

Leading Change: Integrating Lifestyle Medicine into your Practice

Integrating lifestyle medicine into your everyday practice may require many changes – ranging from workflow to updating your electronic health record (EHR) system. These changes may require buy-in from team members at all levels, including leadership, practice staff, information technology (IT) staff. Getting buy-in requires careful planning, extensive persuasion, and persistence. The purpose of this resource is to help you plan for leading your change initiative.

The following questions will help you think about getting buy-in for integrating lifestyle medicine.

1. Why is lifestyle medicine important to your practice, and how does integrating a lifestyle medicine program align with your practice or health care system's strategic priorities?
2. Which team members will be committed to improving the lifestyle of patients? Think about people who could help you lead this change and how they might help.
3. What goals do you plan to accomplish for yourself, your patients, and your team by implementing a lifestyle medicine care model into your practice? What strategies do you plan to implement to achieve these goals?
4. Who would you need buy-in to implement these strategies (e.g., leadership, IT staff, educators and trainers, clinical team)? What do these people need to do to implement strategies?

5. What data, information, or personal stories would help you get buy-in? Sharing personal stories about how lifestyle changes affect you, your patients, and your community may help get buy-in from the clinical team and other stakeholders. Discussing anticipated organizational improvements about goals and performance may help get buy-in from leadership.

6. How will you communicate with individuals from whom you need buy-in? Think of all communications people receive. How can your message resonate with others?

7. What short-term goals or “easy wins” can you reasonably accomplish for lifestyle interventions? How can this be used to help increase buy-in and momentum?

8. What barriers exist to making changes, and how might you overcome them?

9. What are the first steps for you and your team to get started?

Share these questions with staff and other stakeholders and summarize answers. To get buy-in, people need to believe changes are essential, possible, and they have input in the process. The answers to these questions should help you develop a change strategy for incorporating lifestyle medicine into everyday practice.

RESOURCES (questions composed based on these books)

1. Kotter JP. *Leading Change*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press; 1996.
2. Kotter JP. *XLR8 (Accelerate): Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press; 2014.
3. Kouzes JM, Posner BZ. *The Leadership Challenge*. 4th ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 2007