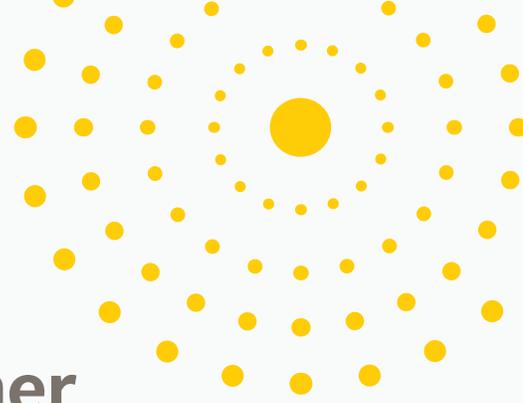


Shared Purpose: Building a Strong Team Together



Shared purpose is what happens when a group of individuals align their belief systems or values with a common challenge, vision or goal.¹ It's the “why” of change.

Why Should You Create a Shared Purpose with Your Team?

Shared purpose is a critical driver of success in system performance and change.² This is particularly true of large-scale change in complex systems such as the shift to an integrated system of team-based primary and community care.

DID YOU KNOW?

70% of large-scale change efforts fail to achieve their goals.³

Alignment in shared purpose helps ensure that all individuals involved in a change are working collaboratively towards the same goal or vision. In this way, the whole can add up to more than the sum of its parts. Shared purpose enables teams and communities to re-energize and inspire people to come together and support the work. It's a common factor in successful change.

There are risks to not having a shared purpose. Without a shared purpose, people may have different understandings about why a change is happening or what their role is in it, leading them to create their own story.⁴ A shared purpose enables a team to discover why a change is important to them and the work they do, and helps to ensure alignment in actions and decisions made.

What Shared Purpose Is Not

You might be thinking your organization already has a mission, vision, goals and values, so a shared purpose isn't needed. However, creating shared purpose specific to your team or community is different from, and additional to these. Similarly, it's not the “what” or the “how” of change, it's the “why”.⁵

For example:



You know **what** your workplace does to offer team-based care. Multiple health care providers from different professional backgrounds work together and with patients/clients, families, caregivers and communities to deliver comprehensive health services across care settings.



You know **how** your workplace offers team-based care. When a patient/client arrives at your clinic, the medical office assistant asks a few questions and depending on what the patient/client needs, offers for the patient/client to see their regular clinician and/or an allied health care professional more specific to their need(s).



However, neither the “what” or the “how” explains **why** your workplace has decided to work in a team-based care way.

^{1,2,3,4}Finney, Liz. National Health Service. Our shared purpose - a practical guide. Horsham: Roffey Park Institute; 2013.

⁵Sinek, Simon. Start with why: how great leaders inspire everyone to take action. New York: Portfolio; 2009.

What Shared Purpose Is

By building a shared purpose, it helps us tap into our need for meaningful work and to be part of something bigger than ourselves.⁶

Most change efforts involve collaboration between people with different knowledge, experiences and agendas. These differences can give us a richer and more complete picture of the truth and they can also lead to conflict and prevent change from happening. It's about finding common ground between values, beliefs and aspirations and working towards a common goal or vision.⁷

OUR

Those who will make a change happen and are affected by that change are all those who should be involved in designing and delivering the change. This makes it all of our change.

SHARED

Talking to each other is necessary to find out what is it that we share. This way our individual values, experiences, beliefs and aspirations are explicit, and overlap with others can be discovered.

PURPOSE

This is the 'why' not the 'what' or the 'how' of change. It is where vision, values and goals meet and create energy and commitment.⁸

If you want to get your team working on a shared purpose, check out this practical, step by step facilitation guide.

[View Facilitation Guide Here](#)

How You Can Create Shared Purpose

It's about the process. Creating shared purpose as a team is all about showing up together, making time to listen to each other and then writing out your shared purpose statement. From there your team can determine what your actions will be and how you will accomplish them.

GATHER TOGETHER

FIND OVERLAPS

DESIGN YOUR "WHY"

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Organizations involved: BC College of Family Physicians, BC Family Doctors, BC Patient Safety & Quality Council, Divisions of Family Practice, Doctors of BC, First Nations Health Authority, General Practice Services Committee, Health Authorities, Midwives Association of BC, Ministry of Health, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia, Patient Voices Network, Rural Coordination Centre of BC, UBC – Innovation Support Unit.