



Decision-Making Guide: Tips and Tricks for When We Get Stuck

Diagnose	Learn How to Get Unstuck	Commit: I will...	Commit: We will..
<p>Hanging Out in I Don't Know Land</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p> 	<p><i>Hard decisions are not easy! Gather information, use a smart process, pilot to lower risk, develop options, tune in to the danger of not acting.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Tip: Adaptive challenges by nature require LEARNING. Make "decisions" that allow you to learn and iterate as you go (e.g. "let's do a pilot" or "let's go visit our local partners to see what's happening")</p> <p>Mindset Shift: See that confusion is actually a way of hiding behind something external. "I Don't Know" serves us by giving us permission to not decide.</p> <p>New Frame: Ask "What is the cost of not deciding?"</p> <p>Ask "Who is hurt if we do nothing?"</p>		
<p>Fear and Doubt are My Ugly Companions</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>We all prefer to avoid loss... even more than we want to acquire gains. We will work harder to avoid loss. This also keeps us playing small and not thinking big enough. Knowing this helps us position, prioritize and value exploring the space of possibility. Many MCH challenges are generational in scale.</i></p> <hr/> <p>New Frame: What would you do if you had a generation to get the change you most desire?</p> <p>Mindset Shift: Think like an investment portfolio manager. Invest at least some of your resources in high-opportunity investments.</p> <p>New Frame: What is the cost of doing what we know doesn't work well?</p>		

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<p>Putting the Decision Off Repeatedly</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Procrastination is a cover for something else... which is usually fear.</i></p> <p>Mindset Shift: Take the time to uncover what the fear is about. What assumptions you are making about what will happen if you make a mistake?</p> <p>Tip: Add more structure around the process. Go slow, get lots of coaching.</p>		
<p>Relying on Higher Ups to Make Decisions</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>It certainly is easier to rely on others to make the tough decisions. Know that they don't see what you see. Be bold.</i></p> <p>Tip: Revisit the structure of how decisions are made. Reconsider what method will work best for this particular decision. Articulate who will decide, who will provide input.</p> <p>Mindset Shift: How is playing it safe serving the goals you have set forth? How might it be limiting?</p> <p>New Frame: We are all leaders with our own evolving sphere.</p>		

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<p>Hiding Behind Process and Procedures To Avoid Making A Decision</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>We may use our own system barriers to justify why we can't take ownership of making a decision. It protects us from making a mistake.</i></p> <p>Tip: If the decision is important, it is worth backing it up and questioning the current structure/process/procedure.</p> <p>Mindset Shift: We are often guilty of building our own cages. Ask yourself and others how current structures are serving you/hindering you from making decisions.</p> <p>New Frame: It is healthy to continuously assess if structures, processes and procedures are serving us and if they are not-change them!</p>		
<p>We Don't Have Consensus So We Can't Move Forward</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>We often assume that we need to have everyone in agreement to move a decision forward. There are many other possible ways to make a decision that are fair and productive.</i></p> <p><i>What is the cost of not moving forward? Who/what does delaying hurt?</i></p> <p>Tip: At the beginning (or even in the middle- to clarify) discuss what the process will be for making decisions. Document the process, and demonstrate how perspectives were taken into consideration.</p> <p>New Frame: While we would love to always be able to accommodate all perspectives that is not always possible. Getting clear on what is most important can help.</p> <p>New Frame: Decisions related to complex challenges change and evolve over time. Framing the decision as "at this point in time/ at this phase of the work" allows for flexibility.</p>		

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<p>Past Bad Decisions Haunt Me</p> <p>ME WE</p> <p>1 1</p> <p>2 2</p> <p>3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Turn "Haunting" into TEACHING. In what way did past decisions go badly? What exactly were the bad consequences? (Staff were frustrated, I felt shame at a stakeholder meeting, needs of the population weren't met). What can you learn going forward?</i></p> <p>Tip: Explore WHY a past decision is still haunting you.</p> <p>If we prioritize feeling safe in our decisions, the cost is in opportunity to innovate and change.</p> <p>Mindset Shift: If your ultimate goal was realized (even if there were bumps along the way), was it really a bad decision?</p> <p>Every big decision is an opportunity for learning. Instead of being haunted by past negatively perceived decisions.... What opportunity for learning and evolution did the experience provide that can be of help now?</p>		
<p>I Worry About Being Seen as Wrong or Stupid</p> <p>ME WE</p> <p>1 1</p> <p>2 2</p> <p>3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Oh good, this means you are human. Hard decisions often stir up emotions of anxiety and stress. All normal.</i></p> <p>Tip: Return to process and prioritize transparency.</p> <p>If your decision-making process involved ample opportunities for learning and feedback you can rest easy.</p> <p>If your choice is in alignment with your personal and team/ organizational values you can rest easy.</p> <p>If you build in opportunities for reflection, feedback and iteration then you are inviting people to show you blindspots and areas for improvement.</p> <p>New Frame: Shift your thinking to one of appreciation for this input as it will strengthen the ability to move forward positively.</p>		

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<p>Going With What's Familiar</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>We all tend to have our go-to people to give input into decision-making. When like-minded people sit and generate solutions (instead of ideas) it limits options considerably.</i></p> <p>We limit our options when we "stake" ourselves to what has worked in in the past.</p> <p>Tip: Look at emerging and best practices from across the country, and from different sectors.</p> <p>Tip: Use Design Thinking tools to refocus entirely on your customer's "Job To Be Done."</p> <p>Mindset Shift: Is my frame too narrow?</p>		
<p>Deferring To The Loudest Person in the Room</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>In collaborative work it is important to be aware of how interpersonal dynamics influence collective decisions.</i></p> <p>Tip: Ensure that facilitation is designed in such a way that all voices are heard. Be strategic and intentionally allow a loud or dominant voice to share early and then give them a job to be done (help with facilitation). Structure activities where only asking questions is allowed for a certain period of time or listening and providing written feedback is the method of choice.</p> <p>Mindset shift: Articulate that we have differences in expression within the group and the group agreement is to value all perspectives no matter the personal style.</p>		

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<p>Seeking Out Ways to Validate Our Original Thought</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Believing you already know the right choice limits your ability to consider information to the contrary.</i></p> <p>Mindset Shift: Actively seek out new information, and be open to it. Stay curious. Ask "what do you see? How would your idea work?"</p> <p>Flexible leaders think about their personal and collective thinking...and consistently try to find ideas and solutions that push and question their own assumptions about what FEELS right.</p>		
<p>I Know Too Much/I'm In Too Deep</p> <p>ME WE 1 1 2 2 3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Innovation is easier the less we know.</i></p> <p>Tip: Actively pursue perspectives of those not entrenched in the work. Try to reality check ideas and options with fresh perspectives and then ask them... what else?</p> <p>Mindset Shift: Adopt the "beginner's mind." Allow yourself to come up with really bad ideas.</p> <p>Occasionally developing scopes of work to loosen and build in flexibility into existing ways of doing things is the scope of work that will open the gates for improvements.</p>		

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<p>The Stakes Feel Too High</p> <p>ME WE</p> <p>1 1</p> <p>2 2</p> <p>3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Ask yourself why? Is it because the population need is so critical? Funding is at stake? Years of invested work could be at risk? Unknown consequences?</i></p> <p>Be assured that if the stakes feel high it is likely because the work is high impact. This confirms that your efforts thus far are on the right track.</p> <p>Mindset Shift: Connect to positive impact. Build in lots of opportunity to learn, reflect and iterate as you go along. Allow flexibility to shift if necessary and minimize risk.</p>		
<p>Everything Is In Flux</p> <p>ME WE</p> <p>1 1</p> <p>2 2</p> <p>3 3</p>  <p>High Priority</p>	<p><i>Do we ever really know how things will roll out? Accepting the state of uncertainty is a step in the process of being able to make good decisions and planning during disruption. Light the first few steps, not the whole stairway.</i></p> <p>Mindset Shift: Have coffee with uncertainty- what would you ask it?</p> <p>Would you ask for clear parameters? Is that the right question?</p> <p>New Frame: How can we phase our work such that there are lots of mini mileposts along the way, so we can revisit decisions and tweak process?</p> <p>How far can we go towards implementation without knowing all the parameters for resources (yet)?</p> <p>Mindset Shift: How can we plan in a way that is flexible enough to accommodate shifting resources?</p> <p>Tip: Map a few likely scenarios. Make some guesses that narrow what you will plan for.</p>		