Organizational changepsychology

Continuous change is essential it any organization.

Public safety organizations are always facing change in the social, political and technological arena (Karp & Helgo, 2008). In order to move forward and keep ahead, an organization must recognize that change is necessary. In addition, a strong leadership component is vital to be effective in the 21st Century. Public safety organizations that foster a learning environment will embrace and succeed in the face of continuous and rapid change (Meese & Ortmeire, 2004).

More importantly, an organizations leadership style that guides every aspect of the change makes it possible to succeed (Kotter, 2007; Gardner, 1990). This paper will reflect the various leadership theories in relationship to transformational change in public safety organizations. These would include an evaluation of trait theories, situational theory, path-goal theory, and transformational theory. In addition, a combination of trait theory, path-goal theory and transformational theory would be the best suited for public safety leadership within organizational change.

Theories of leadership have evolved over the last century to where they more accurately describe activities and successes within organizational circumstances (Avolio & Yammario, 2002; Yukl, 2006).

Theories from traits to transformational attempts to describe the behaviors that led to successful leadership. Meese and Ortmeire (2004) state that leadership theories can be broken down into three major components: leader-centered theories; follower and context-centered theories; and leader-follower interactions-centered theories.

Leader-center theories incorporate trait theories, behavior theory, personal-situational theory, interaction-expectation theory (Meese & Ortmeire, 2004). Follower- and context-centered theories " reflects a significant advance over simplistic, universal, one-way leadership models" (Meese & Ortmeire, 2004, p. 50).

In addition, it would include situational theory, contingency theory and path-goal theory. Leader-follower interactions-center theories state there is an interaction between leaders and followers or groups members (Meese & Ortmeire, 2004).

This would include leader-follower (member) exchange theory, transformational theory and psychodynamic approach. Meese and Ortmeier (2004) state trait theories focus on the leaders inborn characteristics, such as popularity, originality, self-confidence, judgment, sociability, humor, aggressiveness, desire, adoptability, assertiveness, decisiveness, intelligence, alertness, and insight (p.

52). With these traits, leaders are more often able to be effective in a given situation.

In times of change, the leaders who possess charisma are able to influence followers to obtain the desired result needed. This trait is recognized in charismatic leaders, in addition is it also looked at as key component within transformational organizational change. As a charismatic leader, have an exceptional ability to inspire, motivate, and communicate to followers the organizational goals (Gardner, 1990).

Leaders who have these inborn traits, such as charisma have a greater success with followers and therefore would have greater success with transformational change.

The situational theory approaches leadership as each situation needs a different leadership style (Meese & Ortmeier, 2004). Its effectiveness is in the leader's ability to change leadership style as the situation changes. As for an organization in continuous change, this type of leadership would deem appropriate. As the leader would be able to change their leadership style in an organization that is in continuous change. Situational theory focus on directive and support orientations, meaning the leader tells one what to do (Meese & Ortmeier, 2004).

However, in any public safety organization this style of leadership lacks clarity in how leaders may be match to the appropriate groups or members (Meese & Ortmeier, 2004). This may led to failure with the organizational change. Path-goal theory focuses on achieving behaviors from followers in efforts to complete tasks and reach the desired results (Meese & Ortmeier, 2004). Moreover, leaders instill a sense of ownership in each task, giving them the ability to exercise their own judgment in how to reach the goal (Meese & Ortmeier, 2004).

As an organization move forward with changes, followers want to be a part of this.

Leaders who provide empowerment to followers will effective achieve this change, in that followers will want to reach the desired result. Transformational theory in its simplest forms reflects the leader's ability to

changes and transforms individuals within the organization. In other words, a transformational leader influences followers to want to change, improve, and to be led (Northouse, 2001). A theory which benefits both the leader and follower, and projects a successful and bright future for the organization.

Transformational theory involves four I's: idealized influence shows the leaders vision and engages followers through emotion and investments; intellectual stimulation changes the follower's views to reflect that of the leader's vision; individual considerations provides support in direction, guidance and encouragement through leader and follower engagements; inspirational motivation leads follows to a vision through strategy (Northouse, 2001). This theory has strong over tones in both trait and behavior theories. A leader may exhibit and expanding his actions by adding an emotional aspect that engages the follower in the change.

In addition, transformational leaders have shown in research to have a high success rate in reaching the desired results. All the leadership theories provide different attributes a leader must possess within an organization. In order for a leader to be successful in a change, a combination of theories would include trait theory, path-goal theory, and transformational theory making this the best practice.

At every level of change you need a leader who is going to take charge and instill a sense of ownership in the tasks, influencing the followers, and provide emotional support throughout the