Online library of Quality,
Service Improvement
and Redesign tools

Supporting people through change –
an overview

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Supporting people through change – an overview

Carrying out service improvement means doing something differently – which inevitably brings about change. The uncertainty around transition often produces emotional and creative tensions within people. Creative tensions are those focused around having to deliver the service today and do the work to redesign the processes for tomorrow. Emotional tensions are those involved with the anxiety that improvement (change) can bring.

Understanding how to manage these emotional tensions – supporting people through change – is essential if you are to lead and deliver successful service improvement. These tensions can undermine improvement efforts and their full implementation. The following approaches and tools are designed to help you understand some of the aspects of change and help you manage successful transition and service improvement efforts.

As the content relates to the emotional aspects of managing change, it does not always easily categorise into tools. It is often about approaches, understanding them and knowing that there are some methodologies that can help.

When to use it

These approaches and tools can be used at any time when you are making improvements (and therefore changes) to services. If people feel included, listened to and involved in owning, shaping and implementing the improvement, the emotional transition will be smoother and successful implementation will be more likely.

Although many of the tools and approaches can be used by individuals, as change efforts invariably involve a team approach, working through issues as a team will help you to develop a committed and aligned team and increase the chances of a successful transition through the improvement initiative.

How to use it

The specific details for each of the approaches and tools can be found in the relevant sub sections:

- **Commitment, enrolment and compliance**
- **Discomfort zone**
- **Engagement and empowerment**
- **How to understand differences between individuals**
- **Overcoming barriers**
- **Managing conflict**
- **Enabling collaboration by working with resistance**

Additional resources

Bridges, W (2009) *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, 3rd Edition, Nicholas Brealey Publishing: London