

# Navigating Change








Maximizing the power of conversation  
by meeting people where they are  
in the change process



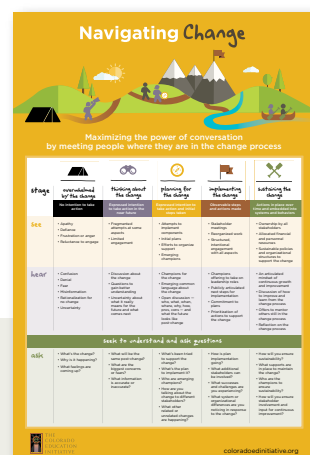
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# Navigating Change



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## stages



overwhelmed  
by the change

No intention  
to take action



thinking about  
the change

Expressed intention  
to take action in the  
near future



planning for  
the change

Expressed intention  
to take action and initial  
steps taken



implementing  
the change

Observable steps  
and actions made



sustaining the  
change

Actions in place over  
time and embedded into  
systems and behaviors

# About this tool



## Background

Colorado educators inspired this tool. Teachers leaders — or liaisons — in the 2013-2014 Integration Liaison Project recognized the power of their conversations with teachers, building and district leaders, and other stakeholders as they piloted the state's new academic standards for students and new evaluation system for educators. The liaisons learned that people engaged with the change process in different ways and at different times. To move forward, it was necessary to adapt conversations to meet individuals where they were in the change process.

The stages in this tool are based on the behavior change model developed by researchers James O. Prochaska and Carlo DiClemente. Their work in the late 1970s concluded that behavior change takes place through a series of stages. Over the decades, the model has been rigorously tested, challenged, validated, and expanded upon.

## Purpose

This *Navigating Change* tool from The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) is for anyone leading or managing an individual, small-group, or large-group change process. It maximizes the power of conversation by meeting people where they are in the change process — and moving them toward sustainable change.

## How to use this tool

How leaders choose to manage change is crucial. This tool can help determine where people are in the change process based on what you're seeing and hearing. It also provides an overview of the stages of change, guiding questions to help people move forward, and examples from the field.

### *Helpful hints:*

- There are multiple “entry-points” into this tool — use it in the way that best helps your work.
- The lists of what you may “see” and “hear” at each stage should be viewed as starting points; there may be additional examples you may encounter in your own change processes.
- The questions you might ask can be used to confirm your initial thoughts, as well as to initiate thinking toward the next stage.

### *Keep in mind:*

- Multiple change processes could happen at the same time with the same individual or group.
- A group may be at one stage of the change process, and at the same time, individuals within that group may be at different stages.
- Change is truly a journey — it takes time, and it's rarely a linear process!



# overwhelmed by the change

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## Overview

**There is no intention to take action at this stage.** This absence of intent to engage with the change close-at-hand may be a result of a lack of information, misinformation, denial, hyper-awareness of what's involved with the change, apathy, or demoralization based on past experience with change — among other reasons. This stage isn't necessarily the starting point for the change process; it may be revisited at any time during the process.

### What you might see at this stage

- Reluctance to engage
- Defiance about the change that's coming or is under way
- Anger or frustration
- Apathy or disengagement

### What you might hear at this stage

- Confusion
- Uncertainty
- Fear
- Misinformation
- Rationalization about why things should stay the same — that change is not needed
- Expressions of feeling overwhelmed
- Denial

### What you might ask to maximize the conversation at this stage

*Seek to understand and ask questions.*

- What is the change that's coming or is under way?
- Why is the change happening?
- What feelings are coming up related to this change?



**Check out our website for examples from the field.**

<http://www.coloradoeducationinitiative.org/navigating-change/>



# thinking about the change

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## Overview

**There is expressed intention to take action in the near future in support of the change.**

While no action is taken yet, people are more aware of the change than in the previous stage — including the benefits of the change as well as the costs (both real and perceived). This increased awareness may stagnate the process or send it back to the previous stage. It's important to move beyond analyzing the pros and cons, and begin exploring a willingness to try small steps in support of the change.

### What you might see at this stage

- Limited engagement
- Fragmented attempts at relating to parts or some aspects of the change

### What you might hear at this stage

- Questions to better understand and gather information about the change
- Discussion about the change that's coming or is under way
- Uncertainty about what the change really means for the future
- Uncertainty about what comes next

### What you might ask to maximize the conversation at this stage

*Seek to understand and ask questions.*

- What will be constant or the same post-change?
- What are some of the biggest concerns or fears about the change?
- What facts being circulated are accurate or inaccurate?

▶ **Check out our website for examples from the field.**

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# planning for the change

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## Overview

**There is expressed intention to take action in the near future, and initial steps in support of the change have been made.** People typically have made initial attempts toward the change, along with additional preparations in support of the change. This stage represents a hinge point in the overall change process — momentum may propel the change forward, and equally, a lack of timely action could send people back to previous stage(s). Concurrent with planning activities, initiate multiple attempts of action related to the change.

### What you might see at this stage

- Initial attempts to implement components of the change
- Creation of initial plans for change
- Efforts to organize in support of the change (e.g., planning meetings, committees, etc.)
- Emerging champion(s) for the change

### What you might hear at this stage

- Open dialogue or discussions about the change — who, what, when, where, why, how, pros, and cons — and what the future looks like post-change
- More consistency and cohesiveness in how the change is talked about
- Champion(s) advocating for the change
- Emerging common terms and language

### What you might ask to maximize the conversation at this stage

*Seek to understand and ask questions.*

- What have you already tried in support of making this change?
- What's your plan to implement the change?
- How are you talking about this change to different stakeholders?
- Who is emerging as a champion for this change?
- What other change(s) are being planned or are under way — related or not related to this change?



**Check out our website for examples from the field.**

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# implementing the change

## Overview

**There are observable steps and actions in support of the change.** In order to be considered at this stage, engage all actions and activities related to the change. Create small “wins” wherever possible, and learn from any attempts that may not turn out as expected. Consider generating additional momentum to keep the actions and activities going — in order to proceed to the next stage. At the same time, it’s possible to go back a stage or two, depending how the people who are directly involved manage and experience the activities in support of the change.

### What you might see at this stage

- Meetings with stakeholders
- Reorganized, dedicated work in support of the change
- Structured, intentional engagement with all aspects of the change

### What you might hear at this stage

- Champion(s) for the change offering to take on leadership roles
- Publicly articulated next steps to implement change
- Commitment to plan(s) for change
- Prioritization of actions and steps that will support the change

### What you might ask to maximize the conversation at this stage

*Seek to understand and ask questions.*

- How is implementation of your plan going?
- What additional stakeholders can you involve in the implementation of your plan?
- What successes are you experiencing in making the change?
- What challenges are coming up as you are making this change?
- What system or organizational differences are you noticing in response to making this change?



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# sustaining the change

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## Overview

**All actions in support of the change have been in place over time and are embedded into systems and behaviors.** Once this stage is reached, movement back to previous stages is far less likely to happen. However, only time will tell if the change is fully adopted.

### What you might see at this stage

- Ownership of change by all stakeholders
- Sustainable policies that support and sustain the change
- Established or enhanced organizational structures that support and sustain the change
- Allocated resources (financial and personnel) that support the change

### What you might hear at this stage

- Reflection on the change process
- Discussion of how to improve and learn from the change process
- Comments indicating a mindset of continuous growth and improvement
- Offers to mentor others still in the change process

### What you might ask to maximize the conversation at this stage

*Seek to understand and ask questions.*

- How will you ensure that the change is sustainable?
- What supports are in place to maintain the change?
- Who are your champions to ensure the change is sustained?
- How will you ensure stakeholder involvement and input for continuous improvement related to the change?

► **Check out our website for examples from the field.**

<http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/navigating-change/>

# Reflective questions



Leaders of the change process can use the following questions to reflect and thoughtfully plan for future conversations and activities. There are no right or wrong answers — and leaders may choose to use some or all of these questions:

- Have I adequately identified *why* this change is happening and the anticipated value or benefit of this change?
- Have I anticipated the potential responses, reactions, or “ripple-effects” of the change?
- What external factors are working for or against the change effort?
- Is this change realistic at this time?
- Am I paying attention to the emerging emotions — addressing feelings first before attempting action?
- Is there a critical mass in support of the change? How do I know?
- How will this change affect my community?
- What communication strategies are available to me? Can I employ this support in the change process?
- How is this change good for students?

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Share your example!



Managing change? We'd love to hear from you — share your example here about how you used this tool. We'll follow up with you to discuss your suggested example so that it might be included for other educators to learn from.

**Send us an email at [info@coloradoedinitiative.org](mailto:info@coloradoedinitiative.org) with this information:**

1. Describe your experience using this tool to manage change. What worked? (300-word limit)
2. What were the challenges you encountered? (300-word limit)
3. Of the stages featured in this tool, which best corresponds with your example?  
Select any that apply:
  - ☐ Overwhelmed by the change
  - ☐ Thinking about the change
  - ☐ Planning for the change
  - ☐ Implementing the change
  - ☐ Sustaining the change
  - ☐ All of the above
4. Name
5. School district or organization
6. Email address
7. Phone number

## Give us your feedback

**Send us an email at [info@coloradoedinitiative.org](mailto:info@coloradoedinitiative.org) with this information:**

- How was this tool useful to you?
- How could we improve this tool?
- What else would you like to share about your experience with this tool?

# Notes:



# Notes:



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1660 Lincoln Street  
Suite 2000  
Denver, CO 80264  
303-736-6477