Coping With Change

Presenter

Jennifer Alfonso

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Ms. Alfonso has served as an individual trainer and coach to top executives in several Fortune 500 companies. She is a dynamic and engaging trainer who acts as a national consultant to both public and private organizations. She has presented over 2,000 workshops to various organizations such as the Department of Justice, American College of Cardiology, Centers for Disease Control, and many more.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the challenges of change
- Explore the losses and gains specific to change
- Identify personal strategies and supportive resources to manage change and transition
Survey

Which statement best describes your reaction when you are faced with change?

A. I take a deep breath and move ahead.
B. I smile and think, “Oh well.”
C. I get angry and vent to anyone who will listen.
D. I cry and want to run and hide.

Why We Dislike Change

• Fear of the unknown
• Perceived risks
• Lack of control
• Loss of structure/schedule
• Perceived losses, such as a loss of
  – Security
  – Relationships
  – Trust
  – Competence

The Three Phases of Change
**Initial Reaction—Emotional Phase**

- Shock and disbelief
- Anger
- Sadness, grief, and loss
- Guilt
- Anxiety and uncertainty
- Change in trust level
- Confused thoughts
- Fatigue
- Resistance
- Change
- Confused thoughts
- Fatigue
- Resistance

**Intermediate Reaction—Intellectual Phase**

- Voicing your thoughts
- Making a conscious decision to let go of the past
- Seeking balance in your life
- Defining the new situation
- Continuing to learn

**Final Healthy Reaction—Acceptance Phase**

- Establishing clear objectives
- Being proactive
- Looking for opportunities
- Reframing the situation
- Focusing on the positive
- Taking care of yourself and others
Losses and Gains Activity

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Quote

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.”

Helen Keller

Our Perceptions Affect How We Cope With Change

The Process of Perception
Tips for Responding to Change at Work

• Acknowledge the change and your feelings
• Reach out for support
• Frame the change in a positive light
• Be flexible and have realistic expectations
• Become involved
• Increase your value as an employee
• Try not to get caught up in rumors
• Learn about the new culture

Tips for Responding to Change in Your Personal Life

• Seek support from friends and family
• Take steps toward a more hopeful attitude
• Be open to the change and new possibilities
• Have an attitude of gratitude
• Recognize what you can and can’t change
• Remember you still can choose your reaction

Activity

1. Make a list of the things that you can change.
2. Make a list of the things that you can’t change.
3. Make a list of what you can do to let go of and to accept what you can’t change.

Adapted from Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Skills Workbook (Gregory 2010)
Survey

How would you describe your current stress level?

A. Not at all stressed
B. A little stressed
C. Somewhat stressed
D. Very stressed

The Effects of Stress on You

- **Emotional**—Often impacts our mood causing us to be easily agitated, feel depressed, or feel emotionally depleted
- **Cognitive**—Inability to concentrate on the task at hand, or forgetfulness
- **Behavioral**—May cause us to change our behaviors; overeating, increasing caffeine intake or alcohol consumption, or neglecting our exercise routine
- **Physiological**—Muscle tension, gastrointestinal concerns, or general fatigue

It's Time to Try Relaxing

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Other strategies
Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Sit back in your seat.
2. Make your hands comfortable.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Take a deep breath. (Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.)
5. Breathe again.
6. Repeat until you feel calm and settled.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

1. Find a quiet place.
2. Find a comfortable position that supports your head and neck.
3. Close your eyes and take deep breaths.
4. Tighten the muscles in your hands (clench your fists) for four seconds and then release.
5. Repeat this process with other muscles in your body.
6. Focus on letting go of the tension in that muscle area.
7. Finish with slow and even breathing.

Other Stress Relievers

- Take time daily for yourself.
- Sing or dance.
- Do something physical.
- Drink less caffeine.
- Get together with a loved one or friend.
- Help someone else.
- Spend time doing your favorite hobby.
- Say “no” when needed.
- Take things one step at a time.
Conclusion

• **Acknowledge your feelings**—Stress and change are normal occurrences in our lives; how they affect us is determined by how we prepare for and respond to both.

• **Develop a plan**—Establishing goals and identifying the steps for goal achievement aids in keeping stress at bay and allows you to feel a sense of control over outcomes.

• **Reduce stress**—Take time out every day to engage in stress management; challenge mental barriers to successful stress management and embracing change.

Conclusion

• **Take steps to care for yourself**—A balanced lifestyle is essential to the successful navigation of both stress and change; remember balance is key.

• **Seek professional help if needed**—Working with a mental health professional or a counselor through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may assist you in developing and sticking to a plan.

Quote

“If we don't change, we don't grow.
If we don't grow, we aren't really living.”
Gail Sheehy
Resources

Contact your EAP or Work-Life Program for Assistance

Thank You

Questions?

Works Cited


Works Cited


