

When the Perfect Storm Hits

Managing Major Changes in Operations

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Learning Objectives

- Distinguish routine daily stressors from extraordinary cultural shifts
- Plan a careful approach to operational discord
- Manage messaging effectively to all parties impacted by change

The Storm

- 2019 Period of stability: Celebrate 50th Anniversary
- 2020 Pandemic hits
- 2022 Union petition presented
- 2022 Mobile Crisis Response program launches
- 2023 Living Room in Skokie required to go 24/7
- 2024 New Living Room site in Evanston launches

Circumstances



Disruption



Messaging



Lessons Learned



Circumstances



- Most staff shift to working from home
- Virtual contact with clients
- Timeframe unclear



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- Mobile Crisis Response opportunity
- State changes requirements for Skokie Living Room funding
- Evanston funds the new Living Room



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- Holding clients' anxiety
- Fear about physical health



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- Identifying who needs to know what (middle managers often left hanging)
- Legal counsel required



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- 24/7 service delivery
- Increase in less experienced staff
- Higher turnover
- 2.5 years to open Evanston site



Messaging



- Maintain current programs
- Inspire confidence
- Respond to fears and uncertainties



Messaging



- Maintain current programs
- Inspire confidence
- Respond to fears and uncertainties
- Ensure concerns are heard
- Explain aspects of operations in new ways
- Be consistent



Messaging

Mission

Clarification

Opportunity

- Maintain current programs
- Inspire confidence
- Respond to fears and uncertainties

- Ensure concerns are heard
- Explain aspects of operations in new ways
- Be consistent

- Broaden community support
- Increase awareness in local area
- Increase scope of care

Anxious

Confused

Overwhelmed

Lessons Learned



- Longevity of leadership and trusting Board are key
- Strong programs endure
- Remain nimble



Lessons Learned



- Longevity of leadership and trusting Board are key
- Strong programs endure
- Remain nimble
- Remain open to new ideas
- Share common values
- Work toward consensus, knowing it may not be realistic



Lessons Learned

Stability

Humility

Perseverance

- Longevity of leadership and trusting Board are key
- Strong programs endure
- Remain nimble

- Remain open to new ideas
- Share common values
- Work toward consensus, knowing it may not be realistic

- Stay true to organizational values
- Look for growth opportunities
- Play to strengths of leadership

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Circumstances



Discord



Messaging



Lessons Learned



What are we focused on now?

- Continue to live into a hybrid model of operation, with many therapy sessions still offered online and fewer live groups
- Providing solid leadership and supervision for an employee base that is part union and part non-union
- Hiring and retaining employees who work three different shifts
- Learning how to best support employees doing shift work
- Strengthening a Mobile Crisis Recovery program that is well-respected in the community
- Opening a second Living Room in Evanston

Adaptive leadership entails learning new things. If one technique is not yielding desired results, an adaptive leader goes out of his or her way to discover new strategies that can work. With new techniques, both the employees and the company at large will experience growth and development.

Helen Wale on Adaptive Leadership



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