Tool: The Five stages of readiness for collaborative change

Collaboration for Impact

	1. Responding but not changing	2. Recognising the possibility for change	3. Building the foundations for change	4. Creating a shared vision for change	5. Implementing
Context	The community have intractable and interdependent poor outcomes, such as chronic poor health, and high levels of crime. In some communities, this erupts into crisis events, for example drug use epidemics. There is no or little hope.	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. A local champion(s) voice emerges	A small group of people – often from diverse parts of the community – advocate for a different way of working. They work better together in small ways and actively grow a narrative of hope and agency.	Community members are collaborating despite the constraints of the status quo. Evidence grows that change is possible, drawing more stakeholders into the work. Agreement is brokered about what to focus on, with clear goals. The narrative is shifting to what is possible rather than what's wrong	Community has a shared vision which gains increasing levels of traction and authority. More people and organisations are aligning to the vision as evidence of its impact grows. There is hope and belief in the collaboration's ability to tackle more complex change.
Trust	Lack of trust between community, government, service providers and other institutions. People feel disconnected from the decision-making processes	Trust remains low but the event is enough to open up a "space" for people to come together.	Trust remains low, but pockets of people and organisations are becoming more open to working together and determining who they trust to take action	There is sufficient trust in the commitment to work differently	Enough trust exists between people and organisations to challenge existing ways of working
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.	Leadership is still fragmented. 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 think that others need to change first.	Leaders grow in confidence that they have the capacity to create change, rather than looking to others. Leaders convene a diverse range of influencers to explore a shared vision for change. If not in place already, a backbone entity emerges.	The leaders grow in their appreciation of each other's individual and service strengths and begin to collaborate as a way of doing business as usual. People in the community are able to name leadership and where it is expanding and deepening – at official level, within community and from service providers.	The collaborative leadership builds into a powerful coalition that strategically exerts influence across the system. Leaders work to embed the work in their organisations. The backbone entity is negotiating across different agendas to facilitate alignment to the shared agenda.
Way of working	Community discussion about challenges are infrequent and divisive. If there is a crisis the focus is on responding and not exploring what could be done differently Service providers and government tend to fund and operate in a siloed way, focusing on their individual role in trying to respond to the issues that they see. Data is used to report on programmatic activities/outputs, but not to reflect on what is happening	Community discussions turn to how things could be different and look for positive examples. People 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	A body of work is created to mobilise & engage community; map the system in a community; capture baseline data; design the process for large-scale impact. A 'community of change' is intentionally built, designed to start to share knowledge, skills and insights, and explore issues which bring out competing agendas and power imbalances. Emphasis is on building relationships as opposed to achieving immediate outcomes.	New ways of working are emerging. People better understand and define what they want / need to work on, and how to address issues in a more holistic way. They share data to make shared decisions. There is a focus on moving to agreement and action, to start to learn by doing in a structured way. Community led initiatives are emerging. Power and politics are starting to be navigated and managed more effectively.	Collaborative practice is being embedded as a way of working. Evidence is used to inform activity and understand where things are getting traction. Infrastructure and processes are built and strengthened to support alignment to the agenda, including monitoring and evaluation systems. Resources and funds are allocated and managed in a more coordinated way.

Extent of readiness and community empowerment