



# Clinical IT Implementation

## Managing Mindsets to Promote User Adoption

sample excerpt



**“Change management is about people, not about computers. Those who have had success with their way of doing something will be hesitant to try a new process. This is especially true in health care, where patient lives are at stake.”**

— M. Michael Shabot, MD, *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings*  
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## Manage Mindsets; Get User Buy-In

When it comes to successful adoption of new clinical IT tools or processes, a targeted training approach that manages mindsets is the key to success. What is a “mindset”? It is a mental attitude or disposition that affects how we react to or perceive a given situation. In other words, mindset plays a critical role in the way clinicians and other program personnel respond or adapt to a new situation—in this case, clinical IT implementation.

To streamline workflow, thereby improving the quality of patient care, end users must adapt and adopt. To do so, we must overcome resistance by managing their mindset and demonstrating the need for lasting change.

Clinical workers who are end users of new clinical technology need to understand why they should put in the time and effort.

- What do they get out of the change?
- Will the new system help them manage clinical workflow better?
- Will the change benefit their patients?

Presented here are proven strategies for change management and successful implementation.



# Overcome Obstacles

Clinical IT training and system adoption present a unique set of challenges. Clinical personnel work in very fast-paced, high stress situations that have a direct impact on patient health and comfort. Making changes to or implementing a new system adds to the workload, reduces the number of patients clinicians can see in a day, and increases the risk of error. This, in turn, leads to heightened anxiety, tension, and even confrontation among clinical workers who are expected to learn and adopt a new system. Thus, the first step is to understand the main obstacles in any clinical IT implementation.

One of the biggest obstacles is resistance to change. Resistance derives from fear of the unknown, high stress in fast-paced healthcare environments, and feelings of being overburdened with new technology while still caring for patients. For example, one clinical trainer recounts an incident at a federal healthcare facility:

*“A doctor who was participating in the training was so overwhelmed that he walked out in the middle of my presentation. I later approached him and he broke down, explaining that he is a good doctor, but frustrated because he is ‘not good at learning the new technical material’.”*

Such reactions are quite common, even if not expressed overtly.

In a high stakes clinical environment, highly skilled trainers who have clinical experience and superior people skills can make a positive difference by helping to ease the transition for apprehensive users and to relieve anxiety over change in an already high stress environment.

For example, in a dermatology clinic at a federal healthcare facility, a nurse reported on the profound contribution made by a clinical trainer in a transition to a new EHR system:

*“...Without a doubt, it was very difficult to transition with the numerous templates (and changes to the templates) and with individuals who were not computer literate. Tempers flared and anxiety was at an all-time high. She [the trainer] worked hard to get us to relax and knew how to diffuse the situations.”*