

# Meeting the Challenge of Change

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Workplace changes challenge our adaptation skills. Although each of us responds to change differently, you may find yourself having one or more of these reactions:

## **ANXIETY**

- Often, anxiety is triggered by not knowing how workplace changes will affect you, your job, your colleagues or the organization as a whole.
- You may feel emotionally vulnerable and unable to protect yourself from the impact of what will happen.
- Usually, anxiety of this kind is based on a fear of the unknown and a sense that one cannot control what will happen next.

### **Tips for Coping**

- Talk to a trusted friend, co-worker, spouse or another confidant about your feelings.
- Focus on what you can control — those things in your life, both at work and at home, that you have the power to influence and manage.

## **RESISTANCE**

- Resistance is an unwillingness to let go of how things used to be, and often appears as anger, criticism, blaming or withdrawal.
- Often, resistance is how we express our unhappiness with a change.

### **Tips for coping**

- If you feel yourself “digging in,” try to mentally step back from the situation and put it in perspective.
- Find appropriate ways to express your frustration, such as “letting off steam” with exercise, keeping a journal of your feelings or “venting” with a trusted friend or family member.

## **FEELING STUCK**

- Sometimes we feel mentally immobilized by pending changes that leave us in a state of uncertainty.
- Not knowing what will happen next can leave us in a holding pattern.

### **Tips for coping**

- Switch your focus to the present and concentrate on things you can control or influence.

- Give the new circumstances some time to sort themselves out before making any decisions that will have a long-term impact on your life.

## **ADAPTATION**

Adaptation has occurred when you feel ready to move on and accept the new reality. Some people take a long time to feel completely comfortable with a workplace change. In fact, you may go through the earlier stages several times before fully adapting.

## **CREATING A MORE POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

You can help make your workplace a more supportive environment for yourself and others by:

- Practicing common courtesy.
- Avoiding gossip, backstabbing, or spreading rumors.
- Keeping your sense of humor.
- Offering emotional support to those who are having greater difficulty adapting.

## **ENHANCING YOUR ADAPTATION SKILLS**

There is no right or wrong way to adapt to change. These suggestions may help you find an approach that works for you:

- Quiet your mind. Take a few minutes every day to shut out the outside world and listen to what's coming from inside you — your wants, needs, intuitions, and ideas. If it helps, try writing down your thoughts and feelings.
- Stay healthy. Regular exercise, good eating habits and adequate sleep will help your body and mind adapt to stressful change.
- Be creative. Spending time in activities or hobbies that stimulate your creativity will increase your ability to be flexible and build your problem solving skills.
- Learn to live in the present. Deal with circumstances as they are, not as they once were or might be. Stay in the here-and-now, not the there-and-then.
- Be realistic. Recognize that you can't do it all yourself. If you feel overloaded and need help, ask for it. If help isn't available, prioritize — focus on the tasks that need your attention the most.
- Nurture your spiritual life. Change and its challenges are easier to deal with when you are grounded in your spiritual beliefs and personal philosophy of life.