Choosing Wisely
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Choosing Wisely
Implementation Toolkit

Change management & communications

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CHANGE MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Western Health – What they did

Enabling buy-in and taking ownership of healthcare change have been key features of the Western Health Choosing Wisely Project, says Eleanor Garnys, innovations and improvement partner at Western Health and Choosing Wisely project officer.

"Rather than myself as the Choosing Wisely project officer coming from the outside telling clinicians what to do, clinicians made the decisions and then implemented them," says Ms Garnys.

A standout example was how the recommendations for diagnostic testing for pulmonary embolism were adopted by the project.

The doctors in the respiratory medicine unit were the ones who got together and decided that the current Victorian state evidence-based practice recommendations were best practice and should be implemented across Western Health.

"Because the respiratory medicine unit's practice met the Choosing Wisely principle of reducing low value care, we agreed that our project would aim to implement it, not just in the unit but across all the hospital," says Ms Garnys.

"And we've found the doctors in the hospital have been completely on board with participating, promoting and implementing it as part of the project," she says.

What is change management?

Your Choosing Wisely project aims to reduce unnecessary treatments and improve the quality of healthcare in your health service.

Each stakeholder can feel and respond differently about the change, where:

- 🗨 some may embrace it and even become Champions for your project
- 🗨 others can find it challenging – with responses ranging from feeling anxiety, through to active non-compliance.

Change management aims to:

- 🗨 understand the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of stakeholders
- 🗨 build relationships with and between stakeholders
- 🗨 support stakeholders throughout the change.

Developing a change management and communications approach may feel like an unnecessary or cumbersome step. But having an approach to getting people on board with your project will help in the long run.

See 'Why is change management important? ' and 'Why is communications important?' below for more details.

Stakeholder

A stakeholder is defined as "any person, group or institution with interests in a project...who may be directly or indirectly affected by the process or the outcome."[1]

This may include people in the following categories:

- 🗨 clinical staff
- 🗨 management/executive
- 🗨 support/administrative staff
- 🗨 consumers/patients.

Change management & communications and Governance

Change management & communications and Governance are two separate chapters, but there is a significant overlap and differences between these two areas.

What they share in common are the roles / positions and groups already recommended for the governance of your project, that may also be recommended for change management.

For example, a steering committee is commonly considered a requirement for both governance and change management. One of the responsibilities for a steering committee is to identify barriers and enablers. Change management also identifies barriers and enablers, but in addition, makes a plan to address them.

However, governance involves people who are there to support the project's completion but some of them may actually not be actively involved with the change the project is trying to achieve.

So change management is about generating buy-in across the whole health service and governance is about oversight across the project itself.

Models of change management

Different change management models can be applied to healthcare. Two core approaches are: planned change and emergent change.[2]

Healthcare change tends to be based on the planned change approach. It views change as a transitional process between fixed states following pre-planned steps that aim to relinquish old behaviours and adopt new behaviours.

The emergent change approach views change as less prescriptive and more 'bottom up', where managers cede some of the decision-making authority to employees and act as facilitators of change, as opposed to controllers of change.[2]

Why is change management important?

Q. Do you have a person who can promote and explain the project, and set a positive example for colleagues to successfully deliver the project?

If yes, that person can be supported to enable them to be designated in a Champion position, as described in your governance set up.

Q. Do you have a person who is negative towards your project, has influence among other stakeholders and the power to reduce compliance?

If yes, that person requires your project's engagement such as face to face meetings and providing information from as early as possible to understand their concerns early on and bring them on board.

Change management can improve the chances of your project being a success. It's been estimated and often quoted that 70% of change initiatives in all sectors fail.[3,4]

The main reasons cited are that:[3]

- 💬 change plans do not include those affected early enough in the planning

- 💬 change plans do not consider human factors i.e., motivations and human behaviours

- 💬 individual barriers to change are not directly addressed

- 💬 sustainability is not built in from the beginning.

However, it may be inappropriate to consider this 70% figure as an "inherent" fail rate that every project needs to overcome because the context of each project is different.[4]

For instance, it's reasonable to assume that Choosing Wisely projects may be more likely to have a higher success rate because they involve healthcare professional-driven change.

Nevertheless, it's important to take into account the above potential reasons for failure. Being able to do this allows your Choosing Wisely project to more easily deliver its aim.

What is communications?

Communications is an integral part of change management. You can think about change management as framing the buy-in you want to achieve and communications as actually making the change happen.

It involves providing consistent and relevant information about the change that is being planned and implemented for:

- 💬 stakeholders; involved in and affected by your project

- 💬 people in the whole health service; not affected by your project.

It can involve:

- 💬 formal channels to connect with your stakeholders, including: health service intranet, grand rounds, posters, lanyards and more

- 💬 informal means such as the project Champion speaking to colleagues during the day and setting up networking events.

Why is communications important?

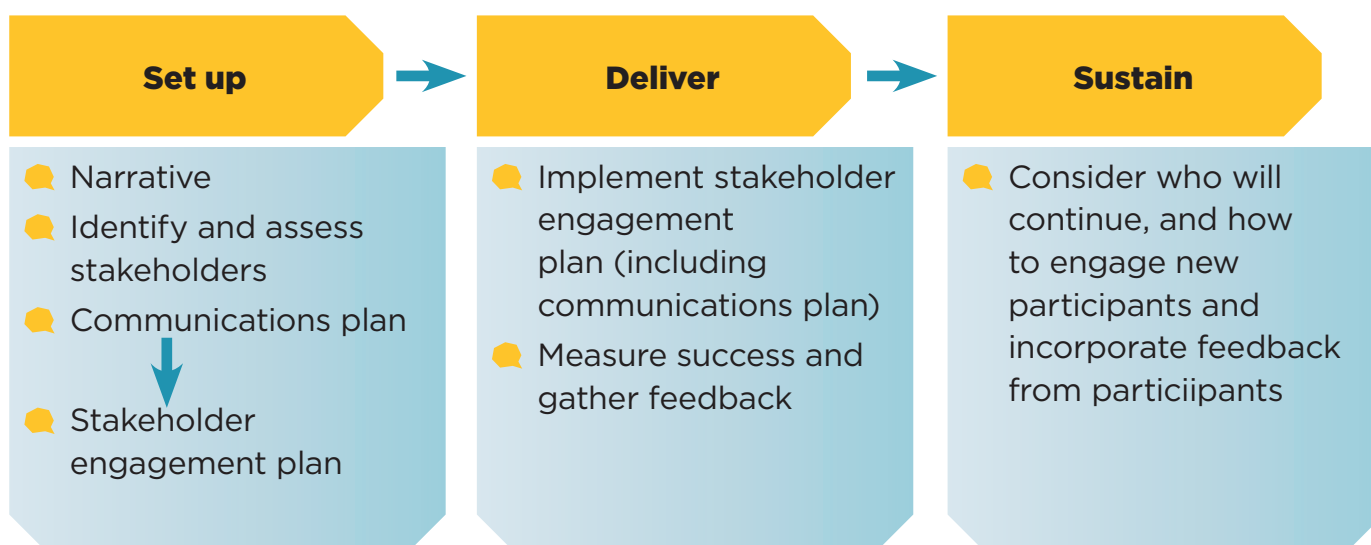Communications is important because it:

- 💬 enables stakeholders to make the best possible contribution for your project's success

- 💬 ensures transparency, trust and confidence

- 💬 lays the foundation for scaling up future Choosing Wisely projects in other parts of your health service.

When to do change management & communications?

- 💬 It's recommended that planning change management for your project begin at the start of the set up stage.

- 💬 Change management then continues during the remainder of the set up stage, and throughout the deliver and sustain stages.

- 💬 Communications begins after change management starts, during the set up stage.

- 💬 Communications continues throughout the deliver and sustain stages.

What to do

Set up	Deliver	Sustain
🟡 Narrative 🟡 Identify and assess stakeholders 🟡 Communications plan ⬇️ 🟡 Stakeholder engagement plan	🟡 Implement stakeholder engagement plan (including communications plan) 🟡 Measure success and gather feedback	🟡 Consider who will continue, and how to engage new participants and incorporate feedback from particiipants

Set up

Narrative

To effectively implement change you need a positive culture and the ability to create a compelling narrative. A captivating narrative should capture why Choosing Wisely is important to the audience. While implementing your chosen topic areas, remember to frame your narrative based on your audience. For example, the narrative or story you tell to executives will likely be different to the story shared with ward-based nurses.

When attempting to engage staff, focus on:

🟡 why the project is important to the audience

🟡 what the interests of the audience are

🟡 how the project will impact and benefit the audience

🟡 how to motivate the audience to spread the word to others.

Do not underestimate the importance of a compelling narrative on successful and sustainable implementation. Consumer stories are often an effective way to engage clinical staff and focus on a common purpose.

📖 Read the following:

🟡 Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, South Australia Change Management Toolkit *Developing your case for change*

Identify and assess stakeholders

Find out who are the people involved in and affected by your project, both as individuals and the group they belong to, and categorise them in terms of their:

- position / role in the project

- experience with change and impact on current readiness for change

- promotion and support that they'll provide and influence they'll have

- detraction and non-compliance that they'll provide and influence they'll have.

Once stakeholders are identified, the next step is to assess how to engage with them. This particularly involves categorising them according to the:

- type of engagement they are best suited to: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower

- key messages.

Read the following:

- Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, South Australia Change Management Toolkit *Identifying stakeholder types*

- *Choosing Wisely Collaboration Implementation Toolkit Workshop 2*
  Levels of stakeholder engagement - Page 5
  How to engage your stakeholders – Page 6

Communications plan

The communications plan is based on your project's narrative. It requires:

- being clear on which communication channels are suited for the type of engagement that you've already identified for each stakeholder (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower)

- categorising stakeholders into audience groups

- developing a schedule (timelines) for communications

- identifying and planning for any risks.

Read the following:

- *Choosing Wisely Collaboration Implementation Toolkit Workshop 2*
  How to engage your stakeholder - Pages 6 to 8

- Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, South Australia Change Management Toolkit *Communications plan*

- *Choosing Wisely Communications Plan* developed by Western Health

Stakeholder engagement plan

Bring all of the above components into a single plan.

This includes a schedule (timeline), or at least the frequency of how often each part of the plan is done.

Read the following:

💬 *Choosing Wisely Collaboration Implementation Toolkit Workshop 2*
Bringing it all together – Stakeholder engagement plan – Page 9

Deliver

💬 Implement the Stakeholder engagement plan, including the Communications plan, according to the schedule.

💬 Measure success and gather feedback.

💬 Make any changes required for the plans based on measures and feedback.

Sustain

Change management and particularly communications can be continued through the sustain stage.

Consider the following:

💬 Who needs to be involved to continue to champion the initiative or project.

💬 Keep staff engaged – create opportunities for staff to share their experiences of the project through staff presentations or newsletter.

💬 Incorporate both staff and consumer feedback on the interventions.

Swan Hill District Health – What they did

One aspect of stakeholder engagement that worked well for the Swan Hill District Health *Using Clinical Decision Rules (CDR) for diagnosis of pulmonary embolism* project was having champions for behaviour change.

"Most people, particularly the nurses have been great supporters of the project's aim to reduce unnecessary CT pulmonary angiography and have actively put in place the change to the way we diagnose pulmonary embolism," says Sharryn Mathieson, Choosing Wisely Coordinator at Swan Hill District Health.

But another aspect, in hindsight, didn't work out so well.

Managing resistance

"We had a few doctors who either didn't participate in education sessions about the CDR or were actively against it," says Ms Mathieson.

"We've had to be flexible and adapt to these challenges. We followed up with the doctors and provided them with additional individual education sessions to ensure that all clinical staff knew about the clinical problem and solution," she says.

"We also held further sessions with the nurses so that when a patient presents with symptoms and there is a query about the diagnosis of pulmonary embolism, to work out with them how to ensure the CDR is available for all doctors to use when they are deciding which tests to order when diagnosing pulmonary embolism."

Clearly the project managed the resistance well as it arose. But in hindsight it could have been done better with planning for it ahead of time, which would have saved them having to scramble together their responses.

Tools and Resources

Templates

💬 *Better Care Victoria Organisational Readiness Assessment Template*
You can use this template to assess whether your health service is ready to implement Choosing Wisely initiatives, particularly section 1.People, for change management

💬 *Barriers and Facilitators Assessment*

💬 *Stakeholder engagement plan*
Choosing Wisely Collaboration Implementation Toolkit Workshop 2 - Bringing it all together – Stakeholder engagement plan – Page 9

💬 *Communications plan*

Guidance

💬 *Twitter cheat sheet*

💬 *Daily Operating Systems administration guide*
A method of working to help a health service answer the fundamental question 'Are we ready today – if not, why not?' Developed by Better Care Victoria.

Examples

💬 *Choosing Wisely Communications Plan* developed by Western Health

💬 *Choosing Wisely A4 leaflet* developed by Goulburn Valley Health

Further information

💬 *Change management, Quality improvement primer*, developed by Health Quality Ontario, 2013

💬 *Change management in healthcare*, Antwi M and Kale M, 2014 Monieson Centre for Business Research in Healthcare, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

💬 *Change management toolkit* developed by Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Government of South Australia, 2019

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