

Options for Coming Unstuck; Strategic Approaches to Decision Making

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National **MCH** Workforce
Development Center
Advancing Health Transformation

National MCH Workforce Development Center

The Center delivers training and consultation to teams of Title V professionals and their partners in:

- Change management and adaptive leadership
- Systems integration
- Evidence-based decision making and implementation

Family and community engagement and health equity are embedded in all Center services, reflecting the Center's commitment to inclusion.

Launched in 2013, the National MCH Workforce Development Center advances the skills and capacity of maternal and child health professionals across the nation.

2 opportunities currently open!



Learning Objectives

1. Engage in conversation about common challenges leaders face in moving from data to action
2. Learn about two tools that can aid in informed decision-making
3. Hear from peers about how they have used leadership strategies and tools advance their work and get results



**Keep
Adapt
Let Go
Create**

**A tool for strategic
decision-making**



Keep, Adapt, Let Go, Create

- Template for examining a set of activities (e.g. activities in a Title V domain area) and then determining which should be kept, adapted, let go of, or where something new is required)

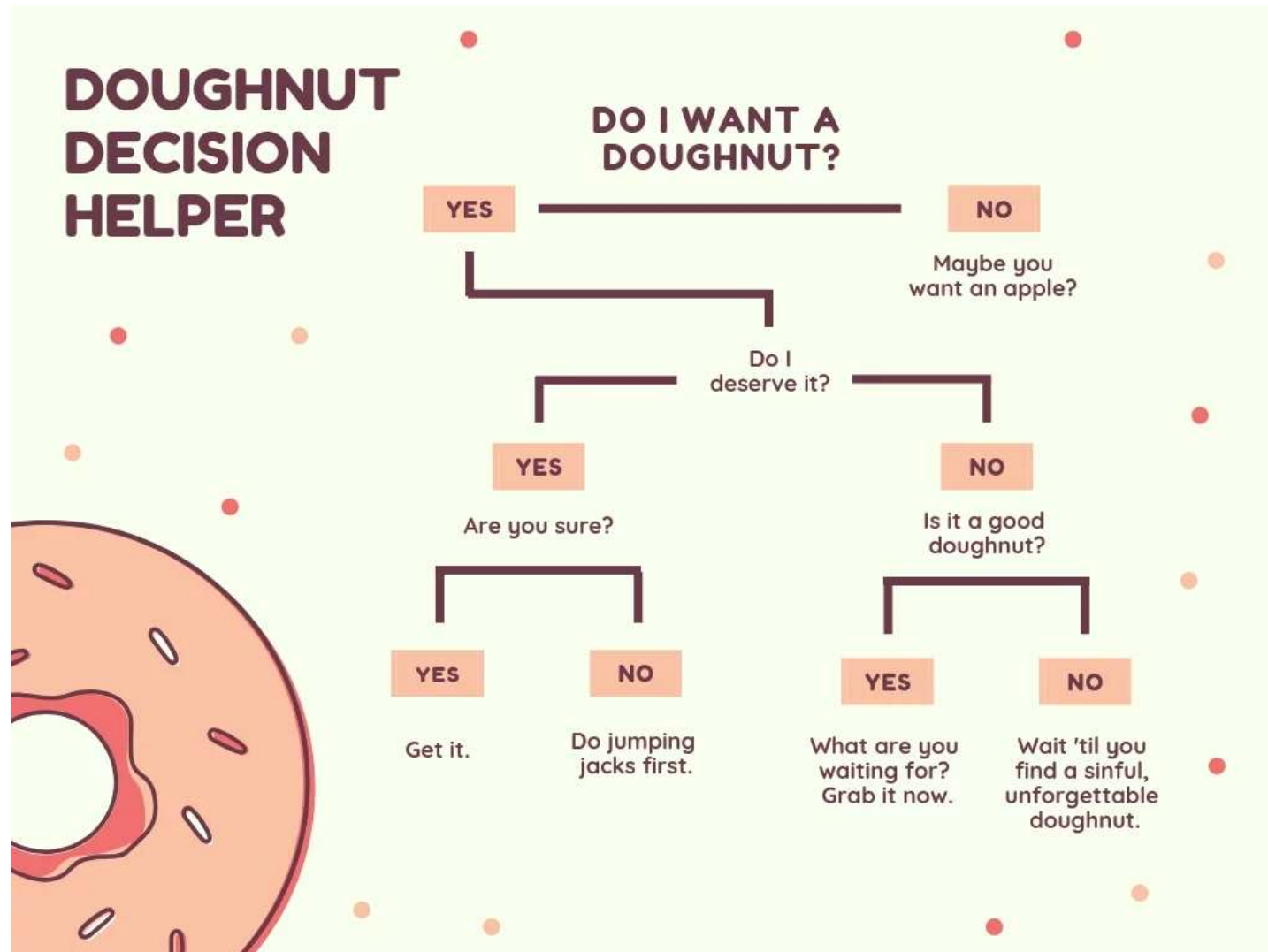


Big Picture Thinking

- **Consider** the priority needs that emerged from your needs assessment
- **Align** the priority needs with the available NPMs, state priorities and the context of what's feasible
- **Crosswalk** with current Title V activities
- **Decide** what to keep, edit or delete



Build an Algorithm for Current Activities



Algorithm for Current Activities-by domain

For domain X, is Program/Strategy #1 aligned with priority needs?

For domain X, is Program/Strategy #1 getting to outcomes?

Yes

No

Maybe

Keep

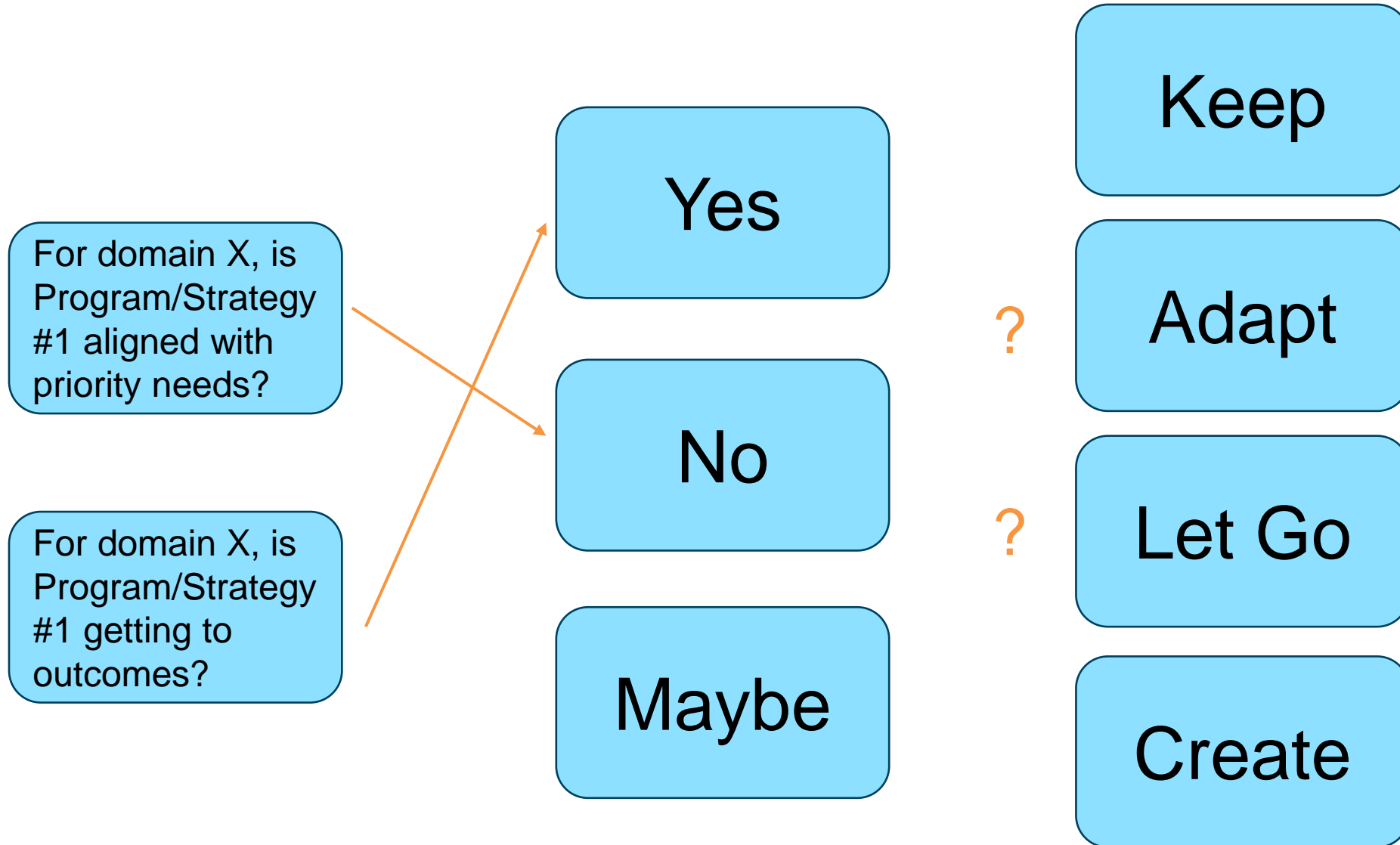
Adapt

Let Go

Create



Algorithm for Current Activities-by domain



Worksheet Available



KEEP...ADAPT...LET GO...CREATE

Title V Domain Area: _____

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FUTURE STATE

What areas of work would (continue to) benefit from Title V resources?	How does this area of work relate to our overall priorities/values?	Who might be “obvious” and “not obvious” collaborators?



CURRENT STATE to FUTURE STATE



	What gains could be made?	What gains could be lost?	What pains could be caused?	What pains could be relieved?
KEEP: (Opportunity outweighs the challenge)				
ADAPT: (Would this work benefit from expanding or reducing geography and/or population, redesign of approach or structure?)				
LET GO: (Feasibility, impact or alignment with new strategies are not sufficient for resources invested)				
CREATE: <i>(What new initiatives, collaborations, programs, services or approaches will need developing?)</i>				



Thoughts?

I Notice...

I Wonder...



Decision-Making Assessment

A tool for strategic
decision-making



Decision-Making Assessment

- Designed to support individuals and teams to consider where they typically get stuck in decision making so they can more readily identify this in the future and move more quickly to action



Decision-Making Assessment

Stuck:	Characterized By:	Is this me?	Is this my team?	<i>example</i>
Hanging Out in the Land of I Don't Know	<i>"Need more information"</i> <i>"We will have to talk about that"</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Clinging to What We Have	<i>Choosing small changes</i> <i>Giving up big opportunities</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Putting the Decision Off Repeatedly	<i>Admiring the problem</i> <i>Same meeting, different day</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Making Higher-Ups Decide	<i>"Your call. Just tell us what to do"</i> <i>"I will have to go back and get permission"</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Haunted by Past Bad Decisions	<i>Tight chest, shallow breathing, flop sweat</i> <i>"Here we go again"</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Can't Bear to Be Seen as Wrong/Dumb	<i>Feeling that you absolutely must get an "A"</i> <i>"I will lose my job if this goes wrong"</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Sticking With Familiar	<i>Focus on efficiency and speed</i> <i>"Best choice is what's easy for me"</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	
Validating Our Original Thought	<i>What decision? It's obvious what to do</i> <i>You find yourself defending your plan</i>	Yes - Maybe? – No	Yes - Maybe? – No	

Hanging Out in the Land of “I Don’t Know”

Hard decisions are not easy! Expect to take steps without knowing what will happen. Tune in to the danger of not acting.

Tip:

- Make small “decisions” that allow you to learn and iterate. “Let’s go observe” is a decision. So is “Let’s go visit our local partners to see what’s happening.”
- Light the first few steps, not the whole stairway: in other words, decide where to start and leave the rest for another day.

Mindset Shift:

- “I Don’t Know” assumes that knowledge is the most important variable. Add weight to other things: heart, action orientation, the value of engagement with new perspectives.

New Frame:

- Ask “What is the cost of not deciding?” Ask “Who is hurt if we do nothing?”



Clinging to What We Have

Economists have shown that most people overestimate losses and undervalue gains. This bias keeps us playing small and missing big opportunities.

Mindset Shift:

- Think like an investment portfolio manager. Invest at least some of your resources in high-opportunity investments.

New Frame:

- Ask “What is the cost of doing what we know doesn’t work well?”

- Ask “What would you do if you had fourteen years to make the change?”



Putting the Decision Off Repeatedly

Procrastination might be covering up fear, or real concern about the likelihood of success across the team. But not deciding is deciding.

Mindset Shift:

- Uncover the belief or mental model behind the fear. What could go wrong? What is likely to happen if you over-commit here? What happens if you make a mistake?

Tip

- Add more structure around the process. Go slow, get lots of coaching—and then push to action.

Tip

- Deadlines can help. Put an “Action-Forcing Event” on the calendar to light a little fire.



Relying on Higher Ups to Make Decisions

It is easier to let positional leaders make tough decisions. Be bold. Others need your leadership.

Tip:

- Revisit the structure of how decisions are made. Reconsider what method will work best. Articulate who will decide, who will propose, who will provide input

Mindset Shift:

- Leadership is a function, and anyone can fulfill it.

New Frame:

- We are all leaders with our own evolving sphere. You likely have more influence than you are using.



Haunted by Past Bad Decisions

A key change principle in the quality improvement sphere is “fail forward faster.” Decisions with bad outcomes can and should be productive.

Tip:

- Turn “Haunting” into learning. What exactly were the bad consequences? (Staff were frustrated, I felt embarrassed at a stakeholder meeting, needs of the population weren’t met). What can you learn going forward?
- Explore why a past decision is haunting you still. Is it because:
 - The process left important voices out (Who can you add this time?)
 - Other people expressed frustration (Is it reasonable to expect that everyone will be pleased? Is conflict bad?)
 - I felt shame at a misstep (Why is this feeling important?)

New Frame:

- If your goal was realized but there were bumps along the way, was it really a bad decision? Did learning take place?



Can't Bear to be Wrong

Hard decisions often stir up emotions of anxiety and stress. This is normal. You are a highly functioning team doing very important work, and most of you are used to getting A's in school.

Tip:

- Return to process and prioritize transparency.
- If your decision-making process leaves opportunities for learning and feedback, you can rest easy. If your choice is in alignment with your personal and team/organizational values, you can rest easy.
- If you build in opportunities for reflection, feedback and iteration then you are inviting people to show you blind spots and areas for improvement.

Mindset shift:

- Practice humble curiosity. Your humility makes room for others and will strengthen the decision and the team.



Going with what's familiar, again

We all tend to have our go-to people to give input into decision-making. When like-minded people sit and generate solutions, it limits options considerably. Recall the words of Peter Senge: “The easy way out leads right back in.”

Tip:

- Gather observations from more people. Look at emerging and best practices from across the country, and from different sectors.

Mindset shift:

- Use Design Thinking tools to refocus entirely on your customer's “Job To Be Done.”

New Frame:

- Ask: What are all the options at this point, including the wacky ones?



Thoughts?

I Notice...

I Wonder...



How might you use
this in your
environment?



For more information about the National MCH Workforce Development Center, please visit our website (MCHWDC.UNC.EDU) or contact:

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Thank
you!!!
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