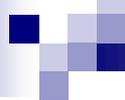




# **Leadership for Wicked Problems**

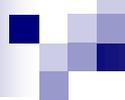
**ACMHA, April 4, 2013**

Richard H. Beinecke DPA, ACSW  
Institute for Public Service  
Suffolk University, Boston  
rickhbeinecke@comcast.net



## Leadership is...

- ❖ Creating a shared vision and mobilizing others towards specific organizational goals consistent with the vision. Must take into account leaders, followers, goals, environment, and shared vision (Antony and Huckshorn, 2008).



## Need to

- understand the context, understand self and others, build productive work groups (teams), nurture humane and effective organizations, create and communicate shared vision, have political leadership, and model ethical leadership (Crosby and Bryson, 2005).
- Move from good to great.

# Three Types of Problems (Heifetz, 1994, 2008)

- Type 1: Technical Problems – Problem is definable and can be solved with technical knowledge and abilities
- Type 2: Problem is clear, but the solution is not.
- Type 3: Adaptive Problems – No obvious definition of the problem or solution.
- Type 3 are complex, multi-framed, cross-boundary, and hard to solve. Need to be proactive, not reactive.

# Wicked Problems

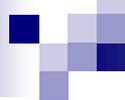
- Wicked Problems: “when organizations have to face constant change or unprecedented challenges..It is the social complexity of wicked problems as much as their technical difficulties that make them tough to manage.” (Camillus, 2008)
- “Working in a swamp, compared to hard ground.” (Parks, 2005)
- No definite formulation of the problem. Each problem is essentially unique, often has not been faced before, is entwined with other problems. The search for solutions never stops. Solutions are not good or bad but are judgment calls and are often difficult to measure.

- 
- Wicked problems require non-linear solutions, not just money
  - They are not just difficult situations but opportunities for creativity and change, new paradigms and ways of viewing the world and ourselves



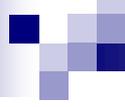
# Immediate Wicked Problems

- Cutbacks in behavioral health funding
- Mental health and violence, guns, suicide
- Patient rights vs. parent/community protection
- PTSD and our returning military
- Behavioral health very low U.S. and global priority although very high need, continuing stigma
- Others?



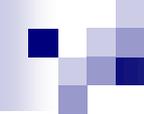
# **Problems We Will Face with Health Reform and Transformation**

- Role and funding in ACOs
- Integration of primary care and behavioral health, medical vs. specialty care
- Where do housing/other social services fit?
- Implementing EBPs, shared decision making, true consumer involvement
- Access, quality, cost, process
- Others?



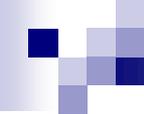
# Longer Term But Coming Fast

- Public mental health/population health
- Chronic care, whole health
- Addressing social determinants
- Moving from an illness to a health model
- Growing inequities
- The neuro-psych and genetics revolutions
- Others?



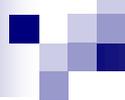
# Issues

- The Triple Aim is a great vision, but what does it mean in real life, on the street?
- As we deal with the immediate problems, how do we address the ACO challenge, and the longer term changes that will fundamentally alter what we do?
- What is the diagnosis of our problem? What should be our priorities, our Blueprint?



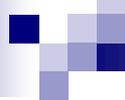
## How Do We Make a Difference?

- How do we get our heads around all this?
- Can we move from “retiring,” “marginalized,” “not organized,” “in need of refreshment”?
- How do we become real players in the health world, not be stuck in our isolated past?
- Can we adopt a new collaborative strategy to implement integrated care systems with a whole health approach?



# **We Need Transactional and Transformative Leadership (Burns, 1978 and others)**

- Transactional: Manage and maintain the current system: efficiency, planning, and goal setting
- Transformative: Visioning, proactive change, entrepreneurship, teamwork, relationships, creativity, communication, engagement and renewing
- Leader as technician or conductor (Cohen and Bradford, 1991)
- Both transactional and transformative leadership are needed



# Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz, 1994, 2008)

- Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough, wicked problems.
- Adaptive leadership is about change that enables the capacity to thrive, orchestrating multiple stakeholder priorities to define thriving and then realize it.
- Successful adaptive changes build on the past.
- Organizational adaptation occurs through experimentation.

- 
- Adaptation relies on valuing diverse views, having diverse processes and solutions.
  - New adaptations significantly displace, reregulate, and rearrange some old DNA.
  - Adaptation takes time.
  - Adaptation requires leadership and involvement at all levels.



# Adaptive work requires figuring out

- What to conserve from past practices
- What to save from past practices
- Inventing new ways to build from the best of the past
- Avoiding our tendency to treat things as technical problems.
- Listen to the song beneath the words- look beyond what people are saying

# Why People Try to Avoid Adaptive Challenges or Fail to Adapt

- Gap between espoused values and real behavior
- Competing and conflicting commitments
- Speaking the unspeakable
- Work avoidance
- Mis-perceive nature of the threat
- Perceive it but the challenge may exceed the culture's adaptive capability
- Distress provoked by the problem and the changes it demands. Pogo: "We have met the enemy and he is us."

# Leadership Steps: Kotter and Rathgeber Our Iceberg is Melting, 2006 (the penguin book)

## **Set the Stage**

1. Create a Sense of Urgency
2. Pull Together the Guiding Team

## **Decide What to Do**

3. Develop the Change Vision and Strategy, the Blueprint (s?)

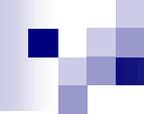
## **Make it Happen**

4. Communicate for Understanding and Buy In
5. Empower Others to Act
6. Produce Short Term Wins
7. Don't Let Up

## **Make it Stick**

8. Create a New Culture

- 
1. Identify the adaptive processes
  2. Manage peoples' adaptive problem solving
  3. Regulate the level of distress caused by confronting the issues
  4. Keep the attention focused on key issues
  5. Shift responsibility for the problem to the primary stakeholders.

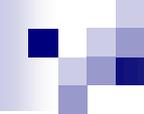


# Different Players

- Early adopters
- Late Adopters
- Non-Adopters
- What are the strategies for each?

# Needed Leadership Competencies: The Beinecke Model





# Questions for Each of You

- What are the key situations that you are now facing that require leadership?
- What leadership skills and competencies are most needed now generally and for you?
- Will situations and competencies change in the future? What new skills will be needed?
- What are your most and least developed competencies?
- What will you do when you go home?
- What should ACMHA do?