

Address individual concerns

To help bring about change, change leaders and facilitators first must know an individual's concerns. Then those concerns must be addressed. While there are no set formulas, here are some suggestions for addressing the stages of concern.

STAGE 0: AWARENESS CONCERNS

- If possible, involve teachers in discussions and decisions about the innovation and its implementation.
- Share enough information to arouse interest, but not so much that it overwhelms.
- Acknowledge that a lack of awareness is expected and reasonable and that there are no foolish questions.

STAGE 1: INFORMATIONAL CONCERNS

- Provide clear and accurate information about the innovation.
- Use several ways to share information — verbally, in writing, and through available media. Communicate with large and small groups and individuals.
- Help teachers see how the innovation relates to their current practices — the similarities and the differences.

STAGE 2: PERSONAL CONCERNS

- Legitimize the existence and expression of personal concerns.
- Use personal notes and conversations to provide encouragement and reinforce personal adequacy.
- Connect these teachers with others whose personal concerns have diminished and who will be supportive.

STAGE 3: MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

- Clarify the steps and components of the innovation.
- Provide answers that address the small, specific “how-to” issues.
- Demonstrate exact and practical solutions to the logistical problems that contribute to these concerns.

STAGE 4: CONSEQUENCE CONCERNS

- Provide individuals with opportunities to visit other settings where the innovation is in use and to attend conferences on the topic.
- Use evidence about student success to provide positive feedback and guidance.
- Engage teachers in examining student work to share how they are implementing the innovation.

STAGE 5: COLLABORATION CONCERNS

- Provide opportunities to develop skills for working collaboratively.
- Bring together, from inside and outside the school, those who are interested in working collaboratively.
- Use these teachers to assist others.

STAGE 6: REFOCUSING CONCERNS

- Respect and encourage the interest these individuals have for finding a better way.
- Help these teachers channel their ideas and energies productively.
- Help these teachers access the resources they need to refine their ideas and put them into practice.

Source: *Taking Charge of Change*, by Shirley Hord, William Rutherford, Leslie Huling-Austin, and Gene Hall, ASCD, 1987.