

Feature Article

Coping With Workplace Change

Change evokes fear in most people because of the uncertainty it presents. People wonder: Will I be adequate for this new position? Will I be able to get along with my new boss? Will the corporation my company is merging with allow me to keep my job? "Major changes, such as new management, downsizing or a company buyout, can result in a feeling of panic," says Susan Starr, a human resource consultant and owner of H2O Marks, a Dallas-based marketing company.

Understanding change

When you have a routine, you know what to expect, and even if it's difficult or boring, it's consistent and reliable. You have learned how to do your work and deal with the people who work with you. But when something changes, suddenly your routine is broken and you no longer know what to expect.

Even if the change is for the better, the transformation can be difficult. For example, when one company installed a new phone system, a frustrated employee exclaimed, "I know it will be so much better once I get used to it, but right now the phones are driving me crazy." "It is the same with any kind of change," says Ms. Starr. "There is a period of adjustment until you feel the consistency that builds trust and confidence. During this time, you may feel disoriented, frustrated, angry and powerless." The best time to prepare for any change is when things are running smoothly. That way, you'll have time to plan ahead.



One way to do so is to practice the following four A's of coping with change:

Awareness Since uncertainty about the future creates the most fear and stress during a change, try to find as much information as you can about your situation. Whom can you ask? What can you learn? What research can you do? The more you learn, the less uncertainty you'll experience. Behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed will help you cope with change.

Acceptance You may not like the change, but if you accept the fact that it is the way it is, instead of fighting it or complaining about it, you'll feel less frustrated. "It's important to accept transformations with grace and a sense of looking forward to a new experience," says Ms. Starr.

Attitude Are you being fearful or are you thinking about the possibilities for improvement change might bring? To focus on the positive aspects of your change, write a list of all the possible positive outcomes. Even though minor changes can cause stress and frustration, the good news is that any change can be an opportunity for something positive to happen. What's more, when you learn how to cope effectively with minor changes at work, you'll develop the skills and positive outlook necessary to help you deal with a major change.

Action This is where you do have some control over the situation. It's how you prepare and respond to change. The following positive actions can help you cope.

- **Develop a network.** Always keep in contact with your managers and fellow employees from former jobs. Your network will be a valuable resource in times of change.
- **Learn new skills.** Learn a new computer program. Take a class in communication skills. Learn to make presentations. Ongoing training will add skills to your professional tool kit.
- **Change your surroundings.** Do what you can to make your work area pleasant and comfortable.
- **Ask action questions.** Whom can you talk to if a situation is getting more difficult to cope with? How can you get to know a new boss or coworker? What ideas can you present to your company that will help with the change?

"The key to coping with change is resilience," says Ms. Starr. "Resilience means knowing how to survive and making the best of change in spite of setbacks, barriers or limited resources."

This Month's Webinar: Resilience in Times of Change

Change is an inevitable part of life. Sometimes it hits us unexpectedly and other times it comes as a consequence of a decision we made. Either way, change can be scary if we aren't prepared to be flexible and resilient in the face of it. Especially in the workplace, organizational change can impact individual employee's performance and productivity.

Thankfully, based on decades of research, we know that it isn't the change itself, but how we perceive it. And there are specific internal and external resources that can be taught to help individuals not only effectively adapt to change but also thrive through it. Resilient people are optimistic, purposeful, growth oriented, engaged and connected. In this webinar, participants will: explore the impact of change on individuals and organizations, define the concept of resilience and how it's essential to cope with change, and learn the skills necessary to foster resilience and make healthy transitions.

Watch this webinar any time throughout the month of February when you log in to IMPACT on the Web at www.MyImpactSolution.com.



Monthly Highlights



Mind Over Money: Creating a Spending Plan You Can Stick With

Visit the Financial Tile located on the www.MyImpactSolution.com website for tips and resources on forming and sticking to a personal budget.



Simple Living Trust

Thinking about setting up living trust? Gain some

understanding and tips on how to set up a trust by visiting the Legal Tile on the www.MyImpactSolution.com website

Forgot your login information?
Give us a call at 800-227-6007.

Eldercare Spotlight

Estate Planning and Advanced Directives

As your loved one ages, they may grow concerned about no longer being able to make decisions for themselves and providing for their family after they pass away. Encouraging them to begin preparing for the future through estate planning can help them:

- Control their property while they are still alive
- Express the type of care they would like to receive, and who can make decisions for them if they become unable to make their wishes known
- Provide for their loved ones after their death
- Lessen the stress of decision-making on their caregivers

If you are unsure of how best to go about creating and notarizing advance directives such as living wills and powers of attorney, there are resources available. IMPACT offers complimentary consultation with an Eldercare specialist who can offer guidance on end of life decisions. Visit your EAP website at www.MyImpactSolution.com where you will find numerous do-it-yourself legal forms on basic wills, Advanced Directives by state, Power of Attorney and more. You also have access to a 30 minute complimentary consultation with a local attorney through IMPACT's Legal services.

If you would like more information on how your EAP can be of assistance, give us a call today at 800-227-6007.

Contributed By: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging

Information in IMPACT on Wellness is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.

You can contact IMPACT Solutions for professional counseling and guidance 24 hours a day at 800-227-6007.

IMPACT SOLUTIONS EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE & WORK/LIFE PROGRAM

Stress Less Center



RESOURCES:

- **Resiliency Skills Training Series** consisting of 14 brief training modules designed to improve your resiliency and build up your resistance to stress
- **Relaxation Tools** including guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation and more
- **Assessment Tools** including depression, anxiety and mental health risk assessments

Did you know... IMPACT Solutions offers a **Stress Less Center** on your EAP website where you can find new tools and strategies for managing stress in one convenient location?

Searching for stress free living? That is a myth. However, we are offering you a chance to understand your personal relationship with stress and increase your control over unexpected stressful events. Doing so will improve your overall life at home with family and friends, at work with coworkers and customers and with people in your community that you deal with on a daily basis.

In addition to the numerous resources on the website, you can call IMPACT Solutions 24/7 at 800-227-6007. A mental health professional is available at all times to provide you with confidential in the moment support and guidance to address your immediate need. Counseling referrals and other EAP services are coordinated by our triage counselors during normal business hours, Monday through Friday.

Visit our **Stress Less Center** on the IMPACT Website at www.MyImpactSolution.com

Remember to enter your organization's Member Login.

Forgot your Member Login? Give us a call at 800-227-6007