Stages of Multicultural Organizational Change

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July 2007
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One of the key dilemmas facing people working for multicultural organizational change[1] is where to begin. It is relatively easy to identify problems and desired practices. The more perplexing challenge is how to move an organization effectively to action. When new practices are imposed without attention to readiness, resistance may be reinforced and chances for success may be hindered. An essential prerequisite to effective strategy development is an understanding of the readiness of the people in the organization.

The transtheoretical model of change (TTM), which has been used widely for behavior change, offers useful concepts for navigating the complex dynamics involved in multicultural change in organizations. This paper explores two TTM constructs – stages of change and processes of change and how they may be applied for designing multicultural organizational change strategies. The concepts in this paper may be used in conjunction with concepts from field theory, discussed in the second paper of this series.

Overview of TTM and Relevance to Multicultural Organizational Change

The core idea behind TTM, developed by Prochaska and colleagues, is that people change when they are ready. According to this model, social influence, rather than coercion, is most effective in fostering change (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001). Social influence can be used to help the movement of individuals and organizations through change processes.

The transtheoretical model has been used to study change in a range of individual behaviors, such as alcohol and substance abuse, preventive screening, eating disorders and smoking in pregnancy. This model integrates processes and principles of change across major theories of intervention in psychotherapy

1   I am using the term multicultural organizational change to refer to changes that organizations make to improve the effectiveness of their services to diverse populations and to create organizational policies and cultures that promote equity and value difference. These changes are sometimes referred to as developing Cultural Competence, Diversity Change, or Multicultural Organizational Development.
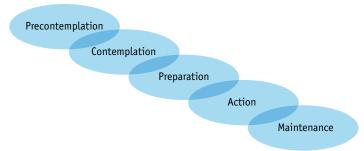
and behavior change (Prochaska, Redding and Evers, 1997). There is evidence that the key concepts of TTM can be applied to understanding and changing organizational behavior in areas such as integrated service delivery (Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 1999), quality improvement in health care (Levesque et al. 2001), and time-limited therapy (Prochaska, 2000).

Cultural Competence, Diversity Change, and Multicultural Organizational Development (MCOD)[2] frameworks assert that organizations must undergo an ongoing developmental change process. They offer a variety of ways to conceptualize this process. Cross and colleagues suggest that an organization moves through a continuum from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency (Cross et al., 1989). MCOD has been conceptualized as a movement through three stages from monocultural to nondiscriminatory to multicultural (Foster et al., 1988 as cited in Sue, 1995). These models may be helpful in conceptualizing the "big picture" of organizational change. TTM may complement these broad conceptual models, by helping change agents navigate through resistance and other day-to-day realities; move an organization to readiness and action; and sustain new behaviors.

TTM is based on the understanding that resistance is a characteristic of any major organizational change effort and a major reason why such efforts fail (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001). Resistance should be expected in different stages of multicultural organizational change because the topics of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression are controversial and emotionally charged (Brantley, Frost and Razak, 1996). TTM suggests that it is counterproductive to forge ahead with action without addressing issues such as resistance that stand in the way of individual and organizational readiness.

Stages of Change – TTM's central organizing construct, stages of change (SOC), identifies stages through which individuals and organizations progress in a change process. These stages are defined as 1) precontemplation

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Stages of Change

- no intention to take action in the foreseeable future; 2) contemplation - intention to take action in the near future (defined as around six months); 3) preparation - intention to take action in the immediate future (usually one month); 4) action - made overt changes within the past six months; and 5) maintenance - work to prevent relapse into the old behaviors (Prochaska, Redding and Evers, 1997).

2   In the first paper of this series, I described *Multicultural Organizational Development* (MCOD) as an approach that addresses issues in service delivery as well as organizational development.

The SOC construct may be used to assess the stage of multicultural development of both the organization and the individuals within it. In adapting this construct, it may be necessary to be flexible with the time frames that the model associates with each stage. Furthermore, there is a great deal of fluidity in the multicultural change process and organizations may move back and forth between stages or be in more than one stage simultaneously.

Processes of Change and Stage-matched Interventions – Processes of change are the covert and overt activities that people and organizations use to progress through the stages of change. Understanding these processes can help guide the development of appropriate interventions (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001).

The following processes have been identified in both individual and organizational change. (Processes 11-14 refer only to the organizational level.) Examples of interventions are shown in the right hand column (Cancer Prevention Resource Center, 1998; Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 2001). (*See diagram on facing page*).

There is no one-to-one match between processes and stages of change. Rather, TTM researchers find that different processes are given greater emphasis in different stages of change. In the table below, the processes of change identified by TTM researchers are "matched" with the stages that are most emphasized in organizational change (Levesque et al., 1999; Levesque et al, 2001; Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001). It should be noted that the processes of change differ in their use and emphasis in different organizations and change processes.

A stage-matched intervention is one that takes into consideration both the stage of change and the processes of change. For example, in the precontemplation stage, interventions might be designed to raise consciousness, while interventions in the maintenance stage may be designed to reinforce new ways of working. Research on the transtheoretical model in organizations has shown that stage-matched interventions, designed to help organizations progress through stages of change, can have greater impact than action-oriented interventions, by increasing participation and the likelihood that individuals will progress to the action stage (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001). Stage-matched intervention involves an appropriate "match" between the process and stage of change and can yield more effective results (Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 1999).

The SOC framework has potential value for MCOD because it allows change agents to plan interventions that are appropriate for the developmental stage of the organization.[3]

3   The published research applying TTM in organizations is often empirical in nature, using statistical measures to ensure reliability and validity (Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 1999; Prochaska, 2000; Levesque et al., 2001). Some multicultural change agents may reject this approach as inaccessible or culturally inappropriate. I am not advocating the use of these quantitative methods, but rather the SOC *concepts*. Qualitative methods and rough estimates can be used to apply the concepts of stages of change. The SOC framework does not provide a precise roadmap, but can be a valuable supplement to the intuition, creativity, and insights of organizational players.

Process of Change	Examples of Interventions
1. Consciousness-raising - Become more aware of a problem and potential solutions	Awareness-raising - Feedback, education, interpretation, memos, newsletters, information about strategies, benefits and goals
2. Dramatic Relief - Emotional arousal, such as fear about failures to change and inspiration for successful change	Techniques to move people emotionally - Personal testimonies, storytelling, role-playing to inspire change, generate anxiety about the status quo
3. Self-reevaluation - Appreciate that the change is important to one's identity, happiness and success	Values and goals clarification, role modeling
4. Self-liberation - Belief that a change can succeed and make a firm commitment to the change	Provide specific choices, encourage involvement, empowerment, and feedback
5. Environmental Reevaluation - Appreciate that the change will have a positive impact on the social and work environment	Empathy training, documentaries, help people to understand how their participation can improve the organizational success and climate
6. Reinforcement Management - Find intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for new ways of working	Overt and covert reinforcements, positive self-statements, and group recognition, disincentives for old behaviors
7. Counter-conditioning - Substitute new behaviors and cognitions for the old ways of working	Provide substitute behaviors through training
8. Helping Relationships - Seek and use social support to facilitate change	Rapport building, buddy systems, trouble-shooters, support, and assistance
9. Stimulus Control - Restructure the environment to elicit new behaviors and inhibit old habits	Align organizational structure and provide resources to support change
10. Social Liberation - Empower people by providing choices, resource, and opportunities	Advocacy, empowerment procedures, appropriate policies to provide access to opportunities, display leadership commitment
11. Thinking About Commitment	
12. Teams	
13. Commitment	
14. Rules and Policies	Align organizational rules and policies to support change

If the intervention and stages are mismatched, organizational change efforts can result in serious setbacks. For example, some organizations lunge head first into discussions of race and power without adequate preparation to establish a common language, create safety, and address fears and resistance. The organization may be in the contemplation stage, while activities are geared toward the preparation or action stages (*see diagram below*). As a result, people sometimes feel attacked and betrayed and the possibilities of creating hope and trust are severely diminished. Understanding SOC can allow change agents to create a process that fosters buy-in to a change process and address issues that might prevent the organization from moving forward.

Similarly, many organizations slide back to old practices after a period of initial energy, enthusiasm, and focus. Without a conscious effort to reinforce new behaviors, organizations may revert to former communication patterns that exclude people based on rank and social group membership. The stages of change perspective helps change agents understand the requirements of maintaining and institutionalizing new practices after they are put into action (*see diagram below*).

TTM complements field theory, discussed in the previous paper, which helps change agents to analyze the wide range of forces that impact change and to "unfreeze" an organization that is stuck in precontemplation or contemplation. Field theory may also be used to identify ways to strengthen forces required to sustain a change in the maintenance phase of the SOC process.

Level of Application – The SOC framework has been applied in organizations using both individuals and organizational entities as the level of analysis and foci of intervention.

Process of Change Emphasized	Precontemplation	Contemplation	Preparation	Action	Maintenance
1) Consciousness-raising	●	●		●	
2) Dramatic Relief	●	●			
3) Environmental Reevaluation	●	●			
4) Self-reevaluation	●	●			
5) Thinking about commitment*	●	●			
6) Self-liberation			●	●	
7) Teams*			●		
8) Commitment*				●	
9) Counter-conditioning				●	●
10) Reinforcement Management				●	●
11) Helping Relationships				●	●
12) Stimulus Control				●	●
13) Rules and Policies*					●

*Applies to organizational level change, rather than individual.

Examples of Mismatches between Stage and Intervention

Process of Change/Intervention	Stage
Commitment – Take action to address issues of race and power (without organizational buy-in).	Contemplation – The organization does not intend to take action in the foreseeable future.
Environmental Reevaluation – Discuss the possible impact of a change on the work environment. (Nothing to reinforce the new behaviors.)	Maintenance – Work to prevent the relapse into old behaviors
Reinforcement Management – Establish a reward system for new behaviors (without raising awareness)	Precontemplation – No intention to take action in the foreseeable future.

TTM researchers suggest that change can be managed most effectively when stage-matched interventions are applied at both individual and organizational levels (Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 1999). The level of intervention may also depend on the change that is desired. For example, if the desired practice is instituting a policy that requires organization-wide buy-in and implementation, an organizational level of intervention may be called for. If there is a policy that impacts only one segment of the organization, such as entry-level staff, the focus may be aimed more appropriately at the group or individual level. At the individual level, assessments are used to identify the stage of readiness and stage-matched interventions are implemented to work with people at different stages. In addition to reducing resistance and stress, stage-matched interventions allow for participation of all staff, whether or not they are ready to take action (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001).

This focus on individuals can be useful for multicultural change processes, which are often characterized by a wide range of individual readiness. Those who are the most convinced of the need for action are often those most negatively impacted by racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Conversely, those who resist change are usually those who are most comfortable with the status quo or fear they have the most to lose in a change process (Brantley, Frost and Razak, 1996). People who are most connected to the community through their job functions may also perceive the need for multicultural change differently than those whose work is more removed from the community (Nybell and Gray, 2004). For example, in contrast to administrative staff with no patient contact, language interpreters, and health advocates often have a greater awareness of language and cultural barriers faced by patients.

According to TTM researchers, individualized, stage-matched interventions are more effective in organizational change processes than a one-size-fits-all approach that treats the organization as a monolithic entity (Levesque, Prochaska and Prochaska, 1999). This idea can work well in influencing the readiness of people who are essential to the change process. The concepts of critical and facilitating actors, described in the second paper of this series, can help change agents identify these individuals.

The concept of SOC can also be applied to an organizational entity as a whole. For example, in a study on the implementation of continuous quality improvement in the Veteran's Health Administration, the unit of analysis was the VA (Veteran's Administration) hospital. Teams consisting of administrators and clinical support staff from 120 participating hospitals completed an assessment tool to identify the stage of change that characterized the VA hospital they represented (Levesque et al., 2001).

It is important to recognize that groups (departments, teams, units, sites, etc.) within organizations may be at different stages of change simultaneously. For example, in some organizations entire departments may be in the action or maintenance stages, while the rest of the agency remains in precontemplation. Other groups of stakeholders such as board members, community leaders, or labor unions may also be at different stages of readiness. Differences in readiness may be used strategically to move an organization forward. For example, rather than waiting to get everyone on board, pockets of readiness in an organization may move forward to model the change and its benefits (Miller, 1994).

Stages and Processes of Change Applied to Multicultural Organizational Development

A fictitious organization, the Community Health Organization (CHO), is used in this paper to illustrate how the SOC may help change agents identify the stage of change and the requirements for moving the organization from one stage of change to the next. The issues and organizational dynamics described are based on experiences with real organizations and are common to many nonprofit and public organizations.

Catalyzing Concerns and Desired Practices – Community Health Organization requested help from a consultant team to address issues of race and hierarchy in the organization. The decision to seek help from consultants was catalyzed by growing tensions among the staff, primarily along racial lines. Several staff members had perceived these issues as important over a number of years, but had been unsuccessful in getting managers to take action. Several staff members perceived a pattern of racial inequity in compensation, leadership development, opportunities for advancement, allocation of office space and recognition. Superficially, the organization looked diverse and its work was heavily concentrated in communities of color, including immigrant communities.

Assessment of Issues and Desired Practices – Through review of organizational documents and interviews with staff and key stakeholders the consultants identified a number of themes. Several of them related to power dynamics among staff, including: 1) many nonmanagement staff members felt that they had no voice in the organization and that managers were not accountable to them in making decisions; 2) several staff people of color felt devalued in the organization and perceived that they were given less opportunity for advancement and growth than their white coworkers; 3) most of the management positions and highest paid positions were held by white people, with white men being disproportionately represented in management; 4) people who had concerns about issues of race, gender, and hierarchy were fearful that voicing their concerns would have negative repercussions; and 5) multicultural concerns were seen as the responsibility of a few staff members and not an organization-wide concern.

Other key themes related to the organization's work in the community: 1) some staff and community members thought that the organization was not doing enough to address health inequities in its programs and services; 2) these people also thought that the programs or services provided were not making genuine change and/or were not sensitive to the realities faced by people in the community; 3) the organization did not have effective methods of measuring how well its work was received by the community it served; and 4) some staff members received informal complaints from community members about the quality of the work.

Some of the desired practices included 1) to openly discuss and plan to address health inequities; 2) to establish and utilize mechanisms for open dialogue around issues of diversity and equity; 3) to develop people of color in the organization in leadership roles; and 4) to establish and implement transparent processes for decision-making and accountability.

Assessment of Stage of Change – The assessment process also included identification of the organization's stage of change. This revealed that there were informal discussions about issues of race, gender, and hierarchy in the organization that had not been brought out in the open. There was no consensus in the organization that there was a need for change.

The consultant team identified three groupings at different stages of change:

- A small group of change agents had catalyzed change by raising their concerns to management. This grouping was ahead of the rest of the organization in their readiness for action but could not move ahead without organizational support. They were engaged in the preparation stage, doing the work required to prepare for action.

- The administrators who made the decision to bring in the consultant team were in the contemplation stage. They were not convinced that any different practices were needed, but were open to considering change depending upon the outcome of the assessment.

- The remaining individuals in the organization were either in precontemplation or contemplation stages. Most of them had not given any serious consideration to the issues that simmered under the surface and had not been openly discussed. A few had participated in informal conversations about the issues and were supportive of the change agents and their concerns.

The consultants also made the assessment that, as an organization, CHO was somewhere between precontemplation and contemplation. The organization had not fully moved out of the precontemplation stage because the issues had not been openly discussed or recognized, and there was both a lack of awareness of the issues and ambivalence about the need for change. The organization was beginning to contemplate the need for change, as reflected in the decision to bring in a consultant team to help address the issues. Based on this assessment, the initial focus of the work was identified: to move the organization through precontemplation and contemplation stages so that it could prepare to make change.

Developing Interventions for Different Stages of Change

Precontemplation – In this stage there is no intention to change behavior in the foreseeable future (Prochaska and Norcross, 2001). On the surface, it may appear that the organization is doing all it can to work effectively with diverse clients. The predominant attitude in the organization may be denial of the need for multicultural change. Issues of race, gender, and power are present, but may not be acknowledged or openly discussed. Many of the dynamics of power and privilege are so deeply embedded in cultural norms that they may be invisible to those who are not aware of their negative effects. For example, the intentions, beliefs, and values of its founders are often woven into the fabric of the organization. In decisions about who will lead, they are more likely to entrust the organization's future to people who share similar beliefs and values (Paul and Schnidman, 1994). There may be active denial about the need for change by those in power. Those who see the need for change may be few in number or lacking in influence within the organization.

A key characteristic of the precontemplation stage is the perception that the benefits of change are outweighed by the costs (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001). For example, organizational leaders may not perceive any serious conflict with maintaining the status quo, and they may believe that MCOD will require a huge investment in money and time. Competing organizational priorities may force issues of diversity to the bottom of the "priority ladder" unless there is a compelling and urgent reason to address them. People who see the need for change may fear that taking risks by raising the issue will have negative consequences. Skepticism may also develop if past multicultural change efforts have failed or had limited or detrimental impact.

Another characteristic of the precontemplation stage is resistance. There is often strong resistance to MCOD for numerous reasons, including fear or discomfort in discussing "undiscussable" issues of race, class, power, and hierarchy. There is often a burnout factor among organizations that have had previous experiences of attacking and blaming approaches to these issues. There may also be resistance by individuals in positions of privilege and power who fear that creating a more equitable work environment will result in a loss of their own power and privilege. Resistance may be active or passive, conscious or unconscious. For example, individuals may express their resistance by scheduling other meetings when the topic is discussed, or being physically present but refusing to engage. Managers may believe that they are committed to change, but be unwilling to consider anything other than superficial changes in the organization's culture.

Moving Beyond Precontemplation – The following processes of change were used to move the organization from precontemplation to contemplation, an intention to take action in the near future. The first task was to get organizational buy-in on the need for and/or benefits of change. Organization-wide consensus was not required. The goal was to build a critical mass of support within the organization that would create momentum for change and be strong

enough to overcome resistance. This included support of the organizational leadership and staff at different levels.

- **Consciousness-raising –** Consultants used a participatory assessment process to gather information about the issues and their impact in the organization. They prepared a summary of the key issues and facilitated a discussion to raise awareness of the issues and to identify potential solutions. All staff members participated in this process, regardless of their readiness for change. Some expressed surprise and felt that those who perceived a problem were overreacting. The consultants worked to help participants to acknowledge that individuals could experience the same organizational reality very differently, depending upon their social and cultural experience and location within the organization structure.

- **Dramatic relief –** Initial efforts were made to address two types of fears. Staff members who wanted the organization to become more multicultural feared that speaking out would result in reprisal from management and would not result in genuine change. The consultants sought to alleviate this fear to some extent through the use of confidential interviews. Managers agreed in open discussions that no action would be taken against staff for voicing their concerns. Some white male staff members feared that the process would provide a forum for them to be attacked as racist and sexist. They also feared that efforts to promote more women of color would result in fewer opportunities for their own advancement. The consultants provided an organizational framework for identifying issues and stressed a non-shaming, non-blaming approach. Multicultural communications guidelines[4] were established to foster a non-blaming environment of open communication.

Contemplation – In this stage, there is awareness that a problem exists and serious thought is being given to addressing it, but there has not been a commitment to action (Prochaska and Norcross, 2001). The contemplation stage may be marked by ambivalence about whether to take action and what type of action to take. As a result, an organization may remain stuck in this stage for long periods. In order to move forward, the benefits of taking action must be perceived as being higher than the costs (Prochaska, Prochaska and Levesque, 2001).

This contemplation stage is crucial in MCOD because it is during this phase that the organizational understanding of the issues and the type of change needed begins to take shape. If the issues are only understood on a superficial level, the organization may consider making changes that don't address the underlying issues, which those who want to see real change will regard as "lip service." The organization may seek a "quick fix," such as one-time diversity training. In the contemplation stage one of the key challenges is to secure full commitment to genuine change.

In the contemplation stage the issues of multiculturalism are openly acknowledged and the organization is considering what, if anything, to do about them. Ambivalence may be expressed as conflict or difference among organizational players who resist or advocate change. Consideration must also be given to the organizational and individual commit-

ments required to make change. Individuals must reflect on what they are willing to bring to the change process. In addition, managers must recognize the need to allocate organizational time and resources to change.[5]

Moving from Contemplation to Preparation – The following processes of change were used to move the Community Health Organization from contemplation (intention to change in the next six months) to preparation, intention to change in the next 30 days.

- **Environmental reevaluation –** The consultants facilitated a process to help staff to identify and to see the positive possibilities associated with multicultural change and to understand ways to use conflict as an opportunity, rather than a threat. This helped staff members to overcome some of their ambivalence about change, and to begin to see the benefits as outweighing the costs. The consultants facilitated a visioning process to help the organization to define how the organization would look and act as a result of change. Examples of what participants envisioned included:

  - All staff members have the opportunity for advancement and growth.

  - The management of the organization reflects the diversity of the community.

  - The organization is accountable to community stakeholders.

A key element of this phase was establishing a shared vision to create a sense of unity within the group. A core aspect of shifting organizational paradigms concerns values. A shared vision also provided a sense of direction so that action planning would be proactive, and not solely a reaction to problems. A strengths-based approach was used so that the organization and individuals within it would build on the strengths that they all brought to the process.

- **Self-reevaluation –** Individuals began to see themselves as change agents who had an active and vital role in the organization. They understood that their engagement in the process was critical in order for change to occur. They began to overcome skepticism and resistance and to see the positive possibilities that change would bring.

- **Thinking about commitment –** During this stage the issue of commitment for individuals and the organization was decisive to moving forward. The change process could have been easily undermined if other pressures on the organization were allowed to keep this issue on the back burner. Therefore, the participation and support of those in management was crucial. The agency director worked with managers to carve out time and resources to allow the

5   It is crucial to acknowledge that many nonprofit and public organizations are understaffed and their staff is overworked. Managers will need to consider the survival needs of the organization together with the value of organizational development. In times of budget shortfall, it may be critical to establish and reinforce multicultural principles. This can help to ensure that decisions about how to use diminishing resources are made with full consideration of their impact on different groups within the service population and staff.

4   Guidelines adapted from VISIONS, Inc.

process to move forward. Individuals also assessed their commitment and interest to participating in the process.

Preparation – The key significance of the preparation stage is that it transitions the organization from considering action to taking action. This requires establishing the organizational conditions to make change possible, including staff readiness, resource and time allocation, and organizational structures. At this stage the organization may take steps that are insufficient to bring about effective action (Prochaska and Norcross, 2001). Processes of change used during this period include

- **Self-liberation –** In this stage it was important to build confidence in the possibilities of change and a firm commitment to change. This was done by identifying tangible steps that would help to build enthusiasm and momentum for change. Through a participatory process the staff members identified specific changes to be made, including short-term and long-term action priorities and specific steps, responsibilities, and timelines. Organizational resource and capacity issues were also taken into account to ensure that plans were realistic.

- **Teams –** Cross-functional teams were established, based on the strengths and interest of staff members to work on different issues. In addition to the specific tasks they were assigned, these teams were used as a mechanism to break down compartmentalization between staff in separate units and different functional roles.

Because the organization took the time to develop its readiness for change, it was able to move into action with strong buy-in and participation from the majority of staff as well as support from other key stakeholders, including board members, partner organizations, and funders. A few staff members remained in the precontemplation stage, which was demonstrated through passive resistance in subtle attempts to undermine the process. However, their influence was not sufficient to undermine the commitment to change that had been built within the organization.

Action – This stage involves modifying a behavior, experience, or environment. It requires the most overt behavioral changes and significant investment of time and energy (Prochaska and Norcross, 2001). Multicultural organizational change encompasses more than a specific practice or behavior change. It encompasses changes in organizational culture, policies, and practices. Thus, the action stage may be characterized by several short-term changes occurring simultaneously while initial steps are also taken to plan and implement long-term changes.

In a multicultural change process a crucial change that occurs is in the individuals and their interactions with each other. Through building a greater appreciation of differences and understanding the strengths that each individual brings to the work, the organizational potential to create change is unleashed. Furthermore, the establishment of new patterns of interacting must include the capacity to openly discuss and interrupt patterns of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression. Organizational actions demonstrate a genuine commitment and result in increased trust.

In the CHO, changes implemented during the action phase included 1) clarifying the organizational decision-making process and accountability mechanisms; 2) strengthening leadership development processes to ensure opportunities for growth and advancement; 3) adapting agreements for ongoing discussion of race, gender, and hierarchy; 4) integrating multicultural issues into the organization's strategic plan; and 5) developing qualitative measures to evaluate community responses to programs and services. All these changes moved the organizational systems into alignment with the new vision of the organization's mission.

During this stage, several processes of change were continued from the preparation stage. In addition, the following processes of change were introduced:

- **Counter-conditioning –** During this stage concerted efforts were made to substitute new behaviors for old ones. The organization made a decision to adopt and practice multicultural communication guidelines that were introduced during the assessment process. This helped to break the silence around issues of racism, sexism, and other social inequalities. Capacity building workshops were held to help staff members to learn and practice skills for collaborative communication. These activities helped to create a cultural shift in the organization to interrupt and transform the prevailing power dynamics.

- **Reinforcement management –** Staff members began to experience the intrinsic rewards of practicing new ways of working, including a stronger sense of community and connection with coworkers, ability to express concerns and have them heard and addressed, the personal growth that accompanies the multicultural change process, and a sense of ownership for the work.

Maintenance – This is the stage in which people work to consolidate the gains made during the action stage and to prevent any relapse to old behaviors (Prochaska and Norcross, 2001). Without attention to this stage, a change process may be regarded as a passing "flavor of the month" and have little hope for sustainability. During this phase it is helpful to establish mechanisms to ensure continuity of the effort. These may include plan review, measuring progress, incentives for positive behavior, and managing knowledge retention and transfer (Cox, 2001). Multicultural organizational change is not a linear process with a fixed endpoint. It is an ongoing process of transformation that includes, but is not limited to, a number of discrete changes along the way. All of these changes are designed to integrate multicultural principles throughout all levels of the organization and its work. Thus, the new practices that are sustained during the maintenance phase contribute to active engagement in an ongoing change process, rather than a specific behavioral change. During the maintenance stage, the CHO continued some of the change processes from the previous stages. In addition, the following processes were emphasized:

- **Reinforcement management –** In addition to the intrinsic rewards, discussed above, extrinsic rewards and accountability mechanisms were established to reinforce the new ways of working. The organization decided

to incorporate multicultural measures into the performance review process for individual staff. Multicultural measures were also incorporated into the evaluation processes for programs and services.

- **Helping relationships –** A process of quarterly plan review was used to create an ongoing support mechanism for change. During this review, a strengths-based approach was used to build social support within the organization for the change efforts of individuals and groups.

Back to Precontemplation – The organization may pass through the stages of change several times to implement and institute additional changes. As a result of sustaining the ongoing change process, the CHO began to consider additional changes in practice and policy. In their return to precontemplation, the following process of change was emphasized:

- **Consciousness-raising –** Building on the foundation created by the change process, the program staff and managers identified the need for a more in-depth exploration of how to integrate multicultural principles within their programs and services and to strengthen the organization's relationship with the community. The organization began to move through the stages of change again to bring its practice into even closer alignment with its mission.

Conclusion

This article explores the possibilities that the stages of change construct offers to multicultural organizational change processes. Change agents who understand the organizational players and the development stage of the organization can develop effective strategies by designing interventions that are appropriate to each stage. This model may be helpful in overcoming resistance that often accompanies change processes and that is intensified in multicultural change. It may also be helpful in achieving genuine participation from organizational players who become active participants in the change process rather than feeling coerced into change they do not support.

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July 2007
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