Working Through Change

People respond in different ways to change. Some are frozen by change and find it difficult to make a decision, while others feel motivated to make positive transitions in their lives. However we react to change, we can all benefit by weighing our options and working with someone who can offer guidance in helping make the best decisions.

Stress usually accompanies any type of change—good or bad. Change usually follows a process and people work through this process differently. Understanding the process of change can help minimize stress and can help you move forward.

The most common changes you may experience in your life are:

**Relationship changes**—marriage, ending of relationship, or the loss of spouse or family member.

**Workplace changes**—company merger, loss of employment, or a job promotion.

**Life style and quality of life changes**—a new baby, adoption, relocation, elderly parents, or illness.

The process of change

**Denial.** The first response to change is usually to deny or minimize the extent of the change.

**Resistance.** This next stage can bring out anger, anxiety, and depression. This is the phase where uncertainty, self-doubt and low self-esteem begin to surface.

**Exploration.** After a period of denial and doubt, most people enter the next more optimistic, future-oriented stage. People will begin to explore other possibilities, new opportunities, and will begin looking for the good that may come out of the situation.

**Acceptance and New Commitment.** This is the final stage of the change process. People at this stage have developed new goals and have gone through an emotional shift from anxiety to renewed self-confidence. This is the time people often describe as feeling like a weight has been lifted off their shoulders.
Healthy Ways of Dealing with Change

Dealing with change can be easier if we are open to the occurrence of it. The following are some tips for dealing with changes as they occur.

• **Recognize that change is a part of life.** Life would be boring and stagnant if things didn’t change. Change keeps us fresh and alive.

• **Anticipate change.** Don’t become too complacent. Being flexible and open to change will lessen the surprise when it does happen.

• **Monitor change around you.** Be an active participant in life and notice your surroundings. You’ll be able to spot change and deal with it a lot easier.

• **Adapt to change quickly.** When you begin to anticipate and monitor change, you'll be able to adapt faster with less stress.

• **Learn to enjoy change.** Understand that change is a necessary part of life.

• **Expect that change will happen over and over—and over again.** Life is a series of changes.

Contact Us

Your program provides access to tools and other resources online or call us directly to speak to a professional counselor who is available everyday and at any time to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you.

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