Fostering Leadership In A Crisis Response System

Bringing It Home
May 21, 2019
Your Hosts

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Partners for Impact
Announced purpose

Executive Directors, Program Directors, and Board Members are challenged to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness within their agency and within the scope of their community’s housing crisis response system. This intensive session will focus on how to develop and strengthen agency leadership by exploring Program designing within complex systems to meet complex problems by using:
- data and input from people with lived experience
- implementing adaptive leadership skills to successfully lead an organization
- growing sustainability for homeless service

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Our approach for this session

Key aspects of our approach:
- rooted in theory and research
- applied at the individual level; organizational or program level; and system or CoC level
- you will bring in the context for discussion, exploration, and learning where you need it most
- our best learning happens in the moment and comes from each other

Our focus will be on the adaptive changes within systems, adaptive challenges that you face as leaders, and adaptive skills that you need to cultivate as a leader. We can also spend some time on technical challenges as time allows.

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Ground rules

What is said in the room stays in this room or ask permission
Be present, participate and contribute
Suspend judgement
Listen and think before speaking
One person at a time and pass the mic
Speak from your own experience and not the experience of others
Avoid advice; bring collective wisdom
**Individual Exercise - What is your change initiative?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the current reality.</th>
<th>Describe your aspirations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Introductions

Name
Organization
Your role in the organization
Expectations for the day
Your organization’s role in the broader homeless system
Your proposed change initiative
Rough schedule

10:30 - 12:15  Lots of content; some exercises; break sometime in the morning

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch

1:45 - 4:45  More exercises at your table and in the room; some content; breaks as you desire
Frameworks

Helps organize perspectives, experiences, and thinking

Enables learning

Dynamic way of helping you anticipate and NOT predict
Framing the Day

Adaptive Leadership - a practical leadership framework that helps individuals and organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments. It is being able, both individually and collectively, to take on the gradual but meaningful process of change. It is about diagnosing the essential from the expendable and bringing about a real challenge to the status quo.

The Adaptive Cycle - conceptual model intended to expose the degree to which a complex system is resilient. The adaptive cycle acknowledges that episodic stresses and disturbances can cause systems that had accumulated capital and built complexity to suddenly collapse and reorganize.
## Technical and Adaptive Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Adaptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear definition</td>
<td>Unclear definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear solution and implementation</td>
<td>Unclear solution and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives aligned</td>
<td>Legitimate, competing perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader has primary responsibility</td>
<td>Stakeholders primarily responsible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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More signs of adaptive challenges

Cycle of failure - oversimplifying problem and applying a technical solutions

Dependence on authority - holding authority figures responsible for causing and/or fixing organizational problems
More on adaptive challenges

Gap between aspirations and reality
Standard responses/solutions are inadequate
Difficult learning is required
New stakeholders need to be engaged
Longer time frame is necessary
Disequilibrium is experienced as a sense of crisis
Group Exercise - What are some technical challenges?
Group Exercise - What are some adaptive challenges?
Individual Exercise - What aspects of your change initiative are technical and what are adaptive?
Adaptive Cycle
The Adaptive Cycle
Performance Loop
Development - Characteristics

Potential
Many ideas to choose from
Diffuse energy looking for feedback
Developing decision-making criteria
Decide on something to grow and adapt
Growth and Maturity - Characteristics

- Revenue generation and distribution
- HR growing staff
- Develop and sustain goals/values - strategic planning
- Tracking outputs and outcomes
- Growth connections; political, Board/development governance
- Volunteers
- Skills development or acquisition
- IT and data collection
Group Exercise - What creates a disruption?
Renewal Loop
Release - Characteristics

Emotions - grief
Reductions
Decision making regarding what to keep and what to let go
Decision making regarding what to do with what is kept/left
Importance of Vision and Values

Your North Star for both the performance loop and the renewal loop
Exploration - Characteristics

- Uncertainty
- More discernment
- No decision-making criteria
- Ideation
- Innovation
- New view - data
- Choices
- Never ending at the same place you started

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Multiple layers and multiple sizes

Individual, organizational, and community level cycles - all at different places and moving at a different pace

Building Identity on the left - Adaptive on the right

You get stuck - the goal is to build your skill base to continue to move through the cycle

Never the same - the context will always change, your experience will always change

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Individual exercise - Where are you personally, organizationally, system?
Individual exercise - Where is your change initiative?
Skills to Move Along the Adaptive Cycle (Group Exercise)
Development - Skills needed

The Adaptive Cycle

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Growth and Maturity - Skills needed

The Adaptive Cycle

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Release - Skills needed

The Adaptive Cycle

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Exploration - Skills needed

The Adaptive Cycle

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Leadership Skills
Nonprofit Skills for the Adaptive Cycle

Clear vision and values that drive to the center
Strong fundraising, including building capital and reserve funds
Succession planning
Communications planning
Regular listening and giving value to voices of experience
Self-care and leadership skill-building routine
Support network development
Ability/willingness to ask for help
Brainstorming

Quick introductions

Person 1: Share your challenge in one minute
Person 2: Affirm the challenge and then in one minute “One thing you might consider is…..

Reverse roles
Move two chairs to the right
Adaptive Leader

View from the balcony
Identify the adaptive challenges
Regulate distress
Maintain disciplined attention
Give the work back to the people
Protect the voices of leadership from below
View from the balcony
View from the balcony and participation on the dance floor

Observe - tends to be subjective, goal is to make it objective by being on the balcony and gathering data

Interpret - wired to do it quickly; slow down and ask - is this accurate?

Intervene - try new things; small things; test things; be uncomfortable
How do you shift to the balcony?
Distress & Emotional Systems

All systems are driven by emotion

Balance of change vs stability . . . anxiety vs calm . . . to make a system healthy and forward moving

People can not learn when overwhelmed

Stress drives the need for change - Sense of Urgency, John Kotter

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Leaders role in regulating distress

Create a holding environment - turn up the heat and have ways to release the steam

Leader is responsible for direction, protection, orientation, managing conflict and addressing norms
How do we do this?

Emotion Regulation and Self Care Skills
  Mindfulness
  Checking the facts and staying away from judgement

Self-differentiated leadership
  Separating self from others while staying connected, allowing the leader to shape the system rather than being shaped by the system

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Listening

The voices of those with lived-experience
The voices of those on the edge, where adaptation is most needed (front line staff, volunteers, community members, community leaders, those most affected by decisions)
More than a survey - make it real and relational and ongoing
Not tokenism - don’t bring one formerly homeless person onto your board and call it a day
Allow those voices to penetrate - you have to accept that your perception may be wrong

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Empower to Lead

Be inclusive, Don’t be the gatekeeper - treat all concerns and ideas as valid

Share expectations and responsibility

Work through conflict and distractions

Build collaboration

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Applying the Adaptive Cycle and Skills to Organizational Issues
Organizational Issue Tables
(choose table other than change initiative)

Board development
Staff and volunteer development
Evaluation and continuous improvement
Fund development
Resource management - facility
Communications
Table Discussion Questions

(volunteer balcony observers)

1. What are some technical challenges associated with this organizational issue?
2. What are some of the adaptive challenges associated with this organizational issue?
3. Describe how this issue may manifest on the adaptive cycle.
4. What specific skills (technical and adaptive) are needed to move it through the adaptive cycle?
Debrief

What was one highlight of this discussion

Balcony observers to share
Homeless Service System (COC) as a Collective Impact Initiative
Common Agenda

Common Understanding of the Problem
Defining problem; especially underlying causes

Put boundaries on the problem and solution

Shared vision for change
High Level Goal
Specific SubGoals
Key levers for moving the agenda forward

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Constant Communication

Consistent and open communication

Focus on building trust
Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Differentiated approaches
  Find unique strengths
  Find different philosophies

Coordination through joint action plan
Shared Measurement

Collecting data and measuring results

Focus on performance management

Shared accountability
Backbone Functions

Separate organization(s) with staff

Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations

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COC as a Collective Impact Initiative

What has HUD put in place and or suggested for each of these conditions?

What is missing?
Applying the Adaptive Cycle and Skills to the Local Homeless System (CoC)
New Table Configuration - Stage of COC

Development

Growth and Maturity

Release

Exploration
Table Discussion Questions (volunteer balcony observers)

1. Jump to the balcony and describe what is happening on the dance floor with your homeless system.
2. What are some technical challenges with your homeless system? What are some of the adaptive challenges?
3. Whose voices are present? Whose voices are missing? How will you engage all the stakeholders’ voices?
4. Where is the distress and how can you regulate it?
5. How do you share the responsibility back to the stakeholders?

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Debrief

One highlight from your table discussion

Balcony observers?
Applying Adaptive Leadership Skills and the Adaptive Cycle to Your Change Initiative
Triads with an interviewer and a recorder - Remember these questions

1. What was your change initiative?
2. What parts of your change initiative are technical and what part are adaptive?
3. Where is it on the adaptive cycle?
1. Whose voices are present? Whose voices are missing? How will you engage all the stakeholders’ voices?
2. Where is the distress and how can you regulate it?
3. How do you share the responsibility back to the stakeholders?
4. Where do you need to focus?
5. What other areas of leadership do you see as most critical for your change initiative? Consider where you are in the adaptive cycle.
6. What strategies do you need to develop and implement based on the adaptive cycle?
7. What resources do you need?
In Closing

What was your biggest take-away from all of today’s work?

What do you want to continue to explore?