

One Point Lesson | *Communicating Change*

Purpose: Help leaders prepare and stay focused on critical questions related to communicating about a change by providing a greater awareness around it.

When it comes to communicating about an upcoming change, people need as much awareness as possible in order to begin to feel comfortable about moving forward. **Expect feedback and questions from employees** as you provide them with information. They may even have a concern or insight that you will need to escalate.

While your intention is to provide information, it's also important to ask employees good questions to clarify understanding and agreement.

Be prepared to answer the following questions to demystify the change and use the clarifying questions to ensure a constructive dialogue. Consider answering the questions during team meetings so that everyone hears the same information and can learn from each other's questions.

ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS	CORE MESSAGES	QUESTIONS TO CLARIFY AND GAIN ESURE UNDERSTANDING
<i>What is changing?</i>	<i>Explain in as much detail as you can using specific talking points provided by leadership.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What concerns you about the change?</i> • <i>What are you hopeful about?</i> • <i>How do you think this change will help our patients, customers, team members?</i> • <i>What are you most excited about?</i> • <i>What support will you need to make this change?</i> • <i>What additional information or resources do you need to feel comfortable able this expectation?</i>
<i>Why is it changing?</i>	<i>Explain, using consistent talking points, the business need for why the change is needed right now.</i>	
<i>How does it connect to the bigger picture?</i>	<i>Explain how the change relates to the Vision and Mission of the organization and focus on the benefits for our patients.</i>	
<i>WIIFM? (What's In It For Me?)</i>	<i>Explain how they are directly or indirectly connected to the change and how it will benefit the people we serve in the long-run. Focus on benefits.</i>	
<i>What do you need me to do?</i>	<i>Explain to every individual what they need to do to facilitate the change and move through their own transition. Provide them with the knowledge they need.</i>	
<i>What skills do I need to learn?</i>	<i>Provide them with resources they will need to be able to do what you need them to in the future state.</i>	

Don't know the answer to an employee's question?

- *Admit you don't know and commit to finding out.*
- *Don't share what you've 'heard' as a fact. Share what you've seen or been told through formal channels.*
- *Share information about the process (for example, when you'll know or what your next step is)*
- *Be sure to close the loop with the employee as soon as you can.*

Payoff: When a leader covers these basic questions right away, they create the awareness individuals crave in order to feel secure in their next steps and so they can focus on controlling what is within their control. Doing this work upfront prepares employees for their transition.