



**University
of Victoria**

Managing Change and Transition

An Overview

***It's not so much that we're afraid of change,
or so in love with the old ways,
but it's that place in between we fear...
it's like being in between trapezes.
It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer.
There's nothing to hold on to."
M. Ferguson***

Introduction

Why is Executing Change so Challenging?¹

- 1. People will resist change.** Some of the strongest resistance will occur from what people ask for. Why? “Uninformed Optimism is always followed by “Informed Pessimism” and humans will choose the *comfort* of familiarity over the *anxiety* that comes with the unknown.
- 2. We live in an era of perpetual change/unrest.** We have more unrest today than 20 years ago. In fact we have only just crossed the threshold of perpetual unrest. We need to expect more change. Today represents the least amount of ambiguity we will face. So, we need to stop assuming we are one project away from things settling down.
- 3. We’ve run out of the resources required to deal with change.** Absorbing change requires physical, emotional, and intellectual energy. On any given day human being can only absorb so much change before capacity reaches overload and they are pushed into “future shock”. The dysfunctional symptoms of “future shock” occur when the demands for adaptation to change exceed the current adaptation capacity. What is change related dysfunction? - Any action or feeling that diverts resources away from meeting productivity and quality standards.
- 4. We incorrectly focus an inordinate amount of energy into trying to make people feel comfortable during a major change.** Reality is they won’t – dramatic change is uncomfortable. The leader’s role in change is not to make people feel happy about the change: it’s *helping them succeed despite their discomfort*. It is not necessary for people to like what has happened to them – it is necessary that they make adjustments that will help them succeed in the new environment.
- 5. We focus on getting the change “installed”** (e.g. # people trained, \$ spent, # computers on desks) **and miss “realizing” the return on investment expected from the change** (i.e. the fundamental purpose for the change, the outcomes that were promised). What is behind this gap? The human side of change. It is the humans in the landscape that achieve the results not the change “containers” we buy or build. People need to be readied to absorb the disruption and adapt to the change.

¹ Adapted from a presentation by Daryl Conner – Organizational Change: Installation vs. Realization)

Organization Strategies for Successfully Realizing the Results in Change:

- 1. Look for ways to decrease unnecessary demands on existing resources.** Leaders need to consider the aggregate effect of incremental changes. Change projects need to be driven by whether or not they are an organizational imperative. Change projects should generate “*such value that the cost for failing to implement them would be prohibitively high*”. They are beyond good ideas – they are critical to organizational survival. Other ideas must be rejected or put on hold.
- 2. Increase the organization’s capacity and resilience for dealing with the disruption of change,** People need to be able to absorb change if organizations are going to be effective. We can increase capacity by carefully and diligently managing the human side of change (i.e. the transition). We can increase resilience by seeking out and enhancing personal resilience. Resilient people are Positive, Focused, Flexible, Organized and Proactive.
- 3. Follow a process for managing change and transition** – As leaders we need to deal with both what is changing and the impact of that change on the people. This workbook provides an overview on how to manage change and transition.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to provide Leaders with an overview of the process for Managing Change and Transition. The guide includes the steps for Managing Change and offers particular emphasis on Managing Transition or the Human side of change.

Managing Change vs Managing Transition²

Change is the shift in the external situation; the thing that has changed. It can happen fast.

Transition is the reorientation people need to make in response to the change. This can take time.

To be successful in both the implementation and in helping people we need to manage both the *change* and the *transition*.

A *transition* management plan is a necessary component of a *change* management plan and presumes that the underlying change is being well managed.

A well-managed change ensures that:

- There is an identified Executive Sponsor for the change
- Leaders understand the shifting roles of Sponsors, Implementers Agents and Advocates during change
- Change teams are set up as needed (e.g. implementation, transition, communication, etc.)
- The need for the change has been effectively established and communicated to everyone – more than once using a variety of medium.
- The impacts of the planned change - indirect, as well as direct - have been identified and communicated.
- Those who will be impacted by the change have been involved in the planning, or at the very least, will be involved in its implementation.
- The details of the implementation are generally understood as they emerge and are modified to fit changing circumstances

² Bridges, William. (1991). *Managing Transition: Making the Most of Change*.

A Word About Roles During Change³

Knowing the roles that you and others play in a change initiative is essential to success. Although you may play more than one role within a change, it is critical that you are clear about which role you are enacting at any one time. You must also work within the appropriate boundaries for that role.

There are four key roles necessary for successful and sustained change efforts. These roles tend to cascade down the hierarchy of an organization. They include the roles of Sponsor, Implementer (or Target), Agent and Advocate.

Sponsor:

- The person with the authority to make a change happen.
- Has direct authority over the individuals who will implement the action or change.
- Has access to and/or control over the resources (money, time and people) needed to implement action or change.
- Has a clear vision, identified goals and measurable outcomes for the change initiative.

There are two types of sponsors: 1) **Executive or Initiating Sponsors** – usually the top executives in the organization and 2) **Sustaining Sponsors** – usually those who are responsible for sponsoring the change in their own areas or units. The change may be initiated by an Executive Sponsor and moved forward by the Sustaining Sponsor.



Who is ‘your’ Sponsor for this change?

³ Adapted from Conner, Daryl. (1993). *Managing at the Speed of Change* And O’Neil, Mary Beth, (2000) *Executive Coaching: with Backbone and Heart*

Implementer(s) or Target(s)

- The people who are authorized to implement the change (and often are also expected to change something about the way they are doing their work).
- Have direct line responsibilities to the Executive or Sustaining sponsor.
- Most effective when they clarify their questions and concerns about what is expected with their Sponsor at the beginning of a change
- Provide sponsors with information about issues that might block or impede success – thereby providing an essential feedback loop in the system
- Requests necessary resources that leverage and reinforce success)



Who is/are 'your' Implementers/Targets?

Change Agent:

- Can work with both the sponsor and the implementers but does not take on their roles (e.g. functions as a Consultant or Coach).
- Can be internal or external to the organizations
- Is focused on helping the sponsor and implementers stay aligned with each other
- May act in a number of roles - data gatherer, educator, advisor, facilitator or coach in order to aid sponsors and Implementers in achieving success.
- Must be sponsored to work with the Implementers or Targets - has no direct-line authority over the Implementers or Targets.



Who is/are 'your' Change Agent(s)?

Advocate(s)

- Has a good idea and is in search of a sponsor
- Can occupy any role in the organization
- Most effective if they show how their idea is compatible with issues important to the Sponsors' change projects and goals

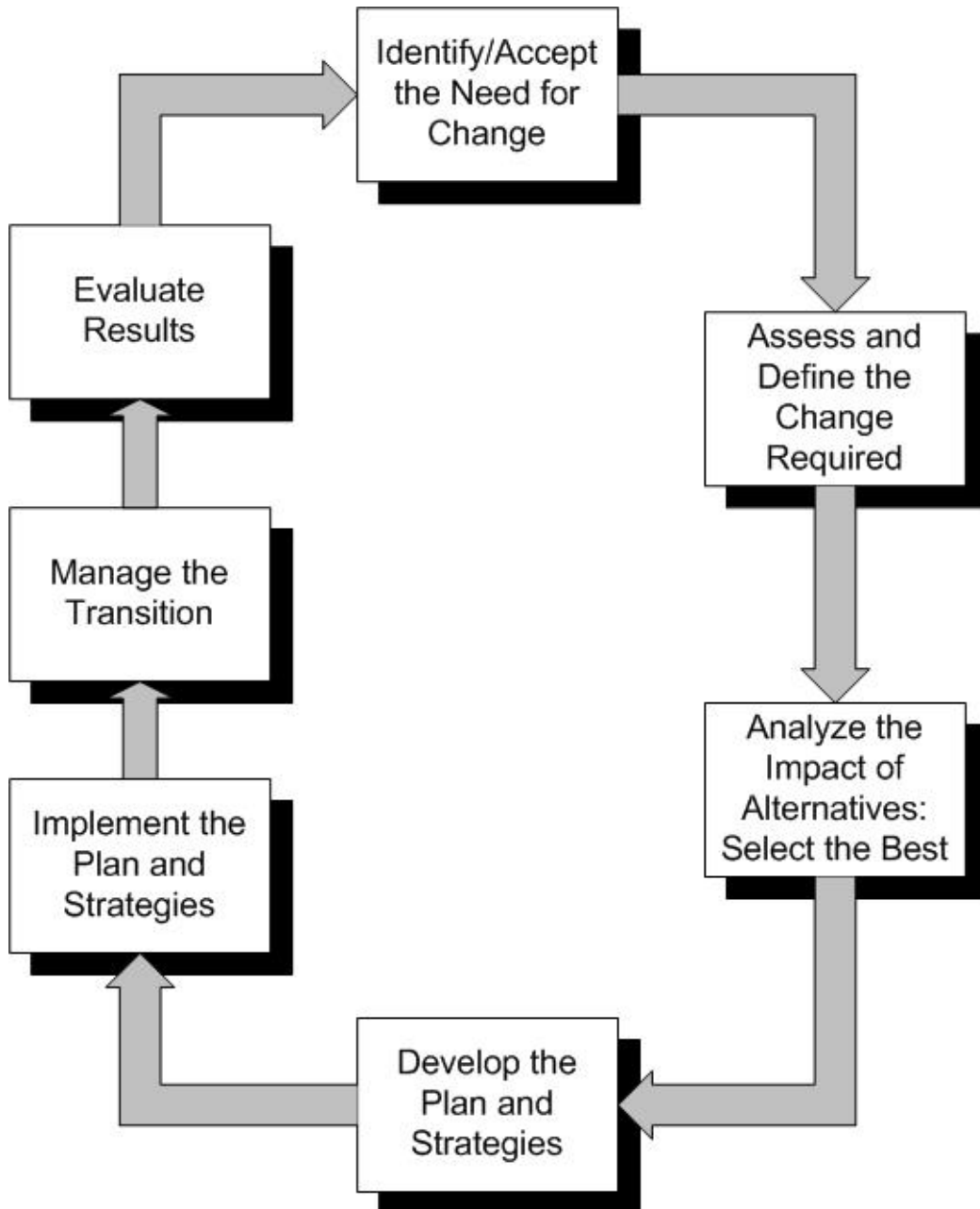


Who is/are 'your' Advocates?

Successful change requires clarity around the roles and authority of those involved. The greater the degree of vertical and horizontal alignment the greater the chance of success. As a leader involved in a change initiative you can increase alignment by advocating with those involved to clarify the role they are playing.

Summary of Steps for Managing Change⁴

Use the steps for managing change as a check list to guide you in change initiatives.



⁴ This model for managing change is based on the “Steps for Managing Change Process” developed by Linda Ackerman and the Managing Transitions model developed by William Bridges

Detail of Steps for Managing Change:

1. Identify/Accept the Need for Change:

- List the issues, indicators or symptoms
- Ask stakeholders to confirm the issues, indicators or symptoms
- Decide whether change is necessary
- Set up change team(s)/support mechanisms (implementation, transition, communication etc.)
- Clarify Roles (Sponsor, Implementer, Agent, Advocate)

2. Assess and Define the Change Required:

- Identify the preferred future state
- Assess the current state
- Identify the gap or difference
- Clearly define what must be changed
- Establish measures of success

3. Analyze the Impact of Alternatives and Select the Best:

- List reasonable alternatives (including making no change)
- Assess the cost/benefits, pros/cons, outcomes/risks and potential side effects
- Choose the best alternative
- Identify restraining and supporting forces (i.e. people, events, rules and policies)

4. Develop the Plan and Strategies:

- Explain the change and rationale
- Describe the current situation vs. the desired future
- Explain the options considered and decision
- Describe objectives, action plans, and measures of success
- Develop strategies:
 - √ Operational (Physical/Plant Legal, Financial, and Service Issues)
 - √ Training and Learning
 - √ Human Resource (HR/LR, Staff Transfer, Selection)
 - √ Communication
 - √ Transition
 - √ Team Development
 - √ Budget Implications

5. Implement the Plan and Strategies:

- Enlist others
- Determine readiness for change
- Prepare and educate those implementing the change
- Follow the timetable and sequence of events for communication, training, team development etc.)

6. Manage the Transition:

- Monitor transition issues and people's response to the change
- Implement strategies to help people with the transition
- Recognize results

7. Evaluate the Change:

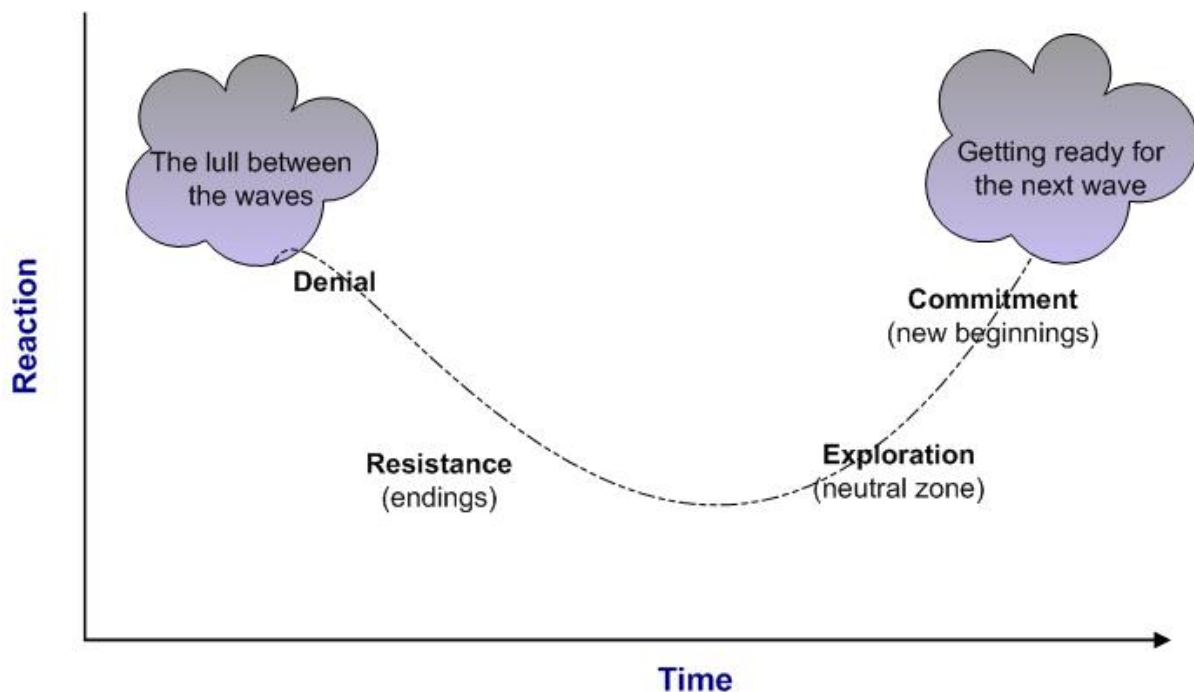
- Monitor progress and debrief
- Design and conduct evaluation based on the measure of success
- Document and report on the outcome
- Adjust or alter based on evaluation

Model for Managing Transition⁵

People go through the phases of transition as they orient to change. Transition is not a linear process that moves orderly from step to step. People find themselves moving back and forth between the phases. As a manager you need to expect and allow people to go through the transition process at different speeds and in different ways.

You can use this model to:

- Predict how people will respond and what they may need as they react to change
- Respond appropriately to help people move forward
- Find the opportunities within the change



⁵ This model for Managing Transition is influenced by the separate work of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Cynthia Scott and William Bridges

What You Can Do at Each Stage

The Lull Between the Waves

In between major changes we might enjoy a time when we are not involved in any major transition. This time is included in the Transition Model because we believe that the “lull between the waves” provides an opportunity to get ready for change. Preparing can help people move through transition more easily. Here are some things you can be doing, individually and as a leader/manager - to prepare for change and transition.

Individual:	Leader/Manager:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Look for signs of upcoming changes that may affect you➤ Find out all you can about personal transition➤ Develop skills that will help you better deal with change and transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Help people look for signs of upcoming changes➤ Offer people training in dealing with change and transition➤ Develop skills that will help you better lead people through change and transition



What signs do you see of upcoming changes?

The charts on the pages that follow describe the phases of transition and provide some suggestions for moving through each phase.

Helping People Deal with Denial

Possible Reactions:

Feelings: Shock, agitation, apathy, numbness, disbelief

Behaviours: Withdrawal, activity without getting much done

Thinking/Saying:

"This is no big deal."

"I don't know what everyone is upset about"

"They've said this before and nothing happened."

"I'll believe it when I see it."

"It doesn't affect me."

"This won't really change anything."

"What announcement; oh that, I didn't really pay much attention."

Focus: Immediate

Suggested Actions for Individuals	Suggested Actions for Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listen, listen, listen – pay attention to what you are hearing ➤ Seek the information you need to deal with the changes ➤ Ask questions to find out what is changing and what is not ➤ Decide how this change might impact your life, and your work. <p>Knowledge and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personal Transition ➤ Grieving process ➤ Communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clearly explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the change without denigrating the past • why change is needed • what is over and how people will be affected • what will not change ➤ Ask for reactions ➤ Listen, listen, listen – pay attention to what you are hearing ➤ Show caring and concern ➤ Respond to questions, clear up any misunderstandings, and acknowledge objections ➤ Acknowledge losses ➤ Allow people time to grieve <p>Knowledge and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Change management ➤ Managing Transition ➤ Grieving process ➤ Strategic communication ➤ Facilitating Meetings



Who is showing signs of denial?



Ideas for helping people understand the change and how it might affect them.

Managing Endings & Dealing with Resistance

Possible Reactions:

Feelings: Guilt, resentment, anxiety, self-absorption, stress, depression, anger, fear, defiance

Behaviours: Asking questions, challenging, complaining, failing to see any positive outcomes, can't sleep, withdraw, hide, sabotage, blame, “retirement on the job”

Thinking/Saying:

"Why are they doing this to us?"

"This is crazy, Who's idea was this anyway?"

"Why can't things stay the way they are?"

"This will never work."

"They don't know anything about “_”, how can they decide this?"

"What's going to happen to me?"

Focus: On the past, on what was, and on concern for the unknown future

Suggested Actions for Individuals	Suggested Actions for Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask questions to get the information you need ➤ Find out how the change affects you, your work group, and other groups you interact with ➤ Express your concerns ➤ Assess and mourn your losses (what is over and what is not) ➤ Mark what is ending for you or your work group (action, event, ceremony, memento, piece of the past) ➤ Talk to others about their losses and reactions ➤ Look at your past losses or changes . . . are they getting in the way ➤ Stay in tune with your feelings . . . Talk to a friend . . . Keep a journal . . . Seek counselling and support from EFAP <p>Skills and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dealing with Change ➤ Grieving and loss ➤ Communication ➤ Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Surface resistance by asking for reactions, questions and concerns ➤ Listen, listen, listen ➤ Show caring and concern and respond empathetically ➤ Continue to offer information in several ways ➤ Help people identify what is ending and what is not ➤ Help people grieve and mark losses through rituals, actions, events, ceremonies, & momentos ➤ Give people a part to play ➤ Remove things (tools, systems, machines) that would encourage people to hang on to "what was" ➤ At the same time, look for ways to soften the blow. <p>Skills and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dealing with Resistance ➤ Communication ➤ Listening ➤ Helping people with loss



Who is affected? (eg. Individuals, teams, groups, customers, patients, stakeholders)



What are they losing? (eg. Relationships with peers, boss, sense of belonging, kind of work, sense of control, feeling of competence, trust, status, turf, etc.)



What will you do to help people with their losses? (eg. Acknowledgement, replace with something else, restore them in the change, help people grieve or say good-bye)

Exploring the Neutral Zone

Possible Reactions:

Feelings: Some hope and optimism, some frustration, can't focus, confusion

Behaviours: Adjustment, bargaining, willing to get involved, too much to do, many new ideas, over-preparation, chaos

Thinking/Saying:

"Things are a mess, we are so unorganized."

"How did we decide to do this, I forget."

"I am so tired, I don't know which end is up."

"I am waking up in the middle of the night, and my head is spinning with all the kinds of ideas"

"Sometimes I know where I am going, and sometimes I just feel lost."

"It is scary to think we could do just about anything, no one knows what anyone else is doing."

Focus: On the future

Suggested Actions for Individuals	Suggested Actions for Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gain a greater sense of control by: getting involved, gaining access to decision makers, setting goals, and minimizing personal changes ➤ Seek a greater understanding by; finding out decisions being made, and information you need ➤ Develop your support systems by: confide in someone, letting others know what you need ➤ Re- establish your sense of purpose and direction by taking stock of your skills, talents, abilities and achievements, clarifying what success means to you. ➤ Develop a plan to get the skills and knowledge you need ➤ Brainstorm and write down new ideas, experiment with new ways of doing things <p>Skills and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Career Planning ➤ Creativity and Innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to explain the purpose and plan ➤ Support commitment to the change ➤ Encourage people to be creative and ask for ideas for making their own changes ➤ Involve people in trying out ideas ➤ Start training people in the new skills they will need <p>Skills and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coaching ➤ Communication



What systems, structures, policies and/or procedures (temporary or permanent) would help?



What training and skills do you think people need?



Ideas to support and encourage people to explore their options.

Gaining Commitment and a New Beginning

Possible Reactions:

Feelings: Acceptance, commitment, hope, satisfaction

Behaviours: Rebuilding, cooperation, clear focus and planning

Thinking/Saying:

"How can we work on this."

"Oh I get it, I see what you mean, I didn't understand what you were trying to tell me."

"When you get used to this, it isn't half bad."

Focus: On the future

Suggested Actions for Individuals	Suggested Actions for Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set clear objectives based on personal purpose, vision of success, and career plan ➤ Put together a plan to develop training in skills and knowledge you need ➤ Find some low risk setting to practice new skills, for a few quick successes ➤ Find a mentor to coach you ➤ Celebrate your successes <p>Skills and Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning and Objective Setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Hold Steady” on the plan ➤ Support peoples commitment to the change ➤ Continue to provide training and practice in new skills <p>Skills and Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Giving Recognition

Getting Ready for the Next Wave

Possible Reactions:

Thinking/Saying:

"It's funny how upsetting it all was, it feels like ancient history now."

"I can't say I love this new job, but it's OK."

"It took me a while to get used to the people on the team but now it feels like we have always worked together."

"I suppose they will change this too someday, but for now it feels pretty effective."

Suggested Actions for Individuals	Suggested Actions for Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reflect on the change experience and personal transition process to identify insights➤ Develop a strategy for taking charge of the next wave of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reflect on experience with change and managing transition to identify insights and learnings➤ Develop a strategy for improving the management of the next wave of change and transition

In Summary

Phase	Individual	Leader
The Lull Between the Waves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look for signs and Develop Skills for Change and Transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help look for signs of change ➤ Offer training and Develop skills for change and transition
Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listen, Seek, and Ask 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain, Ask, Listen, ➤ Show Caring, ➤ Respond to Questions and Acknowledge Concerns
Resistance (Endings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ask, Express, Mourn, and Seek Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Surface Resistance, ➤ Listen ➤ Show Caring ➤ Inform ➤ Help Mourn ➤ Respond to Questions and Acknowledge Concerns
Exploration (Neutral Zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek control, understanding, support, purpose, plan and participate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain purpose and plan ➤ Ask for support ➤ Encourage Creativity and Ideas ➤ Involve people ➤ Start Training
Commitment (New Beginning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop knowledge and skills ➤ Celebrate success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hold Steady ➤ Develop Skills and Knowledge ➤ Celebrate Success
Getting Ready for the Next Wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflect on Experience and ➤ Develop Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflect on Experience and ➤ Develop Strategies

Appendix 1 - Some Things to Remember

- Those planning the change start their transition first and reach their beginnings first
- People experience transition in differing intensity and move through them at different speeds depending on factors such as:
 - √ the degree to which the change takes them by surprise
 - √ the degree the change places them in an uncertain or unfamiliar situation
 - √ their clarity about the expected outcomes of the change
 - √ their stage of life
 - √ the number of other transitions they are experiencing at the same time
 - √ their opportunity to express vulnerability or uncertainty
 - √ their individual temperament (e.g. MBTI preference)
 - √ their personal self awareness
 - √ whether or not there is a specified end time for the change
 - √ the impact upon them personally
- People will differ in terms of how difficult their endings and how they experience their losses

Appendix 2 - Impact of Change

Whenever an organization is faced with significant adjustments due to reduction, reorganization or consolidation of services or workforce, the pressures of change create stress for those within the organization.

Although restructuring is not a personal issue, it is **felt** in a very personal way. People experience different emotions and feelings, which may be significantly different from yours and each other's. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

- **Every employee** – including the leaders – will feel differing levels of stress, pressure, anxiety and even excitement as changes unfold.
- **People whose jobs are eliminated or changed** feel a deep sense of personal loss. The pride they feel for the work they have been doing may be hurt.
- **Personal friendships** may be tested and even damaged, as some colleagues gain and some lose, some leave and some stay.
- **Those taking retirement options** are faced with making major life decisions.
- **Those re-deployed through restructuring, bumping or transfer** will need to begin a new job and join a new work team.
- **Those remain with their basic job intact or even a better job** face "survivors guilt" and the prospect of future changes.
- **Work Teams that need to integrate new members** need to help them orient to the area and team, meet new people, build new relationships and clarify new roles and functions.
- **Work groups that are altered** need to revisit their mission and goals and rebuild their teams in order to adjust to the changes expected.
- **Work groups that are left intact** may need to address their anxieties about the possibility of future changes.
- **Productivity and morale** may be taxed and stretched. Ongoing projects, deadlines, and new initiatives may need to take a lower priority as people adjust to and accept the changes.

Those leading and implementing organizational change need to be aware and sensitive to the impact of change on the individual and the work group. It is not enough to focus on implementing the change. Leaders need to also help people deal with their response to the change.

Appendix 3 - Change Implementers: Questions to Ask Sponsors

Implementers are most effective when they listen, inquire, and clarify their questions and concerns with their Sponsor at the beginning of a change initiative

Use the questions below (not all will apply) to structure your initial discussions. As you do, keep in mind that the answers you get from the sponsor should reflect their behind-the-scenes role.

About the Change

- What is driving the change effort?
- How does this change tie in with the organization's objectives?
- What is your vision of this change? What do you see changing?
- Is this part of a larger change initiative? If so, how does it fit in to that larger effort?
- What is the current situation?
- What is the time frame for this change?
- Where does this change fit into the list of organizational priorities? On your list of priorities?
- Who (else) is driving the change effort?
- What is their level of support for the change?

About expectations/results:

- What results does the organization expect from this initiative?
- What are the consequences if this change doesn't occur?
- Describe the outcomes:
- What organizational payoffs do you see in this?
- What benefits do you see for individuals?
- How will results be measured?

About Your Role as the Implementer:

- Why was I chosen for this?
- To whom am I accountable?
- What do you expect from me?
- What authority do I have?
- What additional authority do I need?
- What other factors do I need to consider?

About the Sponsor's Role:

- What role do you plan to play as the sponsor? (Active? Behind-the-scenes?)
- What kind of ongoing communication do you want or need?
- What support will you provide?
- How committed are you to making this change?
- What resources are you willing to commit?
- What concerns do you have?
- Are you open to receiving feedback on what you are doing to aid the change effort?

About Support/Resources:

- What ideas do you have for the best ways to achieve this change?
- What resources are available?
- Who else relies on those resources?
- What kind of access to people and information will we have?
- What information/data exists that supports the change?
- What kind of information do we need?
- What help do you think I'll need from you?
- What help will I need from others?
- What is the budget for this?

About People:

- Who are the stakeholders in this change?
- Whose support is it particularly important to get?
- What suggestions do you have for the best ways to get that support?

Appendix 4 – Handling Resistance

You will need to handle resistance throughout the change process. Doing so, is particularly important and demanding of your time and skills at the initial stages of the change process.

Handling resistance requires the ability to:

- Recognize the signs of resistance
- View resistance as a natural part of the change process
- Listen and react non-defensively

These abilities form the foundation of the 5 steps that will help you handle resistance:

- 1) Acknowledge to yourself that you are encountering resistance
- 2) Describe what you see, hear and feel
- 3) Stay silent and let the other person or people respond
- 4) Listen attentively
- 5) Work together to develop plans to deal with concerns, fears and losses

TIPS:

- The idea is not to eliminate resistance. This is not possible. Instead focus on allowing people to express their issues – sometimes people just need to be heard.
- It is not necessary that people like the change. It is enough for them to agree to work with you and to begin to accept the change.
- Differentiate between authentic resistance and "false" resistance. False resistance, while real, has nothing to do with the change. Instead it is usually rooted in old grudges, resentment, or need for attention. Asking people to be specific about what their objections are, will help you distinguish between what is authentic and what is false.
- Also seek to differentiate between resistance that comes from fear of lack of ability or skill and resistance that comes from unwillingness.

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