Organizational Change

Shared Themes and Lessons

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Trends in the Field

- Much change in language in the field (e.g., use of "individualized," "self-directed")

- Much downsizing of group homes

- Organizations that have small programs of self-determination or self-directed services

- Challenging to identify **authentic** change; focus of this strand is on organizations that are striving to make authentic change

Themes/Lessons Related to Work on Organizational Change

Based on findings from a qualitative study of organizational transformation (funded through the RTC on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota)

Strategies for Change

- **Focus on foundational, transformational change**
  - "Such change is systematic, takes times, planning and patience. Such change is not done by just tweaking parts of the system in isolation." (Hanninen, n.d.)
  - "Offering individualized supports calls for transformational change. It is not simply a matter of attracting additional money and solving technical problems." (O'Brien, 2009)

Strategies for Change

- **Generating shared vision, leadership, and commitment**
  - Committed ED and core team
  - Challenge: work on spreading the investment to all staff
    - Drawing staff into individual planning, organizational change work
    - New types of conversations among staff
  - "In most organizations, relatively few people are enrolled; fewer people are committed; the great majority are in a state of compliance. The committed person brings energy, passion, and excitement…The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organizations." (Senge, 1990)

Strategies for Change

- **Focus on individual and organizational planning/change—reflexive learning**
  - **Individual planning**
    - **"PCP works if you do it."**
      - **Making time and space**
      - **Commit or recommit**
      - **Planning without preconceived ideas**
      - **Drawing in community people**
  - Organizational planning
    - Strategic thinkers
    - Working plan

Strategies for Change

- **Creative funding/resources**
  - Blended funding (day and res.)
  - Combining all funding sources (dis./nondis.)
  - Dedicated positions for individualized supports development

  - Challenge: flexibility of funding, funding streams (e.g., for self-directed, when people are in crisis)

Strategies for Change

- **Promoting new collaborations**
  - Within organizations (e.g., across departments, inclusion of hr/finance people, etc.)
  - Within system (e.g., with state, with service coordination, with self-advocates)
  - Beyond disability services system (e.g., community housing organizations)

Strategies for Change

- **No single model for change**.
  - "Instead of transmitting a program of instructions for change, the Institute has been a continuing learning process for its designers as well as its participants." (O'Brien, 2009)

Strategies for Change

- "Hands-on" Technical Assistance
  - Monthly meetings (learning, source of energy, source of sharing of ideas and strategies, sense of community)
  - Working groups
  - On-site work at agencies, with families, etc.
  - Learning journeys/mentorship – with other organizations

Strategies for Change

- **Addressing systems issues: state context is important**
  - Collaborative effort within Community of Practice (e.g., MD)
  - Increasing opportunities for SD in general
    - State level initiatives
    - Committees, meetings, etc.

  - Challenges: frustrating, slow work of systems change (e.g., issues of funding flexibility, regulations that don't fit with people's homes, Nurse Practice Act, etc.)

  - State involvement in working on issues helps considerably, but is not a quick fix for everything; don't wait for the state in order to make organizational changes
    - "Things shifted when we decided that regardless of what (the state) does, we are going to move toward individualized supports." (O'Brien, 2010)
    - "Those people with developmental disabilities who are served by an agency that follows the safety-first norm of waiting for (the state) to underwrite change with new money are likely to wait a long time." (O'Brien, 2010)

In Summary

- **Need for a clear mission**: "Know what your compass direction is; otherwise it's easy to get blown off course." (Pat Fratangelo, Onondaga Community Living)
- **Need for recognition that organizational change applies to any type of organization**; key is recognition of this, becoming a "learning organization"
  - "What we were doing became unsustainable; we didn't do a good job with circles and relationships; we kept all the power; so we'd say we were all about individualized support, but we were far from it." (Tim Quinn, Arc of the Northern Chesapeake Region)
  - Learning organization: "Where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together." (Senge, 1990)
- **Importance of this work**: "Failure to do the developmental work necessary to make this transformatmion will result in a great deal of activity that renames usual practices and makes small improvements within the boundaries of current structures." (O'Brien, 2009)
- **Perseverance**: Organizational change is challenging, long haul work: "You don't have to have all the answers; you just have to be willing to be in the process." (Tim Quinn)
- **Value of the learning community context**: energy, learning, connections/mentorship = sense of do-ability
  - "The people we met through the learning institute have given us a clear picture of where we stand, the knowledge that others are in the same boat, and the confidence to deepen our investment in individualized supports."