



No One Likes CHANGE

The one thing in life that is inevitable is change. We can all expect to experience change in our lives and each one of us will respond to it in different ways. Some of us are paralyzed by change and find it difficult to make a decision, while others may use the change to motivate us to make positive transitions in our lives. Some of us are even lucky enough to be able to anticipate change and plan for it. Whatever our reaction to the change, stress generally occurs. What is new and unknown can create anxiety. Change, similar to grief, often follows a process. How we progress through this process depends on how quickly we adapt to the change. Understanding how to cope with the change is critical to effectively dealing with our stress and anxiety.

The Process of Change

Denial. Often our first reaction is to deny or ignore the extent of the change. This reaction gives us time to bring perspective to what has happened. Although we may look and feel like we are handling things just fine, denial helps us avoid what is changing. It's important to recognize that while this is normal, it is important to move beyond this as quickly as possible.

Resistance. Eventually the reality and scope of the change becomes clear. As a result we may feel angry, resentful and anxious. Uncertainty, self-doubt and fear can begin. At times this can be so distracting that we are reluctant to look ahead and may become stuck.

Possibilities. Most people are able, with time, to accept that change has occurred and with that become more positive and look at the new possibilities that exist. People can choose to accept change and move in different directions. Some people become more confident, excited and energized by their new direction.

Acceptance and Moving On. In the final phase, people begin integrating the changes and accepting new directions for their lives. They are often more positive and gain confidence, and for some this can be a very exciting time. With acceptance comes a reduction in anxiety and a commitment to move forward.

Tips for Dealing with Change

While there is no universal roadmap for how to work through change, consider the following.

Remember that change is a normal part of life. While uncomfortable at times, change can keep life from becoming routine and boring. Other times it can result in positive and exciting results.

Try to anticipate change. Don't become too complacent. Being flexible and open to change in our lives can lessen the surprise when it does occur.

Try to accept change early in the process. Try not to get stuck in denial and resistance. While it is normal and tempting to avoid anxiety and uncertainty, the sooner you face the inevitable, the sooner you can take action and feel that you have gained control and influence over the situation.

Reach out to your support system and talk about it. This is the time to use the people and resources in your life. Talk to co-workers, friends and family. Don't "go it alone." Remember you have been there in the past for them; let them be there for you!

Remember Your EAP

Your Employee Assistance Program is available to assist you and your family members through this process. We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your privacy is maintained and your interactions with the EAP are strictly confidential. With our network of Behavioral Healthcare Specialists, the EAP through Employee Assistance of the Pacific will respond quickly, consistently and reliably to your concerns – and those of your family members.

Employee Assistance of the Pacific

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