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## Are Diamonds a Girl's Best Friend? Working Toward a Support System for Sexual Misconduct in Baseball

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## **Abstract**

Anyone who experiences and wishes to report sexual misconduct should be supported and have resources available to them. The problem of practice addressed in this organizational improvement plan is the deficit of structures and supports for reporting sexual misconduct at Baseball X (a pseudonym), resulting in ineffective and inefficient reporting and investigatory processes. This plan is focused on analyzing Baseball X through multiple lenses and frameworks to identify potential solutions to this problem. To resolve this issue, the best solution is to embed strategic and intentional support systems into the organization and its culture. The theories of power, systems, and feminism that underlie Baseball X and this issue are explored, and change is viewed through a combined authentic and servant leadership lens. Baseball X's organizational context is examined through Bolman and Deal's four frames, Quinn's competing values framework, Deszca et al.'s change path model, and Nadler and Tushman's congruence model. Change implementation is guided by the plan, do, study, act model in alignment with the change path model. Communication and knowledge mobilization plans are also identified and outlined.

*Keywords:* baseball, sexual misconduct, ombuds, advocacy, competing values framework, change path model

## **Executive Summary**

This organizational improvement plan is an effort to work toward a support system for sexual misconduct in the baseball industry, specifically at an organization given the pseudonym “Baseball X” to protect its anonymity. The plan explores details about the organization, the change efforts desired and needed, and the leadership intended to address the issue. Details about why this work is important and required are shared, as is a personal connection to the work and how that relates to agency for the change.

The first chapter of this organizational improvement plan introduces the problem of practice: Baseball X’s deficit of a support system for reporting sexual misconduct, and the organization’s correspondingly ineffective investigatory processes. Details about my position in the pursuit are shared, as a consultant to the organization and former employee, as well as my personal lens statement and views of the world. Context is offered to the organization through the theoretical frameworks that underlie the entire organizational improvement plan, with a focus on feminist theories, systems theories, and theories of power. Baseball X’s background is considered, and its values, vision, and mission are described. The organizational structure and leadership are also analyzed.

Further in this chapter, the leadership problem of practice is discussed, as is the plan to address it by combining authentic and servant leadership theories, with potential for an adaptive approach if and as needed. The organizational state, and the ways this problem have been reinforced within it, are further amplified. The envisioned future state of the organization and the vision for change are outlined. The gap between the current state of the organization and the envisioned state is also discussed.

The first chapter also frames the problem of practice through structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 1991), with attention paid to organizational culture. The chapter also explores the guiding questions that have emerged from the problem of practice and culminates with a leadership-focused vision for change. That vision

is to mitigate the difficulties for victims of sexual misconduct who endure the reporting and investigatory processes of Baseball X. Priorities for change are considered, and the requirement of Baseball X's leaders to ensure success throughout the change process is specified.

The second chapter of the organizational improvement plan discusses my leadership approach to the problem of practice in more depth. Authentic and servant leadership approaches are discussed further and identified as appropriate for this organizational improvement plan. The chapter also develops a leadership framework for understanding change. It is based on a foundation of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010), implemented through a combination of the four-step change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) and the congruence model for organizational change (Nadler & Tushman, 1977) as a diagnostic tool, complementing the early stages of the change path model. The organizational change is analyzed through these frameworks to ensure the selection of an informed change path that is equitable and ethical.

Organizational change readiness is addressed in the second chapter and assessed through Deszca et al.'s (2019) questionnaire to diagnose that readiness. Change barriers and change drivers are introduced and discussed in this chapter, and Baseball X's commitment to change is further discussed. Multiple potential strategies and solutions to attempt to resolve the problem of practice are posited in the second chapter, and their benefits and challenges are compared. A support system of ombuds and advocates is proposed to have a significant potential impact, address the problem of practice in collaboration with organizational change drivers, and align with my leadership approach and framework for leading the change process. As such, it is established as the preferred solution to close the chapter.

The third and final chapter of the organizational improvement plan builds on the findings from the analysis of the organization, information about the need for change, and the state of readiness of Baseball X. It presents the change implementation plan, examining the way the plan fits within the overall organizational strategy and structure, how the plan will lead to

improvements for social and organizational actors, and how it will promote equity and social justice. It also suggests a strategy for communication, using multiple mediums to effectively communicate the change process. Communication will take place through individual conversations between change agents and other organizational members, formal presentations to executive leadership, organizational emails, and regular organizational meetings, with potential to engage the public through members of the media and various media outlets.

The third chapter further offers a method for monitoring and evaluation, including manufacturing engagement and regular feedback. The plan, do, study, act model (Deming, 2018) is used in conformity with the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019), identifying affiliated timelines with each stage of the process. Goals are also identified for each stage, as well as plans for monitoring and evaluation throughout those stages. Climate surveys are identified as a significant resource in both monitoring and evaluating the change initiative. The third chapter further considers how the transition from the current state to the desired state will be managed, and how stakeholder reactions to change will be understood. Supports and resources for implementation are also outlined. The final chapter concludes with next steps and future considerations beyond this organizational improvement plan, including assessing the impact of the solution and proposing broader organizational climate surveys.

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**List of Acronyms**

PDSA	Plan, Do, Study, Act
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Adaptive leadership:** An avenue for leaders and followers to connect to face problems and find solutions together (Heifetz et al., 2009).

**Authentic leadership:** A style allowing leaders to lead from their hearts, set high levels of ethics and morality, and work beyond their own personal interests for the greater well-being (George et al., 2007).

**Conservative culture:** An organizational culture that offers predictability to organizational members, finds overall success in the organization's endeavours, searches for certainty, avoids change, and advocates for the status quo (Al-Khatib et al., 2021).

**Double-loop learning:** Taking a critical look at underlying assumptions, norms, and objectives; detecting errors; and questioning the underlying policies and goals of the organization, as well as its own program (Argyris, 1977).

**Feminist theory:** A theory that questions gender inequality and seeks to effect change in areas where inequalities create power inequities (Ferguson, 2017).

**Innovative culture:** An organizational culture that adopts innovation, adapts, responds to environmental variables, and supports employees in their own innovation (Botelho, 2020; Padilha & Gomes, 2016).

**Power theory:** The view that power is a behavioural attribute that can modify the behaviour of other individuals within a decision-making process (Lukes, 1986).

**Servant leadership:** A philosophy in which leaders aim not only to serve, but also to inspire and motivate others around them to serve, both within and outside the organization (Greenleaf, 1970).

**Sexual harassment:** Unwelcome "advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature [in the workplace]" (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d., para. 1).

**Sexual misconduct:** “Conduct of a sexual nature or conduct based on sex or gender that is nonconsensual or has the effect of threatening, intimidating, or coercing a person” (Covenant College, n.d., para. 1).

**Systems theory:** The study of systems as they relate to one another within a larger, more complex system (Stroh, 2014).

**Transformative research paradigm:** A framework centering the experiences of marginalized communities, including research on the power differentials that have led to marginalization, associated with actions designed to mitigate disparities (Mertens et al., 2008).

## **Chapter 1: Problem Posing**

Throughout the first chapter of this organizational improvement plan, I posit the problem of practice of a large entity within the baseball industry, given the pseudonym “Baseball X” to protect its anonymity: Baseball X’s lack of structures and supports for reporting sexual misconduct, and the correspondingly ineffective investigatory processes. I share details about my position in this pursuit, as a current consultant and former employee of Baseball X, along with my personal lens statement. This chapter offers context to the organization through the theoretical frameworks that underlie this entire organizational improvement plan, with a focus on feminist theories, systems theories, and theories of power. I explain the leadership problem of practice, viewed through a combination of authentic and servant leadership theories, with potential for an adaptive approach. This chapter frames the problem of practice, looking at it through structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, with attention paid primarily to organizational culture. This chapter also explores the guiding questions that have emerged from this problem of practice and culminates with a leadership-focused vision for change. But before the desired change can be understood, details about the organization and this pursuit are pertinent.

### **Positionality and Lens Statement**

In the examination of my positionality and lens statement, I clarify my personal leadership position with Baseball X. Also discussed in this section is my view of the world and my personal leadership approach. Throughout this section and the entire organizational improvement plan, I make evident my alignment with feminist values and the fight for equity.

My experiences working in baseball are widely varied and have offered me several perspectives. I have worked within the industry in numerous roles and for an array of different organizations, as a reporter, statistician, director of communications, director of baseball operations, and more. Beyond the positions I have held, my experiences in baseball also include (a) unreported sexual harassment and assault, from receiving inappropriate messages, to being

the subject of sexist comments and jokes, to being inappropriately touched; (b) informally reported sexual harassment, from the creation of hostile work environments to quid pro quo requests; and (c) formally reported sexual assault, engaging in a workplace investigation with Baseball X regarding an incident I shared with the organization. Unfortunately, these experiences are neither unique to me nor to the baseball industry (Archie, 2022; Luther & Wertheim, 2020; Rosell et al., 1995; Strang et al., 2022; Vijayasiri, 2008). Other industries have made policy improvements to remedy sexual misconduct issues (Buchanan et al., 2014; Caggins, 2022), and their work and research can be used to achieve change within Baseball X.

Though sexual misconduct can be difficult to define, it often encompasses notions of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse (Abboud et al., 2020). Sexual misconduct covers a wide range of inappropriate, unacceptable, and unprofessional behaviours that might be physical, verbal, or visual (Abboud et al., 2020; Clark, 2011). Physical sexual misconduct can include touching, fondling, kissing, penetration, and any other contact that has the intention of sexual arousal (Abboud et al., 2020). Verbal sexual misconduct involves sexual conversation, and visual sexual misconduct often involves the showing or sharing of pornography (Abboud et al., 2020).

Often, victims hesitate to come forward about their experiences with sexual misconduct due to hierarchical position and existing power imbalances (Yang & Katz, 2020), the prevailing thinking of men that exists in a male-dominant industry (Acker, 2012; Westman, 1992), and founded fears about the risks of reporting, retaliation, disbelief, blame, personal and professional costs, and of being ashamed (Bergman et al., 2002; Fitzgerald & Swan, 1995; Foster & Fullagar, 2018; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Pershing, 2003; Rosell et al., 1995; Vijayasiri, 2008; Willness et al., 2007). When reporting, there is often an absence of awareness of the policies, procedures, and investigatory processes (or lack thereof, in some circumstances), and victims can become compelled into an improvised education of them (Peirce et al., 1998).



The nature of this problem of practice and my background with Baseball X present a unique alignment of interests. After I made a formal report of sexual misconduct to Baseball X and the organization concluded an investigation into the misconduct, I reached out to Baseball X to discuss a proposal for specific organizational policy improvements. Baseball X accepted the proposal, and I further suggested an ongoing consultancy relationship as those policies are considered, altered, implemented, and monitored. My insights and experiences with Baseball X's policies and procedures allow the organization a helpful perspective to which it does not otherwise have access. Those experiences have also guided the focus for my research and work in this organizational improvement plan. In that regard, I offer both knowledge power (Deszca et al., 2019) and influence power (Smits & Bowden, 2015) to the organization within this plan. My knowledge power reflects my understanding of how things operate within Baseball X to get things done, relating to the ways the formal processes work and how power and influence really manifest within the organization (Deszca et al., 2019). My influence power provides me the respect of those in the organization who are willing to be led through the change process by this organizational improvement plan and the research within it because of the expertise and credibility that I have regarding the nature of the change required (Smits & Bowden, 2015).

The initial focus of my doctoral pursuit was centered around the gender disparity in the baseball industry, particularly in leadership positions. That focus shifted after my reporting and investigatory experience offered me a personal glimpse into a more specific area of need. I realized that organizational support throughout the reporting and investigatory processes could have positive effects not only for anyone who uses those processes, but also for Baseball X. The lack of a significant support structure, as well as any specific feedback loop on organizational processes, are significant gaps at Baseball X, and I hope that my experience and relevant research can help to bridge those gaps.

In my consultancy with Baseball X, I will work in partnership with the organization for change and will approach this work using a transformative research paradigm. This paradigm

will assist in pointing my research toward more inclusive outcomes, offer a way to extend the meaning of traditional ethical concepts to reflect ethical considerations more directly, and help me challenge the injustices perpetuated by the status quo (Mertens et al., 2008). A transformative research paradigm will guide my work in reconstructing the existing system while maintaining focus on increased social justice. Using research from similarly situated industries, with insights from my experiences with Baseball X, my aim is to serve the greater good within Baseball X with a combination of authentic and servant leadership approaches as the foundation for my work.

Leaders, as all others, bring their own worldviews into everything they do (Ivey et al., 1997), and particularly into their leadership. A worldview is the lens through which individuals understand and perceive their own experiences and the world around them (Ivey et al., 1997). In my own leadership, my worldview leans liberal and liberal feminist, and tends to be critical in nature. I align with a liberal worldview because it encompasses a belief in progress and change, it takes a skeptical view of tradition, it shares an optimism in the human condition, it focuses on promoting human rights, and it emphasizes incentives (Plazek, 2012). I align further with liberal feminism because it opposes inequitable treatment of women and argues that women have the right to freedom in intimate sexual and reproductive matters (Baehr, 2013). I also tend to take a critical worldview in imagining a better future (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). A liberal view tends to be more humanistic and supportive of a higher morality than the law (Plazek, 2012), whereas a critical focus sees the world as collective groups of individuals aiming at social transformation, with varying degrees of power to influence or be influenced (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). For a critical theorist, obligations to individuals are inadequate because often such commitments are operationalized, enforced, or ignored in power dynamics that are organizationally implicit and systemic (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). Each of these pieces to the puzzle of my worldview align with my approach of amalgamating authentic and servant leadership, remaining true to my goals (George et al., 2007), undertaking the moral responsibility to see future improvements, and

being committed to making the world a better place (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Although this organizational improvement plan is focused on structures and processes, it also emphasizes an awareness of the resulting culture where the process is dysfunctional. The key educational piece is not limited to a focus on process, but rather includes the cultural shift that involves an organizational learning process.

My optimism for the human condition has led to my belief in progress and change (Plazek, 2012), and without that mindset, this organizational improvement plan would not exist. My skepticism of the traditional notions of men and women that have led to the power imbalances I have seen throughout the baseball industry align with the ideology of classic liberal feminists' views of equity (Baehr, 2013). This critical view also lends to a focus on human rights (Plazek, 2012), particularly through my pursuit of support structures for anyone who reports sexual misconduct. Because storytelling and perspective sharing can be catalysts for cultural change (Evans, 2010), my consultancy and combination of authentic and servant leadership will provide the necessary incentives to motivate change at Baseball X (Plazek, 2012). My primarily liberal worldview fuels my desire to work within the traditions of baseball and to bring about progress and change to begin building better traditions.

My critical worldview lends itself to the opportunity to question why things are the way they are, and to understand the power dynamics at play within existing issues (Edwards & Ritchie, 2022), which is my aim throughout this organizational improvement plan. Critical thinkers often acquire intellectual resources like background knowledge and knowledge of key concepts to explore the issues that they are looking to resolve (Bailin et al., 2010), and the aim is that the relevant research and partnership with Baseball X, accompanied by my personal experiences, will help push for resolution. Viewing problems critically can allow consideration for social contexts in which injustices persist and challenge the status quo (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011), which is necessary for this problem of practice. Critical thinking is often furthered by having a grounding in ethics, which can encourage the willingness of critical thinkers to consider

multiple perspectives (Edwards & Ritchie, 2022). My worldview underlies the way in which I perceive the problem of practice and aligns with the way I hope to lead the change process.

My experiences initially led me to an authentic approach to leadership and further allowed me to intertwine ideas stemming from servant leadership into a broader approach. Authentic leaders are passionate about their purpose, consistently demonstrate their values, and incorporate their hearts—and brains—into their leadership (George et al., 2007). Authentic leaders do not compromise when their values are tested (George, 2003) and are guided by their morals toward a better future, modelling development behaviour for followers (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Servant leaders are guided by their morals and conscience, beginning with the primary desire to serve others, followed by a conscious choice to aspire to lead (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Because authentic leaders are committed to themselves and their own beliefs, they can build trust with others (George & Sims, 2007) and establish enduring and meaningful relationships (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). The servant leadership approach similarly aspires to be the difference between leadership that works and leadership that endures (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

Sharing my personal experiences has become an important piece of my work and my understanding of how the research of other similarly characterized organizations and industries relates to baseball. In this way, my authentic leadership approach (Shamir & Eilam, 2005) aligns with my underlying theoretical lens incorporating feminism, power, and systems, as well as with my chosen change lens of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010). My personal experiences have helped me discover the purpose of my leadership and have fostered a way to effectively advocate for change (George et al., 2007). They have allowed me an opportunity to collaborate, through consultancy, with influential people in positions of power within Baseball X (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), and they are evident within my research and proposed solutions.

Through a servant leadership lens, in the second chapter of this organizational improvement plan, I propose solutions for implementing change. It is also through this lens that

I accept the risk of failure along with the chance of success throughout the process (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Authentic leadership alone is unlikely to be sufficient to produce and inspire the desired change, but in combination with a servant approach, and the assistance and commitment of Baseball X's executive leadership team (Nadler & Tushman, 1990), it is a significant step in the right direction. I realize that I will likely be required to consider additional perspectives to operate as a consultant within the organization, and adaptive leadership (Boylan, 2018), which invites leaders and followers to face problems and find solutions together (Heifetz et al., 2009), provides another potential approach. It likewise aligns with a transformative research paradigm as well as with my own values.

My own values and experiences have led me to pursue change within Baseball X. I have been driven by a worldview that is primarily liberal, but also feminist and critical. My aim is to use authentic and servant leadership through my consultancy role with Baseball X to implement this organizational improvement plan. The context of the organization, within which this change is envisioned, is further described in the following section.

### **Organizational Context**

This section explores the broad context of Baseball X. It offers insight into the background of the organization and describes its values, vision, and mission. It also outlines the organizational structure and leadership. Further, this section explores theories of power, feminist theories, and systems theories as the underlying framework for this organizational improvement plan.

The entire baseball industry can be and has been a difficult environment for many women who have worked in it (Lee, 2021; Wagner, 2021), and Baseball X is no outlier to those experiences. The industry is a prestigious place to work, and the organization is a desirable workplace to represent within it. Those factors combine to make it difficult to see, realize, and understand the sexism and microaggressions of sexual harassment and misconduct that have persisted to become repetitive and increasingly aggressive over time (Radke et al., 2016).

It can often be easier to ignore underlying characteristics of industries and organizations that allow the persistence of such behaviours than to act against them (Acker, 2006; Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). Factors increasing the difficulty include the predominance of men, a hierarchical organizational structure, and a history of forgiving inappropriate behaviour (Brown et al., 2020; Buchanan et al., 2014; Davidi, 2021; Kane & Disch, 1993; Ring, 2019; Rosell et al., 1995; U. S. Department of Defense, 2017; Wagner, 2021; Yang & Katz, 2020). As gender inequality has persisted over time, any progress seemingly made has continued to emphasize the “otherness” of women, neutralizing men as the default norm (Ringblom & Johansson, 2019, p. 340.) The interests of men and ideas of masculinity have been built into the organization, along with the subordination of women (Acker, 1992; Lansu et al., 2019; Sayce, 2019). Women represent only 20% of Baseball X personnel, with an even smaller percentage in leadership, so seeing the organization, its processes, and its values through the lens of men comes almost naturally (Acker, 1992).

Each of the aforementioned factors contributes not only to the organizational culture (Schein, 2010), but also to the existence of sexual harassment within it (Cooper, 2017) as well as to workplace sexism and diminishing job satisfaction (Rubin et al., 2019). Other male-dominated, highly hierarchical organizations include but are not limited to the military, police, firefighting, football, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) organizations (Brown et al., 2020; Buchanan et al., 2014; Kane & Disch, 1993; Rosell et al., 1995; U. S. Department of Defense, 2017; Yang & Katz, 2020). Because of these connections between the characteristics of such organizations and Baseball X, I share the organizational context through these researched similarities. This research is supplemented with anecdotal baseball industry experiences outlined in the media as the best organizational insights available, as well as with my own firsthand experiences.

## **Broad Contexts of the Organization**

Baseball X consists of a central office that oversees dozens of organizational members. Across its entities, Baseball X comprises nearly 12,000 full-time front office and on-field employees (Baseball X, n.d.). Among that group of employees, 80% are men and 71% are White (Baseball X, n.d.). Within Baseball X's central office, there are almost 450 full-time front office and on-field employees, with slightly better diversity numbers (Baseball X, n.d.). Among the employees in the central office, 68% are men and 66% are White.

## **Values, Vision, and Mission**

The organization's mission aims to support an inclusive culture and offer meaning to baseball fans and communities, and its vision is to be a responsible member of those communities as well as the sport of choice (Baseball X, n.d.). As an organization, Baseball X espouses the values of people, culture, and community, and its members have their own directives to serve public interests. Although Baseball X is concerned with the public's perception and general interests, it is committed to building an inclusive environment based on pillars of belonging, acceptance, communication, respect, and leadership (Baseball X, n.d.).

## **Organizational Structure**

Even though its functions and structures are overseen by executives within the central office, Baseball X is also accountable to stakeholders, including fans and various investors, who can have political connections. Leadership and decision-making within Baseball X are influenced by numerous factors including financial considerations, public perception, and accountability to its array of communities. Organizational priorities are set with importance on both the political and social demands of stakeholders, which can increase the complexity of responsibilities and challenges for executive leaders.

## **Organizational Leadership**

The hierarchical structure of Baseball X is a combination of a bureaucratic or orthodox organization and a professional organizational structure. Baseball X retains a formal hierarchy,

with characteristics of a bureaucratic structure including specialization and differentiation under a single authority (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011). Baseball X is overseen by its highest-ranking executive, who is delegated the role after a vote of entity owners. The role is not attached to any tenure or designation of time; rather, it is related to job performance and the overall success of the organization.

In bureaucratic organizations, and in Baseball X, formal authority is related to the ranking and prestige of positions, not necessarily the person who sits in those positions (Mechanic, 1962). Both bureaucratic and professional organizations share characteristics of having elaborate structures and processes, with comprehensive systems of formal regulations to govern all aspects of those structures (Kärreman et al., 2002). This is a functional system of organization in some respects, yet this bureaucracy can lead to the creation of compartmentalized areas across the organization, which can result in a lack of communication, a deficit of collaboration, and an inadequate feedback loop (Argyris, 1977). These characteristics at Baseball X have led to the current problem of practice. Assigned leaders (Northouse, 2019) within the organization have been given structural power under their rank or positional title. Because of the bureaucratic and professional hierarchical structure of Baseball X, decision-making is often understood to be the responsibility of the highest-ranked or -positioned leaders.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The deficit of structures and supports in place for reporting sexual misconduct at Baseball X results in ineffective and inefficient reporting and investigatory processes. Theories of power, feminist theories, and systems theories lay the foundation for understanding the issues, and for working toward change. Each theory is applicable on its own, but together they are intertwined into the understanding of the theoretical foundation of the problem.

#### ***Theories of Power***

Sexual misconduct, particularly when it takes place in the workplace, is an issue of power, primarily patriarchal power, with men exercising power over women (MacKinnon, 1989;



Wilson & Thompson, 2001). The wielding of power in this way is particularly evident in organizations with key characteristics similar to those of baseball: gendered institutions that are highly hierarchical and historically lenient in punishing inappropriate behaviour (Acker, 1992; Cooper, 2017; Ring, 2019; Yang & Katz, 2020). Power in organizations can come strictly from a hierarchical structure (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011), from the structures and systems that the organization is built upon (Lukes, 1986), and from the organizational culture, based on the thoughts, beliefs, and values of organizational members (Schein, 2010). In both the baseball industry and at Baseball X, power surfaces at all those levels and is at the very least partly responsible for the prevalence of sexual harassment in the industry (Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021).

### ***Feminist Theories***

Feminist theories oppose thinking in binaries, because it is too simplistic to think of one thing or the other—men or women, for example—as the only options (Ferguson, 2017). Instead of limiting options for thought, feminist thinkers can multiply the categories of sex, detach the notion of reproduction from sex, and challenge the social construction of sexual identity (Poovey, 1988). Feminist theories most often challenge oppression with the aim of working toward justice (Ferguson, 2017). Many times, they are rooted in storytelling, with women giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010) and being required to share their personal details. This is because the prevailing narratives that exist come from gendered thinking (Acker, 1992), a male point of view (Westman, 1992), an emphasis on women being the “other,” and men being the default norm (Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). It is a perspective that men often mistake for being the absolute truth (Ferguson, 2017). Though this organizational improvement plan delves into the research of industries and organizations with similar characteristics to Baseball X, it leans heavily on the storytelling of women in baseball, mostly for lack of scholarly literature on the specific subject matter. I share stories from women in the baseball industry found within mainstream media, along with similar issues from other industries, my own personal

experiences, and the proposed notion of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010). The change path model, including the awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization phases of change (Deszca et al., 2019), presents the stages through which these stories can be used to work toward an improved future for the organization and all those within it. They will be most prevalent throughout the awakening stage, where giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010) can be used as a tool to engage with the stories and divulge them to create urgency for action with Baseball X's executive leadership.

### ***Systems Theories***

The baseball industry and Baseball X work within formal structures with specific goals, as well as formal rules and roles (Millett, 1998). This formality might allow for predictable success in implementing the organizational improvement plan, using the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019). The underlying informal structures, such as the organizational culture, are also systems upholding the status quo (Millett, 1998; Stroh, 2014), as well as the power imbalance and inequity. The issue is systemic, not to be simplified as an outcome of certain policies or attitudes, but instead as a result of interconnected processes that are part of a larger system creating meaning (Powell, 2010). To consider implementing proposed solutions to combat the systemic injustices experienced by women (Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021), the baseball industry needs to engage in double-loop learning (Millett, 1998), not only receiving information but also considering the underlying goals and policies (Argyris, 1977). Organizational members need to call into question the culture (Davidi, 2021; Schein, 2010; Wagner, 2021) and look at patterns over time rather than singular events (Powell, 2010). Baseball X's issues with sexual harassment are a result of a systemic imbalance of power, inequity, an organizational culture promoting and perpetuating the problem (Lee, 2021; Powell, 2010), and the objectification of women (Kane & Disch, 1993; Lee, 2021; MacKinnon, 1989; Willness et al., 2007).

Baseball X is a male-dominated, highly hierarchical organization with a history of forgiving bad behaviour. Theories of power, feminism, and systems underlie the problem of practice within this organization. The next section articulates more clearly exactly what that problem of practice is.

### **Leadership Problem of Practice**

The problem examined in this organizational improvement plan is Baseball X's deficit of structures and supports in place for reporting sexual misconduct, resulting in ineffective and inefficient reporting and investigatory processes. Further, this problem includes the beliefs that reinforce the current structures, understanding that any new structures and supports will need to address the implicit narrative that supports them. This section details the current organizational state and the ways this problem has been reinforced within it. It further explores the envisioned future state of the organization and begins to outline what the vision for change will entail.

My aim is to use relevant research from industries and organizations that share characteristics with Baseball X, accompanied by my own experience, to improve the existing system through a combined authentic and servant leadership approach. Because my agency within Baseball X is as a consultant, working with executive leadership will be crucial, and the support of that leadership for this proposal for change will be a catalyst for initiating and implementing the change. Evidence that this issue exists within the baseball industry and Baseball X has most often been chronicled through mainstream media coverage of women sharing experiences of victimization (Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021). The effects of reporting sexual misconduct include but are not limited to fears that it might not accomplish anything, potential retaliation, disbelief, blame, isolation, exclusion, personal and professional costs, embarrassment, shame, and humiliation (Bergman et al., 2002; Fitzgerald & Swan, 1995; Foster & Fullagar, 2018; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Pershing, 2003; Rosell et

al., 1995; Vijayasiri, 2008; Willness et al., 2007). So, what changes can be made to help support victims of sexual misconduct who wish to report and mitigate the risks of reporting?

### **Current Organizational State**

This problem of practice is reinforced by Baseball X's institutionalized, formal, bureaucratic, and professional hierarchical structure, as well as its conservative organizational culture. They create barriers to its employees' ability to adopt innovative strategies. Conservative organizational cultures tend to resist change and gravitate toward the status quo (Al-Khatib et al., 2021), often driven by bureaucratic management (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011). Though a conservative culture is the best descriptor of the current organizational state, Baseball X has also shown some progress toward becoming an innovative organizational culture, even if only in the support of this organizational improvement plan and its collaboration with me in my consultancy role.

Innovative organizational cultures adopt innovation, adapt, respond to environmental variables, and support employees in their own innovation (Botelho, 2020; Padilha & Gomes, 2016). Though conservative and innovative organizational cultures appear juxtaposed (see Table 1), Baseball X is poised to transition through the change process to embody attributes of both, and aspects of both will be necessary as Baseball X implements change. Ideally, Baseball X would embrace its conservative organizational culture in areas such as offering predictability to members of the organization, seeking certainty, and finding overall success in its endeavours, while moving toward an innovative organizational culture in supporting networks built within the organization, focusing on both internal and external knowledge, and measuring innovation over stability (Al-Khatib et al., 2021). Most important, this organizational improvement plan anticipates the transition of Baseball X to an innovative culture that supports and encourages change throughout the change process and accepts new ideas without resistance.

**Table 1***Comparison of Conservative and Innovative Organizational Cultures*

Variable	Conservative organizational culture	Innovative organizational culture
Predictability	There is predictability.	There is no predictability.
Organizational search	Searches for stability.	Searches for renewal.
Competency focus	Focuses on core competencies.	Focuses on broad competencies.
Rate of success or failure	High success rate.	High failure rate.
Organizational support	Supports organizational hierarchy.	Supports organizational networks.
Surprises	Avoids surprises.	Promotes the existence of surprises.
Knowledge focus	Focuses on internal knowledge.	Focuses on internal and external knowledge.
Perspective on change	Avoids change.	Encourages and supports change.
Measurables	Measures stability.	Measures innovation.
Search focus	Searches for certainty.	Searches for mystery.
Perception of risk	Encourages non-risk taking and discourages risk taking.	Encourages risk taking.
Focus on new ideas	Resists new ideas.	Accepts all ideas presented.

*Note.* Adapted from “Conservative Culture, Innovative Culture, and Innovative Performance” by A. W. Al-Khatib, M. A. Al-Fawaer, M. I. Alajlouni, & F. A. Rifdi, 2021, *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 14(3/4), p. 678 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-10-2020-0224>). Copyright 2021 by Emerald Publishing.

**Envisioned Future State**

Baseball X must become more effective and efficient in its support and structures for reporting practices, which will require innovative strategies and interventions. This process will depend on a significant shift from a conservative organizational culture to an innovative organizational culture, the latter being the ideal setting for high performance in a changing environment (Liao et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2018). Within an innovative culture, motivation is

stimulated through support and encouragement to innovate (Botelho, 2020; Padilha & Gomes, 2016).

The vision for change within Baseball X includes a future with improved support systems that will serve to dismantle the existing power imbalance for women, encourage the reporting of sexual misconduct, and support women through that experience. This process involves the support of senior leaders at Baseball X, indicative of at least the beginning of an intentional culture shift from the top of the organization. This further implies that sexual misconduct will begin to be dealt with more appropriately throughout the organization. Within this vision, my organizational improvement plan will work with Baseball X's current policies, and its executive leadership, to provide consultancy on improvements and additions. The gap between the current policies and the desired state is not extensive, but incremental changes could realize immense impacts. In the organization's current state, there is a lack of transparency of the process, as well as support in acquiring an understanding of what the reporting process might entail, should someone wish to endure it. There is also a deficit of support throughout the investigatory process once a report is made. To reach the desired state, the leadership team and I will work toward an improved organizational culture through the expansion of structural supports.

From the current organizational state to the envisioned state of the organization, significant proposed are changes on the horizon. The aim of the change is to resolve the issue of a lack of structures and supports in place for reporting sexual misconduct, correcting the ineffective and inefficient reporting and investigatory processes. Ideally, this change will be a catalyst for further cultural improvements as well. The following section outlines this problem of practice in more detail, through Bolman and Deal's (2017) four-frame approach.

### **Framing the Problem of Practice**

The organizational problem of practice is the deficit of supports for those who report sexual misconduct within Baseball X, and the poor investigative practices that result. The issue

is underpinned by feminist theories in its focus on women in baseball and the gender inequality that exists. That inequity relates to theories of power and the existing imbalance within Baseball X. The imbalance persists because of the structures in place, with systems theory explaining the organizational structures: structures that were originally built by and for men, relating again to feminist theories.

What has been created is a system of imbalance that ultimately harms women, within a conservative organizational culture that has created, sustained, and perpetuated the problem. Within the conceptual framework for this problem (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), utilizing Bolman and Deal's (2017) four-frame concept of the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, my aim is to use the research within my organizational improvement plan to create feasible and desirable change within Baseball X. Bolman and Deal (1991) developed the frames out of a desire to reconcile their opposing worldviews and to better understand leadership through each frame. The authors disagreed on what, how, and whether to teach particular ideas, and inductively developed the frames to work together and capture different strands in the organizational literature (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The frames complement and complete one another, both theoretically and at Baseball X (see Table 2). The frames can be used as references to help define differing situations, understand how they relate, and determine appropriate action to be taken (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

### **The Structural Frame**

This frame focuses on how the accomplishment of organizational goals can be directed and facilitated (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Baseball X has made numerous public commitments to the goals that this organizational improvement plan hopes to accomplish but has otherwise disjointed pursuits. Goals are often shifted based on the timing of the baseball season and the priorities in the moment, without much flexibility for additions for the goal-pursuing agenda. Competition tends to exist between goals, which can shift priorities, but is not necessarily favourable to the goals that this plan is seeking to achieve.

**Table 2***Reframing Leadership*

Frame	Leader as	Leadership process	The role of the frame in relation to Baseball X and the other frames
Structural	Social architect	Analysis, design	The structural frame is needed (a) to improve processes through structure and coalitions at Baseball X, complemented by work within the political frame to form coalitions among individuals; (b) to determine organizational fit, which is also completed through the human resource and political frames; (c) to create roles within the organization, which is similarly completed through the human resource frame; and (d) to address shifting goals; the political frame does this in a complementary way.
Human resource	Catalyst, servant	Support, empowerment	In addition to determining organizational fit and creating roles within Baseball X, the human resource frame relates to the dynamics among organizational members. The structural and political frames are complementary in addressing relationships, particularly relating to power dynamics. The human resource frame also addresses the way male-dominated environments are characterized by gendered behaviour, symbols of masculinity, and male superiority. Both the political and symbolic frames complete this notion, addressing the superiority and the symbols related to masculinity.
Political	Advocate	Advocacy, coalition-building	In addition to forming coalitions, determining organizational fit, and addressing shifting goals, power dynamics, and male superiority, the political frame also looks at political leaders as advocates. Although advocacy as a role is a primary goal of the change implementation plan, advocacy <i>for</i> the plan and enthusiasm for the change is what the political frame addresses, along with the structural and human resource frames.
Symbolic	Prophet, poet	Inspiration, framing experience	The symbolic frame complements and completes the above pieces. The focus of the frame within Baseball X is primarily on organizational culture, which embodies elements of the other frames.

*Note.* Adapted from “Leadership and Management Effectiveness” by L. G. Bolman and T. E.

Deal, 1991, *Human Resource Management*, 30(4), p. 511 ([https://doi.org/10.1002/](https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930300406)

[hrm.3930300406](https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930300406)). Copyright 1992 by John Wiley & Sons.



Structural leaders value information, offer clear direction through their leadership, hold people to account for their results, and use new policies and rules to try to solve organizational problems (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Baseball X has shown that it values the information that this organizational improvement plan is exploring by entering into a consultancy partnership with me. The hope is that new policies, further discussed in Chapter 2, will be implemented because of this exploration, and further that the organizational will be accountable for the results of that policy implementation.

### **The Human Resource Frame**

The human resource frame centres around people within the organization and the relationships that exist between and among them (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Human resource leaders value relationships and feelings among organizational members and assume that organizations that meet the basic needs of those members will work better than those that do not (Bolman & Deal, 1991). This frame has the most relevance to this proposal and to the problem of practice, with the dynamics between men and women, and the existing power imbalances between people, at the core. Male-dominated environments rely predominantly on relationships among men, the gendered thinking of men (Acker, 2012; Rubin et al., 2019; Westman, 1992), and the notion that those environments are often characterized by gendered behaviour, symbols of masculinity, and male superiority (Acker, 1992, 2012; Rubin et al., 2019; Willness et al., 2007). Each of these factors complicates the relationships among people within the organization and affects this frame in particular.

### **The Political Frame**

This frame also deals with power dynamics and conflicts, in addition to the notion of coalition (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Amid a highly hierarchical structure, power will always be at play, but its effects are exacerbated because of the job gender context within Baseball X and the predominance of men within the organization (Baseball X, n.d.). Professional conflicts exist among the priorities of the organization, but the goal is to form a coalition based on both the

individual and group interests to dismantle the barriers to reporting sexual harassment, and the deficit of supports when doing so.

Political leaders are advocates and negotiators who value realism and pragmatism (Bolman & Deal, 1991). They spend time creating coalitions and negotiating compromises, while networking and building a base of power (Bolman & Deal, 1991). As further explored in Chapter 2, advocacy is a key piece of the desired change. Because of my agency as a consultant to Baseball X, I will also look to networks and coalitions of cooperating organizational members who are enthusiastic about the change to aid in its implementation.

### **The Symbolic Frame**

Although organizational culture is a factor among each of the frames, it fits most appropriately under the symbolic frame and is notably a significant predictor of sexual harassment (Bergman et al., 2002; Buchanan et al., 2014; Vijayasiri, 2008; Willness et al., 2007). Organizational culture is defined by the values and beliefs of the people who make up the organization, formed by the principles, ideologies, and policies allowed over time as organizational members experience various changes and outcomes, adapt to their environments, and solve problems (Schein, 2010). Not only is culture a predictor of sexual harassment, but it can enable the prevalence of such behaviour and impede victim willingness to report (Bergman et al., 2002; Buchanan et al., 2014; Schein, 2010; Street & Gradus, 2007).

Another male-dominated, highly hierarchical institution that has been historically forgiving of bad behaviour is the military (Mercier & Castonguay, 2018; U.S. Department of Defense, 2017). Anecdotally, military research findings are strikingly similar to the experiences of women in the baseball industry that have been shared in the media, as well as with my own experiences. Buchanan et al. (2014) focused on the prevention of sexual harassment in military environments, noting the importance of organizational culture and the ways individuals perceive their workplace policies, procedures, and practices. The authors shared that because of the male-dominant environment that persists within the military, there might be resistance to

change among members of the organization, particularly regarding attitudes toward women (Buchanan et al., 2014). This idea is one that extends to baseball (Davidi, 2021; Lee, 2021).

Among the literature relating to environments that share the characteristics of Baseball X, Rosell et al. (1995) studied women in firefighting and found that women were first seen and categorized for their gender and understood as firefighters secondarily. The attitudes of men toward women in their profession included skepticism, hostility, prejudice, and harassment (Rosell et al., 1995), notions that have continued to persist decades later (Cortis et al., 2021; Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). Vijayasiri (2008) found sexual harassment to be a gatekeeping behaviour in the military, noting that women's decisions to file complaints might be correlated with the amount of trust they have in the organization to take complaints seriously and appropriately sanction harassers. The most common sexually harassing behaviours Vijayasiri found within the military parallel those prevailing in the baseball industry, including offensive gender terms, sexual jokes, differential treatment or preference based on gender, extortion or bribery for special treatment in exchange for sexual favours, and threats of retaliation for not engaging (see also Strang & Ghirelli, 2021). Buchanan et al. (2014) found that organizational culture improved when members of leadership worked openly to disrupt sexual harassment practices and modelled respectful behaviour. Improved cultures were further shown to result in reduced rates of sexual harassment and retaliation, as well as better work and psychological outcomes for victims (Buchanan et al., 2014).

This problem of practice is sufficiently outlined by the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2017), and particularly the last frame. The significance of Baseball X's organizational culture is evident within the problem of practice and its framing, and as such, it likely needs to be a focus throughout the change process. The organizational culture will also be apparent as this organizational improvement plan looks to answer the guiding questions that have emerged from this problem of practice, which I discuss in the next section.

### **Guiding Questions Emerging From the Problem of Practice**

To guide the development of an organizational improvement plan to address the problem of practice, it is necessary to identify a set of questions facilitating the inquiry into the organization and to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues underlying the problem prior to developing possible remedies and recommendations for change. In developing this organizational improvement plan, the top priorities for organizational change include leadership, culture, and support. To gain an improved understanding of the problem of practice, it is important to examine the current context of the organization.

The first guiding question examines who has organizational power (Lukes, 1986). Organizational power is important because it can improve both an organization and its leaders (Singh, 2009). It can come from the hierarchy, the organizational culture, and from the structures and systems within the organization (Lukes, 1986). Power can dictate control, the future of the organization, outcomes of conflicts, and the security and prosperity of organizational members (Singh, 2009). Employee-centered leaders who exercise considerable expert power can create supportive work environments and will be required to lead the desired change at Baseball X (Singh, 2009). Negative power can have the opposite impact, with many organizational limitations (Singh, 2009). Determining who has power at Baseball X and how it is being used is an essential component to solving this problem of practice.

The second question developed from this problem of practice asks whose voices are being empowered (Acker, 2006; Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). Baseball X is a male-dominated organization with a prevailing narrative stemming from traditional gendered thinking (Acker, 1992), a primarily male viewpoint (Westman, 1992), and an emphasis on men being the default norm (Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). Interrogating this problem of practice requires further inquiry into the prevailing voices of the industry, as well as questioning whose voices are being ignored. Exploration into the traditions of the industry and perspectives that are understood to be the absolute truth (Ferguson, 2017) will also be required.

A third query stemming from this problem of practice inquires as to what organizational policy changes are possible (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). Baseball X is currently a predominantly conservative organizational culture, and it will need to shift into an innovative culture to allow for change (Al-Khatib et al., 2021) and to motivate the change process within the organization (Botelho, 2020; Padilha & Gomes, 2016). It is a bureaucracy with some professional hierarchical attributes (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011), but it will need to shift further away from being a bureaucratic organization to facilitate the autonomy among employees that will be required throughout the change process (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011).

The final question emerging from this problem of practice asks the following: Using a benchmark of responsive policy, how have other traditionally male-dominated industries or organizations found success in dismantling the existing power imbalances (Cortis et al., 2021), lowering the risk of sexual misconduct for women in the workplace or reducing the perceived risks of reporting due to that inequity? A plethora of research has been done in other male-dominant and highly hierarchical organizations and industries. Their histories with sexual misconduct, its effects, the reporting of it, and the consequences of those reports are well documented (Brown et al., 2020; Buchanan et al., 2014; Kane & Disch, 1993; Rosell et al., 1995; U.S. Department of Defense, 2017; Yang & Katz, 2020). Learning from other industries and their trials, tribulations, and triumphs will aid in the development of change processes and the likelihood of success from this organizational improvement plan.

### **Leadership-Focused Vision for Change**

This section outlines the vision for change, a vision to mitigate the difficulties for victims of sexual misconduct who endure the reporting and investigatory processes of Baseball X. I describe the gap between the current state and the envisioned state of the organization, and alignment with the problem of practice. Additionally, the priorities for change, including the consideration of current organizational leadership and what will be required of Baseball X's leaders, are also discussed.

Leading change is an adaptive and evolutionary process requiring leaders to express a structured and forward-thinking vision to bring people together to work toward a common goal (Northouse, 2019). Developing a goal-driven conceptual framework requires collaboration from organizational leadership members who welcome and share the vision for change, realize and understand the current gap in support structures, contribute to development of change drivers, and communicate them within the organization (Weare et al., 2014). Because of my consultancy role throughout the change process at Baseball X, my leadership approach to change will require significant agreement and participation from organizational leadership.

### **Vision for Change**

Experiencing sexual misconduct, particularly within a workplace setting, impacts victims differently. Victims are often faced with the inevitable decision of whether to report, to their own organizations or to formal authorities or both, weighing the consequences of what might result (Bergman et al., 2002; Fitzgerald & Swan, 1995; Foster & Fullagar, 2018; Gutek & Koss, 1993; Pershing, 2003; Rosell et al., 1995; Vijayasiri, 2008; Willness et al., 2007). Beyond reporting, the investigatory process can be difficult and potentially retraumatizing for victims (Bergman et al., 2002; Foster & Fullagar, 2018; Willness et al., 2007). Going through the reporting and investigatory processes at Baseball X led spurred my desire to find ways to offer supports to others who might want to or need to endure the reporting and investigatory processes in the future, in alignment with my combined authentic and servant leadership approach.

Leading change in a bureaucratic, hierarchical setting as an external consultant adds some difficulty in trying to influence the people and overall leadership within Baseball X to initiate a system of supports throughout the reporting and investigatory processes. In establishing and clarifying my aims throughout the change effort, my vision statement is to ensure that anyone who wishes to report sexual misconduct within Baseball X, or who wishes for transparency and communication throughout the reporting and investigatory processes, has

organizational supports available to them. Baseball X will cultivate a more inclusive environment by realizing these changes and nurturing a system of support.

The envisioned state for Baseball X is to become an organization with an encapsulated commitment to supporting victims of sexual misconduct throughout the reporting and investigatory processes, as well as being an organization that allocates the necessary resources to build and maintain those support systems. An organizational culture of support will ultimately be created and sustained by the executive leadership of Baseball X and will be regularly communicated with employees and stakeholders. Baseball X, as a bureaucratic, hierarchical structure in a systems setting, with relationships viewed through power and feminist theory lenses, powered by authentic and servant leadership with an adaptive approach, will become an example of an innovative, caring, and supportive organization (Amagoh, 2009; Gabriel, 2015).

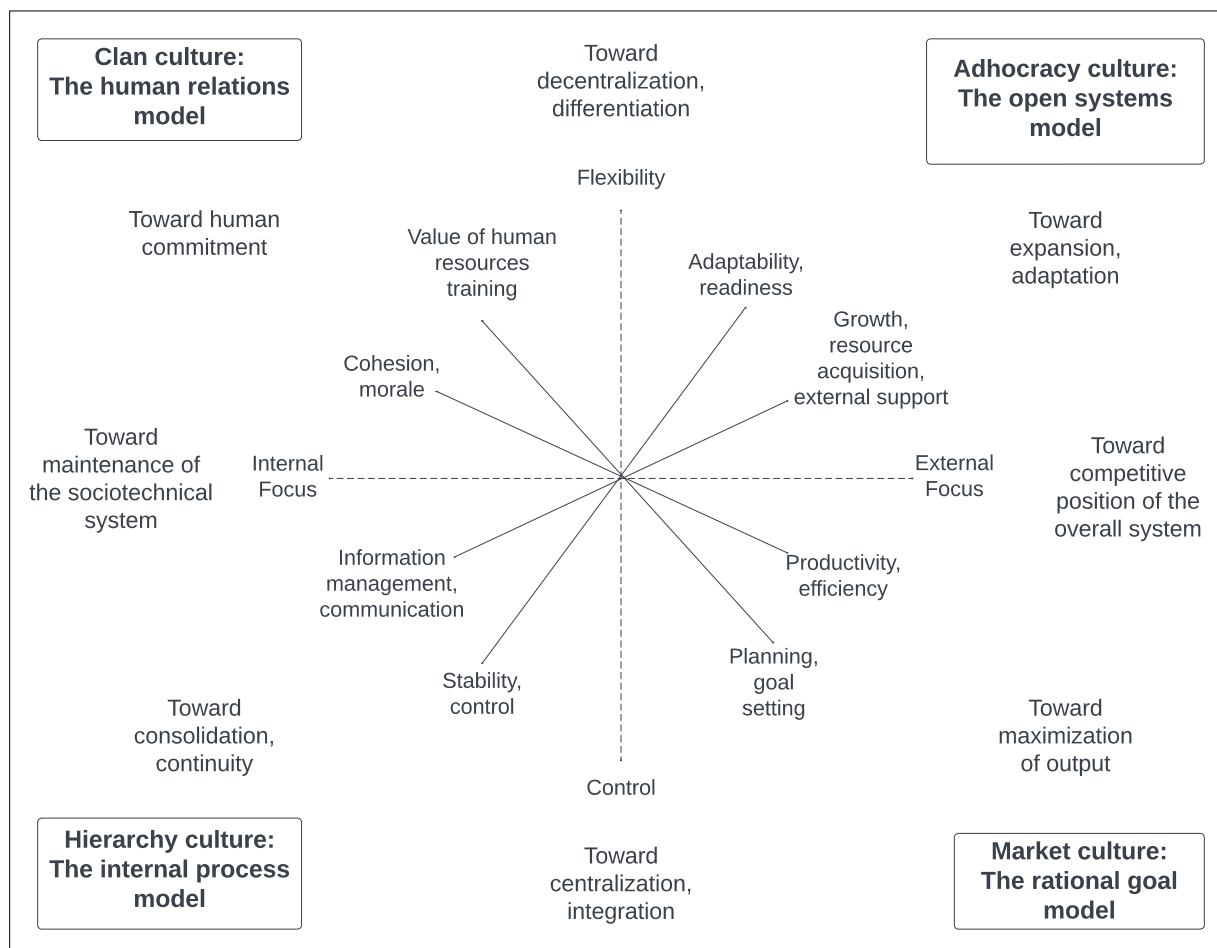
### **Gap Between the Present State and Envisioned Future State**

Determining the existing conditions and culture within the organization, the causes underlying those conditions, the targets for change, and the potential resulting change requires organizational analysis and diagnosis (Quinn & McGrath, 1982). Baseball X's structure follows a systems theory approach. The organization operates through an application of systems thinking, requiring an understanding of the influences of connected systems to achieve a desired result (Lukes, 1986). That structure is complemented by underlying power and feminist theory approaches, with an imbalance of power between men and women (MacKinnon, 1989; Wilson & Thompson, 2001) and a strict hierarchical structure delineating power (Diefenbach & Sillince, 2011). A competing values framework (see Figure 1) can aid in developing a broader understanding of Baseball X and help to define the profile of the organizational culture within it (Colyer, 2000). The competing values framework and its analysis of organizational culture is a useful step in measuring performance, effectiveness, and subsequent diagnosis of organizational change (Colyer, 2000; Quinn et al., 1991). The framework further relates to other competing values already presented in this organizational improvement plan. Like the juxtaposition of

conservative and innovative cultures already presented, elements of a combination of other competing values will be necessary for the organization to function effectively.

**Figure 1**

*Competing Values Framework*



*Note.* Analysis tool adapted from “Organizational Culture in Selected Western Australian Sport Organizations,” by S. Colyer, 2000, *Journal of Sport Management*, 14(4), p. 326

(<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.14.4.321>). Copyright 2000 by Human Kinetics.

The competing values framework identifies four quadrants, creating a spectrum of organizational behaviours and factors, separating them into one of four cultures: clan culture,



adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture (Felipe et al., 2017; Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993). Within clan culture, leaders are like parent figures, the organizational foundation is loyalty and tradition, and the organization places a premium on teamwork and participation (Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993). Adhocracy culture is entrepreneurial, with innovative and risk-taking leaders, and organizational value is rooted in being a product or service leader (Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993). Within a market culture, the organization is results-oriented, with an emphasis on winning and competitiveness, and leaders who are hard drivers, producers, and competitors (Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993). Hierarchy culture is a formalized and structured place to work, with formal rules and policies holding the organization together, and leaders taking pride in being good coordinators and organizers (Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993).

Baseball X's organizational culture is primarily hierarchical, though it is also results-oriented and shares qualities representative of a market culture. In its current state, Baseball X's strongest tension within the competing values framework is a conflict between stability and control versus flexibility and change: it is an organization built on its traditions and maintaining the status quo (Ring, 2019), often displaying resistance to change (Lee, 2021). Adhocracy culture is an important prerequisite for success in innovation (Felipe et al., 2017; Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993), and the change process will require innovative thinking from the leaders of Baseball X to advance to the envisioned state. Although a balance of competing values is important in maintaining organizational effectiveness (Colyer, 2000), the desired state of the organization is one that allows for flexibility to enable the desired changes, creating stability and control in a way that has not existed previously. Within the competing values framework, this would look like a shift from the internal process model to an open systems model (Quinn et al., 1991), or from the hierarchy culture to the adhocracy culture (Felipe et al., 2017; Hooijberg & Petrock, 1993).

## **Priorities for Change**

The first priority for change is for Baseball X's executive leadership team to fully understand the deficit of supports for those who endure the sexual misconduct reporting and investigatory processes, as well as to glean the impact that providing those support structures can contribute not only to individuals, but to the entire organizational culture. Through my consultancy collaboration with executive leaders at Baseball X, the firsthand narrative of my experience and the accompanying research on this problem of practice can help the organization comprehend the degree and expansiveness of supports required to make an impact.

For organizational change to be successful, Kotter (1995) suggested that it must be rooted in a culture that is embodied by the top levels of leadership. Though the desired change of this organizational improvement plan is also hoped to result in cultural improvements, Baseball X's executive leadership plays an important role in achieving any improvements. Leaders will need to reframe their understanding of the beliefs, values, and assumptions comprising the organizational culture (Schein, 2010) to understand the problem of practice because they will be continually called upon to introduce and implement initiatives for change (Leonard, 2013). It is also important for organizational leaders to embrace the notion of change success (Schein, 2010), because when resistance to change is considered a natural and inevitable conclusion, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Leonard, 2013).

A second priority for change will involve deliberate commitment on behalf of Baseball X's leaders to collaborate and participate in communicating the need for change and the benefits expected from that change. Traditionally, Baseball X has used a top-down approach to share mandates and policies throughout the organization. Typically, within this hierarchical structure, these directives have been geared toward quantifiable outcomes and results. They generally have not served to measure the experience of individuals and what the people within the organization might need to feel supported (Ghiroli, 2021; Lee, 2021).

A pertinent point in the change process is for Baseball X's executive leaders to begin to communicate their commitment to addressing the deficit of support structures for those who endure the reporting and investigatory processes within the organization. Using different means of communication is important to inform employees and others affected by incidents of sexual misconduct of suggestions that have been brought forward for change. Just communicating an investment in finding solutions for this problem of practice may instill hope among the desired audience and encourage others to give voice to their own values and participate in the change process (Gentile, 2010).

### **Chapter Summary**

The first chapter of this organizational improvement plan posited the problem of practice, which is Baseball X's lack of supports for reporting sexual misconduct. It outlined the organizational context within which this problem is based, as well as the underlying theoretical frameworks affecting this context, including theories of systems, power, and feminism. It explored the problem through structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, with an emphasis on organizational culture. Also in this chapter, I presented my personal leadership approach, agency, and leadership lens, as well as questions emerging from the problem of practice that have guided this organizational improvement plan. Finally, the vision for change was shared, from the current to envisioned state of the organization, highlighting the priorities for change. The following chapter delves deeper into the envisioned change, describing the leadership approach to the change and the framework for leading the change process. The second chapter also addresses organizational change readiness and posits strategies and solutions to address the problem of practice.

## Chapter 2: Planning and Development

In this planning and development chapter of the organizational improvement plan, my leadership approach is discussed in more depth. This chapter also develops a leadership framework for understanding change and analyzes the organizational change to select an informed change path that is equitable and ethical. Organizational change readiness is addressed and several potential strategies and solutions to attempt to resolve the problem of practice are posited. The organizational problem of practice, the lack of support at Baseball X for reporting sexual misconduct, is framed by a combination of theoretical tools for leading the change process: Gentile's (2010) notion of giving voice to values as a curricular tool to mobilize change, Deszca et al.'s (2019) four-step change path model, and Nadler and Tushman's (1977) congruence model for organizational change as a diagnostic instrument. Using both authentic and servant leadership, this combination of approaches allows me to apply my own experiences to the appropriate research methodology to lead the necessary change and pursue equity. Giving a voice to those who are not often heard (Gentile, 2010) and sharing my experiences with Baseball X is what began the awakening stage for the organization (Deszca et al., 2019), sparking its agreement to consult and work with me as a leader, as well as to make improvements to its policies and practices.

To embrace the challenge of supporting those who endure the reporting and investigatory processes, a feminist lens is of the utmost importance. Listening to the voices of women (Gentile, 2010) is where a more fulsome understanding of the depths of the problem can begin for Baseball X. Once Baseball X is fully awakened to the issues, it can move through the stages of mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2019), enact change, and embody that change as an organization. The change path model is well suited for a hierarchical organization such as Baseball X and a systemic problem within it. The aforementioned models and leadership lenses align not only with my values but also with the goals of this organizational improvement plan.

## **Leadership Approach to Change**

In this context, I understand leading to include presenting a problem, offering potential solutions and paths to those solutions, presenting reasons why the organization should consider moving in a direction of change, and assisting in the organizational change process. The ideal leadership approach for this problem of practice in this context is an amalgamation of authentic and servant leadership, with secondary room for an adaptive leadership style as needed. Both authentic and servant leadership share many similarities and are complementary in numerous ways. Leaders of both styles are positive, authentic, and bring a self-awareness of work values, emotional status, knowledge, and strength to their leadership (Ling et al., 2017). Authentic and servant leaders share characteristics including integrity, honesty, reliability, and humility, and they act in accordance with high internal moral standards (Ling et al., 2017). The differences between the leadership styles will also be advantageous in working with various people in an array of roles. Authentic leadership is more applicable when addressing both senior leadership as well as those who have experienced or witnessed sexual misconduct in the organization. Servant leadership is increasingly relevant when emphasizing other stakeholders and creating value for a community (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

My role as a consultant working in partnership with Baseball X may entail an additional need for flexibility, and adaptive leadership can complement my chosen leadership blend in that way. Though adaptive leadership is not the preferred approach, its inclusion acknowledges that there are limits to what may be done through authentic and servant leadership, particularly as an external consultant to the organization. Because Baseball X, in its current state, is a conservative, results-driven organization, there may be a need to negotiate change in the early stages of implementation, which may emphasize a need for adaptation.

### **Authentic Leadership**

To address this problem of practice, a combination of leadership is the best approach, beginning with authentic leadership. Authentic leaders share positive values while leading from

their hearts, set high levels of ethics and morality, and work beyond their own personal interests for the greater well-being (George et al., 2007; Toor & Ofori, 2008). They also lead with a genuine and authentic passion for their purpose while demonstrating commitment, devotion, and dedication through their leadership (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Authentic leadership is fundamentally advanced through the development of authenticity, which comprises awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour, and relational orientation (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Awareness involves trusting one's feelings and motives; unbiased processing includes acknowledging and understanding one's private knowledge and internal experiences (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). Behaviour refers to how one acts according to one's own values, and relational orientation depicts valuing one's close relationships and achieving openness with others (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). By building trust with their followers and leaning into what they are passionate about, authentic leaders can inspire and motivate the people around them, creating strong relationships that lead to better working environments (George & Sims, 2007).

Sharing my personal experiences and my passion for an improved, enduring change has become an important piece of my work and my understanding of how the research of other similarly characterized organizations and industries relates to baseball. In this way, my authentic leadership approach aligns with my underlying theoretical lens incorporating feminism, power, and systems (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), as well as with my chosen change framework of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010) using the four-step change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) and the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1977). Personal experiences have helped me discover the purpose of my leadership and a way to effectively advocate for change (George et al., 2007). Those experiences have also allowed me to open the door to conversations with influential people in positions of power throughout the organization (Shamir & Eilam, 2005) and create a partnership through consultancy with Baseball X. An authentic leadership approach alone is unlikely to be sufficient to produce the desired change, but in

combination with a servant approach—and the assistance and commitment of Baseball X’s executive leadership team—it is a significant step in the right direction.

### **Servant Leadership**

Servant leaders aim not only to serve but also to inspire and motivate those around them to serve, both within and outside the organization (Greenleaf, 1970). The most influential servant leaders are often those who can influence others through reason, inspired by passion (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). The servant approach to leadership has been further contemplated to include five factors: an altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). The first factor observes altruism as a desire for positive change that the servant leader is called to inspire in the lives of others (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Emotional healing, the second factor, is a willingness to share in the pain and frustration of followers (Yukl, 2013). Wisdom includes knowledge and the ability to make well-informed decisions, and persuasive mapping allows a servant leader to influence others with rational thinking and conceptualized possibilities for the future (Baldomir & Hood, 2016; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Persuasive mapping is the extent to which leaders use sensible reasoning and mental frameworks, and those who use persuasive mapping well are compelling when articulating future opportunities (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Finally, through individual stewardship, servant leaders feel accountable for the larger organization (Block, 1993). Servant leaders look to organizational stewardship to take responsibility for organizational well-being and the care of the organization’s members (Block, 1993).

Because of servant leadership’s alignment with the cultivation of stakeholder participation in evaluation (Greenleaf, 1977), the approach works especially well with the needs that I will have as a consultant working in partnership with Baseball X. I will be looking to enlist others to help enable the change and serve others throughout that change process. As a servant leader, I will be able to keep the development of the people being served at the focus of the

change (Greenleaf, 1977), while also creating an inclusive, fair, and equitable environment that emphasizes their growth (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Greenleaf, 1977).

An essential part of servant leadership is the establishment of trust (Joseph & Winston, 2005), and multiple factors promote trust in my personal agency to lead the change. Having gone through the reporting and investigatory processes at Baseball X myself builds trust that I understand the realities of the organization's current state. Having also established a renewed sense of credibility with the organization has resulted in an overall sense of trustworthiness in my leadership. My commitment to the change, and serving others through the change, should also instil trust in me as a leader.

### **Adaptive Leadership**

My goal is to realize the desired change through a combination of authentic and servant leadership. Because of my agency, an adaptive approach may be needed. Adaptive leadership is an avenue through which leaders and followers can connect to face problems and find solutions together (Heifetz et al., 2009). The engagement between those leaders and followers is crucial to supporting and improving professional learning through an adaptive leadership approach (Boylan, 2018). If there are any issues throughout the change process, I would likely need to engage in adaptive leadership because the approach allows leaders to keep working to assist people as they confront problems and to quickly respond to the needs of the organization (Boylan, 2018). Adaptive leaders quickly identify challenges within the organization (Heifetz et al., 2009) and work to mobilize, motivate, and focus the attention of followers and organizational members to address those problems (Boylan, 2018). Any requirement of the use of adaptive leadership would be situational, requiring improvisation in shifting to this approach from my leadership blend of choice, but that improvisational ability is a key function of adaptive leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Merging authentic and servant leadership, with room to adapt as a leader, provides the foundation for my framework for leading the change process. Through that framework, I will



combine change theories that complement not only one another, but also my leadership approach, my problem of practice, and my preferred solution. This framework is discussed in depth in the following section, where this foundation of leadership will remain significant.

### **Framework for Leading the Change Process**

My framework for leading the change at Baseball X is based on a foundation of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010), implemented through the four-step change path model (Deszca et al., 2019), and aided by the congruence model for organizational change (Nadler & Tushman, 1977) as a diagnostic tool. Nadler and Tushman's (1977) instrument complements the early stages of Deszca et al.'s (2019) model for change. Both add to Gentile's (2010) underlying theory, allowing for a more holistic look at the change process than each theory would accomplish on its own. Giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010) further emphasizes the underlying cultural aspects that are implicit and necessary to address in the change process.

Whereas the change path model is focused on its four stages of awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2019), the congruence model diagnoses organizational behaviour, outlining inputs, outputs, and the transformation processes that constitute organizational functioning (Nadler & Tushman, 1977). The congruence model provides a general organizing framework for organizational components and has eight basic problem analysis steps: identifying symptoms, specifying inputs, identifying outputs, identifying problems, describing components of the organization, assessing congruence, generating and identifying causes, and identifying action steps (Nadler & Tushman, 1977). The model views organizations as entities made up of pieces that interact with one another, existing in a state of relative balance with each other (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). The different components of an organization might fit well together and function effectively, or a poor fit can lead to problems and dysfunctions, as well as poor performance (Nadler & Tushman, 1980). Nadler and Tushman's (1977) congruence model is based on that balance and functionality, with a focus on

people, tasks, technology, and structure, whereas the change path model further considers those components throughout the change process (Deszca et al., 2019).

The first step of the change path model is an awakening (Deszca et al., 2019), aligning with Nadler and Tushman's (1977) early analysis stages of establishing symptoms, inputs, outputs, and problems, to identify and share dissatisfaction with the current state of the organization. To create a sense of awareness for this change to be implemented, and to assist throughout the change implementation process, one of my goals is to give voice to the values of those who are not often heard (Gentile, 2010). As well, I wish to share research as guidance through the change process, complemented by my own experiences, to offer a glimpse into the organizational culture and insights into what the proposal for change is and why it is necessary. Further reasons for the change have been identified in the first chapter of this organizational improvement plan, viewed through Bolman and Deal's (1991) frames. Public commitments to change from Baseball X were recognized in the structural frame, the political frame emphasized a demand for equity for women based on published reports of incidents within the organization, and issues with Baseball X's culture were outlined in the symbolic frame. Deszca et al. (2019) posited that the first step in the direction of change is recognizing that something is wrong and identifying a need for that change, which often requires someone to speak up and give voice to that necessity (Gentile, 2010).

The awakening stage of the change path model begins with a critical analysis of the organization and recognizes that some of the most powerful drivers for change can originate outside organizations and motivate those organizational improvements (Deszca et al., 2019). One of the factors influencing Baseball X's readiness for change, which I address later in this chapter, and which has already acted as a catalyst for that change, is the outside influence of mainstream media publicizing the victimization of women within the baseball industry (Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021). In this stage, leaders need to gain a complete understanding of what is going on within their own organizations (Deszca et al., 2019),

which might be aided by these public testimonials. This stage includes first-order change, directed at altering the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of individuals involved in the change process (Kimberly & Neilsen, 1975). As a consultant to the organization, my experience can also assist in a deeper organizational understanding. Because I am no longer an employee within Baseball X, I have an added sense of freedom to share information that I might not otherwise have shared with organizational leaders, as well as a different perspective on the internal institutional dynamics.

The second stage of Deszca et al.'s (2019) change path model is mobilization, including communicating the need for change and moving it forward. This stage aligns with Nadler and Tushman's (1977) latter analysis stages of outlining organizational components, assessing fits, generating and finding causes, and pinpointing action steps. Through my authentic leadership lens, within my consultancy role and partnership with the organization, I can help guide a transition to a better future within Baseball X (Gentile, 2010). Gentile's (2010) model of giving voice to values embraces the notion that the more one talks about voicing one's own values, the more comfortable one becomes in doing so. This notion can be extrapolated to include a level of comfort in discussing organizational culture and policies, and how they can be improved. Just questioning the status quo, the existing systems, and the power structures at Baseball X might be the beginning of incremental change (Acker, 1992, 2012; Cortis et al., 2021). What might start out as only a hypothesis, supported by personal experience, can gradually become reality and can assist in propelling organizational change (Schein, 2010).

This secondary stage of the change process requires that the specifics of what needs to change be determined and the vision for change be developed (Deszca et al., 2019). Whereas the initial stage is more cultural, this phase is more structural. As a diagnostic tool, Nadler and Tushman's (1977) congruence model helps to identify what to change and is most relevant in this stage. Organizational leaders need to be engaged in discussions about the change while their participation in the process is nurtured (Deszca et al., 2019). Once those leaders are convinced

that the change is necessary, they must persuade others throughout the organization (Deszca et al., 2019), an idea that aligns with a servant leadership approach. Servant leaders continually serve others and bring other organizational members on board to work towards a greater sense of well-being throughout the entire organization (Block, 1993). The mobilization stage includes second-order change, directed at altering attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs of individuals throughout the organization (Kimberly & Neilsen, 1975).

The third step of the change path model is acceleration, which involves supporting the change by engaging and empowering others through action planning and implementing the change (Deszca et al., 2019). This stage continues building participation in the change and takes various insights through that participation to establish a detailed plan for action (Deszca et al., 2019), aligning with the identification of action steps using the congruence model (Nadler & Tushman, 1977). Bringing in the knowledge and insights of as many organizational members as possible will help support the change as the process continues (Deszca et al., 2019). Using an authentic and servant leadership approach, I aim to engage people in executive leadership positions at Baseball X, those who can aid me in enabling change through our partnership in my consultancy role, to further empower others who would be most helped by the policy improvements.

The fourth and final step of the change path model is institutionalization, which involves a successful evolution into the desired state of the organization and includes monitoring and evaluating the change process (Deszca et al., 2019). I discuss the concepts of monitoring and evaluating the change in detail in Chapter 3, yet one goal in this area is for Baseball X to expand on its current use of organizational climate surveys to develop a regular feedback loop of information to measure the change initiatives that have been implemented. These measurements can also begin to identify areas where future change initiatives might begin (Deszca et al., 2019). Before change can commence, however, the organization must be ready for

the change to happen. In the following section, I measure and assess the organizational readiness for change and identify change drivers to assist with the potential implementation.

### **Organizational Change Readiness**

Even with the most intricate and detailed framework and plan for leading the change process, the organization must demonstrate and share a willingness to implement the change and see it through (Dean et al., 1998). Organizational change readiness requires a resolve for change and the capacity to accomplish the desired result (Diab et al., 2018; Weiner, 2009). Readiness for change is situational (Weiner, 2009) and is generally related to a shared belief among organizational members that the change is needed and that the organization is capable of successfully undertaking it (Rafferty et al., 2013). In addition, a shared organizational belief that the change will have positive outcomes will increase the likelihood that the change will be successfully implemented (Rafferty et al., 2013).

Baseball X has indicated its readiness for change through numerous public statements, coinciding with several punishments handed down by executive level leadership to offenders deemed to have violated its policies for sexual misconduct. These statements are indicative of change commitment from the organization (Diab et al., 2018; Weiner, 2009). In one press release shared by Baseball X to publicly disclose an instance of punitive action dispensed by the organization, the highest-level leader within Baseball X shared an organizational objective to continually create environments in which people feel comfortable reporting without fear of the perceived risks of doing so. The organization has a significant amount of work to do in achieving that goal (Davidi, 2021; Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021; Lee, 2021; Ring, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2021; Strang & Ghiroli, 2021; Wagner, 2021), but it has indicated publicly that it is committed to doing so. Executive leaders at Baseball X have publicly committed to making improvements and to creating safer environments. Those voices amplify the significance of the commitment, as they are the voices of the people who will be publicly and primarily held responsible and accountable for the change.

To measure Baseball X's readiness for change, I used Deszca et al.'s (2019) questionnaire designed to assess organizational readiness. The tool was created for leaders to consider what supports and what constrains change readiness in a given organization (Deszca et al., 2019). It accounts for previous organizational change experiences, support from executive leadership, credible leadership and change champions, openness to change, rewards for change, and measures for change and accountability among its readiness dimensions (Deszca et al., 2019). Each readiness dimension allows for specific questions to be answered with either a positive integer, negative integer, or score of zero. The totals fall within a range of -25 to 50. Deszca et al. identified that a score below 10 indicates that the organization is not yet ready for change; readiness increases as scores increase. The benefits of the tool include its ease of use, offering clear and simple results, and that it can be completed by one member of the organization, or in my case, by a former member acting as an outside consultant. However, for the same reason, this tool is also subjective, relying on the eye of the beholder.

Answering the questions posed in Deszca et al.'s (2019) questionnaire, my analysis of Baseball X led to an organizational score of 14 (see Appendix A). Baseball X had its strongest scores in the areas of executive support and credible leadership and change champions, likely because of my collaboration with executive-level leadership in this organizational improvement endeavour. The areas indicating the most significant need for strengthening the organizational readiness for change (Deszca et al., 2019) are rewards for change and measures for change and accountability. Even though Baseball X's score is relatively low for an organization that is considered ready for change, the responses can be used to identify the areas most in need of improvement (Deszca et al., 2019), and the score may be reassessed over time.

Committing to working in a partnership with me and through my consultancy, Baseball X has demonstrated readiness for change and acknowledged that change is needed in the immediate future. Through this commitment to working in partnership, the organization has essentially started the change process, and when organizational members begin the change, it

indicates that organizational change readiness is high (Diab et al., 2018; Weiner, 2009). When readiness is high, organizational members are also likely to expend more effort, display increased persistence, and engage in more cooperative behaviour (Diab et al., 2018; Weiner, 2009), attributes that will assist throughout all stages of the change process.

### **Change Barriers**

No matter its level of organizational readiness for change, Baseball X is likely to face barriers that are considered common among any organization instituting change. Innovation is a prevalent reason for resistance, as it can pull organizational members out of their comfort zones, and the change can require considerable effort from those members (Alasadi & Askary, 2014). Other common resistors to change include loss of predictability, security, convenience, and relationships (Alasadi & Askary, 2014). Organizational change can require members to adapt, and the time and effort needed for that adaptation might be considered inconvenient (Alasadi & Askary, 2014).

Multiple challenges might constrain the change process at Baseball X, including inaccurate judgments of the acceptance and recognition of the proposed change, a desire to maintain the status quo, or declining momentum throughout the change process (Cortis et al., 2021; Nadler, 1981). The organization has indicated a readiness and commitment to changing now, but momentum has potential to dwindle without as much public scrutiny or if another perceived problem takes priority (Cortis et al., 2021; Nadler, 1981). Both internal and external drivers for change can assist in dismantling barriers to change at Baseball X.

### **Change Drivers**

There are numerous features of the current organizational state that influence and present challenges to realizing the proposed vision for change. As an external consultant working in partnership with Baseball X, my work and research are primarily conducted at a distance from the organization. At the system level, victims and others who endure the reporting and investigatory process are largely excluded from influencing policymaking, system planning,

and efforts toward targeted organizational improvement. That excluded group of people also has few, if any, opportunities to interact with others who are or have been similarly situated. At the executive level, that same affected group is also usually excluded from informational meetings, further policy decisions, and change planning.

Despite those challenges, internal change drivers do exist. The most significant internal change driver includes executive-level leaders at Baseball X who have been working in partnership with me and engaging my consultancy. They have demonstrated a commitment to change, as well as to working for equity within the organization. There are opportunities for increased participation, and the future may hold even more chances for feedback on the reporting and investigatory processes. The organization also has near-unlimited resources and few financial constraints, narrowing the number of obstacles that might arise. However, victims and others who have used those avenues represent an array of experiences and expertise, which can create issues in realizing the change vision.

A significant external change driver is the influence of public perception, particularly of the baseball industry's issues with sexual harassment and misconduct (Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021). This perception can be a catalyst for Baseball X to develop a stronger sense of professional identity, pride, and safety through improved knowledge and support structures. As similar issues have also appeared to be publicly prevalent in other major sports, including football, basketball, and hockey (Archie, 2022; Luther & Wertheim, 2020; Strang et al., 2022), this external change driver might also contribute to enhanced legitimacy for Baseball X as a sports industry leader.

Whereas the leaders at Baseball X are internal change drivers, I am an external change driver through my collaboration and partnership with them as an outside consultant. I am pushing the change effort from the outside cooperatively, using connections within the organization. Similar issues with sexual misconduct and the investigatory processes in other major sports may also be considered change drivers. The National Football League angered



women during a recent investigation for its lack of a victim-centred understanding and approach (Vrentas, 2021). The National Hockey League and Hockey Canada have had continued issues and extended ongoing investigations over a past incident that might have been prevented with different protocols at the time of the event (Strang, 2022; Strang et al., 2022). Female supporters have been harassed and abused at English Premier League and other football matches seemingly without repercussions (Whyatt, 2023). A college basketball team's season was cancelled in 2023 after allegations of false imprisonment, harassment, and criminal sexual contact (Grammer, 2023), and support systems have not been publicly shared. Baseball X can seize the opportunity to be an industry leader and set new standards for support in sports. The current leadership at Baseball X is committed to the change, devoted to working collaboratively, and determined in its commitment to deepening its knowledge and understanding of the problem, through my research within this organizational improvement plan along with my experience.

### **Change in the Context of Equity, Ethics, and Social Justice**

Because the problem of practice at its core is one of systemic inequity and an imbalance of power, the entire organizational improvement plan is shaped and understood within a social justice context. Through this plan and in my role as a consultant, I strive to empower the voices less often heard, consider where power is held within the organization and by whom, and work toward a better future for the greater good. Using Nadler and Tushman's (1977) congruence model with Deszca et al.'s (2019) change path model, by giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010), and by adopting an authentic and servant leadership approach, I will work collaboratively with Baseball X to share the experiences of women, advocate for others, and seek equity within an inequitable structure. As an ethical leader, I am looking at what currently exists along with what is possible (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). This problem falls under the ethics of justice, critique, care, and the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

The professional ethics to consider are those outlined among the existing organizational policies and within the vision for change articulated in this organizational improvement plan. The organization's mission aims for a diverse and inclusive culture, with a goal of having a meaningful impact on people, and its vision includes being a great place to work (Baseball X, n.d.). Despite working toward achieving this mission and vision, much of what has been shared through the mainstream media on these topics does not align with commitments or statements the organization has made (Davidi, 2021; Ghiroli, 2021; Ghiroli & Strang, 2021; Kimes & Passan, 2021; Lee, 2021; Ring, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2021; Strang & Ghiroli, 2021; Wagner, 2021), nor does it align with my personal experiences. This lack of congruency leads to an ethic of critique, where the status quo needs to be challenged by dealing with inconsistencies (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Through an ethic of justice, this organizational improvement plan is one step in a larger process that aims to begin to rectify these wrongs while also identifying and focusing on the morals and values that are the keys to doing so, opening eyes and minds to the existing inequities (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

The ethic of care uses trust and loyalty to empower those who have been disempowered (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). This idea is centered around learning how to listen to others (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016), aligning with a central tenet of my change framework of giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010) and my combined authentic and servant leadership approach. As change is implemented and a platform provided for organizational members who have not had opportunities to share their values, there will be a need for the ethic of care. This ethic will require organizational actors to listen and be considerate of what they are hearing and will be necessary in working to challenge the status quo (Cortis et al., 2021; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016).

As an ethical leader, I am continually working to evaluate and affirm my personal values (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). As solutions are posed to address the problem of practice in the following section, they should be viewed through an ethical lens and evaluated at least in part

based on what is possible (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). Solutions should align with the ethics of care, justice, critique, and the profession (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016), as well as with the proposed change framework and my chosen leadership approach. Within Baseball X, ethical leadership can also help the organization fulfill its commitments outlined in its own mission and vision statements (Baseball X, n.d.; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). Baseball X is responsible for each of the outlined ethical areas, and its leadership will be required to understand its ethical responsibilities and work within them as it implements a solution in the pursuit of change.

### **Strategies and Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice**

In this section, three possible solutions are compared and assessed for their compatibility and alignment with factors affecting the problem of practice. The solutions are (a) a minor adaptation to Baseball X's current practices through an extension of existing policies, (b) recommended workplace training and education stemming from climate survey implementation, and (c) a collaborative effort with Baseball X to administer support through ombuds and advocacy programming. The proposed solutions are not alternatives to existing policies but rather are proffered to address the existing gaps and expand or modify current policies, including minor to moderate alterations. These solutions consider my leadership position as a consultant to the organization, the current organizational culture, Baseball X within a systems theory framework, and the desired state after the change effort. Each suggestion is explored in terms of its potential impact, along with the anticipated support for the change and where resistance might emerge. Criteria outlining the most important conceptual pieces for the envisioned future state of the organization are also examined, including whether each solution offers both formal and informal pathways to reporting, incorporates institutional supports for victims, and has clear and open processes offering transparency and accountability. After probing each of the potential solutions, I select one as the preferred option for Baseball X.

### **Solution 1: Expanding Policy Implementation and Awareness**

The first potential solution to address the problem of practice is to extend Baseball X's current employee policies to nonemployees who interact with Baseball X employees. Although Baseball X has policies in place that reference nonemployees, at least in some instances those individuals are not made aware of the policies they might have at their disposal for assistance or protection. This gap is reflective of a pervasive problem among numerous organizations where workers lack general awareness of organizational harassment and misconduct policies (Peirce et al., 1998). In addition, as in many organizations, Baseball X employees are given an employee handbook but are responsible for digesting and understanding hundreds of pages of available information, a task that needs addressing during the onboarding process (Peirce et al., 1998), whereas nonemployees are offered no such resources.

I have worked as a contractor at multiple levels of the baseball industry, and at one point I was a full-time employee of Baseball X. As a contractor, because of the expendable nature of contracting positions, I was unaware of any protections that might have been available to me, where or to whom to report, and what reporting might mean professionally. For full-time employees of entities tangential to Baseball X, clarity is needed for those who encounter difficulties with Baseball X employees. The organization needs to expand its distribution of policies among nonemployees and continually find ways to cite the existence of such coverage to those who are covered (Peirce et al., 1998). Explicit instructions or options for individuals as to whom they should report are suggested, as well as transparency of the entire reporting process for those who might consider it. The efforts must be active, not passive, in engaging individuals and spreading awareness of what is available and to whom (Peirce et al., 1998).

The strengths of addressing this policy gap and modifying existing policies include creating a safer and more inclusive organizational environment. The difficulty of this suggestion is the vast scope of change needed, how far policies can be extended, communication of those policies, and how to ensure and measure that they are working as outlined and desired.

Bergman et al. (2002) found that reporting could be encouraged by clarifying the options of where to do so, mitigating the fears of retaliation, decreasing concerns and fears of the personal costs of reporting, ensuring fair treatment of reports, and providing clear policies and procedures. Evidence that this change might prove effective falls under the perceived efficacy of the policies already in place for those who have access to them, understand them, and have used them.

Although notable for its expansion of processes to all, this solution fails to redress current practices and does not meet the criteria for the envisioned state of the organization. Though formal pathways to reporting exist, informal channels are not addressed in this solution. Institutional supports for victims are included, yet accountability and transparency are similarly not offered through this solution.

### **Solution 2: Providing Educational Resources and Increasing Awareness**

The second potential solution to address the problem of practice is to implement climate surveys and provide sexual misconduct training tools for Baseball X to educate its workforce. Sexual misconduct training effectiveness is extensively related to organizational culture (Goldberg et al., 2019), requiring an understanding of the latter before the former might become efficient. Gathering information to build relevant educational and training resources might be accomplished by implementing climate surveys. In addition, climate surveys could lead to an understanding of where the primary need for education exists (Swartout et al., 2018) and allow for appropriate educational resources to be employed.

#### ***Climate Surveys***

Climate surveys are evidence-based tools measuring sexual harassment and other offenses through anonymous respondent feedback (Swartout et al., 2018). When used effectively, climate surveys can aid organizations in understanding the nature and scope of sexual misconduct that exists, as well as benchmarking progress if used over time (Yang & Katz, 2020). Such surveys can target priority areas requiring victim assistance, direct resources

efficiently and effectively (Peirce et al., 1998), and identify where information and education might be falling short organizationally. Climate surveys should be conducted by third-party entities, and employees need to be continually assured of their anonymity throughout participation to ensure honest answers (Swartout et al., 2018). If Baseball X were to enlist the use of climate surveys, they should aim to extend participation beyond employees. The organization might consider collaborations with contractors or contracting services, outside vendors, journalistic outlets, and other relevant parties to expand survey reach.

The strengths of climate surveys include their ability to raise awareness of issues, particularly when leaders struggle to correctly gauge organizational culture due to significant underreporting of sexual offenses (Swartout et al., 2018). Climate surveys also offer the capacity to gather information anonymously (Yang & Katz, 2020), and they have been used in various capacities by Baseball X in the past, so there is a level of familiarity. As evidenced by organizational responses to stories shared by women in the baseball industry (Adler, 2021; Rosenthal et al., 2021), organizational culture in baseball has not been accurately or adequately understood. As Swartout et al. (2018) found through their implementation of climate surveys, most respondents believed their participation in them to be important and personally meaningful, factors that could provide an incentive for future participants. Weaknesses associated with climate surveys include the necessity of comprehensiveness, resulting in surveys becoming lengthy endeavours, as well as reliance on respondents. Unless participation is mandatory throughout the organization, climate surveys are also likely to exclude those who do not wish to participate because they do not accept or recognize the proposed changes or be subject to bias because there will be heightened engagement from participants with a vested interest (Swartout et al., 2018).

Evidence of the effectiveness of climate surveys has been most deeply explored through their use on college campuses, where they have become useful and reliable tools (Swartout et al., 2018), and demonstrated by the information victims have shared through the media: giving

voice to issues has led to some action (Adler, 2021; Rosenthal et al., 2021). Implementing climate surveys to gather information can aid in mitigating fears for victims, as well as providing a roadmap for future education.

### ***Educational Resources and Training Tools***

Beyond using climate surveys to identify areas of need, tools and resources can assist in compiling information about perceived wrongdoing and help the organization improve by using that information appropriately (Swartout et al., 2018). Training tools must be tailored to their audience. Training alone is unlikely to significantly reduce sexual misconduct in the workplace, but in accordance with other measures it can have a positive effect (Roehling & Huang, 2018). The recommended practice would be to use a combination of training methods to address weaknesses identified in the climate surveys, with educational formats varying over time.

Diverse training methods can have distinct results, but some education is better than none. Preusser et al. (2011) explored the advantages and disadvantages of computer-based and instructor-led training and found that regardless of method, having an instructional course on sexual harassment increased learning. The authors recommended blended education, with computer-based instruction followed by instructor-led training. This combination method can speed up the in-person portion of the process and allow more time for questions, participation, and application of new information (Preusser et al., 2011).

Dobbin and Kalev (2019) found that the most effective method of sexual harassment education was through bystander intervention training, which increased bystander motivation to intervene, confidence in intervening, and actual intervention. The authors found that treating trainees as allies for victims as opposed to potential perpetrators was significant in advancing understanding and preventing predictable future behaviours (Dobbin & Kalev, 2019). Often in workplaces, manager training is focused on offering tools to recognize and address harassment, whereas training of employees is instead focused on bad behaviour (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). This method has less effectiveness than bystander intervention training and can lead to adverse

effects of increasing victim blaming and the likelihood of harassment (Dobbin & Kalev, 2019). Baseball X could reap numerous benefits from the use of climate surveys and a variety of educational tools.

Although this solution offers educational advantages, it does not meet all the criteria for the envisioned state of the organization. It is possible that climate surveys might address both institutional supports for victims as well as create a potential avenue for informal reporting of sexual misconduct. However, formal reporting is not directly addressed in this solution, nor does it offer clear and open processes for transparency and accountability.

### **Solution 3: Implementing a System of Support**

The third proposed solution is a combination of an ombuds program and advocacy system. Formal and informal reporting pathways are both necessary to manage sexual misconduct complaints (Pappas, 2016), resulting in this combined solution. Ombuds would assist anyone who wishes to gain more information before making a formal report. At the same time, an advocacy program would support anyone who moves forward in the reporting process and endures an investigation. This solution is centered around the victims and offers a level of support beyond what was proffered by the aforementioned solutions.

#### ***Independent Ombuds***

Ombuds are a potential avenue for informal reporting channels, offering an option that permits confidentiality. Ideally, ombuds are independent from the organization and outside the chain of command, taking on the task of listening to victims and offering confidential advice (Dobbin & Kalev, 2019). Ombuds programs are used in many organizations as an alternative to formal grievance systems and as a means of responding to the underlying interests that lead to disputes, which are often not well addressed by formal guidelines and organizational regulations (Pappas, 2016). The role of an ombudsperson does not include advocacy. Instead, the ombudsperson offers impartial and informal pathways to victims who are not comfortable going through a formal process or have yet to decide what they are comfortable with (Yang & Katz,



2020). Ombuds would not open investigations or participate in the investigatory process, instead assisting victims in deciding whether that process is something they might wish to pursue (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). Ombuds defuse situations before problems can escalate by helping individuals weigh their options, understand their goals, and improve communication (Pappas, 2016). Ombuds offer a place for individuals to go if they do not know where to turn (Pappas, 2016). Ombuds should also be available to those outside of Baseball X who interact with employees of the organization.

The benefits of providing additional outlets for victims include increasing the likelihood for victims to find an acceptable level of comfort in reporting (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020), allowing victim anonymity and confidentiality (Dobbin & Kalev, 2019), and offering the organization additional information that might provide focus for future education. One possibility for why anonymous reporting pathways do not encourage reporting is because victims want to ensure they can speak with someone confidentially before deciding whether to make an official report (Pappas, 2016), a problem resolved by the ombuds. An ombuds program also offers a victim-centered organizational outlet, in contrast to human resources and legal departments, which often prioritize the organization and are focused on protecting the organization from legal action (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). Ombuds provide confidentiality without putting the organization on notice for the purpose of creating a legal obligation to act (Pappas, 2016). A potential weakness in this proposed solution is that there might be a point at which the ombuds would be legally obligated to share information with the organization. If that were to happen, confidential communications would no longer exist as such. If a report were to reach that point, however, the accompanying advocacy piece of this proposed solution could then go into effect.

### ***Offering Advocacy***

Guttek and Koss (1993) outlined the importance for organizations to be sensitive, to outwardly demonstrate value in female employees, and to offer a supportive supervisor, counsellor, or advocate for victims. Investigators of complaints, human resources

representatives, and members of organizational legal departments should not be considered victim advocates and must not be presented to victims as such. When victims are offered advocacy and complaints are handled appropriately, there is potential to mitigate negative effects, such as lowered self-esteem, job satisfaction, and commitment, and the questioning of one's abilities and reality (Guttek & Koss, 1993).

The strengths of providing advocacy include assisting victims in navigating complex and potentially retraumatizing situations while also offering confidential resources victims can trust and assets that can aid them in seeking other services that might best help them through the investigatory process (Javorka & Campbell, 2019; Maier, 2008). Javorka and Campbell's (2019) research offers evidence of the benefits of advocacy, indicating that it worked most efficiently and effectively when it ensured victim confidentiality and when advocates understood the issues unique to the organizational culture. Difficulties associated with advocacy include additional costs incurred by the organization, ensuring confidentiality between the victim and advocate, and finding professionals who understand the dynamics of the situation and the organizational culture; the latter is a significant factor (Javorka & Campbell, 2019). Although publicly available evidence of the effects of advocacy in organizations that specifically share characteristics with Baseball X is limited, advocacy has generally been shown to have substantial benefits for victims (Javorka & Campbell, 2019; Maier, 2008). Anecdotally, Baseball X has confirmation of the effectiveness of advocacy, with feedback that participant experience in the investigatory process vastly improved when offered an advocate. In the past, an advocate has been provided to a victim toward the end of the process, demonstrating that doing so is feasible for Baseball X, and there is room for advocacy to be a workable solution in helping victims who come forward.

The roles of ombuds and advocates are separate and reactive, and engage victims through different phases of the reporting and investigatory processes. Ombuds offer confidentiality and information to victims who are deciding whether they wish to report sexual misconduct (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020), whereas advocates aid those same victims through the

formal reporting processes. Ombuds can offer only information and do not advocate for victims or for a path to pursue (Dobbin & Kalev, 2020). Advocates may offer advice and are partial to the victim as they assist them through the investigatory process (Javorka & Campbell, 2019).

The third solution meets the criteria outlining the most important conceptual pieces for the envisioned state of the organization. Through ombuds, an informal reporting pathway is created, and advocates are engaged in the formal reporting process. Institutional supports are created through the additional programming. Clear and open processes are outlined to offer transparency and accountability of the processes.

### **Comparing the Proposed Solutions**

Each of the proposed solutions is accompanied by benefits and challenges. Those are weighed in a comparative table (see Table 3), along with the resources that might be required for Baseball X to implement any potential suggestions. The proposed solutions require time, human, and information resources from the organization, though the requirements vary from minimal to moderate. Financial resources are scaled, though considering the resources of the organization, there are little, if any, financial constraints to be considered.

The only solution that does not require additional financial resources is Solution 1, policy expansion. Although that minor adaptation of Baseball X's current policies might create a safer environment, the change would be difficult to implement, monitor, and measure. Therefore, even though I recommend that Baseball X expand its current policy reach, this solution is not further explored in this organizational improvement plan. Solution 2, using climate surveys and training tools for education has the benefit of increasing knowledge and awareness of issues while compiling information confidentially. However, to be effective, a level of specificity, comprehensiveness, and tailoring would be required that would be difficult to achieve. Training and education are also recommended to Baseball X, but providing educational resources is not the best solution for the organization. Instead, Solution 3, a collaborative effort to implement ombuds and advocacy programs through the reporting and investigatory processes, is preferred.

**Table 3***Potential Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice*

Solution	Brief description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Required resources
Solution 1: Minor adaptation to current Baseball X practices through policy expansion	Extending organizational employee policies to nonemployees who interact with Baseball X employees.	Creation of a safer and more inclusive environment.	The scope of change needed and how far policies can be extended, communication of policies, and monitoring and evaluation.	Minimal time, human resources, and information resources will be required, along with insignificant or zero financial commitment.
Solution 2: Adopting training tools and education through climate survey use and understanding	Implement climate surveys and provide sexual harassment training tools for Baseball X to educate its workforce.	Raise awareness of issues and increase knowledge, mitigate fears for victims, gather information anonymously.	Necessity of comprehensiveness, survey reliance on respondents, needs to be tailored to audience.	Moderate time, human resources, and information resources will be required, along with a moderately significant financial commitment, though a minimal portion of the overall budget.
Solution 3: Collaborative effort to implement support through an ombuds program and advocacy system	Merging an ombuds program to assist those who might wish to report with an advocacy system for those who endure the reporting and investigatory processes.	Victim-centered, impartial and informal pathway to information, increased likelihood of finding comfort in reporting, organization can focus future education, can mitigate negative effects for victims, helps victims navigate potentially retraumatizing and complex situations, offers resources.	Confidentiality could potentially create legal issues, and finding professionals who understand the dynamics of the situation and organizational culture could be difficult.	Moderate to significant time will be required, along with a significant human resources effort, significant information resources, and a more significant financial commitment, though still a minimal portion of the overall organizational budget.

*Note.* Adapted from *Building Human and Organizational Capacity in a Small Nonprofit and Human Service Organization Through a Culture of Leadership Development* by A. A. Silver, 2022, p. 59. Copyright 2022 by Adam A. Silver.

Table 3 illustrates the significant strengths of implementing support through an ombuds program and system of advocacy. Most important, this solution employs a victim-centered approach and implements necessary formal and informal mechanisms for reporting. Even though finding ombuds and advocates who understand the organizational culture might be

difficult, it is not an impossible challenge, and the benefits of doing so outweigh this potential hardship (Javorka & Campbell, 2019). Climate surveys, presented in Solution 2, take on an important element of the work in the preferred third solution. This piece of Solution 2 will be used to support the implementation of advocacy and ombuds programs using the preferred solution. The preferred solution is poised to have a significant impact and address the problem of practice in collaboration with organizational change drivers while also aligning with my leadership approach and framework for leading the change process.

### **Chapter Summary**

The second chapter of this organizational improvement plan examined the planning and development of the process. It outlined the amalgamation of authentic and servant leadership as my chosen approach, with room for me to adapt as a leader if my consultancy role begets that necessity. This chapter developed my framework for leading the change process through a combination of the change path model, the congruence model for change, and the notion of giving voice to values, all in alignment with my leadership approach. It also explored organizational change readiness, including consideration of competing internal and external forces that shape change, including equity and social justice. Finally, three potential solutions for the problem of practice were posited in this chapter, and a preferred solution of support systems emerged. The preferred solution is a system of support through ombuds and advocacy programs within Baseball X. The following chapter develops a plan for implementing, monitoring, and communicating the organizational change process. The third chapter also addresses next steps and future considerations.

### **Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation**

The first chapter of this organizational improvement plan offered contextual background about Baseball X as an organization and outlined the problem of practice to be addressed. It also shared my personal leadership approach and insight into my agency as a leader within this context. The second chapter delved into the organization's readiness for change, as well as drivers for the change and barriers that might be encountered along the way. I presented an amalgamation of authentic and servant leadership as an approach to be used within the four-step change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) aided by the congruence model (Nader & Tushman, 1977) for organizational change as a diagnostic tool. The second chapter concluded with the proposed solution for Baseball X to address the problem of practice: implementing ombuds and advocacy programs to support those who have experienced sexual harassment or sexual misconduct to understand and navigate Baseball X's reporting and investigatory processes. Change efforts in the context of equity, ethics, and social justice were also discussed.

This chapter builds on the findings from the analysis of the organization, information about the need for change, and the state of readiness of Baseball X. I present the change implementation plan, a strategy for communication, and a process for monitoring and evaluation. I consider how the transition from the current state to the desired state will be managed and how stakeholder reactions to change will be understood. Supports and resources for implementation are also outlined. I conclude with next steps and future considerations.

#### **Change Implementation Plan**

This section examines how the plan for change fits within the overall organizational strategy and structure. It also explores how the plan will lead to improvements for social and organizational actors, as well as promote equity and social justice. Change initiatives are most likely to fail during the implementation phase (Smith & Mourier, 1999), making it imperative to recognize how this plan aligns with existing organizational strategies and to be specific throughout this section. The change implementation plan outlines roles and responsibilities of

change agents and organizational actors to purposefully transition Baseball X from its current state to one in which support structures, including ombuds and advocates, are in place for those who experience the organization's reporting and investigative processes. The desired state of the organization is a structured system of support, with ombuds and advocacy programs to assist those who experience and report sexual misconduct.

### **Context for Change**

Theories of power, feminism, and systems provide the foundation for understanding issues within Baseball X and for working toward change. The organization relies on its hierarchical structure and relationships throughout that structure to endure. Through this lens, it is expected that many, if not all, organizational members will experience the effects of the change and its implementation. Using an amalgamated authentic and servant leadership approach, while giving voice to values (Gentile, 2010), it is important to cultivate strong relationships (George & Sims, 2007), include and involve organizational members in the change (Kernis & Goldman, 2006), and aim to inspire, motivate, and serve those within and outside of the organization (Greenleaf, 1970). To improve the efficiency and outcomes of the change process, the organization must identify and prioritize stakeholder relationships (Marques Miragaia et al., 2014). Involving stakeholders in creating and supporting the need and urgency for the change is vital.

Using a combined authentic and servant leadership approach to enable and administer the change, the organization's executive leadership team will empower members of Baseball X and give voice to their values (Gentile, 2010). I will also work to empower organizational members in my role as a consultant and change agent, while engaging in the process to implement ombuds and advocacy programs for support throughout the organization's reporting and investigatory processes. To realize this desired solution, it will be integral to cultivate trust in the process throughout the organization while continuing to share my values, reasons, and purpose (Gentile, 2010) as a leader. Servant leaders aim to inspire the lives of others, embrace

organizational well-being, and care for members of the organization (Block, 1993). Those being served are at the focus of the change (Greenleaf, 1970). Authentic leaders demonstrate commitment and dedication (Toor & Ofori, 2008) while building trust with their followers and engaging with their needs (George & Sims, 2007). This leadership approach supports the nature of the proposed solution and will allow me, as a change agent, to engage and empower organizational members throughout the change process.

Considering the resources of the organization, Baseball X has few financial constraints, and those restrictions are not a concern within the change process or this change implementation plan. Baseball X is prepared for the change, has enlisted me as a consultant to advance the process, and scored above 10 on Deszca et al.'s (2019) organizational readiness questionnaire (see Appendix A). Baseball X is ready to begin implementing the change required to address the problem of practice and advance the organizational improvement plan.

### **Managing the Transition**

The proposed solution to the problem of practice requires a reimagining of the roles and responsibilities of Baseball X's executive leadership team, as well as an increase in time spent collaborating with me as an external consultant to the organization. To accomplish this rebalancing, a plan for the transition is needed. Elements of that plan include revising structures to enable the change, crafting responses to the emotional and behavioural reactions of organizational members, sharing information, and reviewing the change process after it has been completed (Deszca et al., 2019). Managing the transition throughout the change process will involve several people in numerous roles, including change agent, change initiator, change implementor, change facilitator, and change recipients (Deszca et al., 2019). Descriptions of those roles, and who will take responsibility for them during the change process, are outlined in Table 4. The role of the change facilitator is the most relevant to the alignment of the process with the change path model, requiring facilitation through each of the model's four stages. My own role is explained in this table, as it will be important for me as a change agent, initiator, and



implementer to introduce and regularly reinforce the messages about the need for change, and to work to incorporate change into the organization.

**Table 4**

*Roles and Responsibilities Within the Change Process*

Role	Description	Who
Change agent	Responsible for advising on the methodology of the change effort, training decision-makers and performers on that methodology, leading the change, and playing any or all roles within the change process. May be in a formal or informal position of leadership.	As an external consultant working with executive leadership at Baseball X, I identify myself as the change leader, who at various points throughout the change process may take on the role of initiator, implementer, facilitator, and even recipient.
Change initiator	Acts as a project manager, ensuring that project activities and duties are assigned and completed, coordinates with leaders and participants, serves as a liaison, identifies the need and vision for change, champions the change, and advocates for the change in the organization.	As the person raising the initial issue in identifying the problem of practice within the organization, I am the initial change initiator. Responsibility for change initiation will become collaborative and shared by executive leadership at Baseball X through the collaborative visioning process.
Change implementer	Does the work, making sure that project activities are assigned and completed. Responsible for ensuring change happens through planning, support, and responding to resistance.	The executive leadership team will be responsible for implementing the change while engaging my assistance as an external consultant.
Change facilitator	Provides oversight, promotes stakeholder support, clears roadblocks, and assists in the change management process by fostering support and providing guidance.	In the awakening, mobilization, and acceleration phases of the change path model, the executive leadership team will be instrumental as change facilitators. In the acceleration and institutionalization phases, the human resources, legal, and investigations department leaders will be essential to the success of the change.
Change recipients	Organizational members and others who are affected by the change, or those who are required to change their behaviour to ensure the effectiveness of the change.	This change will require all recipients to develop new attitudes, mental models, and ways of working with one another. Recipients include executive leadership, leaders across all departments, members of various teams, and anyone who wishes to report sexual misconduct.

*Note.* Adapted from *Partners in Education: Leveraging School Social Workers to Support*

*Transformative Equity and Well-Being in an Ontario K–12 Public School Board*, by S. F.

Burosch, 2022, p. 75. Copyright 2022 by Stefani F. Burosch.

## **Overview of the Change Process**

This organizational improvement plan employs Deszca et al.'s (2019) four-step change path model as the framework for leading the change process. The model's stages of awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization are used as guideposts. Beginning in the implementation phase, the change path model will be accompanied by the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model for effective change management (Deming, 2018). A detailed overview of the change process using both models is provided in Table 5, including the goals of each stage, who will be responsible for accomplishing those goals, and the actions associated with the stages of the models. The proposed time frame is that each of the four phases will take place over consecutive 6-month periods, for a total elapsed time of 2 years for the initial change process.

Within the PDSA model (Deming, 2018), the first stage centres around the plan for change. It includes determining the objective, asking questions, making predictions, and determining the who, what, where, and when of the change (Cleary, 1995). The plan for Baseball X includes the implementation of ombuds and advocacy programs as a means to dismantle the barriers that exist because of the power imbalance for women in baseball (Cortis et al., 2021; Ringblom & Johansson, 2019). In the doing stage of the PDSA model, the change will be carried out, programs implemented, and records of results kept (Deming, 2018). Any issues or unexpected observations will be documented, and the analysis of data will begin (Cleary, 1995). In this stage, there is potential for the use of climate surveys (Swartout et al., 2018) to record measurements and evaluate progress. The study stage of the model allows for complete analysis of the data being measured (Deming, 2018), with the aim to lead to further improvements in the change process. The collected data will be compared to predictions and learning will be summarized (Cleary, 1995). In the PDSA model's acting stage, the organization will consider the measures in place, as well as those that might be deemed necessary or helpful for solutions to remain effective in the future (Deming, 2018). This final stage is the most important for ongoing progress and continual forward movement (Donnelly & Kirk, 2015).

**Table 5***Overview of the Change Process*

Steps of the change path model and plan-do-study-act stages (with affiliated timeline)	Goals of the timeline	Who will accomplish these goals	Associated actions
<p><b>Awakening:</b> January to June (Year 1)</p> <p><b>Plan:</b> Understand the problem and set goals. Determine what data to collect. Gather and use information to predict potential issues, identify considerations, and contribute to the feedback loop.</p>	<p>Within the first 6 months, the short-term goals include getting Baseball X to agree to the use of ombuds and advocacy support programs, designing and developing the support programs, and beginning to write job descriptions and terms of reference for the ombuds and advocates.</p>	<p>Change agent, change initiator, change implementers, and change facilitators.</p>	<p>In partnership with the executive leadership team, I will be spearheading the change within the organization to identify change drivers, host facilitated discussions pertaining the to change, and review the organizational readiness results to encourage discussion, while making the case for support programming. The executive leadership team will maintain a baseline of awareness and evaluation skills, consider the goals of the change process, collectively determine criteria to use to measure readiness for implementation and success, offer input into both the communication plan and the monitoring and evaluation plan, diagnose required resources, and create feedback loops with regular updates.</p>
<p><b>Mobilization:</b> July to December (Year 1)</p> <p><b>Do:</b> Carry out the implementation plan. Document successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Gather, analyze, and share data to inform the change process.</p>	<p>Within the second 6-month period, the medium-term goals include determining the legal obligations and duties of ombuds and advocates, completing those job descriptions, obtaining approval of the job descriptions, beginning the hiring process, and identifying a monitoring and evaluation method for the support programs.</p>	<p>Change agent, change initiator, change implementers, and change facilitators.</p>	<p>In partnership, the executive leadership team and I will seek out organizational members to form an advisory group to establish legal boundaries of the program supports and complete the job descriptions. As an external consultant and change agent, I will continue to engage the executive leadership team within the organization throughout the hiring process, review what has been learned to this point, check in using established feedback loops, and adjust when and where necessary.</p>

Steps of the change path model and plan-do-study-act stages (with affiliated timeline)	Goals of the timeline	Who will accomplish these goals	Associated actions
<p><b>Acceleration:</b> January to June (Year 2)</p> <p><b>Study:</b> Compare progress to date with plan. Note developments and areas of challenge. Analyze data collected and summarize learnings to inform any changes to the plan.</p>	<p>Within the third 6-month period, long-term goals include the implementation of the ombuds and advocacy support programs, communication of the availability of the programming, and the beginning of monitoring and evaluation of the change, using climate surveys to engage change participants.</p>	<p>Change agent, change initiator, change implementers, change facilitators, and change recipients.</p>	<p>Organizational members involved in the change implementation process will conduct action planning and adapt as new learning occurs. Required changes may arise as programs are employed and evaluated. The executive leadership team at Baseball X will share monitoring and evaluation results and will work in partnership with my consultancy to draft a sustainability plan to share with stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Institutionalization:</b> July to December (Year 2)</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Consider what changes need to be made to the system of support to fully resolve the problem of practice. Address those changes and continue full implementation by carrying out the complete development cycle.</p>	<p>Within the fourth and final 6-month period, long-term goals continue to include the implementation of the ombuds and advocacy support programs, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the change, using climate surveys to engage change participants.</p>	<p>Change agent, change implementers, change facilitators, and change recipients.</p>	<p>Working with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, I will help lead change participants through full implementation as a change agent, so long as findings to this point support continued implementation. The executive leadership team will continue to conduct evaluations of progress and results, checking the job descriptions and terms of reference from the advisory group to confirm completion of outlined goals, draft a final report, and present findings from the change process at an organizational meeting.</p>

*Note.* Adapted from *Fostering an Evaluative Culture by Addressing a Breakdown in the Policy Development Cycle* by M. Anderson-

Draper, 2022, p. 74. Copyright 2022 by Michelle Anderson-Draper.

Various goals have been identified throughout the change implementation process that can serve as guideposts for progress and gauges for understanding whether the proposed timeline for change remains achievable along the way (see Table 5). The short-term goals to be achieved during the awakening stage, and within the first 6 months of the plan, include Baseball X agreeing to the use of ombuds and advocacy programs, designing and developing the support programming, and beginning to write job descriptions and terms of reference for the roles of ombuds and advocates. The medium-term goals set out to be achieved within the mobilization stage and the within the first year of the organizational improvement plan include determining the legal obligations and duties of ombuds and advocates, completing the job descriptions for both unique roles, obtaining approval of the job descriptions from the organization, having Baseball X begin the hiring process, and identifying a monitoring and evaluation method for the support programming. The second year of the organizational improvement plan, which includes the acceleration and institutionalization stages of the change path model, includes the long-term goals of implementing the ombuds and advocacy programs, communicating the availability of the programming, and monitoring and evaluating the change, which I discuss later in this chapter. Each of these goals constitutes a necessary step within the implementation plan and serves a dual purpose of ensuring the timeliness of progress throughout.

The preferred solution of employing ombuds and advocacy programs for support throughout the reporting and investigatory processes is complicated. It requires both full engagement with and support from the targets of the change: those who have experienced sexual misconduct and are considering whether to report it. As a consultant, I do not have the agency to position the change as necessary on my own. In collaboration with Baseball X's executive leadership team, however, that agency exists, along with an ability to work toward positive outcomes for individuals within the organization. My amalgamated authentic and servant leadership approach, undergirded by Gentile's (2010) model of giving voice to values,

will be effective in ensuring that various voices are heard and that organizational members feel comfortable participating completely and honestly in the change process.

Because of the resources available at Baseball X, the change process is more about shifting priorities and allocating those resources than it is about finding finances. For the initial steps of the change to commence, the major assets required are time and attention. As a change agent, I will provide dedicated time and energy to the executive leadership team and the change process to drive the implementation, evaluation, and communication, thereby creating a demand for change. As an external consultant, I must recruit a group of allies, including executive leadership members, to partner with in developing and championing the change. Engaging regular feedback will be crucial to the success of the change, as will the support of the executive leadership team and other organizational members.

### **Potential Implementation Issues**

The first two chapters of this organizational improvement plan have outlined that the reason this problem of practice exists is because Baseball X has not prioritized support for or focused on those who endure the reporting and investigatory processes. Working collaboratively with Baseball X's executive leadership will be a necessary piece of institutionalizing the change to ensure that organizational members consider the effectiveness of new policies and offer feedback. As part of the acceleration stage of the change implementation plan, examining the proposed solution can work to address issues and motivate adjustments before fully engaging the change. A monitoring and evaluation plan, a focus in a later section of this chapter, plays a fundamental role in promoting reflection and organizational learning, as well as identifying challenges and highlighting potential solutions for them.

One challenge that may arise throughout the change process is a transition in leadership or turnover in organizational participants, though this is not anticipated or likely. I am an external consultant to the process, and I have cultivated a strong and ongoing relationship with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, but if that team were to change, go on leave, or be

drawn to another issue, success would be difficult. This issue would have to be addressed, if it arose, through discussions with the revised members of the executive leadership team.

Because the benefits of implementing the proposed solution may not be immediately apparent and are dependent on the unfortunate frequency of the experience of sexual misconduct, it may be difficult to garner further support and gain momentum. This change implementation plan requires participants in the reporting and investigatory processes to employ the ombuds and advocacy programs, and there is no guarantee to their regularity or their participation in providing feedback. Frequent and effective communication throughout the organization could help to counterbalance this potential issue, to share results as they are gathered, and to ensure that the work toward positive change continues.

### **Plan to Communicate the Need for Change and the Change Process**

Effective and persuasive communication plays an important role in organizational success in implementing change (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). By communicating and enabling participation throughout the change process, leaders can create an environment that is ready for change, instead of one that requires addressing resistance after change occurs (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Using a theoretically grounded change management communication plan, Torppa and Smith (2011) found that organizational members were more receptive to change and became invested in the success of change when they believed it was needed in the organization, that it was appropriately designed, that the organization could implement it, that leaders believed in the change, and that it might ultimately benefit them. Several key principles outline a sound organizational communications strategy: including message redundancy, using multiple media, including face-to-face communication, enlisting organizational leaders as key communicators, and offering personally relevant information (Klein, 1996; Torppa & Smith, 2011). The organization will need to see its objectives, activities, and communication needs through (a) readying and planning, (b) working through the change, and (c) reinforcing and sharing the change within and outside the organization (Klein, 1996). This section outlines the

purposes of communication and the associated messaging related to the goals of this organizational improvement plan.

Deszca et al.'s (2019) change path model requires communication through the stages of awakening, mobilization, acceleration, and institutionalization within the organization. Through the change path model, communication will focus specifically on organizational objectives, organizational activities, and the communication needs of the organization. The structure for the communication plan will embed the stages of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) into an adaptation of Klein's (1996) model of (a) pre-change approval, (b) developing the need for change, (c) midstream change and milestone communication, and (d) confirming and celebrating the change success. This approach will make the change process easier to understand, the key to any communication plan, with the ability to adapt each stage to the needs of Baseball X. Communication is a critical component of the organizational improvement plan, and given that breakdowns in communication can lead to difficulties in implementation (Deszca et al., 2019), incentivizing effective communication for Baseball X will be important during the change process.

To avoid confusion and create a dominant perspective throughout the organization relating to the change, members of leadership need to create and communicate the desired outcome (Chapman, 2002). Although this organizational improvement plan has begun to articulate a vision for change, members of executive leadership within Baseball X will need to effectively communicate that vision throughout the organization (Gilley et al., 2009). Leaders can improve organizational performance during the change process by increasing awareness through communication and by clearly defining organizational roles in the change process (Gilley et al., 2009). An effective communication strategy should also demonstrate attributes of both authentic and servant leadership. Trust and confidence can be established through communication, which can also build interest in the change initiative (Deszca et al., 2019). An authentic and servant leader can also provide motivation to organizational members by



delivering appropriate messages, as well as by creating ideas and communicating effectively about the benefits of those ideas (Gilley et al., 2009). Passionate and frequent communication can also cut down resistance and provide legitimacy to the change effort (Gilley et al., 2009).

### **Building Awareness of the Need for Change**

This organizational improvement plan seeks to address the lack of support structures at Baseball X for those who experience its sexual misconduct reporting and investigatory processes. By moving to a more supportive structure, an opportunity exists to improve Baseball X's overall organizational culture and performance (Schein, 2010). As an external consultant using a combined authentic and servant approach to leadership, I must work closely with the executive leadership team at Baseball X throughout the implementation of the change to ensure broad and consistent communications, with a focus on both internal and external stakeholders.

The first two chapters of this organizational improvement plan confirmed Baseball X's readiness for change. Successful implementation of the change would support an infrastructure that would allow for purposeful and inclusive change in the future and help organizational members identify change as essential and beneficial. Communicating with and seeking feedback from those who are directly impacted by the proposed change through one-on-one conversations and climate surveys will provide pertinent information for further understanding and potential for modifications in the change process. Building trust with those most affected by the change, primarily those who engage with the proposed support systems, also aligns with my combined authentic and servant leadership approach.

To begin the change, I will start by communicating the change drivers with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, first through individual conversations, ultimately culminating in a formal presentation either in person or online, and then with other stakeholders. Change drivers impacting Baseball X, as described in the second chapter of this organizational improvement plan, include the commitment from executive leaders to working with me as a consultant, myself driving the change as an external leader and consultant, and the influence of

public perception. Promoting the benefits of the change to organizational members and external stakeholders to reinforce success and support the mission and vision of Baseball X can foster acceptance of the change (Deszca et al., 2019). The executive leadership team, with my support as an external consultant, is ultimately responsible for communicating the need for change, creating awareness of the change implementation plan, and communicating with organizational members throughout the process. To build awareness, I will work in partnership with the executive leadership team to establish a communication plan, which the leadership team will present to stakeholders and other organizational members.

### **Communicating the Change**

This communication plan focuses on three aspects of the change. The first initiative is to communicate the reason for the change, as well as what the change aims to achieve. The necessity of the change can be communicated to organizational members and other stakeholders through sharing the desired goals of the change, the change drivers, and the benefits of the suggested change. The change necessity will initially be communicated by me to executive leadership members through individual conversations, followed by a formal presentation, ideally in person. This initiative will then be most efficiently communicated organizationally by email, so that it can reach the widest audience. Following up on the electronic communication, executive leadership should further communicate the reason for change, and its goals, at organizational meetings.

The second initiative is to engage organizational members in working toward achieving the envisioned state of a system of support. Communication must occur frequently, and appropriate messages related to the change process need to be shared with enthusiasm, to maintain widespread organizational participation in the process (Gilley et al., 2009). To engage organizational members, communication will happen informally in person and formally through emails and semi-annual organizational meetings. There is also potential throughout each aspect of the change for the change plan, goals, and progress to be communicated more widely and to

the public through press releases and the engagement of media members, which is a common practice for Baseball X.

The third aspect of the communication plan includes sharing directives to establish the change within the organization over the long term, beyond the parameters of the change implementation plan. This initiative will also be communicated through internal conversations, emails, and meetings, and could be shared further through media outlets if desired. All these aspects of the communication plan require a commitment from the executive leadership team at Baseball X to participate in mutual and frequent communication throughout the change process. This section discusses how communication can be incorporated into the change implementation plan using the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019) and Klein's (1996) adapted model to focus communication at each stage.

### ***Pre-Change Approval Phase***

The pre-change approval phase aligns with the awakening step of the change path model and involves communication to convince executive level leaders of the need for change (Deszca et al., 2019). Communication throughout the awakening stage is focused on emphasizing the need for change and how the change is envisioned, enlisting organizational leaders with the authority to enact the change through that communication. This phase of the communication plan targets the organizational members who have the capacity and capability to influence and approve a needed change (Deszca et al., 2019). It can strengthen the role of those influential organizational leaders as servant leaders who can designate resources equitably and ensure they have the desired impact throughout the change process.

Achievement in this phase coincides with timing, as persistence, opportunism, and the involvement of others at the right time throughout the change is positively linked to successful selling of the desired change (Deszca et al., 2019). Timing has been important in forming a consultancy partnership with Baseball X, as the problem of practice has become increasingly relevant and prominent as our discussions began and have continued. This phase has already

begun in some fashion through the formation of that partnership, but communication through individual and group conversations will be ongoing and in alignment with this plan as it moves forward. As the change initiator at the beginning of this awakening phase, and with the support of Baseball X's executive leadership team, I will work from the organizational improvement plan's framework to continue to heighten awareness about the necessity of the change. It is also important to unite the change and its goals with the organization's goals, plans, and priorities (Deszca et al., 2019).

### ***Developing the Need for Change Phase***

As the need for change is developed, communication is required to explain the issue and to provide a clear and compelling rationale for the change (Deszca et al., 2019). Communication throughout the mobilization stage of the change path model focuses on increasing interest, support, and awareness of the change. Employees need to be reassured, steps of the change process need to be clarified, and a strong and credible sense of urgency and enthusiasm for the change should be generated (Deszca et al., 2019). Communication throughout this phase needs to account for presumptive understandings and challenge misconceptions. Baseball X's executive leadership team and I will lean on Gentile's (2010) model of giving voice to values to clarify organizational roles throughout the process and begin to develop discussions about the organization's values and beliefs, and their alignment with this initiative.

Organizations often have other priorities that arise or consistently exist that can captivate attention, and communication can help pull members back to the urgency surrounding this initiative (Deszca et al., 2019). In this phase, the vision for change needs to be clearly articulated, and the specific steps to be taken throughout the change process should be clarified and communicated (Deszca et al., 2019). Communication in this phase will occur through face-to-face conversations, one or more formal presentations, and emails to organizational members. Recipients of the communication throughout this phase will be more likely to remember the messages if they are simple, unexpected, concrete, credible, and emotional, and if they tell a

story (Birshan et al., 2012). Birshan et al. (2012) recommended stories that include why the change is important to the people who are participating in it, to heighten the sense of purpose and meaning surrounding the change.

### ***Midstream Change and Milestone Communication Phase***

In the midstream change and milestone communication phase, communication will offer specific information about plans for the organization and how things will operate (Deszca et al., 2019). A critical piece of this stage is the piloting of the ombuds and advocacy programs at Baseball X and targeting communication to its intended audiences. Communication will further inform organizational members and stakeholders about the progress that has been achieved to this point, to receive and listen to feedback on organizational attitudes surrounding the change, to identify issues and address any misconceptions, to clarify any new organizational roles or structures, and to continue to foster an environment of support and enthusiasm for the change (Deszca et al., 2019). In this phase, communication will continue informally through individual conversations and group emails, as well as formally during semi-annual organizational meetings.

Throughout the middle phases of the change, people need to clearly understand the progress that is occurring, and change leaders need to have an accurate picture of the attitudes of those who are affected by the change, so extensive communication on the content of the change should be prioritized (Deszca et al., 2019). The internal stakeholders mentioned in the prior phase will take focus in this stage, in addition to external stakeholders, including media, vendors, independent contractors, and others. Members of the pilot project will look to the framework of the organizational improvement plan and Gentile's (2010) model of giving voice to values to communicate with executive leadership. Baseball X's executive leadership team will continue to promote and prioritize communication with stakeholders. As the novelty of the change wears off, maintaining interest and enthusiasm in the change process becomes

increasingly crucial, so communicating enthusiasm and recognizing and celebrating progress are important (Deszca et al., 2019).

### ***Confirming and Celebrating the Change Phase***

This phase involves communication to share successes of the change initiative with organizational members, to celebrate the change, to learn from the change, and to prepare the organization for next steps (Deszca et al., 2019). Successes would include implementation of programming, engagement with the added support systems, the acquisition of organizational feedback, and appropriate responses to that feedback. Throughout the institutionalization step of the change path model, the outcomes of the change will be communicated. To gauge progress, bolster commitment, and reduce stress, celebrations are needed throughout the change process but are focused on in this phase (Deszca et al., 2019). This final phase is also when the entire change experience should be analyzed and discussed, identifying any unfinished tasks along the way and positioning the organization for the next change (Deszca et al., 2019).

### **Knowledge Mobilization**

Knowledge mobilization activities are ongoing throughout the change implementation plan and are prevalent throughout the communication stages. Lavis et al. (2003) described an organizing framework for knowledge transfer that includes five important pieces: (a) message, (b) target audience, (c) messenger, (d) the knowledge-transfer processes and supporting communications infrastructure, and (e) evaluation. Numerous messages and mediums have been outlined throughout the communication plan and are necessary for the success of the change initiative. The target audiences for each of the messages vary but extend from executive leadership at Baseball X to organizational members to external stakeholders. The messengers will not always be the same throughout the process, but this piece will begin with my consultancy and expand to executive leadership as well as other members of the organization. In the knowledge-transfer processes, Lavis et al. indicated that passive engagement is less effective, and interactive processes may be the most compelling, no matter the audience. Evaluation is

further discussed in the next section of this chapter but is relevant to organizational knowledge and decision-making (Lavis et al., 2003).

Communication is a fundamental part of any change (Deszca et al., 2019). Appropriate knowledge mobilization will be used to ensure a significant impact (Lavis et al., 2003). The knowledge mobilization plan is illustrated in Appendix B. This plan recommends frequent and honest communication tailored to divergent audiences and to distinctive communication needs associated with the different stages of change. The next section examines monitoring and evaluation of the plan, delving into tools and measures to track and assess change.

### **Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation**

Aligning with the selected solution in this organizational improvement plan is a collaborative approach to the implementation of a support system for the reporting and investigation of sexual misconduct at Baseball X. Organizational members will be engaged throughout the process through a participative approach (Deszca et al., 2019) presented earlier in this chapter. Change through collaboration and participation requires a monitoring and evaluation framework that can manufacture engagement and solicit regular feedback. A monitoring and evaluation framework offers specific guidelines for regular monitoring and intermittent evaluation throughout the duration of the change initiative (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). Evaluation is the comprehensive undertaking that offers a point of reference for the framework, and monitoring is a segment of evaluation (Markiewicz & Patrick, 2016). In the context of this organizational improvement plan, monitoring will be used to gauge the ongoing progress and results of the change initiative, and evaluation will appraise whether specific outcomes have been realized.

Evaluative tools can assist in building awareness, offer clarity on the change that is emerging, and advocate support and understanding for the next steps and future considerations (Deszca et al., 2019). The change initiative is a process within itself, but it is also focused on changing the organizational culture of Baseball X (Schein, 2010). To assess the effectiveness of

the change, as well as supports and points of resistance, it is crucial to apply monitoring and evaluation throughout the process. Although monitoring and evaluation tools and methods will need to be designed and developed collaboratively with the executive leadership at Baseball X, I offer a template for change process monitoring and evaluation, including potential tools and approaches (see Appendix C).

### **Plan, Do, Study, Act**

As previously discussed, the PDSA model (Deming, 2018) will be employed as a tool throughout the change implementation plan to track the process and its effectiveness. Elements to be tracked include change implementation activities, interest and engagement from organizational members and participants, and the success of targeted outcomes. The PDSA model will help to gauge the appropriate times to progress through the stages of the change path model, from awakening to mobilization to acceleration to institutionalization (Deszca et al., 2019). Combining the PDSA and change path models will help offer opportunities to me, as a change leader working collaboratively with Baseball X's executive leadership, to build engagement with them and other organizational members. It will also allow assessment of the general sentiment around the change initiative to understand when progression through the stages is appropriate.

Though the PDSA model is primarily mirroring the stages of the change path model in this change implementation plan, its cycle can and will occur within each phase as well. The plan is to measure each stage's particular metric with a tool for evaluation as described; the doing involves monitoring the goal of each stage, and then studying and acting based on those results. Aspects of authentic leadership, including leading with a genuine passion for the purpose while demonstrating commitment, devotion, and dedication through leadership (Toor & Ofori, 2008), as well as aspects of servant leadership, including the aim to serve, inspire, and motivate (Greenleaf, 1970), are supported by the PDSA model, aligning with the organizational improvement plan's prescribed leadership approach.



## **Change Path Model**

Aligning with the planning step of the PDSA model (Deming, 2018) is the awakening stage of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019; see Appendix C). Monitoring in this stage will focus on the use of initial climate surveys to assess employees' interest in and engagement with the change process within Baseball X, as well as organizational understanding of the issues being addressed and interest in participating in the change. The progress on both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and survey participant feedback will be shared with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, as well as with me as a consultant. The findings will help gauge organizational attitudes toward the change and implementation process, potentially identifying change drivers and resisters beyond those that have already been identified. Evaluation in this stage will focus on the successful initiation of the advisory group, as well as regular meetings and communicated updates. Throughout this stage and the next, the advisory group will evaluate the endorsement of the change throughout the organization.

In alignment with the doing stage of the PDSA model (Deming, 2018) is the mobilization step of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019; see Appendix C). Although evaluation in this stage will be relatively the same as in the previous stage, monitoring will focus on the design and development of climate surveys for participants in the change progress. These surveys will assess the support programming and gather further insight into that programming's successes and uses. The climate surveys also offer organizational members an opportunity to give voice to their values (Gentile, 2010), creating data points from those thoughts and values for the organization to work from. As in the previous stage, progress on outcomes and feedback will be shared with the executive leadership team at Baseball X and with me.

Aligning with the studying step of the PDSA model (Deming, 2018) is the acceleration stage of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019; see Appendix C). Monitoring in this stage will focus on a checklist applied by the advisory group to ensure that key elements of the change implementation plan are executed well and in a timely manner. Communications will be

developed to ensure the process is on track and to maintain continued support for the change. Levels of engagement throughout the process will be monitored through feedback opportunities including climate surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations between participants and members of the advisory group. Evaluation in this stage will focus on the completed tasks on the checklist and will be shared with different audiences inside and outside the organization. Movement to the next stage of the process will occur only when most of the tasks are completed and all the tasks are at least underway. Satisfaction with the process and levels of confidence with the support programs will be assessed primarily using climate surveys.

In alignment with the acting stage of the PDSA model (Deming, 2018) is the institutionalization step of the change path model (Deszca et al., 2019; see Appendix C). Monitoring will again focus on the advisory group's checklist, to determine whether the change process is aligned with its goals and whether the initiative has become embedded into organizational practice. Programming, services, and continued communication will demonstrate that the change has been implemented and remains a focus for the organization. Climate surveys will become a part of the fabric of the organization. All communications in this stage will include opportunities to share how the change is being received and whether it is yielding the desired results. Evaluation in this stage will look to the results of whether the support programs are incorporated into Baseball X's regular budget, communications, and strategic planning. Using climate surveys and feedback opportunities, organizational members and participants in the support programs should report near-complete or complete satisfaction with and support for the change.

### **Tracking and Assessing the Impact of the Change**

Climate surveys are tools to measure sexual misconduct and other offences through anonymous respondent feedback (Swartout et al., 2018). As explained in Chapter 2, climate surveys can aid organizations in understanding existing issues and benchmarking organizational progress (Swartout et al., 2018; Yang & Katz, 2020). Throughout this change implementation

plan, climate surveys should initially be used to assess interest and engagement from organizational members, knowledge about current pathways and opportunities for reporting sexual misconduct, and interest in participation in the change initiative and use of the support systems. These climate surveys will be a part of monitoring the change implementation plan. As the change is implemented, climate surveys should then be used by participants of the reporting and investigatory processes within Baseball X, becoming embedded in the support programming and being used to evaluate the change.

Climate surveys can help raise awareness of concerns, gauge organizational culture and cultural issues (in the case of Baseball X, cultural issues relate to the significant underreporting of sexual misconduct and its related offenses), and gather information anonymously (Yang & Katz, 2020). The majority of climate survey respondents believe their participation in them to be important and personally meaningful, which can have a positive influence on participation and response numbers (Swartout et al., 2018). Though climate surveys can be lengthy, and are reliant on respondents, they have been useful and reliable tools on college campuses, where their use has been most explored (Swartout et al., 2018).

Monitoring and evaluation of the change implementation plan offers a continual feedback loop and path to success for the change at Baseball X. It aids in gathering data throughout different stages of the process, with opportunities for adjustments and improvements as the process unfolds. Feedback in this instance is likely to begin with one-on-one conversations between change implementers and change participants, and then develop more broadly into focus groups and wider organizational discussions. A successful change effort will incorporate communication throughout the change implementation process and be embedded within the monitoring and evaluation processes.

### **Next Steps and Future Considerations**

The process of developing this organizational improvement plan began with a reflection on my own experience of the reporting and investigatory processes within Baseball X, and the

desire to do better for others, in alignment with my amalgamated authentic and servant leadership approach. This plan offers a comprehensive understanding of the problem of practice and a strategy to address it. The full potential of addressing this problem of practice will be realized only when a support system for the reporting and investigation of sexual misconduct is embedded within the fabric of Baseball X, completely institutionalized within the organization.

The next steps of this plan include further monitoring and evaluation throughout the entire organization and industry to gauge enhancements in the understanding of issues and to determine whether the broader organizational climate has improved because of the change implementation. Plans for future adjustments and improvements to the process, programming, and monitoring and evaluation will be considered based on what is learned throughout, and those lessons learned will be shared with organizational members and external stakeholders. Success of this initiative could also be applicable to other major sports organizations and industries and could aid in their reporting and investigatory processes. Exploring the application of this plan to other organizations could be a focus for future research and action planning.

### **Chapter Summary**

The third and final chapter of this organizational improvement plan examined the implementation, communication, and evaluation of the change process. It outlined the plan to manage the transition and change, including the timeline, the targets of the timeline, who will accomplish those targets, and the actions associated with those goals. The chapter also addressed potential implementation issues and how they might be addressed. It further explored the plan to communicate the need for change and the change process, as well as how to give a voice to those who have traditionally been silenced. Change process monitoring and evaluation tools were discussed and proposed, as were the ways in which the implementation plan could be refined to respond to the monitoring and evaluation findings. Finally, next steps and future considerations of the organizational improvement plan were discussed.

## **Narrative Epilogue**

Late in my baseball career, I came forward to Baseball X to report an incident of sexual misconduct that had taken place several years prior. Inspired by several women in the baseball industry who had publicly shared their own professional experiences with sexual harassment and misconduct, I initially took my complaint to a subsidiary of Baseball X before the issue was escalated to the highest level of the organization. The organization opened an investigation, with Baseball X retaining outside legal counsel to conduct what ended up being a 91-day investigatory process. Despite receiving a favourable outcome upon the conclusion of the investigation, the process became nearly impossible for me to endure. I left my position at Baseball X amid the investigation. At the same time, I attempted to relinquish my role in the investigatory process, only to learn that I had gone too far already and was unable to do so.

Following my departure from Baseball X, throughout my continued participation in the investigation, and after it was complete, I began to think about the relatively fortunate position I was in and how the adversarial process might affect others who were not as privileged. At the time of the investigation, I was employed full-time by Baseball X, with both an income and mental health resources at my disposal. I am highly educated, and I had some knowledge and understanding of what the process would include, how long it might take, and how workplace standards of proof are distinct from what is required for punitive action in a court of law. I also had facts in my favour and corroborating evidence. Finally, English, the language all the interviews were conducted in, is my first language. Upon conclusion of the investigation, I had gained firsthand knowledge of the difficulties of the investigatory process and a newfound perception that I might have been among the most capable of enduring it. The revelation led me to a renewed sense of purpose, with the goal of improving the process for anyone who might require it in the future.

In so many areas of life, as well as within the structures of most organizations, experience brings great value. Experience earns prestige, money, credibility, and more. But in

this instance, my experience has not added value. In numerous situations, my experience of Baseball X's reporting and investigatory processes has become a detriment. Instead of being understood to develop greater understanding of the issues, my experience has periodically been seen as a complaint. It has become my problem, instead of a microcosm of a larger problem. This organizational improvement plan is an academic query but relating my experience to the problem of practice has, on occasion, been seen as a personal complaint rather than an organizational issue. My experience turned years of academic study and research on that issue into an individual grievance.

Part of the problem is that without my experience, and giving voice to the values I gained throughout that experience, there would be little to no information revealing that this problem exists. Unfortunately, the organization is not held to account publicly for the number of complaints it receives, nor for how it handles those matters. Neither has feedback ever been sought from victims or participants of the reporting and investigatory processes before I came to the organization with proposed solutions and engaged a partnership through consultancy. These issues live in the shadows of the organization, but when brought to light are conceived of as personal dilemmas instead of broader organizational and cultural problems. Because this is a much wider issue than my own, I am committed to ensuring that policies and procedures are improved so that others do not have to endure what I did. This organizational improvement plan is one step in the process of trying to find ways to help that happen.

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### Appendix A: Measuring Readiness for Change

Readiness dimension	Related questions	Readiness score range	Baseball X's score
Previous change experience	Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	0 to +2	+1
	Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	0 to -2	0
	What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	0 to +2	0
	What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	0 to -3	0
	Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	0 to -3	0
Executive support	Are senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	0 to +2	+2
	Is there a clear picture of the future?	0 to +3	+1
	Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	0 to +2	0
	Are some senior managers likely to demonstrate a lack of support?	0 to -3	0
Credible leadership and change champions	Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	0 to +3	+1
	Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve their collective goals?	0 to +1	0
	Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	0 to +2	+1
	Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	0 to +1	0
	Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	0 to +2	+2
	Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	0 to +2	+2
Openness to change	Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the internal and external environment?	0 to +2	0
	Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	0 to +2	0
	Could the organization focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries?	0 to +2	0

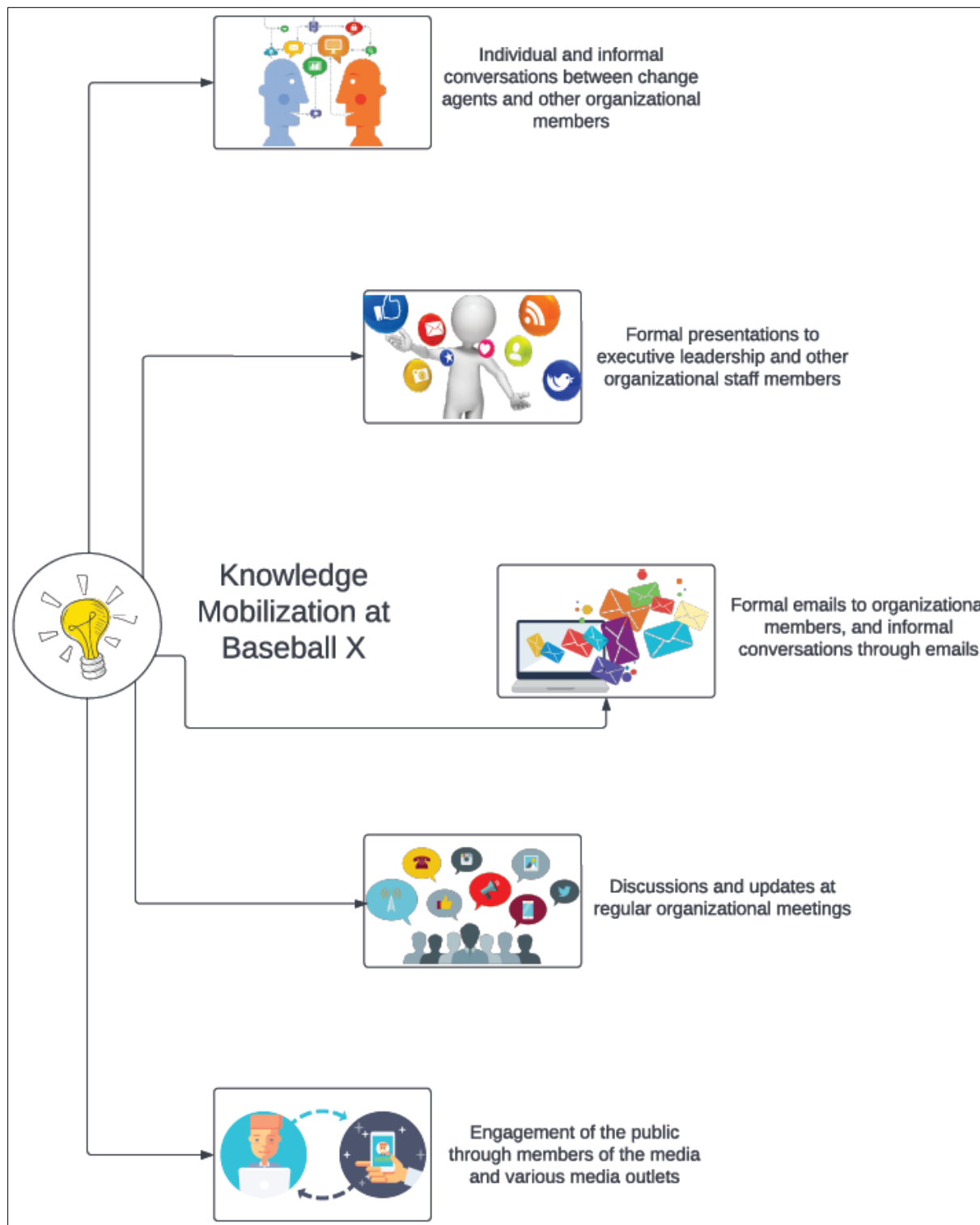


	Does “turf” protection exist in the organization that could affect the change?	0 to -3	-1
	Are middle and/or senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	0 to -4	0
	Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support?	0 to +2	0
	Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	0 to +2	0
	Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	0 to -2	0
	Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	0 to +2	0
	Does the organization have communications channels that work effectively in all directions?	0 to +2	0
	Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	0 to +2	+2
	Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	0 to +2	+2
	Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy needed to undertake the change?	0 to +2	0
	Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	0 to +2	+1
Rewards for change	Does the reward system value innovation and change?	0 to +2	0
	Does the reward system focus exclusively on short-term results?	0 to -2	0
	Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	0 to -3	0
Measures for change and accountability	Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	0 to +1	0
	Does the organization attend to the data that it collects?	0 to +1	0
	Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	0 to +1	0
	Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully meet predetermined deadlines?	0 to +1	0
Total			14

Note. Adapted from *Organizational Change: An Action-Oriented Toolkit* by G. Deszca, C.

Ingols, and T. F. Cawsey, 2019, pp. 113–114. Copyright 2019 by Sage.

### Appendix B: Knowledge Mobilization Plan



## Appendix C: Proposed Template for Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Steps of the change path model and plan-do-study-act stages (with affiliated timeline)	Goals of the timeline	Monitoring		Evaluation	
		Quantitative focus on results	Qualitative focus on experience	Quantitative focus on results	Qualitative focus on experience
<p><b>Awakening:</b> January to June (Year 1)  <b>Plan:</b> Understand the problem and set goals. Determine what data to collect. Gather and use information to predict potential issues, identify considerations, and contribute to the feedback loop.</p>	<p>Within the first 6 months of this organizational improvement plan, the short-term goals include getting Baseball X to agree to the use of ombuds and advocacy support programs, designing and developing the support programs, and beginning to write job descriptions and terms of reference for the ombuds and advocates.</p>	<p>Use initial climate surveys to assess interest and engagement from organizational members, knowledge about current pathways and opportunities for reporting, and interest in participation in the change initiative and use of support systems. Findings will address the attitude toward the proposed change and implementation process, aiming to identify champions and resisters. Report on initial results.</p>	<p>Progress on both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and survey participant feedback will be consistently shared with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, and with me as a consultant, to identify when to move to the mobilization step. The plan will also be communicated to broader stakeholders and organizational members.</p>	<p>Throughout both the awakening and mobilization stages, there will be a successful initiation of the advisory group, as well as regular meetings and communicated updates. Broader support will be deemed ready and with little identified resistance to the proposed change and implementation process.</p>	<p>Throughout both the awakening and mobilization stages, the advisory group will report on the positive endorsement of the change and its intention. Direct stakeholders will report on the urgency for change and the endorsed plan.</p>
<p><b>Mobilization:</b> July to December (Year 1)  <b>Do:</b> Carry out the implementation plan. Document successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Gather, analyze, and share data to inform the change process.</p>	<p>Within the second 6-month period, the medium-term goals include determining the legal obligations and duties of ombuds and advocates, completing those job descriptions, obtaining approval of the job descriptions, beginning the hiring process, and identifying a monitoring and evaluation method for the support programs.</p>	<p>Design and develop climate surveys for participants in the change process, to assess the support programming and gather further insight into the proposed solution to the problem of practice. Begin to identify areas for improvement and areas where more understanding is needed. Report on continued results.</p>	<p>Progress on both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and survey participant feedback will be consistently shared with the executive leadership team at Baseball X, and with me as a consultant, to identify when to move to the acceleration step. The plan and progress will also be communicated to broader stakeholders and organizational members.</p>	<p>Throughout both the awakening and mobilization stages, there will be a successful initiation of the advisory group, as well as regular meetings and communicated updates. Broader support will be deemed ready and with little identified resistance to the proposed change and implementation process.</p>	<p>Throughout both the awakening and mobilization stages, the advisory group will report on the positive endorsement of the change and its intention. Direct stakeholders will report on the urgency for change and the endorsed plan.</p>

Steps of the change path model and plan-do-study-act stages (with affiliated timeline)	Goals of the timeline	Monitoring		Evaluation	
		Quantitative focus on results	Qualitative focus on experience	Quantitative focus on results	Qualitative focus on experience
<p><b>Acceleration:</b> January to June (Year 2)  <b>Study:</b> Compare progress to date with plan. Note developments and areas of challenge. Analyze data collected and summarize learnings to inform any changes to the plan.</p>	<p>Within the third 6-month period, long-term goals include the implementation of the ombuds and advocacy support programs, communication of the availability of the programming, and the beginning of monitoring and evaluation of the change, using climate surveys to engage change participants.</p>	<p>The advisory group will apply a checklist to ensure the key elements of the change implementation plan are executed well and in a timely manner. These elements include continuation and expansion of the advisory group, and further design and development of climate surveys, and further design and development of support programming.</p>	<p>Internal and external communications reports and messaging will be developed to keep the process on track and to continue establishing support for the change from stakeholders. Levels of engagement will be monitored through feedback opportunities, including climate surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations between participants and members of the advisory group.</p>	<p>The advisory group's checklist will continue to demonstrate completed tasks of the implementation plan and will be shared with different audiences, inside and outside the organization. Advancement to the institutionalization step will occur only when the majority of tasks are completed and all of them are underway.</p>	<p>Satisfaction rates with the change process, and levels of confidence with the support programs will be assessed and must achieve near-complete satisfaction before progressing to institutionalization.</p>
<p><b>Institutionalization:</b> July to December (Year 2)  <b>Act:</b> Consider what changes need to be made to the system of support to fully resolve the problem of practice. Address those changes and continue full implementation by carrying out the complete development cycle.</p>	<p>Within the fourth 6-month period, long-term goals continue to include the implementation of the ombuds and advocacy support programs, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the change process, using climate surveys to engage change participants.</p>	<p>The advisory group's checklist continues to be used to determine if the change process aligns with its goals and if the initiative has become embedded into organizational practice. Programming, services, and continued communication demonstrate that the change has been implemented and remains a focus. Climate surveys following the reporting and investigatory processes are embedded in the programming.</p>	<p>All communications include opportunities to share how the change is being received and whether it is yielding the desired results and support.</p>	<p>The support programs are incorporated into Baseball X's regular budget, communications, and strategic planning. The change is regularly communicated, with updates on how it is being used and received.</p>	<p>Through climate surveys and feedback opportunities, organizational members and participants in the support programming report near-complete or complete satisfaction with and support for the change.</p>

*Note.* Adapted from *Building Human and Organizational Capacity in a Small Nonprofit and Human Service Organization Through a Culture of Leadership Development*, by A. A. Silver, 2022, p. 85. Copyright 2022 by Adam A. Silver.