How Organizations Change

Possible reasons for organizational change
- Outside regulations which govern organization
- Monetary restrictions on agency functioning
- Self-interest on part of administrator(s)
- Insufficient information about what is happening at direct service level (caused by administrative layers of bureaucracy that act to buffer, summarize, edit, and censor information before it can get from the bottom up to administrators)
- Change in client system’s needs

Organizational change may be initiated by:
- **formal authority figures** (administrators initiate and control change process)
- **practitioners with little or no administrative power** (workers who deal directly with individual clients, groups and families)
  - “change from within”
  - “internal advocacy”
  - “change from below”

**Macro changes** within an agency are typically one of **two types**:
1) changes made to **improve the resources** provided to clients
2) changes made to enhance the agency’s **working environment** so that personnel can perform more efficiently and effectively, thus improving service provision to clients

**Methods for making macro changes:**
1) Undertaking a specific project (specific sets of short-term, result-oriented activities providing support or direct services in response to unique conditions, problems, needs, or issues, in community or organizational context)
2) Initiating and developing programs (relatively permanent structures designed to meet ongoing client needs; carry out policies that are intended to meet community or organizational goals)
3) Changing agency or organizational policies (either formal or informal)

**Four critical elements required for organizational change:**
1) **change agent** (one who feels some change within agency is needed)
2) **action system** (people and resources organized and employed to work toward the needed change)
3) **innovation proposal** (the idea to be implemented)
4) **action plan** (detailed blueprint for how to go about achieving the desired change)
Assessing Organizational Change Potential

P Identify Problems to address
R Review your macro Reality
E Establish primary goals
P Identify People of influence
A Assess potential financial costs and benefits to clients and agency
R Review professional and personal Risk
E Evaluate the potential success of a macro change process

If potential for organizational change seems positive, then use the IMAGINE process to pursue actual change

I Start with an innovative Idea
M Muster support and formulate an action system
A Identify Assets
G Specify Goals, objectives, and action steps to attain them
I Implement the plan
N Neutralize opposition
E Evaluate progress

Resource:

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