

STRATEGIES FOR LEADING PEOPLE THROUGH TRANSITIONS

SHOCK / DENIAL		
What people might say	How people might react	What the leader could do
<p>“This is no big deal. I don't know what all the fuss is about.”</p> <p>“They've said this before and nothing happened.”</p> <p>“I'll believe it when I see it.”</p> <p>“It doesn't really affect me.”</p> <p>“This won't change anything.”</p> <p>“What announcement; oh that, I didn't pay much attention.”</p> <p>“We're prepared for this, we'll be OK.”</p> <p>“We've done this before, no big deal.”</p> <p>“They're just putting things back to the way they were before.”</p>	<p>What people might do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with work as usual. • Not react at all / agree with everything. <p>Showing signs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock, denial, blind faith agreement, uninformed optimism. 	<p>The leader's focus should be on raising AWARENESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explain the change without denigrating the past • Explain why the change is needed • Clarify what is over and how people will be affected • Explain what will not change • Ask people for their reactions and listen, listen, listen • Show caring and concern • Respond to questions, clear up any misunderstandings • Say when you don't know
RESISTANCE / BARGAINING / DEPRESSION		
What people might say	How people might react	What the leader could do
<p>“This is crazy, who's idea was this anyway?”</p> <p>“Why change something that is working?”</p> <p>“This will never work in our area.”</p> <p>“They don't know anything about my area, how can they decide this.”</p> <p>“I feel like I don't have any control.”</p> <p>“I don't have a problem with change, it's just this change.”</p> <p>“I need more information. How will this affect me?”</p> <p>“They don't know how to do this.”</p> <p>“We've tried this before and it didn't work.”</p> <p>“They don't care about people, just about their own agenda.”</p> <p>“I just want things to go back to the way they used to be.”</p> <p>“We can improve without making structural changes.”</p> <p>“Can we just do it the old way for this part of the job?”</p> <p>“I am so tired, I can't make sense of anything.”</p> <p>“I don't care anymore.”</p>	<p>What people might do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand to know all the details about how it will work in future. • Debate the merits of the change. • Challenge, complain, blame, criticise. • Withdraw / isolate from others. • Have difficulty concentrating. • Experience loss of sleep, energy, motivation. • Withhold information. • Become angry and impatient. <p>Show signs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-absorption. • Fear and/or anger, suspicion. • Anxiety and/or frustration. • Bargaining/negotiating. • Sadness/depression, ambivalence. 	<p>The leader's focus should be on acknowledging feelings and instilling a DESIRE to change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface resistance by asking for reactions, questions and concerns • Respond empathetically – acknowledge concerns and losses • Continue to offer information, helping people identify what is ending and what is not • Focus on the new behaviours that will be required to be successful • Help people to identify the strengths and resources they have to succeed in the future • Help people grieve and mark losses through rituals, actions, events, ceremonies, mementos • Reframe the situation – what is the opportunity inherent in the change – for them, their stakeholders, the team? • Help people to get excited about the possibilities of the future - what the ideal state could be if the change is successful

Adapted from: Jaffe, T.D. & Scott, C.: *Managing Personal Change*. 2004.
Taking Charge of Change – a personal guide for building resilience during change. Centre for Excellence in Learning, University of Victoria.

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EXPLORATION		
What people might say	How people might react	What the leader could do
<p>“Things are a mess, we are so disorganised.”</p> <p>“No one knows what anyone else is doing.”</p> <p>“We just have to get organised.”</p> <p>“What’s my job?”</p> <p>“What’s the new procedure?”</p> <p>“We need some training”</p> <p>“How can this new way of working benefit stakeholders?”</p> <p>“There’s no going back, we just have to make this work.”</p> <p>“Remind me again why did we decided to do this...”</p> <p>“I have all these ideas whirling around in my head.”</p> <p>“Sometimes I feel confident and know where I am going, sometimes I feel lost.”</p>	<p>What they might do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give it a go, get involved. • Look for information, new rules. • Try to figure things out. • Think of lots of ideas and options. • Look for structure and order. • Ask for training. <p>Show signs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, uncertainty. • Cautious optimism. • Willingness to learn. • Excitement. 	<p>The leader’s focus should be on building KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explain the purpose and the plan • Involve people in trying out ideas • Provide people with the coaching / training and development they need • Work with the team to clarify objectives, key measures, roles, values, behavioural norms, standards. • Reinforce behaviours in line with the change and address behaviours that don’t align with the new way of working. • Establish processes, practices and routines to embed the new ways of working. • Adopt a coaching approach to help people formulate and work towards their objectives.
ACCEPTANCE / COMMITMENT / INTEGRATION		
What people might say	How people might react	What the leader could do
<p>“I am starting to figure this out.”</p> <p>“I got up the other day and felt like myself again.”</p> <p>“Our meetings are starting to feel pretty good.”</p> <p>“When you get used to this, it isn't so bad.”</p> <p>“I am starting to love this new way of working.”</p> <p>“It took me a while to get used to the people on the team but now it feels like we have always worked together.”</p> <p>“It's strange how upsetting the change was, it feels like ancient history now.”</p> <p>“This works so well now – I hope they won’t start messing things up by changing again.”</p>	<p>What they might do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuild, cooperate, focus. • Plan, make decisions, solve problems. • Learn. • Collaborate. <p>Showing signs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance. • Satisfaction. • Confidence. • Integration. • Entering another ‘comfort zone’? 	<p>The leader’s focus should be on REINFORCING the change and preparing the team for the next wave of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and reinforce behaviours that are aligned to the new environment - don’t allow people to revert back to the old ways. • Continue to provide coaching and practice in the new skills • Help people to resist the urge to enter a ‘comfort zone’ by challenging the status quo and looking for opportunities to innovate. • Reflect on the experience of leading transition to identify insights and learning and use it to develop a strategy for leading the next wave of change and transition.