

In a Nutshell

Fresh Perspectives on LTSS Issues

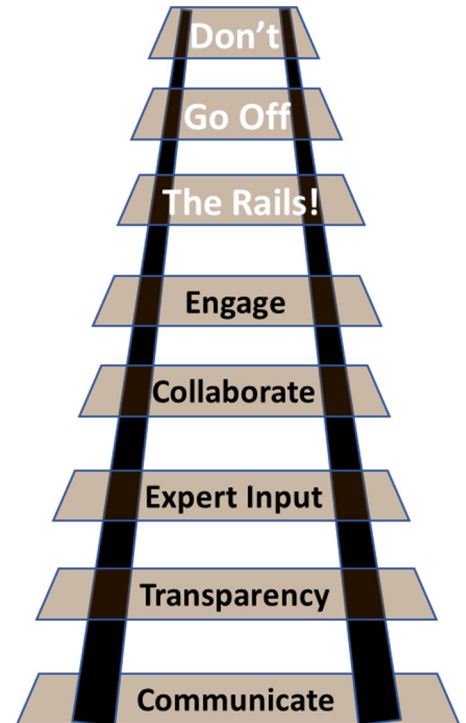


Managing In a Global Pandemic

LTSS providers and government staff that administer LTSS programs respond to crisis situations all the time. Most of these are individual emergencies: an adult day center employee has the flu, a water main breaks at a nursing facility, a fire occurs at an assisted living. Some crises are widespread: floods, tornado, hurricanes. And then - there are pandemics. The scale of COVID-19 is off the charts compared to any other emergency. States are working through difficult decisions about businesses that serve people who are both at great risk and in great need. These are massively consequential decisions as workers seek to assure safety for LTSS recipients throughout the emergency. Providers are working throughout the uncertainty, trying to protect their staff and those they serve.

These are difficult situations for decision makers – information is incomplete, uncertainty is high, and the pace of change is fast. This is **extreme** change management, but it is still change management so go back to basics:

- ✓ **Engage** → Time is of the essence. Communication methods may be limited. You still need to engage with stakeholders: providers, advocates, participants, and other partners. Listen to learn their pain points in the crisis at hand. Communicate your own pain points. Collaborate on solutions.
- ✓ **Collaborate** → In a crisis it is even easier to become siloed. You must work harder to collaborate. Set clearly defined “lanes” and respect those. Communication may be challenging and people may feel too overwhelmed to confer, but collaboration is how you create the most effective and efficient response.
- ✓ **Expert input** → We count on experts to predict hurricanes and warn us of tornadoes or flooding. If you need an expert to help sort out the consequences, find them. These may be your public health agency, universities, or private individuals with relevant knowledge or experience.. Sometimes their greatest contribution is a fresh set of eyes and ears.
- ✓ **Transparency** → Be as open as you can through the crisis. As you communicate, engage, and collaborate, all must have access to the same information. Be clear about your goals and challenges. Be clear about barriers. Be clear about what is and isn’t “in your lane”.
- ✓ **Communicate** → You can never over-communicate - especially in a crisis. It can feel like there is information overload in the midst of a crisis, yet even then there are stakeholders desperate for more communication, more information.



Managing in a Global Pandemic - Beyond Compliance

We often talk about how to think beyond compliance in service provision or program operations. In the current crisis, with executive orders and 1135 or Appendix K waivers, there is a focus on temporarily removing regulations, or permitting non-compliance to maximize operations during the crisis. In a crisis, it can be easy to react and make knee-jerk decisions without fully processing the information you do have. Be cautious about these changes. Focus on solid problem solving. Start with clearly identifying what the problem is. Assess whether the proposed solution will solve it. If it doesn't, are there alternative solutions? Even a solution that appears to solve a problem may have unintended consequences. Try to identify as many as you can. Making careful decisions about regulations and rules to waive in a crisis will pay off as things do, eventually, return to normal.



Sage Squirrel Consulting would love the opportunity to you help work through solid problem solving and keep up good principles of change management even in the midst of a crisis. Contact us for assistance.

Contact us at info@sagesquirrel.com or visit www.sagesquirrel.com for more information.