

THE SECRET

**TO HELPING PEOPLE ON YOUR
VETERINARY TEAM CHANGE THEIR
BEHAVIOR**



WHY CHANGE MATTERS

Will your practice be different this year than it was last year? Different this quarter than it was last quarter? People focus on the pace of change, but often the problem is driving change that lasts.



Performance

The manner in which you coach and have conversations with those in your practice can affect how your team improves. With a destination, a reason, an intention, and a plan in place, your team can create lasting change. And with your support as their coach, your team can improve their performance and create a better future for the practice.



Engagement

Are your employees engaged, or are they simply satisfied? The answer could affect your company's ability to succeed. If you want your practice to grow, you need engaged employees. Engagement for engagement's sake doesn't drive growth, profits or accountability. However, the actions you get from an engaged team, do.



Culture

Culture makes most of the decisions in your practice. Your people will conform to it whether it's the one you want, or just the one that evolved because you didn't consciously build a better one. You can't execute tomorrow's strategy with today's culture.



Growth

As a leader, one of your biggest jobs is ensuring that, over time, your people are capable of accomplishing more. You only have a few levers to pull as it relates to improving what your practice can accomplish. The most effective investment you can make is in the talent that makes up your team. Nothing is more critical for the growth of your hospital than the growth of your people.

WHAT CREATES **UNSUSTAINABLE** CHANGE

Change can be difficult. It's certainly not easy in the vet world. Here are the things some organizations believe will create lasting behavior change, but ultimately are not sustainable:



Policies and Procedures

As managers of a team or leaders of a business, we often think of policies and procedures as a way to change behavior. It just doesn't work that way most of the time. That's not to say that we shouldn't have guidelines for how we work at our best, but often policies that we write are built much more around what we should not do at work.



Telling People What to Do

We often feel like most of our time is spent telling people what to do. But how often does someone else telling us that we need to change positively impact our commitment to that change? Telling someone on your team what to do may get a result once or twice, but it is not a way to creating sustainable behavior change.



Fear and Punishment

Most people don't come to work every morning thinking, "I'm going to get as many things wrong as I can today." Yet when we punish mistakes we are reducing a team member's engagement and demonstrating that thinking for themselves isn't okay. Fear may get you an immediate response, but it ultimately hinders your opportunity for future change.

WHAT CREATES SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

The most lasting change happens through involvement, not compliance. For sustainable change, these four things must be true. As a leader in your practice, you can help your team members get there.

1

I want to.

If people don't want to change, they won't. They must find a connection to both the vision behind the desired change and their individual goals. You can help define the change and vision, making them clear and compelling enough so that others desire to follow.

2

I know how.

Even when people want to change their behavior, they won't do so if they don't know how. Human behavior is made up of habits and patterns that we have had years to practice and perfect. Lasting behavior change takes time, commitment, coaching, and practice as employees learn how to do things in new ways.

3

I believe I can.

Confidence is an important ingredient for behavior change. Does the practice have the necessary tools for change to be successful? Do employees believe leadership will stick with the change and see it through? Does the staff have the capabilities to correctly implement the change? These types of doubts often cause people to shy away from trying something new.

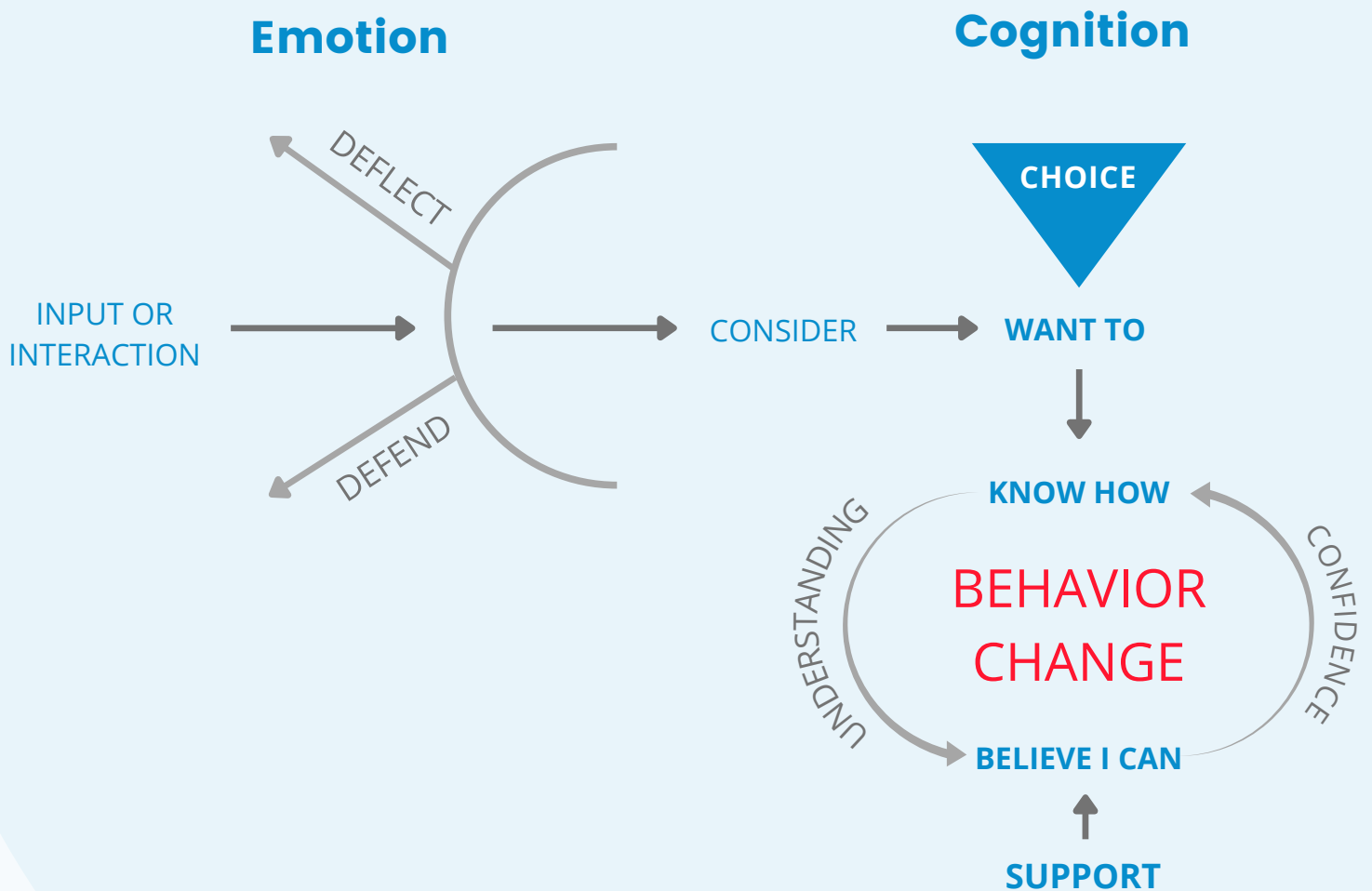
4

I have support.

People will resist change if they don't see others around them making a shift. There is a lot of risk in going first! If you can get enough momentum for change by involving people from the start, setting a clear vision, and committing to the change yourself, then people are much more likely to follow. Once change begins, it becomes about support and growing as a team through the change process.

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

THE SECRET TO HOW CHANGE HAPPENS



FRAME THE FUTURE WITH YOUR QUESTIONS

To create sustainable change, ask questions that cause people to shift their thinking. When you begin framing the future by asking the right questions, you will see movement toward the desired change.

Examples of thought-starting questions include:

? **At your best how would you tackle this ...**

? **If you wanted ...**

? **If you could make some progress ...**

? **How do you think ...**

? **What would help you ...**

More Resources about Change on Your Team and in Your Practice

Blog Articles

[Leading During Times of Change](#)

[Leaders Change Perspective, That Changes Everything](#)

[Why People Don't Do What You Say](#)

On-Demand Courses

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