Managing Change

Change is a process that involves endings, transitions and beginnings.

Endings:

During the change process, we are in the position – either voluntary or involuntarily – of having to end an attachment to an old way of doing things. This detachment is what we refer to as an ending. Endings are often painful and disorientating. Even though we may fully realise – intellectually – that the ending is necessary or inevitable, it still hurts to let go. One common problem in change situations is that we don’t let go. We refuse to break and end up carrying emotional “excess baggage” into the new venture. The key to the ending process is to recognise exactly what we are hanging on to and then begin the process of letting go.

Transitions:

The process of letting go is what we call transitions. And the logical question we ask is: transition to what? It’s difficult enough to let go, but it’s doubly difficult if there isn’t something there to hang on to or at least reach for. As a result, the key to transitions is to clarify a direction and a goal. Even if these are only sketchy at first, they still represent something to head for. Eventually, as the direction and goals become clearer and more concrete, we are able to comfortably end the old and begin the new.

Beginnings:

Once people are committed to or at least moving in direction of accepting and “owning” the change, new beginnings can occur.

Here are some suggested ways to manage change instead of letting change manage you:

- Express your feelings about the change (e.g. feelings of loss) to supportive friends, co-workers or family.
- Enlist the support of others
- Plan for known change
- Obtain as much information as possible about what is happening
- Mark or celebrate endings
- Set yourself short term objectives
- Identify and use your internal and external resources
- Take time to look after yourself
- Deal directly with your concerns about change
- Identify what you are in control of
- Avoid “catastrophising” and “awfulising”
- Be patient with yourself. Change is stressful for most people and you may take a while to adapt
- Practice regular relaxation techniques
- Seek assistance from a professional if you suffer from prolonged symptoms of stress

ResolutionsRTK is your Employee Assistance Program provider. Using the service give you access to qualified professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and management coaches - who can help you with change related issues. To make an appointment, contact ResolutionsRTK during business hours, Monday - Friday, between 8:30am and 6:00pm. You can arrange to speak to someone over the phone, or face-to-face counselling, in a location convenient to you across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

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