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# **Bureau of Development Services: Managing Change in Times of Uncertainty**

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Presented by:

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# Managing Change in Times of Uncertainty

## Agenda

- Stages of Transitions
- We are Change Agents
- Managing the Neutral Zone
- What is stress, and how does it effect people
- How to recognize stress in yourself and others
- Stress Safety Nets: personal and professional
- Common Causes of stress
- Next Steps

## Stages of Transitions

**Change** - a specific event, or related events reflecting a new beginning

**Transition** - the emotional processing and adjustment in individual experiences in response to change. IT begins with an ending.

Transitions consist of **ENDINGS**, **NEUTRAL ZONE**, and **BEGINNINGS**

### **Characteristics of ENDINGS:**

- Disenchantment
- Disidentification
- Disengagement
- Disorientation
- Denial

### **Characteristics of NEUTRAL ZONE:**

- Not engaged in usual activities
- Times of "I don't know"
- Questioning self-worth
- Letting go of the past
- Questioning meaning, values, role

### **Characteristics of BEGINNINGS:**

- New opportunities
- Testing the situation
- Searching for new meanings
- Integrating new experiences, roles, goals

*Adapted from William Bridges John Adams*

## Stage One of Transition: Endings

**Note where or how you or those around you are experiencing the following**

Disenchantment - "I don't want to give up how I think it should be, but it's not working anymore."

Disidentification - "Who am I in this organization now? I don't really know anymore."

Disengagement - "I just don't fine in her anymore; it doesn't feel right."

Disorientation - "I don't know this organization any more."

Denial - "I don't believe this; it's not really going to go this way."

## Loss

**Note which of these seven categories you or those around you may be experiencing**

\_\_\_\_\_ Attachments - people, relationships, location, groups, networks.

\_\_\_\_\_ Turf - physical space, responsibilities, psychological space.

\_\_\_\_\_ Structure - schedules, policies, deadlines, authority, meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ Future - hopes, dreams, career path, and retirement plans,

\_\_\_\_\_ Meaning - shared work values, why is this happening to me? Why did I put so much into this organization?

\_\_\_\_\_ Control - decision-making and problem solving seem irrational, no clear directions

\_\_\_\_\_ History - people don't remember what it was like and how good it was; new people don't care about the history.

## Stage Two of Transition: Neutral Zone

**Note which of these behaviors you or those around you may be experiencing**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Not engaged in usual activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Times of "I don't know"
- \_\_\_\_\_ Questioning self-worth
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting go of the past and comfortable behavioral patterns
- \_\_\_\_\_ Questioning meaning, values, role
- \_\_\_\_\_ Taking a time-out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decreased effectiveness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Increased illness/injuries
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-absorption
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inability to absorb new information, adapt to new situations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty prioritizing tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Resentment of work and co-workers
- \_\_\_\_\_ High levels of anxiety
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blocked communication
- \_\_\_\_\_ Loss of motivation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Passive - aggressive behaviors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Guilt - blaming, defensiveness, fault-finding

## Strategies to get people through the Neutral Zone

**Which of these strategies do you think could be effective in your environment?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Talk about the Neutral Zone experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make a plan to overcome the loss of clear direction
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintain close contact
- \_\_\_\_\_ Communicate, communicate, communicate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build a sense of belonging to counter isolations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protect people from further changes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide reflective opportunities and events
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage people to think of new coping strategies and share them
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep future goals clear
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create temporary structures and clarify responsibilities and procedures.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Help people to recognize new opportunities that are emerging
- \_\_\_\_\_ Create a ritual for the ending
- \_\_\_\_\_ Highlight opportunities to learn and grow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recognize and talk about losses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be innovative; look for simple, clear solutions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Understand yourself first, and model flexibility for others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prepare for the risks by remembering past successful transitions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Embrace the transition process

### **Transition Check List**

- Take your time
- Take care of yourself
- Arrange temporary structures
- Don't act just for the sake of taking action
- Acknowledge the sources of discomfort
- Gauge where you are: ending, neutral zone, beginning

## Stage Three of Transition: New Beginnings

- Stop getting ready and ACT!
- Identify yourself with the final result of the change
- Take things step-by-step, stay on track
- Pay attention to the PROCESS

### Effective Communication During Transitions

- Demonstrate respect for differences
- Learn to tolerate ambiguity
- Be flexible
- Suspend assumptions
- Be willing to see/hear others' points of view
- Have patience
- Know other's communications styles preferences and adapt to them
- Listen for understanding
- Allow people to express their fears, worries, concerns
- Ask questions to get information
- Offer suggesting only when asked
- Stick to the issue, stay in the present
- Vary your approach, be creative
- BE explicit with your expectations

### Take The Upset Out of The Upheaval

- Which of these strategies do you think could be effective in your environment?
- Identify situations in which you might over-react and avoid them
- Reduce the number of decisions that you make
- Remember that time can help, but not as much as what you actively do

### Get support

- Who can I depend on?
- Who can I discuss my concerns with?
- Who can recognize my strengths and value my contributions?
- Who can give me the information I need?
- Who will make me face what I need to face?
- Who can share the good times and good experiences?

## **Warning Signs of Stress**

### **Signs of Mild Stress**

1. Difficulty making decisions both large and small
2. Excessive daydreaming or fantasizing
3. Increase in drinking or smoking
4. Vague or disconnected speech or writing
5. Excessive worrying, especially over small things
6. Inappropriate anger, hostility, or outbursts of temper, marked changes in behavior
7. Insomnia - difficulty falling asleep or frequent waking
8. Frequent minor illnesses, aches and pains
9. Constant thinking about personal failures or shortcomings
10. Confusing and forgetting details - dates, times, places, making more mistakes than usual
11. Feeling worthless or inadequate

### **Signs of Serious Stress**

1. Disregarding high-priority tasks, or reducing amount of time devoted to each task
2. Blocking out new information
3. Appearing to give up or appearing detached, revealing negative or cynical attitude toward others
4. Adhering inflexibly to established organizational rules and practices
5. Acting in an over precise and intellectualizing manner
6. Inappropriate humor
7. Steal from or cheating the organization; obviously wasting time and being frequently unavailable or inaccessible



## Some Ways to Deal with Stress

- Talk it out
- Escape for a while
- Work off your emotions
- Stop criticizing yourself
- Reach out for support
- Take one thing at a time
- Choose a positive way of dealing with the stress, don't make it worse
- Do something for someone else
- Have a physical, find out if you have a medical problem
- Meditate
- Exercise
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## **Resistance to Stressors**

**Resistance to stress is related to:**

**Mental Condition:** confidence, not self critical, not perfectionist, aware of feelings, talking openly about feelings

**Physical Condition:** Strength, endurance, flexibility, cardiovascular health

**Skills:** Problem solving, communicating, negotiation

**Life Style:** Diet, use of drugs, alcohol. nicotine, caffeine, support from others

## **Common Causes of Stress**

What are the most common causes of stress for you in your workplace today?

What kinds of situations, actions, activities, trigger stress for you?

## **Symptoms and Effects of Anxiety**

During Change people will experience a range of responses. The most common of these reactions is anxiety. Anxiety ranges from mild to severe.

### **Physical**

- Sweating
- Pounding heart
- Stiff, sore muscles
- Lack of sleep
- Indigestion
- Headaches
- Gross and Fine motor problems

### **Psychological**

- Inability to concentrate
- Poor memory
- Emotionally volatile
- Easily angered, frustrated, discouraged, impatient
- Distorted thinking
- Unable to process new information
- Checking and rechecking work

### **General Symptoms**

- Making Mistakes
- Breaking, losing things
- Accidents
- Narrow focus only on oneself
- Decrease in risk taking and creativity

## Support

Type of Support	Name - Professional	Name - Personal
1. Exercise		
2. Has resource ideas		
3. Honest with you		
4. Help solving problems		
5. Encourages you to vent your feelings		
6. Lets you know they care		
7. Listens		
8. A safe place to go to really be yourself		
9. Someone who knows and accepts the real you		
10. Someone to just have fun with, be kids again		
11.		
12.		

## **Analysis and Plan for Managing a Stressor**

Identify your current biggest stressor:

What are you doing now that you want to continue doing to manage this stressor?

What could you start doing that would reduce this stressor?

What can you stop doing that would reduce this stressor?

Who could help you manage this stressor?

Specific commitment to yourself regarding this stressor:

## Managing Change in Times of Uncertainty

### **Helpful, Interesting, or New Tools and Strategies**

(HINTS)

#### **Topics covered were:**

- Stages of Change
- Managing the Neutral Zone
- What is stress, and how does it effect people.
- How to recognize stress in yourself and others.
- Stress Safety Nets: personal and professional.
- Plans for managing stress

#### **Helpful, Interesting or New Tools and Strategies that I gained today.**

*What I most want to remember about this workshop:*

*What I learned about myself*

*What does this mean I should:*

1. **start doing**

## Helpful, Interesting, or New Tools and Strategies

(HINTS continued)

2. **stop doing or do less**

3. **continue doing**

*Two things that can be useful to me in managing stress are:*

1.

2.



## Change Bibliography

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