

LEADING CHANGE TOOLKIT™

TO HELP CHANGE AGENTS AND
CHANGE TEAMS MAKE LASTING
IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH CARE



What does it take to be an effective change agent using the Social Movement Action Framework? A checklist for change agents

Knowing what it takes to be an effective change agent to promote knowledge uptake and sustainability using the Social Movement Action (SMA) Framework can help you and members of your change team develop the know-how to lead change. Use the checklist below to gauge your skill level as a change agent.



1. Support and understand the shared concern

The desire for change or shared concern in the social movement is foundational as the driver for change. Change agents must support and understand the desire for change and/or shared concern, its history and its complexity. They should understand the need for change and what the change will mean.



2. Amplify energy for activism

A key component of receptivity to change is having the energy to drive it. Engaging in SMA as a methodology for change has been found to be an energizing force as it serves to motivate front-line staff. Change agents need to be able to determine the level and quality of energy and if it is optimal for activism. They need to promote and amplify enhancing energy sources such as having purpose, autonomy, intrinsic motivation and focus as precursors for activism.



3. Develop capacity in social movement action

Being a social movement change agent requires knowledge and skills in social movement thinking and action. This can include learning how to frame or position an issue, think strategically, and organize and coordinate mobilized individual and collective action.



4. Engage collective agency and courage

Social movement change agents must have a strong commitment to the shared desire for change or concern and the urgent need for change. In addition to knowing what change is needed, they must also have the courage and collective agency to take risks and be authentic in their convictions.



5. Embrace shared leadership

Change agents are likely more familiar with traditional, top-down approaches to change based on previous experiences. Applying social movement action requires change agents to emerge as leaders and develop new skills using “bottom-up” approaches. This includes learning how to work together as change teams (or core leadership structures) using a model of shared leadership and decision-making.



6. Strategize for action

At first glance, social movement action can appear spontaneous and in response to a strong desire for change or shared concern by activists. Skilled SMA change agents recognize that mobilized individual and collective action does not happen without intentionality and strategic planning and action. While support for a strongly desired change or shared concern may be ready-made, the response led by SMA change agents must be collectively developed, authentic and purposeful.



7. Join and participate in networks

Social movement takes more than committed, inspired and motivated individuals. To achieve goals and outcomes, SMA change agents need to access and secure resources such as knowledge, funding and connections with others. Regular participation in networks supports SMA change agents to connect with others and source needed resources, including mobilizing energy.



8. Speak out to influence and widen support

Change agents must be able to talk about the social movement and the urgent need for change in ways that are informed and meaningful. In their communications, SMA change agents must convey optimism about solutions for change that are achievable when individual and collective action is engaged.



9. Be confident to go public with change

SMA change agents know that public visibility is key. It increases awareness and the credibility of the social movement, supports building a critical mass and attracts attention to the desired change or shared concern – all of which supports momentum. Use public visibility strategically to get your change initiative noticed.



10. Remember that the change is never yours alone

Finally, social movement change agents must always remember that creating real, sustained change requires an inclusive approach that allows everyone to get involved and own the change. The power of a social movement always rests in the grassroots efforts of people (like point-of-care staff and persons with lived experience) and their shared or collective identity, and not solely the leadership of change agents or change teams.