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MANAGING TRANSITIONS

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Endings, Helping to Let go

- Identify who is losing what
- Accept the reality and importance of the subjective losses
- Acknowledge losses openly and sympathetically
- Let people take a piece of the "old way" with them
- Inform, explain the change again and again
- Define what's over and what isn't
- Treat the past with respect/celebrate successes
- Show how endings ensure continuity of what really matters

Managing the Neutral Zone Successfully

- It's about helping people
- "Normalize" the neutral zone
- Redefine it
- Create temporary systems and short-term goals
- Strengthen intra-group connections
- Monitor the pulse
- Foster creativity

Launch New Beginnings

The 4 Ps:

- Purpose: Explain the logic and expected outcome
- Picture: How the outcome will look and feel
- Plan: Step-by-step phasing
- Part to Play: For all in the plan and outcome

Rules:

- Be consistent in all messages and behaviors
- Ensure quick wins
- Symbolize the new identity
- Celebrate success with fun and takeaways

TIPS FOR COPING WITH PERIODS OF UNCERTAINTY

MANAGING CHANGE IN DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS

Expect some fluctuation of mood

When in periods of uncertainty, you — and others around you — may react more emotionally to situations that would otherwise seem trivial. Be patient with yourself and others as this roller coaster of emotions continues through the days or weeks of uncertainty. Anger, numbness, fear, frustration, sadness and intense anxiety are typical reactions in these times. Talk with those close to you about these emotional swings and enlist their help in working through them.

Pay attention to your eating and sleeping patterns

Sleep disturbances and appetite changes are common at times of high stress. Engage in intentional relaxation activities (deep breathing or visualizations of calming and enjoyable memories) as bedtime nears or when you awaken in the night. Consciously focus on non-caffeine, low-sugar and low-fat foods and drinks. Small snacks containing some protein, eaten between light meals may help stabilize your mood and your energy level. If sleep and eating problems persist beyond four weeks, more serious depressive symptoms may result. Consider talking to a doctor or counselor about regaining your equilibrium.

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Set short-term goals for work and home

While you wait for the waters to calm, write down a few goals that you can accomplish daily, weekly and within one month. The distant future is more uncertain, but you can reclaim a sense of control over your life by accomplishing important tasks today. Organize your files, balance your checkbook, clean out closets or attend a workshop to broaden your skills. Continually update your goal list and check off your accomplishments.

Get out and get active

Movement and physical activity help burn off the “fight or flight” chemicals your body produces in times of stress. Go outside at lunchtime and walk a few blocks. Wash your car, go bowling with a friend or put on some music and dance. Social isolation, though it may seem initially comforting, can tip the scales toward depression. Call up a coworker and go to a movie. Or attend a group function, like church services or a ball game, and actively connect with others.

Help others and help yourself

Volunteering your time and talent will result in quick rewards for you and others. Contact local churches or social agencies (YMCA, Red Cross, literacy groups, etc.) and get involved in giving. Getting outside yourself and focusing on the needs of others will help you ride out the period of uncertainty in your own life.