9.10: RESPONSE AND RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Several factors can influence resistance to change. It is not uncommon for staff to state that they were not involved in the decision making regarding changes in their practice and, as a result, be highly resistant to change. While not everyone will embrace change, individuals respond on a continuum that ranges from a lack of enthusiasm to overt sabotage (Gaudine & Lamb, 2015). Resistance may involve a personal loss, feelings of inadequacy, lack of competence, and lack of confidence to perform (Austin & Claassen, 2008). Leaders who can help members psychologically own the change are more likely to see the change initiative sustained and embedded in practice.

We offer the following strategies to counter resistance:

- Understand that resistance is a natural part of the process but must be constructively addressed for change to progress.
- Learn why an individual is resisting the change. Perhaps the resistance may be related to the lack of understanding in how the change process unfolds, which calls for supporting their ability to adjust to the change.
- Link some of the old ways of working with the new change as a way to bridge the old with the new and bring some familiarity to new practices (Austin & Claassen, 2008).
- Identify people who are willing to try new practices, which can reduce the possible resistance from others when change is introduced (Bowers, 2011).
- Assist staff in identifying with and valuing how the change will affect their practice (i.e., help them to assume ownership for the change) in order to ensure that the change is embraced and sustained.
- Communicate a clear vision of the benefits to be gained from the change (Yukl, 2013). Structured and transparent communication aids the participation and involvement of staff.