Template 6.4.3: Working with Emotional Reactions to Change

Purpose

This template outlines possible emotional reactions to change that may be evident at individual and team levels. It assists reflection and conversations that can prompt action.

How to use it?

Consider the questions below and use them to prompt conversations within the team – agree actions that will address issues that arise.

No.	Key considerations	Actions
1.	Do the change leaders need support to understand people's emotional reactions during change? Do people feel supported by the organisation leadership? Is a support plan in place?	
2.	Are there legacy issues from past change efforts that need to be considered? Has the pace of recent changes had a significant personal impact?	
3.	Do people fully understand the need for the change – what is driving it?	
4.	Consider the potential 'negative' impacts on people in the current change plan? How can these be worked through and minimised?	

No.	Key considerations	Actions
5.	Are people willing to let go of the status quo or their past successes in order to commit to a new future?	
6.	What degree of influence do people feel they have over making this change, as opposed to feeling that the change is being done to them?	
7.	What support can the change leaders initiate to help people manage their reactions during the change process and work through their emotions in a way that assists them to engage with the change? This will include listening to concerns, acknowledging progress, affirming good practice, coaching, shadowing, job rotation, further education, etc.	
8.	People need support to embed the changes into their everyday activities and behaviours. How are people encouraged to discontinue 'old systems and ways' and integrate changed practices?	
9.	Do people feel they have the competencies and skills to be able to succeed in making the change a success?	

No.	Key considerations	Actions
10.	Are people worried about failing at either their operational duties or the changed practices?	
11.	Are there concerns that the organisation has adequate resources, knowledge and skills to succeed?	
12.	How do people feel about the level of urgency communicated, and their ability to respond effectively in the given timetable?	
13.	What new behaviours and ways of doing things are being demonstrated and encouraged? Can people relate to these in a meaningful way? Do they resonate with the values of care, compassion, trust and learning?	
14.	Do people feel that decisions regarding the change will be made fairly and justly?	

Template 6.4.3: Working with Emotional Reactions to Change (continued)

No.	Key considerations	Actions
15.	Do people feel they will lose power and autonomy as a result of the change?	
16.	What resources already exist in the organisation for employee assistance? How can these be levered to support staff?	
17.	How do we acknowledge people's level of comfort with chaos – their need for order and knowing how things will unfold?	
18.	Does the culture of the organisation support people to be open about reactions to change and seek support? Is there a need to enhance communication in this regard?	

Adapted from: *Ackerman Anderson, L. and Anderson, D. (2010: 81)* [3]

People's Needs Defining Change – Health Services Change Guide