



# Sector Readiness and Workforce Capacity Initiative

## *Developing Leadership Effectiveness in Uncertain Times*

# Session 1

## Self-Awareness, Mindfulness and Change

This leadership module focuses on effective ways to respond to leadership challenges that may be experienced in times of increasing change and uncertainty in your organisations. It covers various aspects of leadership and provides knowledge, tools and strategies to build effectiveness in each of these areas.

*We have four sessions – The first will focus on the self.*

To be a successful leader we need to know ourselves and this requires that we learn and develop, grow our self awareness and seek to improve in all areas in our lives. Being self aware means we recognise our strengths, act on them, grow them and our confidence to apply them. It also means we observe our behaviour and identify areas of development.

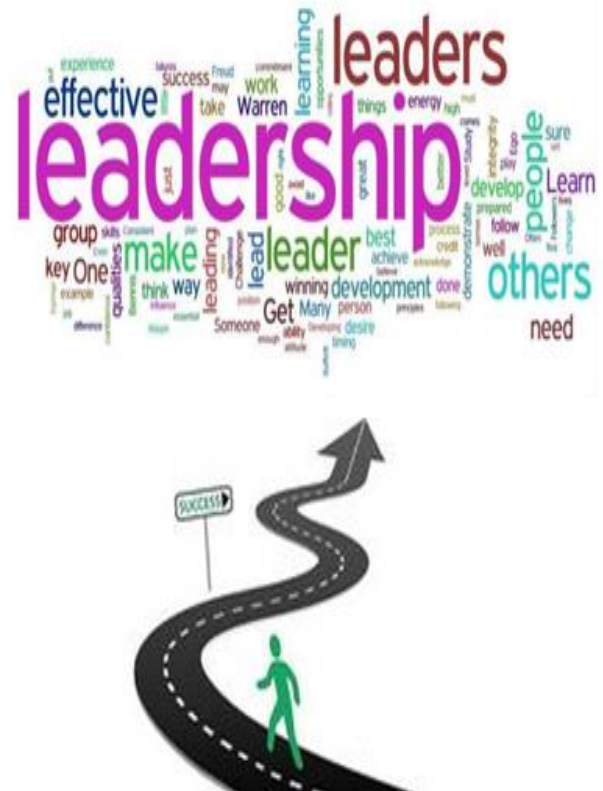
We acknowledge those aspects of our functioning that sometimes get us into strife and we monitor and regulate our emotions.

The second session will build on this and include our emotional intelligence, engagement with others, triggers in the brain and our ability to tune in, and work with internal and external conflicts.

In the third session we will focus on leadership and what is needed in readiness for change; taking into account organisational members' willingness and openness to learning. We will examine adaptive change and the type of leadership required and explore the complexity and dynamics of organisational systems. Adaptive leadership is needed in an environment that has bigger shifts. Guiding change is often the leader's ultimate test.

In the fourth session we are going to develop our knowledge and skills in regards to processes and strategies to build ownership in organisational change. The ability to reinvent purpose and create a new vision and bring people on board is essential and can be extremely difficult. New ways of working that require significant change is more than fine-tuning the status quo with a redesign of systems and processes. These larger more transformational changes require people to reframe how they think about and perceive their values, roles, responsibilities and relationships. This altering of perceptions about work ultimately changes behaviour. In this process, the individual leaders, their teams and organisational culture, are fundamentally reshaped.

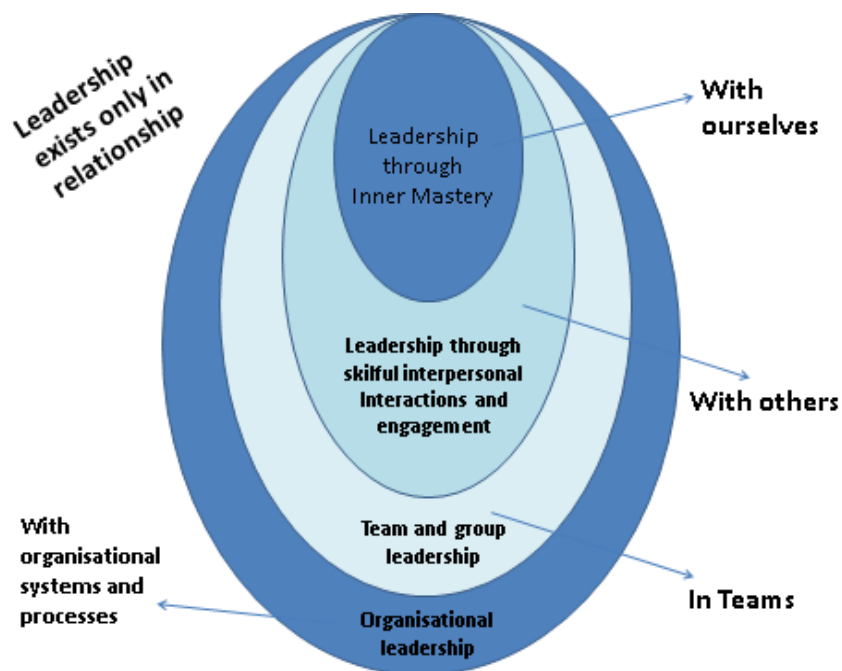
Leadership requires that we grow our capacity to engage others, to operate and be effective at several levels regardless of our role. We have to know ourselves and how we behave, to be able to



shift and respond to others, work in teams and in the organisation as a whole. Team leaders have to know how to build ownership with others, influence a diverse and often dispersed group, understand what it means for a team to have a competing purpose/s.

We are going to work with the **Learning Stages** model early to assist us to focus on what is happening for ourselves and others when we are in new situations and have to work with changes that may be out of our control.

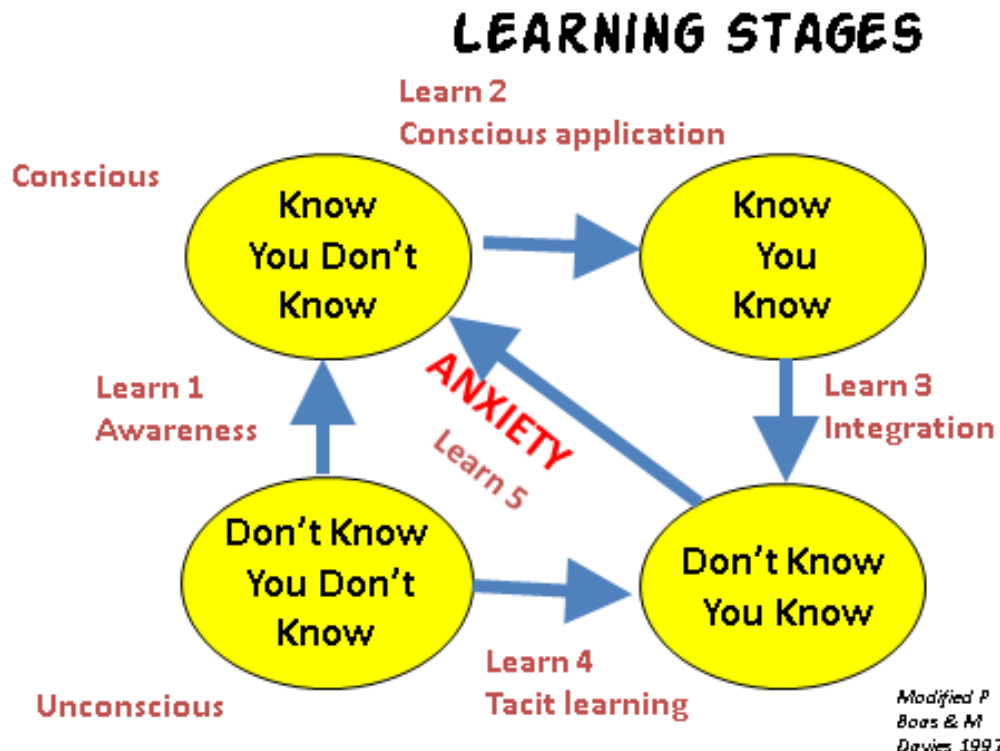
The following model provides a useful framework in which to gain self awareness and also to identify what is happening for others during periods of new learning and change.



The fourth session focuses on leading at an organisational or community level with several strategies for engaging people and building ownership. Having the capability to influence at a whole of system level requires an understanding of organisations and how they operate.

Working to change the people and systems aspects of an organisation often creates significant challenges for leaders and many change efforts fail.

The group activities applied in the Art of Hosting process provide a good set of tools for creating environments for effective change.



## Learning Stages

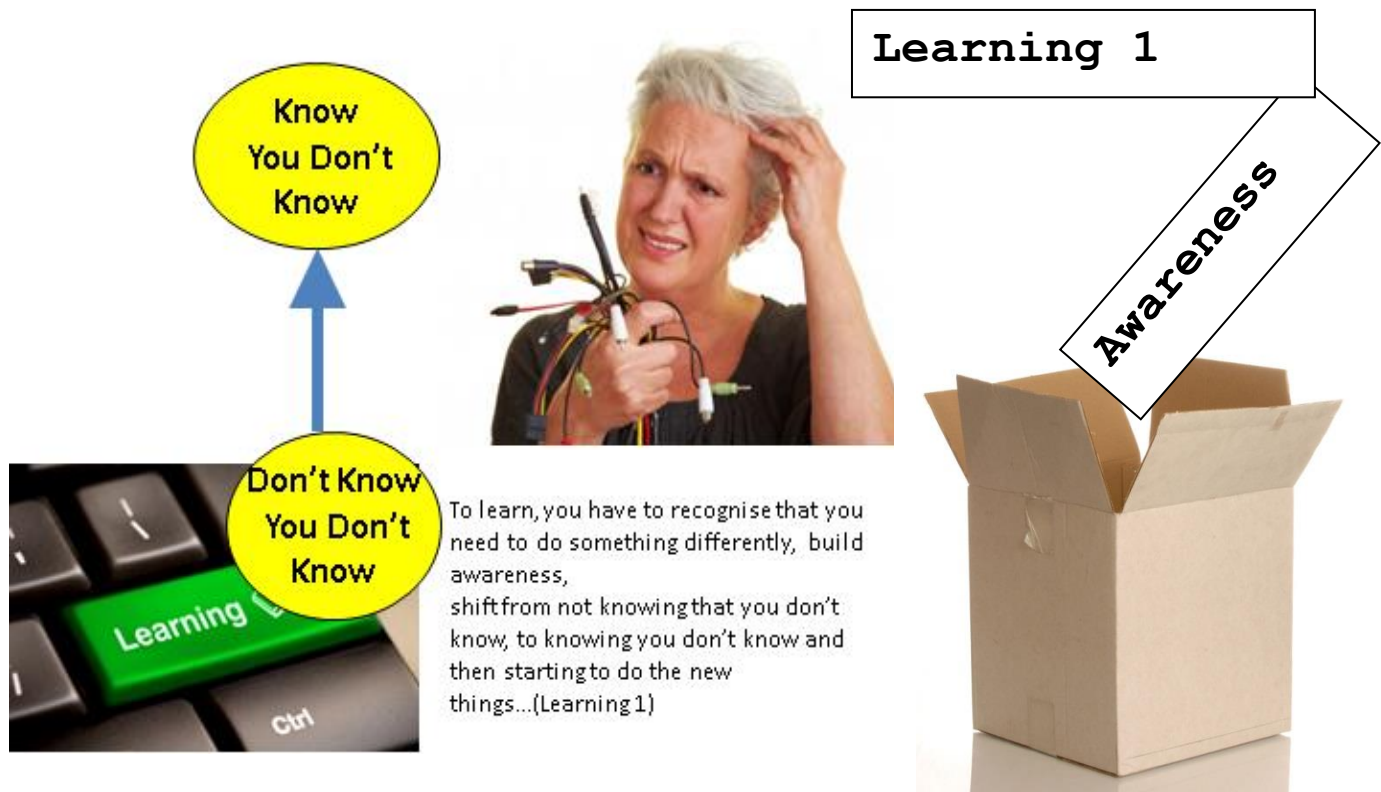
It is important during organisational change to gain an understanding of where people are at in terms of their learning in a new environment. Some helpful questions to ask include:

- How are they understanding the change?
- To what extent are they aware of the new direction?
- Do they have sufficient information to start to work with the change?
- Do they fully appreciate the scope of what is happening or is there a level of uncertainty still?

As we go through the Stages of Learning Model, work out where you and others are in terms of the changes in your service.

Learning involves change: When we start something new we are often at the stage of blissful ignorance – not knowing what we don't know but feeling relatively at ease. This is unconscious incompetence.

To learn, you have to recognise that you need to do something differently, that there are things you don't know and may need to learn about. To do this, you need to shift from not knowing that you don't know to knowing you don't know (but not necessarily able to do anything about it). This is **Learning 1**.

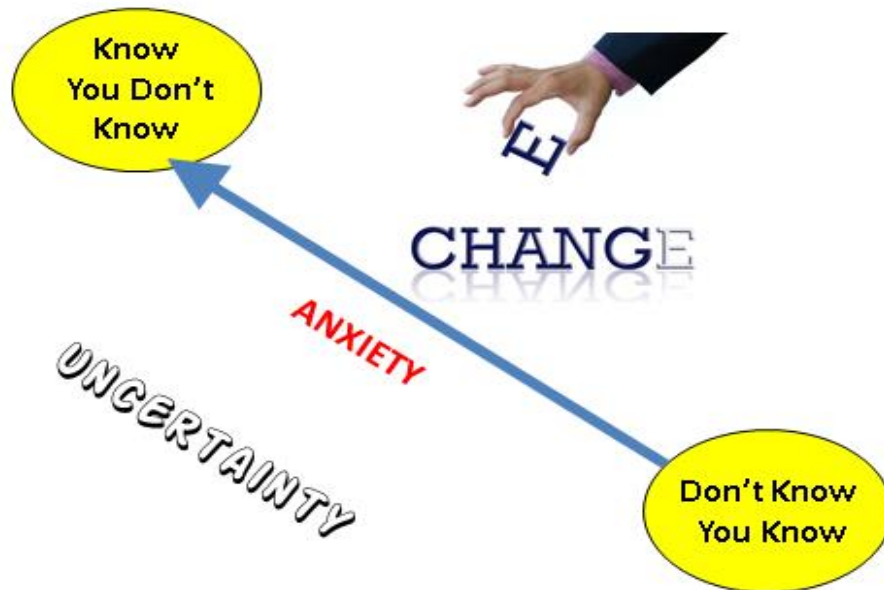


**Learning 2** occurs when you have learned and practiced a new skill and know that you have mastered it but still need to focus your conscious thinking and attention. **Learning 3** is where you have learned the skill so well that it becomes almost unconscious, (e.g. giving a good public presentation). You often have skills that you use automatically such as running meetings, communicating with staff, planning and reporting

**Learning 4** is where you continue to get feedback and information about your behaviour and skills and continue the process of learning to adapt to unfamiliar situations and new challenges in ways you are not aware of.

This can be in the form of tacit learning – like learning new customs and language in a new country, people will often comment on someone having an accent and the person doesn't realise it. When you have been in a new workplace for more than nine months it is possible that you have made changes to how you behave to fit in – you may be aware of some of this but not all.

Anxiety occurs as you move from being automated, relaxed in a role and at ease in your role, to realising that you don't know and have to change. This can come about when the old behaviours you have no longer work but you know you have to change them – **Learning 5**.



### Application of the model with a group

After explaining the model, place four pieces of A4 paper on the floor marked with each of the stages. Ensure they are set out similar to the model in the slide. Ask group members - in regards to the stages of learning – ‘where are you at this stage in your capacity to work effectively with change?’ Now place yourself on one of these continuums and let others around you know why you are standing where you are.

If you use this with a new group, encourage the group members to introduce themselves as they discuss together. Hear briefly back from several group members – aim for some responses from those at each stage. Mindfulness assists us to be aware of our own reaction and manage our responses.

Robinson, W.L. (1974)

*In regards to this model and explanations, acknowledgement is given to the work of Mal Davies, Learning at Work and Phill Boas, Draft One Communications. The activity was designed and regularly tested successfully in groups by Bernadette Rutyna and Chris Patty, Human Ingredient).*

## Mindfulness

There are several schools of study around mindfulness. It has become the focus of work in a range of areas including: leadership and management development (University of Melbourne, Business School Mt Eliza teaches Mindful Leadership), spiritual practice, personal development and growing more healthy organisations.

### MINDFULNESS

- **Keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality** (Brown & Ryan, 2003)
- **Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally** (Kabat-Zinn, 1994)
- **A state of psychological freedom that occurs when attention remains quiet and limber, without attachment to any particular point of view** (Martin, 1997)
- **Bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis** (Marlatt & Kristeller, 1999)

Mindfulness is essentially about being fully conscious of oneself, the context and the relationships as well as other people. This is easy to say but somewhat of a challenge to do when we are not so practised in this way of living. However, you can't make radical changes in the pattern of your life until you begin to see yourself exactly as you are now. As soon as you do that, changes flow naturally. You don't have to force or struggle or obey rules dictated to you by some authority. Arriving at the initial insight is quite a task. You've got to see who you are and how you are, without illusion, judgment or resistance of any kind. You've got to see your own place in society and your function as a social being. You start to see your duties and obligations to your fellow human beings, and above all, your responsibility to yourself as an individual living with other individuals.

#### See articles and self assessment –

Reflections on the Mindful Brain, Daniel J Seigel 2007

Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI) © by Walach, Buchheld, Grossman & Schmidt.

[http://www.academia.edu/1491884/Measuring\\_mindfulness\\_The\\_Freiburg\\_Mindfulness\\_Inventory\\_FMI\\_.Walach\\_H.Buchheld\\_N.Buttnerm%C3%BCller\\_V.Kleinknecht\\_N.Schmidt\\_S.2006\\_Personality\\_and\\_Individual\\_Differences\\_40\\_1543-1555](http://www.academia.edu/1491884/Measuring_mindfulness_The_Freiburg_Mindfulness_Inventory_FMI_.Walach_H.Buchheld_N.Buttnerm%C3%BCller_V.Kleinknecht_N.Schmidt_S.2006_Personality_and_Individual_Differences_40_1543-1555)



## The Role of the integrating Pre Frontal Cortex

A review of the anatomy of the middle prefrontal cortex reveals that it has a major integrative function that links the body, limbic system and cortex to each other. These middle prefrontal areas are crucial for generating nine aspects of life.

As the most integrative structure of the brain, the pre-frontal cortex supports resilience and assists with the development of mindfulness. Dan Siegel Psychiatrist and Paediatrician describes its nine different functions and how having an understanding and appreciation of these aspects of our functioning can assist us to operate in our daily lives.

### THE ROLE OF THE INTEGRATING MIDDLE PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX



- Bodily Regulation
- Fear Modulation
- Emotional Regulation
- Attuned Communication
- Empathy
- Response Flexibility
- Insight
- Intuition
- Morality

*When we achieve new skills of self-observation through mindful practice, it becomes possible to disengage automatically coupled pathways. With this new skill, the mind may create an important ability to free itself from the enslavements of triggers and prior learning*

By focussing awareness on the input from the body, our affective (feeling) states and our range of thoughts and ideas we can start to become more connected to ourselves and others in our lives. This means by paying attention to the signals of our body, we are performing an act that has the potential to transform some of our disconnected ways of living into a richer and more integrated world for ourselves.

## The Pre-Frontal Cortex

1. Bodily Regulation - regulates the autonomic nervous system – breathing, heart rate and digestion. These can be influenced to assist us to stay calm.





Regulate our  
breathing  
stay calm

Quell the fear  
response

2. Fear Modulation - Quells the fear response in people – having good supports in place prior to bad news being given assists a person to feel calm and comforted.
3. Emotional Regulation - every emotion has physiological responses – body contracts in anger, feel overwhelmed in distress and sadness, energetic when happy etc., emotions move through our body as long as we don't shut them down – then they become stuck. It is essential to feel the emotion and then let the body move on to acceptance.



ATTUNED  
COMMUNICATION

4. Attuned Communication – this is the felt sense of another person's experience. If a parent recognises, appreciates and feels their child's moods, fears, joys, etc., the child is likely to be

far more stable – will develop a solid sense of themselves as a person. We are hardwired to seek comfort when scared or upset – having someone to “be there” assists emotions to be managed.

Daniel Seigel shares his understanding about the importance of empathy and how it works in the brain thought mirror neurons, "When kids are able to watch an interaction that's empathic, empathy isn't just being taught; it's being demonstrated."

When talking about the importance of empathic Attunement, Dan says, "When we attune with others we allow our own internal state to shift, to come to resonate with the inner world of another. This resonance is at the heart of the important sense of “feeling felt” that emerges in close relationships. Children need Attunement to feel secure and to develop well, and throughout our lives we need Attunement to feel close and connected." (Seigel, 2007)

**EMPATHY**

**CREATING MEANING FROM  
ANOTHER'S EXPERIENCE AND  
SHOWING UNDERSTANDING.**



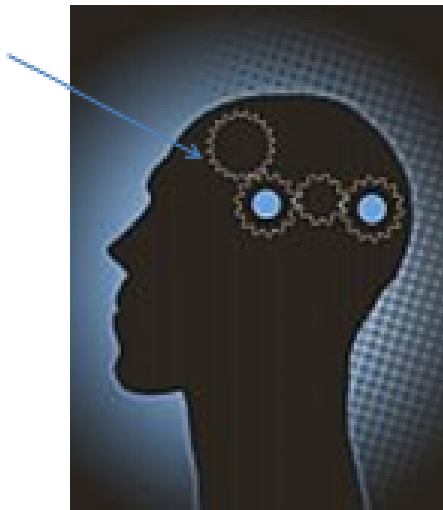
5. Empathy - is the integration of a range of signals from the body, emotions, creating meaning from another's experience and showing understanding.



6. Response Flexibility – this is the capacity to stop, hold an experience, regulate the body response and emotions and then choose an action. The more flexible someone can be the better they are able to manage change. SOBER – Stop, observe, breathe, expand your perspective, respond wisely.
7. Insight – realise what it means to be human, expand one's perspective, create a meaningful and realistic narrative about one's life experiences.
8. Intuition – gut feeling – knowing what is right for us and what isn't.
9. Morality – based on empathy and the interconnectedness of all things, assisting us to make choices for the common good.

Learning the 'mindsight' skill of seeing the mind in oneself and in others enables the individual to discern different streams of awareness. With such a new ability, the capacity to intentionally alter the direction of information flow—to use the skilled focus of attention to change the mind—enables us to amplify the activity of certain pathways and inhibit others. It is in this way that we can use the focus of the mind to change the function and ultimately the structure of the brain.

## THE ROLE OF THE INTEGRATING MIDDLE PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX

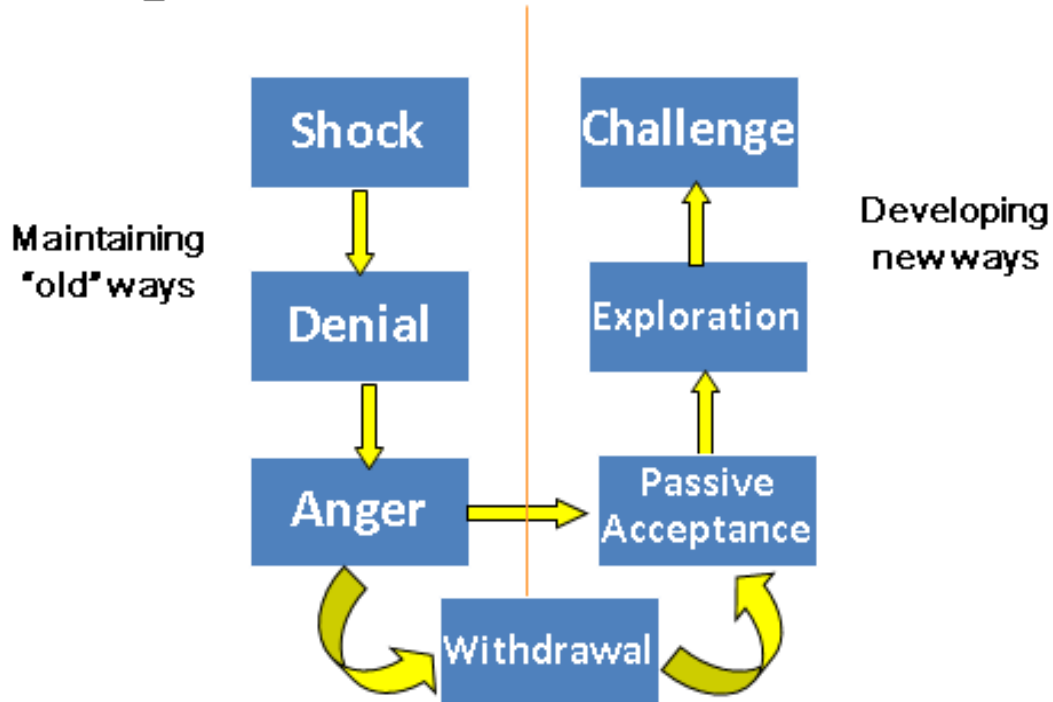


- Bodily Regulation
- Fear Modulation
- Emotional Regulation
- Attuned Communication
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*(Seigel, 2010)*

## INDIVIDUAL CHANGE MODEL



(modified Kubler- Ross, 1969)

### Stages of Change - Individual Responses to change and Leadership Strategies for working with people at each Stage

The following responses and suggested strategies to work through the stages of change have been gathered from research conducted over 8 years with more than 400 leaders in middle management roles in various government departments in Australia as they went through organisational change. They used their own experience and knowledge of what works and what doesn't as well as best practice approaches in this area. These responses are not the same for all people and are to be used as a guide.

Stages of Change	Leadership Strategies
<b><u>Shock</u> - Physical and Emotional Responses</b> Stunned or in limbo Disoriented Heart racing Can't think clearly / hearing goes Feeling non functional No action or engagement with the world Robot like behaviour Lack of energy / feeling of unwellness Disconnected from reality Disconnected from emotions / disassociated	<b>Leadership Strategies</b> Recognise and acknowledge what is happening for people – this has to be an authentic response. Interview and counsel or provide Employee assistance Organise follow ups with people, Buddy up for support Don't leave people alone / find support groups others to be with Patience to just "be" with the person and sit with them Encourage the person to voice / feel what's happening Ensure that the news of a big change is not delivered to a team at the end of a day as they may not be safe to travel home if they are in shock

	Educate others on what this stage is about
<p><b><u>Denial</u> - Physical, Cognitive and Emotional Responses</b></p> <p>Dismissal of the event  NO acknowledgement – this won't happen attitude, cloaking emotion  Carry on as usual – work harder  Comments such as – <i>they always do this and nothing changes</i>, are common at this stage  May involve bargaining – <i>if I work harder, achieve our outcomes etc., we won't have to change</i></p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Open and honest communication with the person, clearly state impacts  Timely reality check  Have supports in place and available  Re-shocking by restating what is happening, may be needed but maintain sensitivity</p>
<p><b><u>Anger</u> - Physical Cognitive and Emotional Responses</b></p> <p>Blood pressure could have increased  Tightness of muscles, tenseness  Poor sleep, busy head  Feeling devalued- efforts not recognised  Feel betrayed  Feel punished  Questioning the decision – argue  Felt disempowered – no resources  Abandoned, hurt and fearful  Could want to vent and sabotage  May blame others or self</p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Prior to the change - Communications strategy / develop transition plan early taking into account individual differences and needs  During - Recognise what it is like for the other person  Let them vent – this is not agreement though  Support / validate / acknowledge their position – that this is real for them, has to be done authentically  May need to confront difficult behaviour  Realise that the anger is directed at the change issue  Identify who is likely to feel more upset – get to know what else is happening in that person's life and ensure they have support</p>
<p><b><u>Withdrawal</u> - Emotional, Cognitive and Physical Responses</b></p> <p>Distressed, upset  Express a desire to be alone or be comforted (depending on individual differences)  Physically – low or high blood pressure, stressed and flat energy  Move away from others  May feel that they are alienated  Assume other people are OK, but you are isolated (not seen by others)  Lose relationships  Can take sick leave and remove themselves from work, may become depressed  Can struggle to get work done with poor diet, concentration, Low self-care, let things slide, little exercise</p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Connect people with others who can assist – ensure Employee assistance and/or external counselling is available if needed  Rituals – share stories / say goodbye to the past  Recognise and step into their shoes and realise how the person is feeling, express empathy  Create awareness in the team that this is a normal to loss  Make support services available, provide time and space for them to talk  Keep an open door policy with these people and let them know you are available, check in regularly</p>

<p><b><u>Passive Acceptance</u> - Emotional, Cognitive and Physical Responses</b></p> <p>Accept the situation          Want to move on but may feel uncertain          Energy neutral, motivation average- low          In a holding pattern but with the start of a desire to shift          Do the basic requirements at work with the potential of future focus          Come in and work 9-5 or only the required hours with no extra effort</p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Communication – maintain present focus and timeframe, reward small achievements</p> <p>Provide supports, buddy up</p> <p>Acknowledge what people are doing</p> <p>Motivate appropriately – provide professional support</p> <p>Link work that they enjoy to the new direction</p>
<p><b><u>Exploration</u> - Emotional, Cognitive and physical Responses</b></p> <p>Motivation building, feeling excited          Seeking opportunities          Starting to feel more empowered          Ready and expectant – moving forward          Ideas flowing, more present with the change          Sense of feeling valued - ready to be proactive          Sense of knowing something about the situation          Seeking direction from authority figures</p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Give direction and ask for their advice          Regular meetings and consultation          Develop options          Focus on strategic – big picture          Keep them focussed          Use their motivation to bring others along          Provide opportunities          Appreciate their successes</p>
<p><b><u>Challenge</u> - Emotional, cognitive and physical Responses</b></p> <p>High energy and enthusiasm          Want to take up leadership and make things happen with the change          Interested and curious about what is happening          Provide good contribution to the workplace          Focus on outcomes          Goal directed behaviours – but maybe unfocussed          Motivation is high – maybe impatient or frustrated at the pace of things (if its slow)          Looking forward orientation, as well as using skills          Feel more in control, keen to take up responsibility</p>	<p><b>Leadership Strategies</b></p> <p>Provide the person avenues to use their skills and motivation</p> <p>Focus conversation on timeframes and outcomes</p> <p>Use best practice comparisons</p> <p>Continue to build motivation with positive focus</p> <p>Give responsibilities and check direction</p> <p>Ask for ideas and contributions to the big picture</p> <p>Recognise their efforts</p>



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Bernadette Rutyna  
Director  
Systems in Action Pty Ltd



Partner Human Ingredient  
[http://humaningredient.com.au/  
bernadette.rutyna@bigpond.com](http://humaningredient.com.au/bernadette.rutyna@bigpond.com)

*Member:-  
Institute of Management Consultants  
Academy of Management  
Australian Institute of Human Resources  
Associate Member Australia and NZ  
Psychodrama Association.*

With over 20 years of experience and significant change leadership expertise across 5 different government departments at middle and senior management levels, I have been responsible for initiating and leading statewide organisational development and culture change processes, strategy planning and futuring processes, leadership and management development and performance improvement.

Over the past 10 years my successful consulting business has assisted a range of public, community and private sector organisations to grow their strategic capacity, build teams, enhance their leadership and align vision and values to achieve results.

Many of the articles and processes used in these sessions come from my own practice developed over years and from partners in Human Ingredient. If you would like more information and assistance in facilitating these activities in your teams, please contact me via email on address provided.

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