

## Ep #78: Try This at Work: Managing Change



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Heather Branscombe**

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Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Hi there, friend. How are you doing? I don't know about you, but at the time that I am recording this, at the very end of June, beginning of July, summer is finally here and I am here for it. I'm actually really excited because I'm going to be working remotely for the first time next week from a resort, which is exciting. And I'm finally also embracing all the opportunities that my yard gives me to garden. These are my fun things for the summer.

My husband and I joke that gardening is our new sport and our yard is the gift that keeps on giving. I was just talking to a colleague though, just about the summer season in general and the changes that naturally normally happen in our work. I don't know about you, but for us, many clients are taking vacation, and truthfully, so are we. And while there's still lots of work to do, this season feels a little bit different, maybe even a bit lighter, both metaphorically and even physically, because where I am here in BC, there is factually more light this time of year than any other time of year.

It led us to have a conversation about change in general, and I thought it would be beneficial to share some of those insights with you as well. Before I share my perspective, though, this is something that's not new to me sharing. This is not change, but this podcast is a passion project of mine because I want all clinicians to have the ability to use this kind of tool set and tips as a way to

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magnify their impact, even if they never work for us or alongside us at Abilities. I consider myself so lucky to be able to do this and to be able to have this even as part of my work week. It is the part of my week that is so fun to think about and to record and as a way to engage with you.

And you can help me to make this more meaningful by helping to spread the message. The more people know, the more that we can help more clients and more clinicians. So let's work together to make that happen. You can help me to do that in a couple of ways. First, if you can follow, rate, and review this podcast wherever you're listening to it, we all know it helps feed the algorithm so that when there's a clinician just like you searching for something just like this, this podcast will come up for them.

And second, if you could personally share this podcast or better yet, a favorite episode for you with a colleague, that is essentially, I don't know about you, but that's where I get most of my podcast follows from. It's from friends. And if you've heard this before and you've meant to do this before and you haven't done it, it's okay, there's no shame. Let this be a sign, today's your day that you can help other clinicians, you can help your other clinical friends.

And if this is your first episode, maybe you've come here from a clinical friend. Welcome, thank you so much for listening. And hopefully as you listen, you can decide who of your clinical friends you would love to hear more of this kind of information to help them at work as well. As always, thank you in advance for your action here. And with that, let's get back to the episode.

So let's start with a deeper question. How do you feel about change? More specifically, how do you feel about change at work? Now, if you're like me, my answer, and your answer may be the same, is it depends. And on some level, of course we actually love change, or we wouldn't be working as a clinician, because aren't we all fundamentally looking to influence positive change in the lives of our clients at least? I mean, yeah, of course. So change can be amazing.

And then there's times when we choose change because we think it is in our own benefit. So we change jobs, we start a side hustle or a new business, or we

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change something about our practice area or who our clients will be. And then finally, there are times when forces we don't control also influence change that impacts us in our work life. Be it a change in funding or a government policy, a change of policy with our employer, a change in colleagues or something else.

So first of all, I just want to offer, it can be really helpful to just notice how our brain typically reacts to change and maybe how it typically reacts to change in those different areas. A lot of times, our brains are going to love change, and sometimes it's going to fear change. And even at our most basic work level, each time we work with a new client, it is a small change in our working life, and you get to notice how your brain reacts to that change.

Now at Abilities, we provide autonomy for what kind of referral a given clinician is going to work with. We talk about them identifying who are their yes referrals, who are their no referrals, and knowing that everything else is probably a maybe. And so clinicians will make those decisions based on their expertise and preferences. And then what I notice is it can make a huge difference in influencing both the client and staff experience. Because ultimately, as a client, would you really want to work with a clinician who's had no choice but to work with you? I think we've even experienced that sometimes as a clinician ourselves. Sometimes it won't factually matter, but when it does, I just want to offer it really does or can matter.

And so for us, one of the amazing things about building something like this at Abilities is that we get to decide how we want to manage things like referrals. So giving clinicians autonomy is a major way that we've decided that we can influence the experience of clinicians at Abilities. What I find super interesting as I work to support clinicians is to notice how they choose to define their yes, no, and maybe referrals.

Now, again, I want to preface this. This is not a judgment at all. There is no one good way to make that distinction. And remember, I want them to make that distinction. I do understand that's going to influence change. But what I have the privilege to notice just from the place that I sit in this organization is how different clinicians approach that choice.

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So again, because I have this clinical background, so I have that kind of assessment or observational mindset, what I've been able to notice is the correlation between the specificity of the clients that they want to work with and their own personal tolerance for change. What I mean by that is the more qualifiers and the more specific those qualifiers are for the kind of clients that they want to see, the more I notice the correlation to a potential intolerance for change.

Again, this is not coming from a place of judgment, but if we just look at this, again, a little more factually, if we look at it from a bigger perspective, it actually makes sense, because when we are choosing something in hopes to positively influence our own experience, the more that we believe an outside circumstance, like a client, is going to affect our experience, means that we are going to try and influence that experience by being more specific in what we want from our circumstances. And in this case, the kinds of clients that we want to see.

Again, this is maybe the third time I'm qualifying it, and I'm doing this this often because I know I want to be clear. It isn't right or wrong to have a higher or lower tolerance for change. It isn't right or wrong to have a very specific idea of who you want to work with. Again, there really is no judgment here. In fact, I don't think it's wrong to be very specific about what you want.

If a clinician is happy with their individual tolerance for change, I'm not here to try and change it. No different than how would I approach goals with any other kind of client. Because notice when I am working with clinicians, I'm going to treat them with that equal level of help and support that I want to support any other kind of client that I would work with.

The upside of just up-leveling your baseline tolerance for change is, and when I say that, it means that up-leveling your baseline tolerance for change is going to mean that you're going to more successfully navigate the changes that you can't influence, which ironically is a lot more than what we can influence. If you're noticing that you want to apply that baseline tolerance for change, this is where you can start by trying the following things out.

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So first, there's an opportunity to understand that any kind of change is going to require you and more specifically your brain to think, to navigate and to process. So to use that new client example, it again factually takes more effort to think about, plan and process what's happening for a new client than a client that you're more familiar with. That makes sense, right?

So broadening that, any external change is going to change your internal effort to understand what that means for you. It's just going to require more brain power. So this also applies to a new job or a job change. It's going to take you, and more specifically your brain, to think, to navigate, and to process in a new job versus an old familiar job. It applies to change that you don't initiate as well, such as funding or other policy changes where you may have had little to no influence or even knowledge before those circumstances are announced.

This is why whenever you're experiencing change, which is, I hope you can see by now, is all the time, be it on a micro level with a new client or a more macro level, like an organizational or government change, self-care is going to be critical to set yourself up for success. So again, it makes sense. When your brain is requiring more effort, it's going to take more self-care to manage that.

So what do I mean when I say self-care? Now, nails and bubble baths are nice, but I'm actually thinking of a more fundamental and deeper kind of self-care. I'm talking about the kind of self-care that helps you to naturally be more mindful. Your ability to be more mindful and intentional, thereby using all of the amazing wisdom that you already have is a key part of you being more successful in navigating any given change, whether you choose it or you don't choose it, no matter how small or how big.

So fundamental self-care are things like sleep, hydration, nutrition, movement, rest, compassion, and connection. They're the kinds of things that prioritize your fundamental self and the regulation of your nervous system. Because when you think about that, and you think about your fundamental self, and you think about regulation of your nervous system, doesn't it make sense that you would think about these things that we often talk about, like sleep, hydration, nutrition, movement, rest, and maybe the things we don't often talk about, like self-compassion and connection?

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So what I want to offer you is prioritizing those things. Again, sleep, hydration, nutrition, movement, allows you to better access your body and your mind and what they're telling you more fully. And then by helping you to regulate your nervous system so that you can hear those messages more clearly, it allows you to think more clearly, to understand and process what your mind and body is telling you and to navigate what is in your best interest to do next.

And then when you still feel somewhat stuck, this is when reaching out to someone else, be it a good friend or a colleague, a mentor, a coach, or some other kind of mental health professional you know and trust that can be there as that compassionate witness for you, not to tell you what to do, but to offer compassion and to help guide you to a decision that feels best for you, that's when they're going to be really helpful. These are the fundamental things that allows our nervous system to be more resilient when change inevitably comes up.

So I bet if you are currently in a good place now and you ask yourself, there's probably one little thing that you could do in that area of self-care so that you can deepen your impact for both you and your career with your clients. So if you think that you're in a good place now, you probably are, take a moment and ask yourself what that could be. And if you aren't feeling like you're in a good place right now, that's totally okay as well. I would just offer, choose one of these things that I've mentioned before. Sleep, hydration, nutrition, movement, rest, compassion, and connection. Take one of those, the one that sounds best, and notice how it affects your nervous system. Give yourself the compassion to decide then what's next when you're in a more regulated place.

So give it a try and let me know how it goes. Yes, I'm busy. We're all busy, but I promise you, I am never too busy to connect with you. Please feel free to connect with me at [heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com](mailto:heather@abilitiesrehabilitation.com). Tell me how it's going and how I can help you now.

With that, I hope you have an amazing rest of the week and I'll talk to you soon.

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Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to [abilitiesrehabilitation.com](http://abilitiesrehabilitation.com). See you next week.