an overall direction for the entire child support program as a whole, incorporating consistent goals and plans of the program's component parts. Ordinarily, it has a long view, often two to five years, as well as shorter-term benchmarks to measure progress toward achieving long-term goals. Most important, it is a living plan, continuously monitored and revisited.

Traditionally, strategic plans include these elements:

- Vision
- Mission
- Measurable goals and objectives

Importantly, strategic planning is much more than a long-term plan. The process to develop and implement strategic plans is critical to their success. Management guru Peter Drucker views strategic planning this way: "It is not a box of tricks, a bundle of techniques. It is analytical thinking and commitment of resources to action.... It is the continuous process of making present entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity; organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry out these decisions; and measuring results of these decisions against expectations through organized systematic feedback."

Overcoming Barriers: Empowering Staff to Achieve Change

Even when there is a clear vision for change and a mission to achieve it, sometimes change fails to occur or fizzles out. Why? Kotter says that employees may understand the vision for change and want to make it a reality, but they are “boxed in.” He identifies the four biggest obstacles to change: structures, skills, systems, and supervisors.

Structure. Structural barriers arise when the structure is inconsistent with the vision and mission for change. For example, the goal is to speed up processes to obtain new orders, yet lawyers within the agency continue to employ the same practices. Even employees who support the change vision become discouraged and frustrated. To avoid that, leaders will need to communicate the need for change and its urgency, then remove structural barriers that impede change.

Skills. Transforming an organization requires people to change years of habits, disengage from skills that they have learned and honed and had success with, change behaviors and attitudes based on years of experience, and move outside their comfort zone. Even when they support change, they can’t change unless they know what they will be doing. Training has to occur at the level needed by the employees and at the time when they need it in order for them to implement change.

Systems. Kotter found that organizational systems, especially human resources, that are at odds with the new vision and mission form barriers to change. Individual and group or section performance goals must dovetail with the change vision and mission, or employees will not see change as in their best interests. Similarly, promotions and incentives should reward those whose performance supports the vision for the program.

Supervisors. Innovation may be especially difficult for some supervisors. They may not believe that change is good for the organization and see themselves as “saving” the agency or the staff or the public from all this new stuff. They discount or filter messages that support change or demonstrate the need for change or highlight early wins. Their staff becomes discouraged and possibly suspicious about change. There are no easy solutions to the problem of supervisors who become barriers to change. Of course, leaders should be aware of the options for dealing with employees who undermine the work of the agency, especially those whose actions are insubordinate. At a minimum, leaders should have honest dialogues with such supervisors, even though these may be uncomfortable conversations.

The elements of empowering your team listed above address critical areas of importance during change. But employee resistance to change is more than those issues. An engaged workforce with a positive relationship to their supervisor and manager will tend toward collaboration and cooperation instead of undermining, passive aggressive behaviors, and malicious compliance. Nurture this building block of your foundation continually so that it's there when you need it. Some of the methods that help with employee engagement follow.

Developing Employee Engagement

1. Understand what motivates employee performance (Dan Pink)
 - a. A living wage
 - b. Work with meaning and value
 - c. Autonomy
 - d. Opportunity to improve
2. Care about employees as people. Some of Gallup's questions:
 - a. Does someone care about me as a person at work?
 - b. Am I told about decisions?
 - c. Do I have what I need to do my job?
 - d. Does my opinion count?
 - e. Do I get to do something that I'm good at every day?
 - f. Do I receive recognition and praise every week?
3. Be authentic (William George)
 - a. Care about people and not the bottom line
 - b. Monitor what you say to ensure feelings are accounted for

Reflection: Barriers to Change

Discuss these issues:

1. *What are some likely barriers within Newbie's agency that prevent staff from fulfilling the change vision?*
2. *What barriers of structure, skills, systems, or supervisors have you found most intractable within your agency?*

SMART Goals

You address barriers, engage employees, and empower staff to make the changes as described above, but eventually you need to move your strategy to action. The action steps you develop to move you closer to the strategic outcome you're looking for are goals.

Peter Drucker, an early leader in process improvement, coined the SMART goal concepts in 1981, but his ideas stem from his work dating back to the 1950s. To operationalize your strategic plan, you set milestones, or goals to achieve. SMART goals keep you honest by forcing you to keep objectives reasonable and measurable.

Goals need to be:

- Specific. What, exactly, do you want to achieve?
- Measurable. How will you measure success?
- Attainable. Develop goals that are within reach, but it is good to stretch.
- Relevant. A goal needs to be a natural result of the vision and the strategy
- Time-Bound. Set a timeline for achieving the goal.

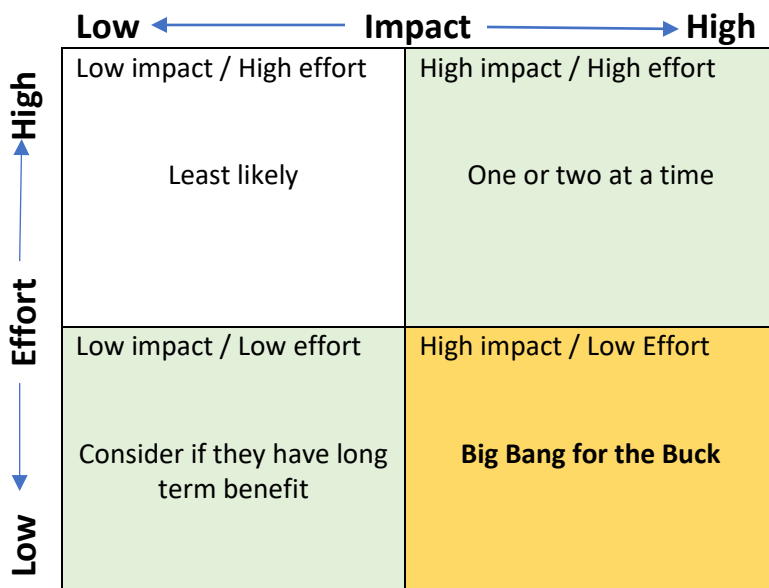
One more important requirement for a goal: Define who is responsible.

One thing that isn't smart is having too many goals. Overloading yourself and your team with goals is a sure way to not achieve them. Try for four and settle for five.

Finally, build in time for PDCA: Plan-Do-Check-Adjust. Too often we stop with Plan-Do. PDCA is vital in the short-term, for implementation purposes, knowing what is and isn't working and adapting the plan to result in success. PDCA is also vital for the long-term progress of your agency, keeping you away from stagnation and on the road to continuous improvement.

A great tool for picking between many possible goals is the decision quadrant.

This example is an Effort/Impact Quadrant.



As you establish goals, look for possible short-term wins. While some of your goals might take months to implement, even those might yield incremental, measurable successes. These successes are important to share with staff. Being able to link them back to the changes you're making, though, means determining the data you will need ahead of time and setting up the processes necessary to measure whether your efforts are having positive effects.

Reflection: Setting Goals

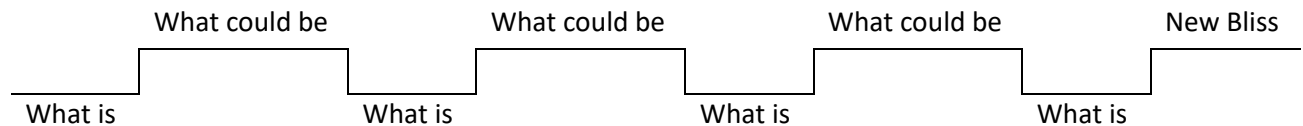
At your tables, set two goals for Newbie.

- How will you use data with these goals?
- How are the goals related to your vision and plan?

Inspire

To inspire your team, tap into their desire to have meaning and mastery, by using a combination of storytelling and data. Data because you need to provide statistical support for your plan and stories because it connects your team to the plan on a fundamental level: hearts and minds.

Nancy Duarte analyzed great speeches including the Gettysburg Address, Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and others, and observed a pattern. These speeches start with a promise. For Lincoln, that "all men are created equal. For King, the unfulfilled promise equality for everyone. They followed the promise with what is happening now. The speeches alternate between what could be and what is, ending on what could be; the vision to be achieved. This is the pattern Duarte describes:



Urgency

One of the important benefits Duarte's method achieves is a sense of urgency. People tend to resist change until they feel the change is urgent. Showing your team that improvement is needed and that their valuable contributions are necessary to succeed builds the urgency and speaks to their empowerment, their value, and their expertise.

Beckhard (1977) describes the dynamic of change as an equation:

$$D \times V \times F > R$$

meaning,
The force exerted by
Dissatisfaction with the current situation
multiplied by
a **V**ision of a positive alternative
multiplied by
First steps in the direction of the vision
must be greater than
Resistance to change.

For leaders, this means that the keys to overcoming R (resistance to change) are found in D (dissatisfaction), V (vision), and F (first steps toward the vision). Effective leaders focus their attention to the point in this equation where they can produce the greatest leverage for change – D, V, or F.

Consider how the *What is* in Duarte’s model, juxtaposed against *What could be* helps develop Dissatisfaction. Weaving the plan and goals in as ways to get to the *What could be* provide First Steps, and the vision is found in Duarte’s *New Bliss*.

Case Study:

Newbie has decided that the agency needs to improve performance and customer service, as well as fully implement the spirit of the “ability to pay” rules.

Newbie met with the management team to come up with three goals and a vision. The group generally came to consensus on the goals but several times Baker and Charles sniped at each other, causing Derrick to withdraw. No one but Baker believes Newbie and the team can succeed at changing the culture and improving the numbers.

In addition, Derrick reports that staff are upset by what they’re hearing about the changes. They are convinced that new expectations will lead to layoffs and that they’ll be disciplined for complaint calls that get to their supervisor or higher. Some apparently worry that all this will lead to privatization. He adds that the most common comment is that the new rule “will result in less support for poor children and more dysfunctional behavior from parents who avoid work.” One person said parents are “dead broke” *because* they are “deadbeats”.

When Newbie gets back to the desk, there’s a voice mail from the SNAP director, who heard about the intention to increase collections and advises that suspending more licenses and putting more parents in jail will only hurt families in the SNAP caseload and create more barriers to putting people to work.

To top it off, there’s an email from the lead attorney of a large county with the subject “Ability to Pay” and advising you that the judges they work with will be insulted by the notion that Newbie thinks a state agency can dictate the limits of judicial authority.

Foundational: Engaged Leaders

You need engaged leaders who can support your plan, carry the message to employees, and communicate information back to you. Of course, it's vital to involve them in the development of the plan and goals, and part of that process will mean disagreement. Respectful disagreement is good. It challenges thinking and often results in improved ideas. Make it an expectation, though, that outside the meeting room, leaders present a united, positive message.

To have a strong foundation, invest time and effort in your leaders. Delegate tasks, develop mutual trust, coach them, give them plenty of opportunity to grow and learn. Give them feedback. Ask their advice. Let them represent you. And expect that they do the same for their direct reports.

A study of what makes a great team of leaders (Wageman and Hackman) identifies four types of teams.

From most effective to least functional:

- Decision-making team – The team is focused on decisions for the whole agency, not just their area.
- Coordinating team – The individuals coordinate with other areas to implement changes across the agency.
- Consultative team – Consults with other executives before enacting a change.
- Information-sharing (alignment) team – Let's other executives know what their doing.

The same study identifies four key components to help you develop a strong, high-functioning executive leadership team.

1. Members must see themselves as leading the organization as a whole first and their individual area of responsibility second.
2. The team has clearly defined membership and a clear, shared purpose.
3. The team has a carefully crafted agenda that focuses the team on meaningful, interdependent activities.
4. The team promotes attention to team strategies and minimizes political dynamics.

Engaged and Disengaged Leaders

When a leader is engaged and supporting the organization's initiatives, they carry the message about the vision and plan to their teams, answer questions in a positive way. They listen to the feedback about staff concerns and address those concerns constructively; they also share the concerns with their leadership team so consideration can be given to adjustment or broad communication.

If a leader is not supportive, they may undermine efforts either subtly, through tone of voice or body language, or verbally with statements like "I don't like it either, but this is what we are doing." The

disengaged leader will most likely not reinforce the change. Possible steps for addressing this behavior may include coaching, addressing the supervisor's concerns, and getting back to the "why" of the change, to achieve buy-in. In the end, you might need to consult with Human Resources about process and options for correcting behavior. Because of the damage an actively disengaged supervisor can do, act quickly to correct the problem.

Peer leaders

Not all leaders are supervisors. If a few of the right people support your vision and plan, regardless of organizational title, support can spread exponentially (Gladwell, 2002). The three types of people that can help catapult a change are:

- Connectors, those who have an extraordinary number of friends and associates. Connectors listen to others ideas and others listen to them. They set trends just by being role models and idea supporters.
- Mavens, those who keep informed on all sorts of subjects and are respected for their depth and breadth of knowledge. Mavens who share their support of an idea with Connectors help move the idea from slow acceptance to quick acceptance.
- Salespeople, those who persuade others who are not convinced.

Listening for buy-in and encouraging those thought leaders in your teams could help your ideas catch fire at a phenomenal rate.

Reflection: Newbie and Resistance to Change

At your tables, develop some talking points about how things are and how they could be. What is the initial "promise" of child support? Use the chart on page 30 if you like.

Will these talking points develop a sense of urgency and support for the vision?

What is one step Newbie might take to bring along the leaders of the management team?

Operationalize

Prior to implementation consider all the changes necessary for success.

- What information and skills do staff need to perform new responsibilities?
 - What sort of training is required?
- What new or adapted tools do they need?
 - Software
 - Hardware
 - Cheat sheets
- What infrastructure changes might be necessary?
- What do supervisors need to train and coach staff during the transition?
- How do supervisors recognize those performing to the new plan?
- How do supervisors correct those not adhering to the plan?

For each of these, how will staff be affected by the changes?

How will operations be affected? How will customers be affected?

How do you communicate the transition to those groups?

How do you allow for feedback during transition?

Look back at the Empowering Employees to Achieve Change section on page 15. How are these questions related to the information there? What parallels do you see?

Reflection: Operationalize and Implement

Each team or table will receive an operational or implementation issue, such as Tools, Environment, or Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. Decide as a group what you will do to ensure success in that area.

Some possible elements:

- Impact on operations
- Communication
- Training
- Feedback loop

Short Term Wins

In the SMART Goals section, we discussed identifying short-term wins: those successes that might happen fairly soon after implementation. Being able to demonstrate those wins now, with stories and data, and sharing them with staff, stakeholders, leaders, and whoever else might listen, helps solidify the “why” of the change. Carefully crafting the message so it calls out next steps and long-term wins can keep everyone focused on the vision and serve as a powerful reinforcement.

Normalize

The final stage in the process is transforming the change from “new” to the “new normal”. Reinforcement of the change is vital. Sharing successes and examples of how the new change is resulting in better outcomes will reinforce the change dramatically for staff and stakeholders alike. Staff who have not completely incorporated the change into their routine or behavior will need coaching by their supervisors until it is part of their routine. Some changes can be reinforced by peers. For example, you might ask teammates to publicly recognize great examples of customer service on an intranet board.

Be careful, though, that you and your managers are listening to potentially legitimate reasons staff haven’t incorporated the change. Discuss and evaluate reasons that may have a ring of truth and adjust procedure where necessary to make things work. If you make those adjustments, share what changed and why with staff. Similarly, encourage constructive suggestions. Even a great idea might leave room for improvement and staff who believe they have meaningful input stay engaged.

Finally, share stories and data that backs up the stories on the successes, both large and small. Relate it all back to why you made the change – and of course, credit the team for making the change a success for your customers. Keep the communication cycle going until the change is completely integrated into business as usual.

Summary: VISION Model for Change

- **Vision and Values** – Relate the change to your vision and values
- **Insight** – Share the vision and gather input from all affected parties
- **Strategy and Support** – Develop an implementation strategy and garner support. Develop SMART goals. Address resistance to change.
- **Inspire** – Keep everyone informed of plans and progress and changes and remind them of the vision.
- **Operationalize** – Ensure everyone has the tools they need and your leaders are on board. Implement and keep everyone informed. Adjust for problems and necessary and keep two-way communication active.
- **Normalize** – Reinforce compliance. Coach and correct non-compliance.

Reflection: Take-Aways

Reflect on the benefits of participating in this training and write no more than 3 sentences about the most important benefit that you would say to each of these:

- Your boss
- A new IV-D director in another jurisdiction
- Your staff

Selected Resources

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SELF - AND PEER - ASSESSMENT

How do you stack up on these leadership characteristics? Give yourself a rating for each standard below, using the following system:

- If you see yourself as a perfect balance of the two characteristics on a standard, rate yourself at "5" – the perfect balance position in the center of the scales.
- If you see yourself more tending toward the characteristic on the left (L) of a particular scale, how far left – circle that point.
- If you see yourself more tending toward the characteristic on the right (R) of a particular scale, how far right – circle that point.

For instance, for the first standard, you will see that "demanding" is on the left (L) side of the standard, and "able to be satisfied" is on the right (R) side.

If you see yourself as perfectly balanced between "demanding" and "able to be satisfied," you would rate yourself as a "5."

If you rate yourself as more demanding, you would choose a rating on the L side that reflects how far from perfectly balanced you rate yourself.

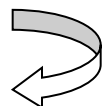
If you rate yourself as extremely demanding, you would rate yourself "L1."

Similarly, if you rate yourself as more "able to be satisfied," you would choose a rating on the R side that reflects how far from perfectly balanced you rate yourself.

If you rate yourself as very much able to be satisfied, you would rate yourself "R1."

Make notes at the bottom on a) any evidence you have to support your self-ratings, b) how you think you might be rated by your direct reports back on the job, c) possible implications of where you've placed yourself, and d) whether you're interested in seeking feedback from others when you return to the job.

See the other side.



Give yourself a rating for each standard below, per instructions on the other side of the page:

1) Standard = demanding but able to be satisfied,

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

2) Standard = accessible but not too familiar,

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

3) Standard = decisive but judicious,

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

4) Standard = focused but flexible,

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

5) Standard = active without causing commotion, and

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

6) Standard = tough but humane.

L1 L2 L3 L4 5 R4 R3 R2 R1

Notes:

STARS Chart¹

<p>Start-Up Assembling the capabilities (people, financing, and technology) to get a new business or initiative off the ground.</p>	<p>Turnaround Saving a business or initiative widely acknowledged to be in serious trouble.</p>	<p>Accelerated Growth Managing a rapidly expanding business.</p>	<p>Realignment Reenergizing a previously successful organization that now faces problems.</p>	<p>Sustaining Success Coming in on the heels of a highly regarded leader with a stellar record of accomplishment.</p>
<p>Challenges Building the strategy, structures, and systems from scratch without a clear framework or boundaries. Recruiting and welding together a high-performing team. Making do with limited resources.</p>	<p>Reenergizing demoralized employees and other stakeholders. Making effective decisions under time pressure. Going deep enough with painful cuts and difficult personnel choices.</p>	<p>Putting in place structures and systems to permit scaling. Integrating many new employees.</p>	<p>Convincing employees that change is necessary. Carefully restructuring the top team and refocusing the organization.</p>	<p>Living in the shadow of the former leader and managing the team he or she created. Playing good defense before embarking on too many new initiatives. Finding ways to take the business to the next level.</p>
<p>Opportunities You can do things right from the beginning. People are energized by the possibilities. There are no rigid preconceptions.</p>	<p>Everyone recognizes that change is necessary. Affected constituencies offer significant external support. A little success goes a long way.</p>	<p>The potential for growth helps to motivate people. People will be inclined to stretch themselves and those who work for them.</p>	<p>The organization has significant pockets of strength. People want to continue to see themselves as successful.</p>	<p>A strong team may already be in place. People are motivated to continue their history of success. A foundation for continued success (such as a long product pipeline) may be in place.</p>

¹ Watkins, Michael, "Picking the Right Transition Strategy," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2009, p.48.

What could be

What could be

What could be

New Bliss

