

## Coping with change in the workplace

Change is inevitable for us all, especially in today's workplace. Changes can be positive or negative, but any change can make some people feel apprehensive and anxious. Some people embrace change and the challenges and opportunities it brings, while others feel worried or stressed. Some of the most difficult changes to deal with are those that are out of our control.



Mark Twain once said,  
*"It's not the progress I mind,  
it's the change I don't like."*

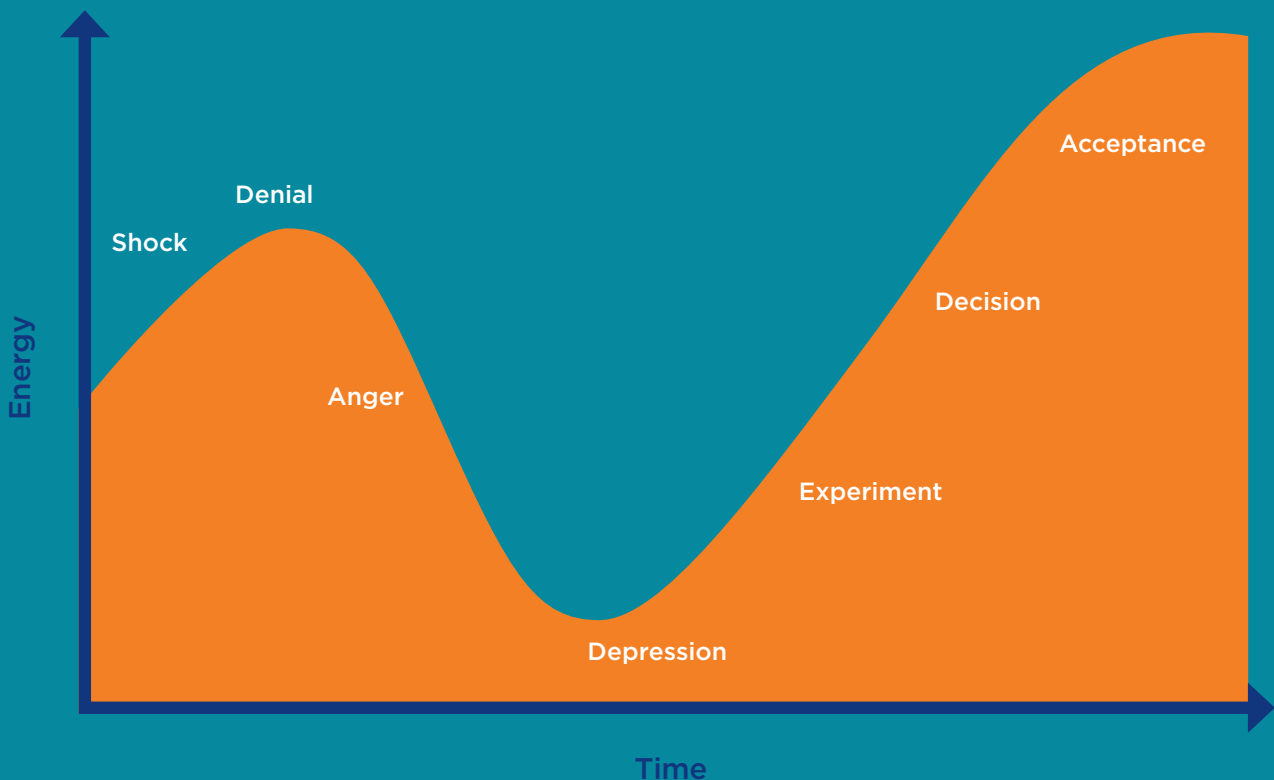


### The Change Curve

The change curve was originally created by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross in 1969 to illustrate how people deal with the news that they have a terminal illness. The same model can be used for any change that you are going through.

It can help you deal with the change if you understand that it's normal to go through each of the emotional stages. The length of time you will spend in each change will differ from one person to another.

### The Kubler-Ross Change Curve



## The stages

### The first stage - Shock/Denial

Shock is the first response to hearing bad news (or what you initially perceive as bad news). And a person immediately goes into a state of denial and tends to think that this news is not correct and can't be happening to me.

### The second stage - Resistance/Anger

After learning that this change is real and is not going away, the next response is anger. When you feel powerless to something the natural reaction is to blame others.

### The third stage - Depression

This stage is when you will feel sadness, regret, guilt and completely helpless. You may become isolated and avoid interacting with others.

### The fourth stage - Exploration

This stage will involve asking questions and thinking of solutions or compromises.

### The fifth stage - Acceptance/Commitment

The need to change is understood and you will now have learnt to live with the change and commit to it.

## Building Resilience

Change whether positive or negative can be challenging. Generally, we will have one of three attitudes towards new challenges:

- **An attitude to face up to, overcome and ultimately benefit from the event**
- **An attitude to face up to but do nothing about the event, or defer doing something until later, and by doing nothing ultimately benefit from the event, and**
- **An attitude that means we can do absolutely nothing because we feel that it's too big for us to do anything about and we effectively hibernate until the event has passed.**

How we cope with change and our attitude towards challenges is determined by our resilience levels.

Resilience is a process of getting a robust attitude in the face of challenging events. It's also about becoming a stronger person as a consequence of facing up to and overcoming challenging experiences.

Perception is a vital element of being resilient. How you think about the challenges and changes that happen to you, determines how you feel and how you behave. Resilient individuals focus on how they can solve their problems rather than focusing on the problem itself and why they are in the situation they are in. Resilient individuals are able to keep the changes that happen to them in perspective so that they are not overwhelmed by them.

The analogy of resilient thinking that is often used is:

*"when you have fallen into a hole, your thinking should be how do you climb out of the hole not how you fell into the hole or how unlucky you are to be in the hole"*

How we cope with change and our attitude towards challenges is determined by our resilience levels.



Being resilient is not about being strong all the time and never feeling pressure/stress. Resilience is knowing when you are starting to feel stressed and using techniques to help keep in control, some techniques can be found below:

- **Breathing Techniques** - deep breathing is one of the easiest relaxation techniques to master and it's also one of the most effective in helping you remain calm and resilient. Slow, deep (diaphragmatic) breathing slows down your heart rate, lowers blood pressure and reduces tension in the muscles.
- **Exercise** - one key way of maintaining your resilience is to be active, in particular cardiovascular exercises and body stretches. The key is to do some exercise, little and often, for example walking, swimming, cycling or playing sports.
- **Talk to others** - it can help to talk to family and friends about how you are feeling, when times are difficult. We all need support at times.



To help with this it is useful to be aware of what your early signs of stress are. Early signs tend to occur in four areas:

**Physical** - you may get a headache, pain in the neck and shoulders or digestion problems.

**Emotional** - you may feel angry, frustrated or have a low mood.

**Cognitive** - you may struggle to think effectively, which could lead to you being indecisive, forgetful or experience concentration difficulties.

**Behaviour** - you may lose your temper more frequently or have trouble sleeping.

We face unexpected changes and challenges throughout our lives. So it's important to learn to keep up a positive attitude and stay strong through the changes and challenges you face. Some simple things to think about are:

- Look at the change from a realistic perspective
- Try not to let things overwhelm you
- Realise that you have a choice in how you handle this change
- Remember change can lead to personal growth
- Act quickly, the sooner you take action to take control of your situation, the better you'll feel
- Focus on solutions, not problems

# Here are some resilience techniques to practice that may help you get through challenging times:

## Choose to have a positive attitude

You may not be able to control what is happening to you but you can choose how you respond to it. Keep an open mind.

## Take care of yourself

Being physically stronger and fitter will help you to face the challenges that life can bring.

## Calm yourself

Imagining the worst will not help the situation, try to stay calm. To help you could try mindfulness or meditation.



Try mindfulness or meditation

## Do something different

To try and change your mood or outlook, take a break, listen to music, go for a walk or call a friend.

## Take baby steps

If you are overwhelmed by a change or challenge, take little steps to move forward.

## Let go of your anger

The change may make you feel angry and upset. You need to let go of these feelings in order to be able to move forward.

## Focus on the things that are good in your life

Try to appreciate the day-to-day good things in your life now.



Appreciate the good things

## Reduce Self-Criticism

Self-criticism often occurs as a voice in our head (sometimes called an internal monologue) which is critical of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Try not to be so hard on yourself.

## Remind yourself

You've been through difficult times before and you will get through them again and grow stronger as a result.

## Reflect

Take time to understand what is happening and how it is affecting you, reflect on the good and the bad and how they have made you feel.

## Self-talk

Talk to yourself positively and out loud each morning. Try saying today is going to be a good day out loud in front of a mirror each morning.



Strengthen your relationships

## Strengthen your relationships

It can help to talk to others when times are difficult, we all need support at times. Make sure you strengthen your relationships with those who are important to you.

## Take the long view

Envisage the future. A long term view helps you to ride over adverse events as you are focused on the longer term vision.

**“ Take responsibility for your own psychological wellbeing”**

If you are struggling with change and want to talk to someone then please call our **Care Line** Service provided by Health Assured. They can provide advice and information at the end of a phone, helping with a range of concerns including coping with change.

To talk to someone please call **0800 028 1708** or take a look at the e-portal:

#### [Health & Wellbeing e-portal](#)

<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk>

Username: policemutual

Password: careline

#### Some useful articles available on the eportal:

- [Managing Change](#)
- [Tips on Managing Change](#)
- [Stress and emotional resilience](#)

#### Some useful Webinars on the eportal:

- [Building Personal Resilience](#)
- [Resilience at work](#)
- [Mental Resilience](#)

To see how resilient you are and take the Robertson Cooper I-resilience test [here](#)



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