The goals of this chapter are to:

- Discuss the relationship between the leader’s own conflict involving issues related to change and the impact of this conflict on the potential for change in the organization as a whole
- Discuss the impact that conflict about change may have on the leader, personally, on other organizational members, and on the relationships between the leader and other organizational members
- Describe approaches leaders can take to address conflicts about organizational change in themselves and in other organizational members

Planning for and implementing major organizational changes require a strong commitment to new and altered organizational goals and priorities. Many leaders, however, like the organizational members they supervise, have uncertainties or conflicts about the actual or imagined changes their organization must make.

Leaders, like other organizational members, often are caught unaware by events that require major organizational changes. Sometimes a lack of readiness or willingness to change is the result of inadequate preparation on the part of leaders and others in the organization who are expected to be aware of professional, programmatic and business trends, including market conditions. Sometimes a lack of readiness or willingness to change is the result of psychological factors, such as anxiety about the future or feelings of loss and its resultant grief over what must be given up in order to adapt to what is new. Psychological reactions to actual and
potential losses in relation to organizational and professional changes are discussed in Chapter 8.

This chapter focuses in more detail on the development and implications of conflict, which is a common result of the clash that occurs when new values, systems or goals appear to be incompatible or not harmonious with existing values, systems or goals. Conflict, like anxiety about the future, and loss and mourning for what has been, is an important impediment to organizational change. Individuals or organizations who experience severe conflict are hampered in their abilities to make the necessary changes or transitions that are required for new approaches to be successful, even when the new approaches might be advantageous to them.

Given the leader’s crucial position in transition and change efforts in the organization, his or her conflicts are likely to be particularly strong impediments to the success of the organization as it moves toward the development and institution of new systems of care. The chapter’s emphasis, for the sake of illustration, is on conflict involving the need for change in health care organizations brought on by the managed care revolution, although major changes of most types, when they call for new agendas and approaches, would be expected to elicit similar reactions.

To begin, the focus will be on two different types of leaders in health care organizations.

**ROUTES TO BECOMING A LEADER IN HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS: RELATIONSHIP TO THE LEADER’S APPROACH AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES**

There are a number of paths to leadership positions in health and mental health care organizations. Many leaders have obtained graduate degrees in the administrative aspects of health related fields (such as health care administration, hospital and health care management) and have had years of managerial experience in health care prior to becoming leaders of their organizations. The orientation of these leaders often is an administrative one, with strong grounding in management and business practices.

Another common path to leadership in health and mental health care programs or organizations has been through recognition for achievements in the clinical delivery of services, research, training or education in health related fields. Leaders in this group commonly have come to their current