

Making Change Happen

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CHAPTER

3

Key Terms

Change—To transform or guide into a different direction.

Global Trigger Tool—A tool developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement that assists with identification of adverse events. This tool's methodology allows for the identification of various "triggers" when reviewing charts in order to determine the presence of adverse events. Examples of triggers include an abnormal lab result, a stop order, or administration of an antidote.

Risk Mitigation Strategies—Tactics utilized to avoid system failures and prevent errors. Risk mitigation strategies may be implemented in response to a recent event or utilized as a proactive strategy. Multiple risk mitigation strategies are often needed to fully address potential failure points. Examples include forcing functions, automation, double checks, and provider education.

Safe Culture—Shared values and beliefs of an organization that result in a common goal among frontline staff and leadership to consistently improve and maintain a safe environment for both its workforce and patients. In a safe culture, the organization is committed to continuous improvement and encourages reporting of potential or actual hazards in this effort.

Walk Round—A tool that assists with discussion between leadership and frontline staff in order to raise awareness of needed system changes, promote accountability for creating a safe environment, and support decisions for future system improvements and resource allocation.

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges a medication safety officer (MSO) faces in an organization is having great responsibility to make **change** happen while having little or no authority. As a system leader, the MSO must understand both the implications of proposed safety changes for the system and the cause-and-effect relationships that such changes may trigger. Accomplished improvement models for medication safety focus on a strong organizational foundation to build the will to achieve results, a process to generate ideas for improvement, and execution strategies that scale across departments and ultimately the institution. Setting the organization's direction can be described as a push-pull strategy to render the status quo uncomfortable and make the future attractive.¹ This concept creates a shared responsibility between hospital administration and all hospital staff for the ultimate goal of reduction in patient harm and improved patient outcomes.

Successful leaders use change models as a framework to improve their organizational performance, culture, and internal leadership strategy.²⁻⁴ Studies of organizations from all industry sectors reveal that failure in reliability and systems performance stems more from inconsistent execution of change rather than from inadequate strategy and planning.⁵ Results are achieved when strategies meet the execution of organizational goals. This requires a cadence of accountability and a continuous rhythm of health care workforce engagement—throughout the system.⁶

Transformational change begins with relationships and trust. Building relationships is a critical component of influencing your organization's behaviors. Leaders drive values, values drive behaviors, and the collective behaviors of the individuals in an organization define its culture.⁷ MSOs must be involved in creating and sustaining a culture of safety that leads to transformational change.

To make change happen, it is imperative to first identify what "should" change. Einstein stated that if he had an hour to solve a problem, he would spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about the solution. All too often, as leaders, especially health care leaders, our first inclination is to fix or "band-aid" an identified problem without thoroughly exploring the root cause.

Gaining momentum for change requires motivating the workforce and creating a revolution from within by activating the heart and mind of health care clinicians and senior leaders. Storytelling is an effective way to leverage the power of the people, human experiences, and our health care network to take on our big challenges.⁸ Our organizations' senior leaders can be galvanized by metrics and measures that create a compelling story for change whether focused on heart (harm) or mind (financial) or a combination. Measures can create a constructive tension to rectify unjustified variation.

Once change does occur, creating forcing functions in the system that make it easy to do the right thing and hard to do the wrong thing will lead to sustainability. Designing workflows for daily tasks can establish a consistent behavioral change. We cannot continue to work harder; we must work smarter.