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Creating a Sense of Urgency and Influencing Senior Leaders

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Valerie E. Stone, MD:

I have no financial relationships with any commercial entity producing healthcare-related products and/or services that are relevant to this activity.



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Overview

What I plan to cover this afternoon:

- Relationship between Influence and Leadership
- Critical first steps **before** trying to influence senior leaders
- Creating a sense of urgency & influencing senior leaders



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Influence

- There can be no leadership without influence, because ***influencing is how leaders lead.***
- In their classic leadership book, Bennis and Nanus state: ***Leading is influencing, guiding in direction, course, action, opinion. An essential factor in leadership is the capacity to influence.***

W Bennis, B Nanus. Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge, Harper Business, 2007.



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Influence Techniques

- Research shows that people try to influence others using one of ten positive influence techniques:
 - Logical persuading
 - Legitimizing
 - Exchanging
 - Stating
 - Socializing
 - Appealing to relationship
 - Consulting
 - Alliance building
 - Appealing to values
 - Modeling

TR Bacon, Elements of Influence: The Art of Getting Others to Follow Your Lead, 2011.



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Influence Skills

- There are also ***Influence Skills*** which determine one's effectiveness at using the ***Influence Techniques***:
- Communication and Reasoning Skills
 - Logical reasoning, data analysis & display, finding creative solutions
- Assertiveness Skills
 - Asserting, behaving self-confidently, using a compelling tone of voice
- Interpersonal Skills
 - Being friendly/sociable, having insight into others' values, building relationships and rapport, being sensitive to others' feelings
- Interaction Skills
 - Building consensus, resolving conflicts, bargaining and negotiating



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TR Bacon, Elements of Influence: The Art of Getting Others to Follow Your Lead, 2011



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Influence Self-Assessment

- You can take an ***Influence Self Assessment*** to determine your effectiveness using these influence techniques and influence skills at: www.theelementsofpower.com

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Critical First Steps *before* Influencing Leaders

- You want to influence a senior leader because there is a “problem” that you want their resources or assistance to fix.
- Critical first steps:
 - Clarify the nature and extent of the problem
 - Walk around talking with docs or others affected
 - Town Hall meetings
 - Survey those affected or track down quantitative measures
 - Choose your battles strategically. Is this problem worth your effort?
 - Consider alignment
 - How well does fixing this problem align with your vision / mission?
 - How well does this fixing this problem align with vision/mission of your leader?
 - Communicate and create an awareness of the problem
 - Division or Department Newsletter
 - Staff / Practice Meetings
 - Leadership Meetings (e.g. Division or Department leadership)



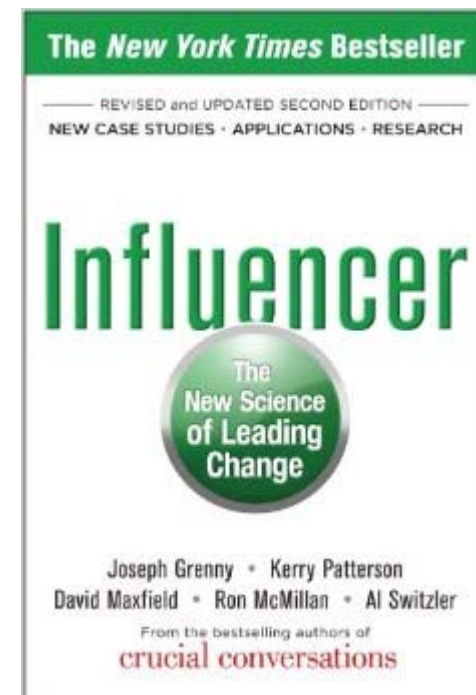
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An Incredible Paradigm of Influence

- **Influencer** explores how to achieve great results by changing human habits and thus optimizing our effectiveness at INFLUENCE.
- States that there are 3 keys to influence:
 - Focus and Measure
 - Find “Vital Behaviors”
 - Engage all 6 Sources of Influence
- These 6 sources of influence are:
 - Make the Undesirable Desirable
 - Harness Peer Pressure
 - Design Rewards and Demand Accountability
 - Surpass your Limits
 - Find Strength in Numbers
 - Change the Environment



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Greeny et al. *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*. McGraw-Hill, 2013.



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Influencing Senior Leaders

- Although I have not mastered the approaches described in *Influencer*, it is clear that it is more about *managing down*, not about *managing up*.
- So what approach should we use when we are hoping to *influence senior leaders*?
- Searched for a paradigm that accurately described my approach and the effective approaches used by my Division Chiefs and Residency Program Director



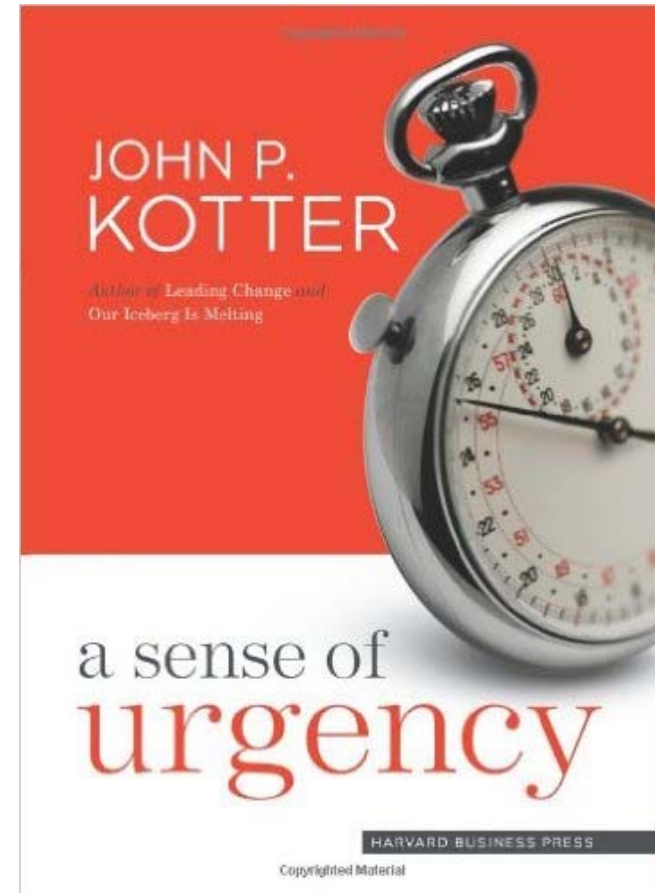
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Creating Urgency and Influencing Senior Leaders

- Found the best paradigm came from great leadership guru that so many of us love to quote: John Kotter.
- Kotter's first principle of Leading Change is creating a Sense of Urgency.
- In one of his newest books, **A Sense of Urgency** he details the steps for doing this most effectively.



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Complacency and False Urgency Are Most Common

- Everyone is busy working-working-working
- Actions don't result in helping the institution succeed in achieving their stated goals.
- Leads to unproductive results and burnout



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What True Urgency Looks Like

- People are clearly focused on making real progress every single day.
- Driven by the belief that the environment contains great opportunities and great hazards.
- Inspires a gut-level determination to accomplish something important – now!



"It's a one-year timer. It gives an added sense of urgency to my research grant."



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How to Create True Urgency

- Once you decide that addressing this problem is your goal:
- Aim for the heart, not just the head
- Connect to the deepest values of senior leadership
- Create a case for real change. Make it come alive using anecdotes about human experience – positive & negative.
- Imaginative, simple and clear



The new boss brought a sense of urgency.

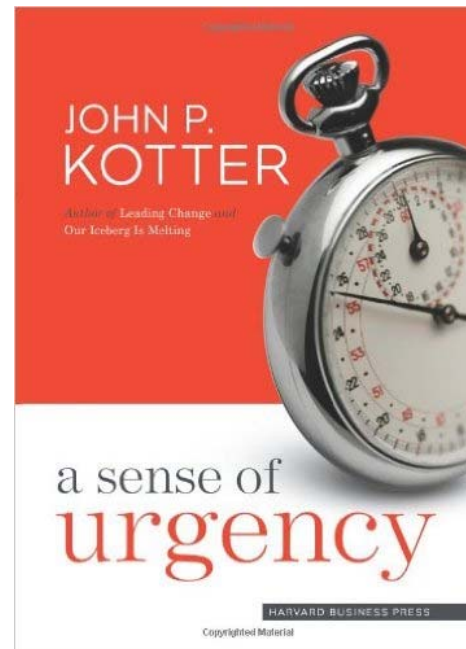


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My Adaption of Paradigm from A Sense of Urgency



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Steps for Creating a Sense of Urgency in Senior Leaders

- **Behave with urgency every day**
- Leadership attitude *not just* that an effort like a special project team must *meet today*, but rather that the meeting must *accomplish something important today*.
- Act and speak with passion and energy
- Believe that your energy & passion can / will make a difference
- Act visibly and be visible to senior leadership and to your team
- Communicate and disseminate your goal – verbally, in print and in presentations



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Steps for Creating a Sense of Urgency in Senior Leaders

- **Bring “the outside in” by sharing patient care experiences and/or the lived experiences of doctors affected by the issue.**



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Bring the Outside In

- Kotter's term "bring the outside in" refers to bringing the experience of customers into the Board Room and/or C-suite.
- One of our **key sources of influence** as physician leaders is the ability to share patient stories and/or "clinician on the ground" stories.
- Always weave a story into your "ask"
- My Epic Abstraction example



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Steps for Creating a Sense of Urgency in Senior Leaders

- **Appeal to the heart as well as the mind**
 - Stories are key. Just enough data, no more.
 - Become familiar with your Chair / CMO / CEO and the amount of data that they are expecting to see.



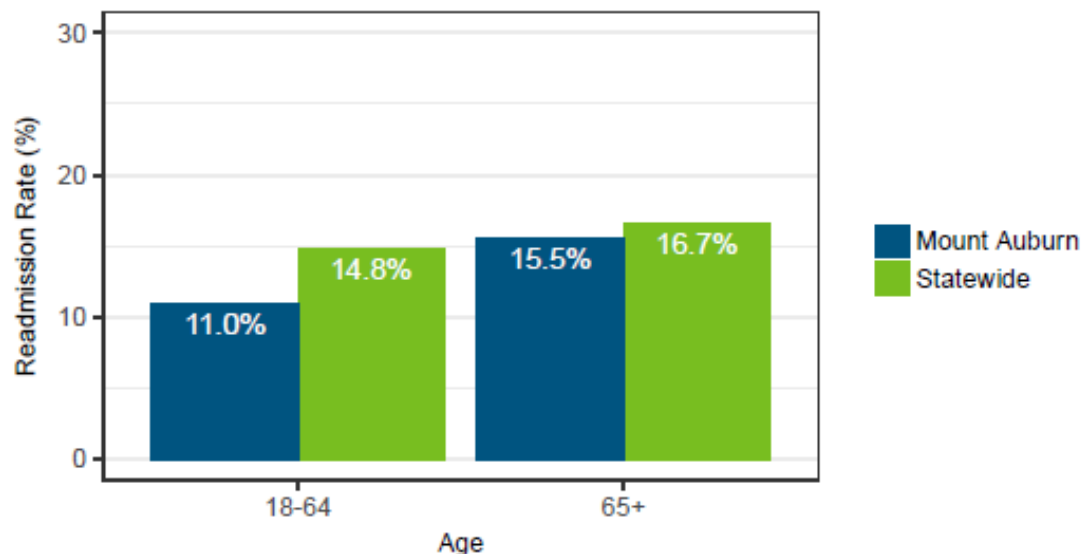
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Just the Right Amount of Data

All-Payer Readmission Rates by Age, July 2014 to June 2015



This graph shows readmission rates by age for Mount Auburn Hospital and for the state. Cells with < 11 cases are suppressed.

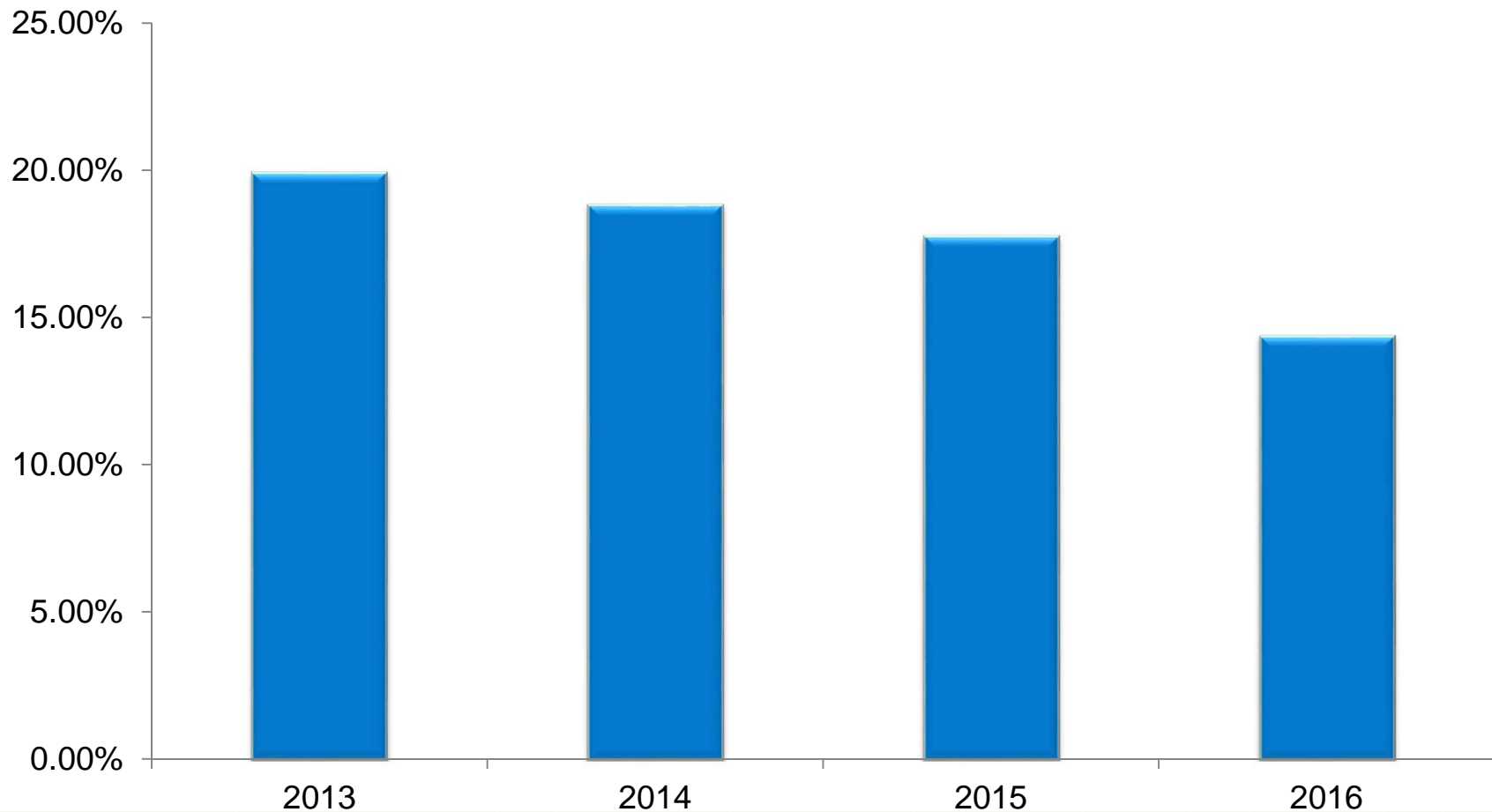


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CHF 30 Day Readmissions by Year



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Steps for Creating a Sense of Urgency in Senior Leaders

- **Have a plan for dealing with the initial “No”**
 - Never assume that senior leadership will say no, without actually asking



*"I admire how you don't take no for an answer,
but I'm afraid I'm calling Security."*



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Steps for Creating a Sense of Urgency in Senior Leaders

- **Find opportunity in crisis**

危機

The Chinese word for crisis shares a character with the word for opportunity.

機會



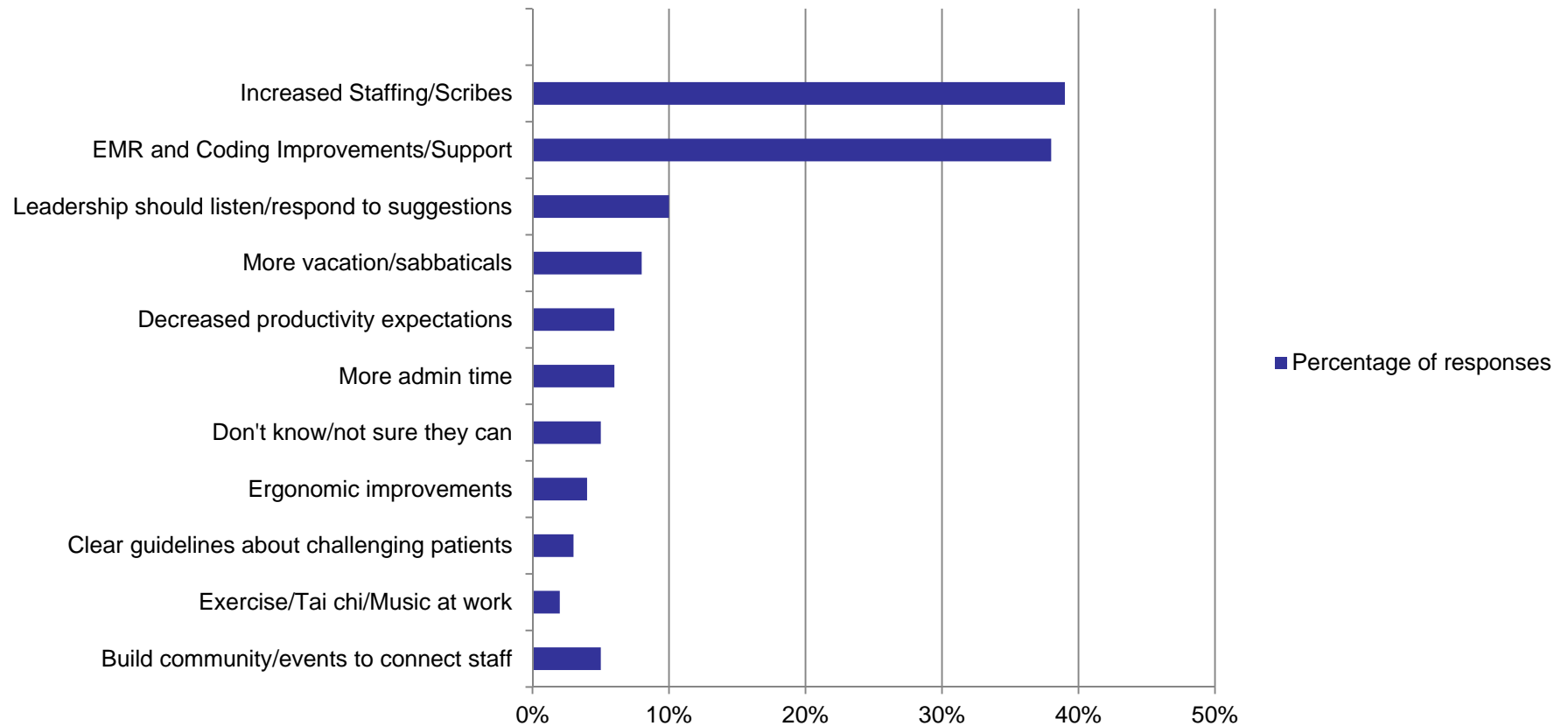
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What is the most important thing that your Department and/or Mount Auburn Hospital could do to improve your worklife?

Percentage of responses



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Logistics of Influencing Senior Leaders

- What about timing? Be strategic!
- Meeting vs. e-mail? E-mail is only for setting up the meeting.
- Strategic value of having standing meetings.
- One on one with senior leader or with others?
- Written info all verbal? It depends.
Visuals should be concise, compelling, clear.



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Summary

- Essential to have a strategy for getting the attention of senior leaders, creating a sense of urgency in them and influencing them to approve & fund your priorities
- First define problem and communicate its importance
- An effective paradigm for influencing senior leaders is adapted from Kotter's ***A Sense of Urgency***:
 - Behave with urgency every day
 - Share stories of patients or doctors affected by the issue.
 - Appeal to the heart as well as the mind. Not too much data.
 - Have a plan for dealing with the initial “No”
 - Find opportunity in crisis
 - Be strategic about logistics of the discussion with leader



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Thank you!



KEEP
CALM
AND FEEL
A SENSE OF
URGENCY



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