Collaborative Change Cycle

CFI’s process for enabling people tackle big, tough problems and create large-scale impact through collaboration
Creating a shared vision for change

Building a shared understanding

Building the container

Understanding the system

Brokering agreement

Enabling the work

Building alignment

Large scale social impact

Implementing large-scale change

Responding but not changing

Recognising possibility for change

Calling for a new way of working

Renew

Release
Collaborative Change Cycle

WHAT IS HAPPENING?
Context:
- The community is characterised by intractable and interdependent poor outcomes for people, such as chronic poor health, unemployment, and high levels of crime and poor community safety. In some communities this erupts into crisis events, for example drug use epidemics, riots or multiple suicides. There is no or little hope.

Trust:
- There is a lack of trust between community members and service providers and other institutions, often with each blaming the other.
- People feel disconnected from their leaders and decision-making processes.

Way of Working:
- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People tend to have an issue rather than an opportunity based focus. They are caught in the cycle of survival rather than being able to see a pathway to a different way of working.
- If there is a crisis – or perceived crisis – the focus is on responding to it and not exploring what could be done differently or explanation of what the opportunities in the crisis are.
- Service providers tend to work in a siloed way, focusing on their individual role in trying to respond to the issues that they see. There may be conflict between service providers with each blaming the other about why things aren’t changing. Community members are seen as passive recipients of services, not co-creators and contributors to a different way of working.
- Funding and resources tend to be allocated and managed in a reactive and siloed way.
- At best, data is used to report on programmatic activities and outputs, but not to reflect on what is happening.
- People want to create change, but negative ways of working keep them locked into old patterns.

Leadership:
- Leaders are encouraged and rewarded for maintaining status quo, any change initiatives end up being ad hoc or short lived.
- Leaders may have little or no information flows to stimulate their personal and professional learning. Their working environment may not support their learning and development.
- Where people do try to step up to work together differently they often struggle to get engagement within their own organisations and within community members because everyone is so busy or stretched doing the doing, focused on making ends meet or do not share the view that addressing systemic issues is part of the work.

[Diagram showing the flow from "Responding but not changing" to "Recognising possibility for change"]
READINESS RUNWAY
RECOGNISING THE POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Context
- An event (positive or negative, but often the latter) occurs, which triggers a response across more than one person, organisation or group. The response is enough to get people to talk about the fact that there is a need for change. Small pockets of people start to hope that change is possible.

Trust
- Trust between community members and service providers remains low but the event is enough to open up a "space" for people to come together.

Narrative
- A local champion(s) voice emerges
- People start talking about ‘enough is enough’ and things can be different.
- A building sense of urgency for change can be felt.

Way of working
- People start to ask questions about why things happen the way they do and how things could be different. They start to recognise that resources are not being used efficiently, that even though effort is being put in things are not changing. They start to question whether funding is being allocated to the right things in the right way.
- People start to look for examples or (role) models or processes that they could refer to or use to work on things differently. They start to notice or look for “bright spots” in parts of the community that are doing better or examples of things that are working better in the community that could be built from rather than focusing on the darker spaces.
- People may also start to recognise their role in the current situation and become more self aware of being ‘a part of the problem’
- Small groups or pockets of activity emerge, often focusing on just trying to make a small difference on a part of the puzzle rather than being daunted by the scale of the whole challenge.
- Dialogue is developed to maintain focus on the need for change.

Leadership
- Leadership and its related activity is still fragmented. There are factions and turf wars.
- The community talks about a need for leadership but are looking for others to lead.
- Leaders begin to understand that a change in the way services are delivered/work together is needed, but might think that others need to change first.
**Way of working**

- A body of work is created to mobilise & engage community; map community assets/strengths, networks and influencers; support community members to participate at all levels; capture baseline data; and design the process for large-scale impact (transformational change).

- A 'container' for change is intentionally built where the entire community of interest is designed to learn and start to share knowledge, skills and insights. People start to test the container by working on issues which bring out competing agendas and power imbalances.

- Within the status quo, people start to build links between emerging activity. Emphasis is on building relationships as opposed to achieving immediate outcomes.

**Leadership**

- Leaders grow in confidence that they have the capacity to create new ways of seeing the problem/potential solutions based on their own knowledge/practices rather than those sourced from an external authority. Their capacity to take risks increases.

- Diverse community members and potentially some stakeholders are able to work together to keep attention on the need for change, creating and maintaining a level of urgency.

- A group of people – possibly an early stage backbone entity – exercise leadership to convene a diverse range of influencers to explore shared purpose.

The work ahead is reframed as a learning process.
Creating a Shared Vision for Change

What is happening?

Context
- The container for change has strengthened - individuals, organisations and groups are making "space" to work together (collaborate) despite the constraints and dominance of the status quo. Small changes build evidence that change is possible. Hope builds, drawing a wider range of community members and possibly stakeholders into the collaborative work and deepening of commitment to the partnerships.
- Agreement is brokered about what to focus on.

Trust
- There is sufficient trust in the commitment to work differently.

Narrative
- The narrative is shifting to what is possible rather than what is wrong. People feel a renewed sense of community and its importance in delivering long term change. People express hope about work differently as well as direction of the change. There is increasing curiosity about what might be possible. People ask 'Why can't we?'

Way of working
- New patterns of working are starting to emerge – ones that are about sharing power, partnership and using community experience and data to make shared decisions. The community are partners in the collaborative change. People start to work to better understand and define what they want/need to work on. They are sharing perspectives and information more openly. People are starting to question and think about how resources and funds are allocated and managed in a more holistic way.
- There is a focus on moving to agreement and action, to start to learn by doing in a more focused and structured way. Assumptions are being tested and learnings gathered through early wins. Community led initiatives are emerging.
- The level of shared interest and intent holds people at the table. The 'container' is strong enough to hold different views and conflict is being brokered and enabled. Power and politics are starting to be navigated and managed more effectively.
- There is a growing understanding and experience of working adaptively.
- An agreed shared purpose is brokered, with clear scope and goals.

Leadership
- A backbone entity is formalised.
- The leaders grow in their appreciation of each other's individual and service strengths and begin to collaborate with each as a way of doing business as usual.
- People in the community are able to name leadership at all levels and where such leadership is expanding and deepening – at official level, within community and from service providers.
IMPLEMENTATION

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Context
- The shared agenda gains increasing levels of traction and authority. More people and organisations are aligning to the agenda as evidence of the group's promise of change delivers impact. A 'movement' is being enabled through communications and growing impact. The collaboration stabilises into a new state where there is constant hope and belief in the collaboration's ability to tackle more complex change to achieve the shared agenda.

Trust
- Enough trust exists between people and organisations to challenge existing ways of working.

Narrative
- The ripple effect of multiple conversations is shaping a new narrative across the community.
- The sceptical are starting to participate, or express some hope.

Way of working
- The community is leading and co-producing change.
- Collaborative practice is being embedded as a way of working. People continue to learn by doing and the cycle of learning is getting faster and smoother.

They are adapting to what they learn and are trying new things. Evidence is used to inform activity and understand where things are getting traction.

Infrastructure is built and strengthened to support alignment to the agenda, including shared measurement systems, the facilitation of strategic learning, and communications that support behaviour change. Systems and processes are created to manage the work more effectively.

Communication - telling the story of the work and its impact is seen as important and valued.

Resources and funds are allocated and managed in a more responsive and coordinated way. More work is invested in trying to build up more reliable/sustainable funding/resource streams to sustain the work.

Leadership
- The shared purpose is an anchor to keep the collaboration on track.
- The collaborative leadership competence across the group builds into a powerful coalition that intentionally and strategically exerts influence up, down and across the system. Leaders work intentionally to protect and embed the work into their organisations and power structures for the long term.
- The backbone entity is negotiating across different agendas to facilitate alignment to the shared agenda. Induction of new stakeholders and people is embedded in the culture and way of working.
WHAT IS REQUIRED?
LEADERSHIP
Reframing the issue as being an opportunity for change
- If crisis is prevailing, stabilising the crisis and using it as an opportunity for change
- If despair is prevailing, using a strength-based approach to build faith in what is working well
- If community members are mobilising themselves, enabling and strengthening their leadership and action around the issues they say are most important to them

COMMUNITY
- Speaking with spokespeople from each community
- Convening or enabling community members to respond to the current challenge

COLLABORATION
Building and maintaining relationships with community members to understand perspectives and values
- Asking community members about the role that stakeholder like NGOs might take, if any

MEASUREMENT
Building an understanding of what people think is or is not happening or working
- Identifying and sharing “bright spots”
**Collaboration**
Developing dialogue to maintain focus on the need for change and working differently.

**Leadership**
Cultivating a sense that it is possible to achieve different outcomes but there is a need to think and work differently in order to achieve that. Bringing attention, understanding and urgency for change at a pace that most community members, stakeholders in the system can cope with.

**Community**
Reflecting on shared past, shared values, culture, language - what is held in common.
Reflecting on the causes of turbulence in the present to bring closure to the past and imagine better future possibilities.
Understanding which parts of community are open to collaborative decision making and action.
LEADERSHIP
Developing awareness of relationships, power, loyalties and potential gains and losses
Identifying where authorisation needs to come from and your authority to intervene

COLLABORATION
Mobilising and engaging community member and (across the system) to inform understanding of system dynamics and build buy in, engagement and authorisation for community priority setting and a new way of working
Mobilising stakeholders (across the system) if requested by community members

COMMUNITY
Facilitating community members and families to share their experiences of how things work now and who they trust to participate in collaborative decision making and take action

MEASUREMENT
Mapping systems and networks to understand activity, power and operating dynamics

LEADERSHIP
Agreeing business as usual is insufficient to make large-scale impact
Agreeing the need for community members setting priorities for change

COLLABORATION
Recognising that community priority setting and collaboration by community members stakeholders is required
Considering the value of partnership

COMMUNITY
Ensuring leadership comes from community members as champions who are calling for community priority setting and a new way of working

MEASUREMENT
Getting data to make the case for change
LEADERSHIP

Enabling the community decision-making structure and the broader collaboration to see the challenge and opportunity differently and build a joint approach to the change.

Using new learning about what successfully creates change in the system to become more intentional and confident as system change agents.

Ensuring sufficient protection is provided to enable testing of new approaches to minimise constraints of the current ways of working.

COLLABORATION

Testing assumptions and exploring potential solutions through prototypes and early wins.

Ensuring prototypes involve and reflect community priorities and perspectives.

COMMUNITY

Delivering early wins or small prototypes with community members leading or involved.

MEASUREMENT

Building feedback loops to learn from doing.

LEADERSHIP

Facilitating a the setting of priorities by the community decision-making structure.

Working with commitment, competition and control.

COLLABORATION

Working with the community decision-making structure and broader collaboration to translate the priorities into an agreed theory of change and action.

COMMUNITY

Facilitating agreement to the agenda with enough community members, across factions to ensure traction.

MEASUREMENT

Setting goals and targets.
Implementing the changes set by the community decision-making structure and the resultant agenda for change:

- Authorising the priorities set by the community decision-making structure and the resultant agenda for change
- Broadening and strengthening the authority of the collaborative response
- Enabling the group to manage the transition from creating to enacting the shared agenda

Leadership:
- Negotiating across different agendas to align to the shared agenda
- Orchestrating deeper and more diverse levels of alignment across the system

Collaboration:
- Embedding collaborative practice across the system

Community:
- More community members and factions supporting the collaborative initiative

Measurement:
- Using data to inform learning and alignment

Building a shared measurement system

Recognising, engaging and supporting collaborative leadership across different networks and age groups within community

Building the infrastructure and fostering collaborative ways of working for large scale action

Enabling the movement for change and large-scale impact

Community members are self-organising in support of the agenda

Doing evaluation on population level impact