



Taking Charge of Change

***– a personal guide for building
resilience during change***

***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

Consider This...

“There has been more information produced in the last 30 years than during the previous 5,000. A weekday edition of the New York Times contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime in 17th century England. The information supply available to us doubles every five years.”
- Richard Saul Wurman, *Information Anxiety*

“Computer power is now 8,000 times less expensive than it was 30 years ago...if we had similar progress in automotive technology, today you could buy a Lexus for about \$2. It would travel at the speed of sound and go about 600 miles on a thimble of gas.”
- John Naisbitt, *Global Paradox*.

“Today’s average consumers wear more computing power on their wrists than existed in the entire world before 1961.”

Purpose Of This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide University of Victoria employees with some tips to help build and maintain resilience and flexibility during change, so that you can take care of yourself and your well being during these difficult times.

Why Is Taking Charge Of Change So Challenging?

In these times of uncertainty, as announcements are made or not made, and our lives are affected or about to be affected by restructuring and budget issues, it is normal to feel shocked, resentful, anxious, and stressed – at least for a period of time. The truth is these times are frustrating for all of us – leaders and staff members alike. It's frustrating partly because, the information we need to make decisions is not readily available; indeed many decisions that may affect us are yet to be made, and the time frames for making them are not firm.

And, along with the announcements comes a cloud of uncertainty... the future is ambiguous... information is not always available... the 'truth' seems to be a moving target... and rumours abound.

Many of us will find ourselves becoming self-absorbed and withdrawn as we worry about what will happen to us in the change ahead. This is a normal and natural response to uncertainty. The reality is that dramatic change is uncomfortable, and many of us won't like what is happening. But most of us will want to figure out how to make the adjustments necessary to succeed in the new environment, whatever that may be.

The good news is...

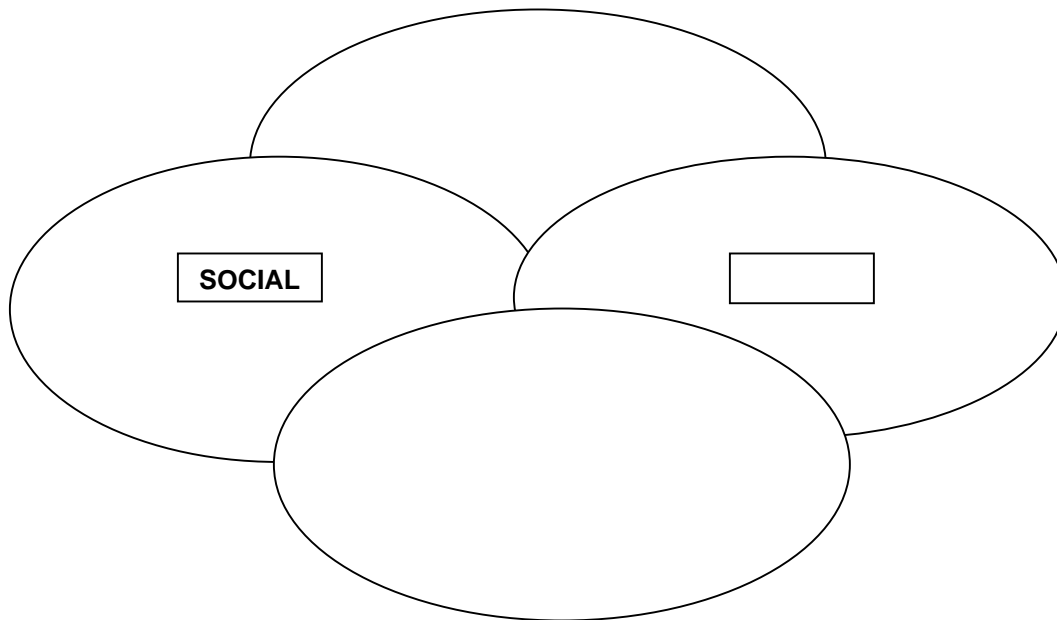
There **is** something we can do to help ourselves survive and even thrive during these difficult times.

So Let's Get Started...

It is important to understand the difference between change and transition.
Change is the change in the external situation; the thing that has changes – it

Something To Think About...

If you think about how many changes you have been through in your life, you will see that you have already experienced many change and transition cycles. Like the examples given earlier, some changes are exciting and self-motivated. Others, like organizational change, are often imposed upon us. But change is all around us and happening all the time. Anytime something old ends or something new begins, our world is impacted. It changes a little or a lot. Below are some of the areas where change happens in our life, and more often than not, they overlap.



To clarify the change and transitions in your own life, use the chart on the next page to 'map' the changes you are dealing with. You might want to include those you have dealt with in the past 2 years, and those you think you might need to deal with in the next couple of years. The changes may be at different stages. You may have just entered into one change process in your work life and be in the midst or at the end of another one in your family situation. The point is to identify as many as possible.

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PAST (18-24 months)	NOW UNDERWAY	FUTURE (18-24 months)

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The Lull Between The Waves

In between major changes you might enjoy a time when you 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 the next change. Preparing can help you move through transition more easily. Here are some things you can be doing to prepare for change and transition.

Some ideas to think about:

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Dealing With Denial

Possible Reactions	Suggested Actions
<p>Feelings: Shock, agitation, apathy, numbness, disbelief</p> <p>Behaviours: Withdrawal, activity without getting much done</p> <p>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."</p> <p>Focus: Immediate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listen, for and seek the information you need to deal with the changes ➤ Ask questions to find out what is changing and what is not (e.g. ask your leaders, send questions to the newsletter) ➤ Decide how this change might you, your work group and other groups with which you interact. <p>Knowledge and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taking Charge of Change ➤ Grieving process ➤ Communication skills



Dealing With Resistance And Making A Good Ending

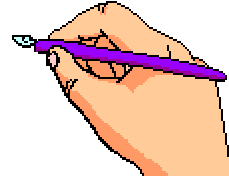
Possible Reactions	Suggested Actions
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Feelings:

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



Your Action Plan

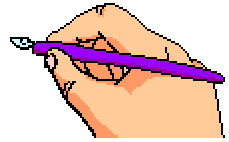


1. Am I feeling OK with my 'resistance' right now?

2. What is ending for me with this change? What steps can I take to make a good

Exploring And Hanging Out In The Neutral Zone

Possible Reactions	Suggested Actions
<p>Feelings: Some hope and optimism, some frustration, can't focus, confusion</p> <p>Behaviours: Adjustment, bargaining, willing to get involved, too much to do, many new ideas, over-preparation, chaos</p> <p>Thinking/Saying: "Things are a mess. We are so disorganized." "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."</p> <p>Focus: On the future</p>	<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 the information you need. ➤ Develop your support systems by: confiding 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 training plan to get the skills and knowledge you need. ➤ Brainstorm new ideas, experiment with new ways of doing things. ➤ Participate in activities to develop your team. <p>Skills and Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Career Planning ➤ Creativity and Innovation ➤ Team skills



Gaining Commitment And Making A New Beginning

Possible Reactions	Suggested Actions
<p>Feelings: Acceptance, commitment, hope, satisfaction</p> <p>Behaviours: Rebuilding, cooperation, clear focus and planning</p> <p>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."</p>	

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Getting Ready For The Next Wave

Possible Reactions	Suggested Actions
<p>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."</p>	<p>Needs to:</p> <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.

What can you do to get ready for the next wave of change?

In Summary

Phase	Individual
The Lull Between The Waves	➤ Look for signs and develop skills for change and transition
Denial	➤ Listen, seek, and ask

Resistance

(Endings)

- Ask, express, mourn, and seek support

Some Things to Remember:

- Those involved in planning the change start their transition first and reach their beginnings first. Do you want to get involved?
- People experience transition in differing intensity and move through the stages 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 role in the change
 - √ 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
 - √ The availability of current, relevant information
- People will differ in terms of how difficult their endings and how they experience their losses

References and Resources

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Pritchett, Price & Pound, Ron. (1992). *Building a High Performance Work Group During Change*.

Pritchett, Price. (1996). *Resistance, Moving Beyond the Barriers to Change*.

The above pamphlets can be borrowed from Organization Development and Learning

Videos:

The Art of Communication and the Science of Change with Cynthia Scott

The New Workplace: Changing Relationships Between Employees & Employers

Survival Skills for the Future with Jennifer James, Ph.D.

Windows of Change with Jennifer James, Ph.D.

The Power of Vision, Discovering the Future Series. Joel Arthur Barker

The Business of Paradigms, Discovering the Future Series. Joel Arthur Barker