

What is Transformational Leadership?

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can inspire change in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. These leaders are concerned about the change process *and* are focused on helping every member of the group succeed within the change context.

Transformational leadership is a theory of leadership where a leader works with teams to:

- Identify what needs to change
- Create a vision to guide the change through inspiration
- Execute the change together with committed staff

It is an integral part of the Full Range Leadership Model¹. Transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale, and job performance of staff through a variety of mechanisms. These include:

- Connecting individual sense of identity and self to a goal and to the collective identity of the team or organisation
- Being a role model to inspire staff and to raise their interest in the achievement of the goal
- Challenging staff to take greater ownership for their work
- Understanding the staff strengths and development areas, allowing the leader to align staff with opportunities that enhance their performance

Components of Transformational Leadership

Bass further defines the theory of Transformational Leadership as comprising four components².

- Intellectual Stimulation – Transformational leaders challenge the status quo and encourage creativity. The leader encourages staff to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn.
- Individualised Consideration – Transformational leaders offer support and encouragement to others. In order to foster supportive relationships, transformational leaders communicate openly so that team members feel free to share ideas, and so that leaders can offer direct recognition of the unique contributions of each individual.
- Inspirational Motivation – Transformational leaders have a clear vision that they are able to articulate to others. These leaders are also able to influence others with the same passion and motivation to fulfil these goals.
- Idealised Influence – The transformational leader is a role model for others. Because staff trust and respect the leader, they emulate this individual and internalise his or her ideals.

Connection to quality improvement

Quality improvement is fundamentally about making change to ways of working to enhance outcomes. This requires change agents to lead others through the change process. Transformational leadership theory articulates the behaviours that most strongly influence change in staff. Staff are most likely to change their

¹ Antonakis, J.; Avolio, B. J.; Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). "Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor Full-Range Leadership Theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire". *The Leadership Quarterly*. 14(3): 261–295.

² Bass, Bernard M. (1990). "From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision". *Organizational Dynamics*. 18(3): 19–31.

behaviour when led by leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviour¹. Therefore, developing change agent's leadership capability to demonstrate these behaviours facilitates change in quality improvement work.