



8 Tips for Change Management

by Barbara Johnson, PhD
TransformMED Practice Enhancement Facilitator

Habitual patterns narrow ideas about what is possible while breaks in routine allow new questions and new perceptions to emerge. Interrupting the routine can be both an exhilarating and uncomfortable process. Here are eight tips to sustain momentum and channel change in a constructive direction:

- 1.** Keep it simple. Break the change into manageable proportions and avoid trying to change too much at one time. Use the 80/20 rule by beginning with changes that will take 20% of the effort to achieve 80% of the rewards.
- 2.** Continually assess what is working and what is not working; change course whenever and wherever necessary.
- 3.** Remember, change in one area will create change in other areas of your practice, sending ripples throughout the clinic. There is no such thing as isolated change. Change pieces need to be connected and balanced with one another.
- 4.** Distinguish between the urgent and important. If the practice is to be transformed, the important issues must be addressed along with managing the urgent daily issues.
- 5.** The leadership team must be united and speak with one voice while modeling the changes they are requesting from others. The leadership team provides the support, direction, and structure of the change. **DELEGATING WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON ANY ONE LEADER.** The most successful leaders get things done through other people.

Leader's question: *"What do you need to do your job effectively?"*

- 6.** People issues are at the heart of change. Emotional and behavioral issues must be identified, addressed, and discussed as they are emerging.

Leader's questions: *"How are doing?"* and *"What do you really think?"*

- 7.** Involve staff from all levels in the change. Involvement creates commitment and ownership. Identify informal leaders at every level and push the decision making down as low as possible. Set up teams at every level and ensure continual communication within and among the teams. The leadership sets up minimum requirements for the teams while decisions about how to proceed are left up to the staff.
- 8.** Confront the brutal facts but keep the faith. Many times a change looks like a failure before it becomes a success.