

Leadership and Management

Adapting to change



Change in the early years is necessary to improve and thrive. It's how we adapt to our surroundings and grow personally and professionally. It's not always easy to accept change, but it's essential if you want to see positive results.

Leading change in early years requires us to be open to taking on new responsibilities, sometimes outside of our current expertise. It challenges us to step into unfamiliar territory, and that can feel scary and daunting - routine is often considered a comfort blanket leaving us feeling secure.

Becoming a 'Change Agent' – this requires individuals to be supported to overcome the fear of the unknown, creating opportunities to test new skills and competencies that are required of them when developing as a professional.

In order to support your team to adapt effectively to change, we must explore not only the '**what**' but also the '**how**' – **what** is change is needed and **how** will this be achieved? In order to answer this, we must help people to think the unthinkable.

Being a successful leader of change will often involve the following characteristics:

- The ability to inspire trust.
- Strong communication skills at every stage.
- Emotional intelligence to pick up on resistance to change and acknowledge the personal difficulties that people have with it.
- The ability to think strategically and link the change to the "bigger picture."

Task 1

Making the change and become a 'Change Agent'.

Consider an existing proposed change to practice. Reflect on the following questions:

- What needs to change?
- Why is it changing?
- How will it affect the way we work?
- What will the benefits be?
- What will need to happen for the change to be successful?
- What is my role in seeing the change be effective?

These are important questions to consider when making and/or leading change. It is important to involve your team at all stages to be fully involved in the process.

Task 2

By looking at change as a process with distinct stages, you can prepare yourself for what is coming and plan to manage the transition. All too often, people go into change blindly, causing much unnecessary turmoil and chaos.

Familiarise yourself with Lewin's Change Management Model – click on the following link:

[Lewin's Change Management Model - Understanding the Three Stages of Change \(mindtools.com\) Lewin's Change Model: Examples & Stages | StudySmarter](#)

Use the Lewin's change model to 'unfreeze, change and refreeze the change'. Try using the model with some simple changes first, such as,

- Moving the book area
- Introducing a rolling snack area
- Adapting the routine at lunch time

Task 3

How do you and your team react and adapt to change?

Consider how you manage feelings experienced when change is introduced, both your own and those of your team members. People's resilience to change will be varied and this needs adequate consideration when supporting. It is important to acknowledge fears and anxieties, ensuring that resistance to change does not manifest.

The Kubler-Ross change curve can support this discussion and understanding around this.

Use the [Kübler-Ross Change Curve® - EKR Foundation](#) diagram with your team and ask them to write their name/put a post-it note on where they feel they are on it and why.

The change can be something simple like a change in the environment or a larger change such as an EYFS reform or an organisational change.