

Leadership in times of crisis during change due to health IT projects

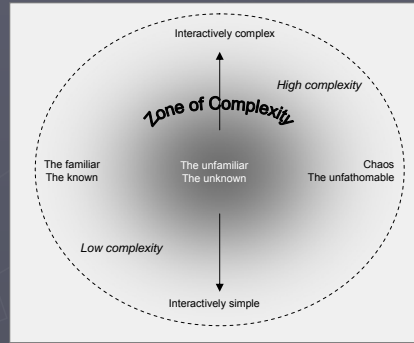
Karen Day & Tony Norris

This presentation

- ▶ Healthcare as a complex system
- ▶ Leadership in IT projects
- ▶ Change
- ▶ The research project
 - Purpose and method
 - Findings
 - Conclusions and recommendations
- ▶ Time for questions

Healthcare: a complex adaptive system

- ▶ Interrelating components
- ▶ Adjust to stimuli in non-linear, unpredictable ways
- ▶ Predictable, predicted changes interwoven with unexpected consequences
- ▶ A system's components interact from simple to complex over time



Tan J, Wen HJ, Awad N. Health care and services delivery systems as complex adaptive systems. Examining chaos theory in action. Communications of the ACM. 2005;48(5):37-44.

Dooley K. A complex adaptive systems model of organization change. Nonlinear Dynamics, Psychology, and Life Sciences. 1997;1(1).

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Leading health IT projects in a complex environment

- ▶ Leadership – the capacity to lead others to achieve a shared goal
 - Communicate vision to others (followers)
 - The leadership context usually complex
 - Leaders rather than followers – attributes, styles, competencies, attitudes
- ▶ Leadership theories – charismatic, institutional, instrumental, trait, contingency, behaviour, emotional intelligence, competence approach

Embrace all theories
Emphasis = competences, attributes, attitudes & intellect

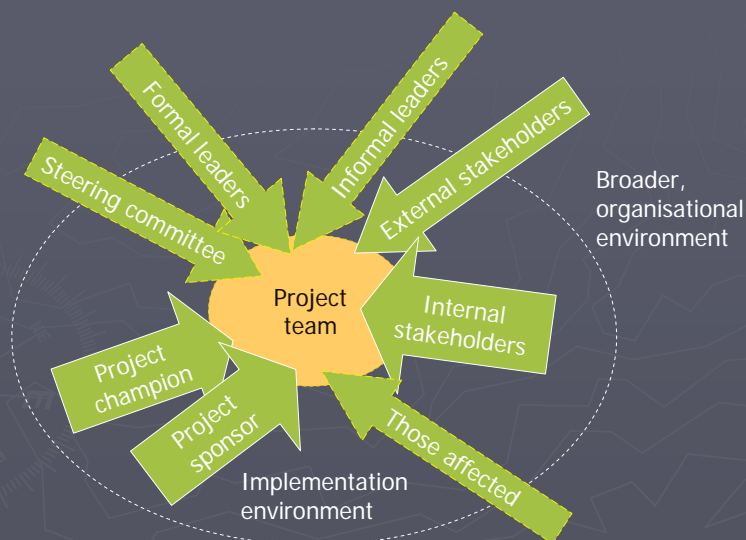
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Project leadership for project success

- ▶ Project management competence OR combination of management and leadership to
 - Develop project team effectiveness
 - Project process journey
 - Track and control project
 - Provide environment for project performance
 - Scope for convergence of disparate groups working on the project
 - Commitment by all for successful outcome
- ▶ PM leadership competence is not critical success factor
 - Different styles for different situations, contexts, project types
 - Different leadership for different parts of the project

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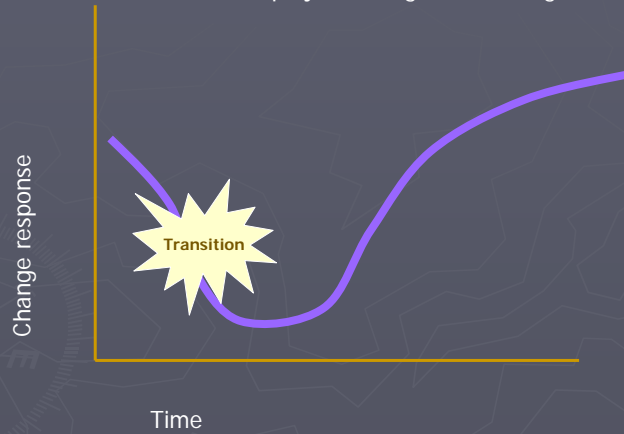
Others influence projects



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Change

Health IT projects bring about change



Elrod II, P. D., & Tippett, D. D. (2002). The "death valley" of change. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 15 (3), 273-291.

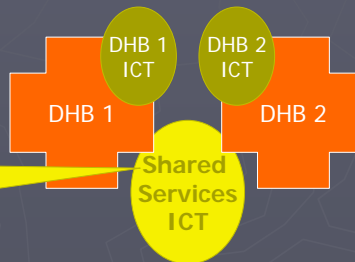
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The project

**Prior to
shared services**

- 2 ICT infrastructures
- Different strengths, issues, futures

Internal form of outsourcing of common support services between two or more similar organisations

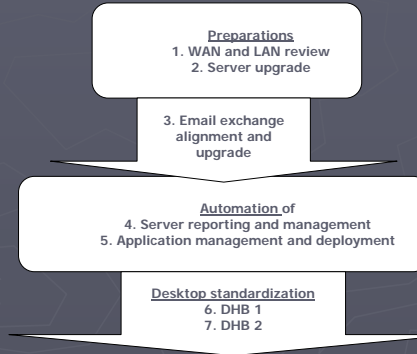


**Information Services
division joins shared
services**

- Single ICT infrastructure
- Standardised processes, some automated
- Shared personnel
- Regional ICT strategy for both DHBs

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The project milestones



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The research

► Purpose

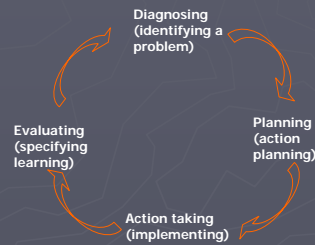
- participate in and study the change management, and
- examine people's responses to change
 - develop an understanding of the **transition period of the change process** in order to facilitate future change management.

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Action research

► Action research

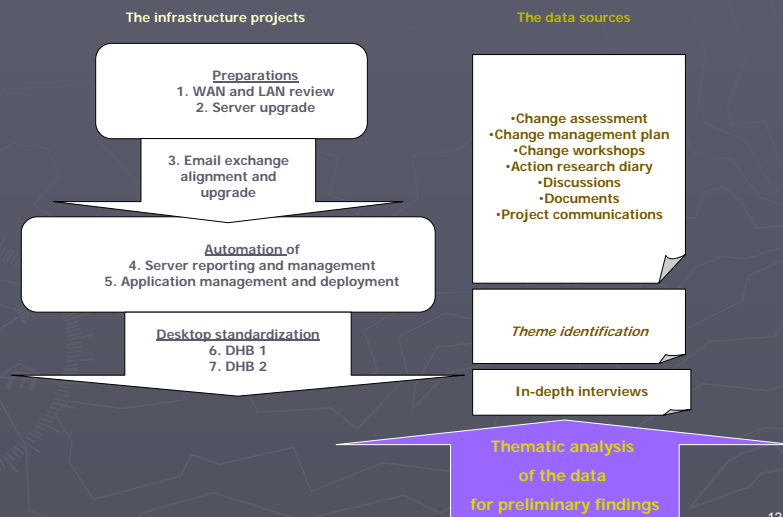
- a process by which change and understanding can be pursued at one time. It is usually described as cyclic, with action and critical reflection taking place in turn. The reflection is used to review the previous action and plan the next one



Dick, B. (2001). Action research: Action and research. In S. Shankar, B. Dick, R. Passfield & P. Swepson (Eds.), *Effective change management using action learning and action research*. Lismore, NSW: Southern Cross Press.

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Data generation parallel to project



Thomas, D. R. (2003). A general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis (11 screens).
<http://www.health.auckland.ac.nz/hrmas/resources/Inductive2003.pdf>, 14 March 2006(13 March 2006).

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Findings: the Capability Crisis

Characterised by 6 themes

Theme 1: Heightened sense of ambiguity and uncertainty

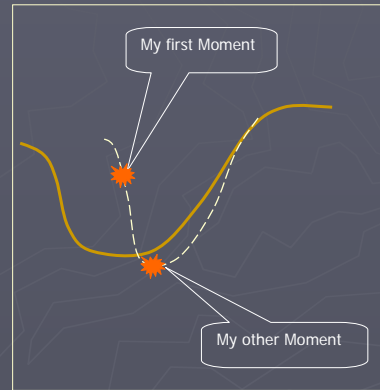
Theme 2: Communication paradox

Theme 3: Disproportionate increase in workload

Theme 4: Peak in demand for leadership

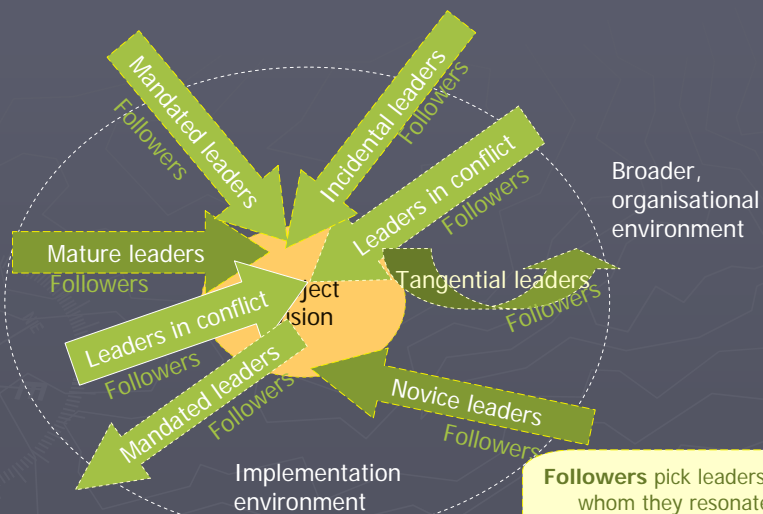
Theme 5: Tension between quantity, quality and nature of resources

Theme 6: Predictions of failure



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The leadership mix



Findings

Describing desired project leadership

- ▶ What they don't want to see in a leader
 - Perceived tone of leadership
 - *People were actually going to get it working and it was a sledgehammer approach. You don't need to add more stress. It would have been a fun environment to work in and change but you don't need the Hitler approach saying, "we want this, this is going to happen, we don't care". I understand why they wanted to say that because basically they didn't want those things to be slid under the table.*

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Findings

Different perceptions

- ▶ Different people saw different leadership from the same leaders
 - Capable vs fundamentally unable
- ▶ Not see expected leadership
 - *Management tell us they are telling us everything but we know that isn't the truth. We don't trust them any more. We feel that they were betraying their staff. We feel abandoned by them.*

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Findings

Resonate with available leadership

- ▶ Distant, incidental leadership
- ▶ Tangential leadership
 - *I'm talking in terms of "the man has a vision and the man can express his vision". He really was a man of the world. You want to be in that world and work in that world. He's a visionary. Not unrealistic. But a vision. I want to go there.*

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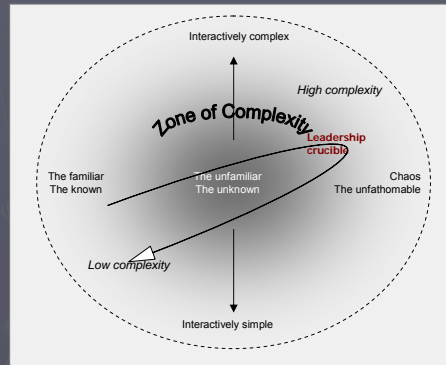
Findings

Opportunity to lead

- ▶ Promoted or hope to be promoted
- ▶ Learn about leadership in difficult circumstances
 - Project with tight deadlines
 - Critical dependencies
 - Followers critical of leadership given
 - *And it was good, I really enjoyed it, I picked up things, hey, how to manipulate people, "I know we've got no people, but you're the man," you know, just get him to actually do stuff that he hates doing but, yeah, and he does it with a smile on his face.*

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Leadership Crucible



- ▶ If the leaders of a project
 - not of the same mind about it and their roles within it;
 - leadership competencies were not similar or compatible;
 - and the time when their leadership is most needed is during a Capability Crisis on the cusp of the Zone of Complexity.
- ▶ Then a Leadership Crucible exists

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Melting pot of leadership

- ▶ Leaders of all types, styles, capabilities and maturity meet in the Crucible, complete with their different agendas and followers
- ▶ Leadership competencies and capacity to collaborate, melt, mingle and renew themselves, emerging with new qualities, new agendas and new alliances
- ▶ Some form new alliances, others destroy
- ▶ *For a while there I felt very unsupported. (The project manager) was over at North Shore and (my boss) was on leave in January and when he came back he was trying to get himself up to date and I felt very very unsupported. That was quite a dark time for me. I don't think we could've done it differently but I don't think he (my boss) had a real understanding of what I was dealing with.*

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Conclusions and recommendations

- ▶ Capability crisis happens often as part of transition in changing world
- ▶ Leadership plays an important role in our capacity to adapt in a complex world
- ▶ Leadership occurs in patterns, where more than one individual influences project outcomes collectively, positively, directly (or indirectly)
- ▶ At some point leaders meet in a Crucible in which their combined effect melds to make or break a project
- ▶ Using the Crucible of Leadership
 - Early diagnosis
 - Manage the leaders' Capability Crisis
 - Convergence of leaders
 - Common vision, use diverse achievements, leaders lead one another

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