

Helping People through Transition

The pace of change and level of complexity in our work environment is increasing. Technological advancements abound, and citizens look more and more to governments to effectively anticipate and respond to emerging needs. This reality is intensified when we find ourselves transitioning to new work arrangements that require a fundamental shift in mindset.

As we navigate complex changes, we are challenged and empowered to evolve the way we work, explore our comfort zone, and enhance our capacity to transition.

Managing change and transition is not an easy task, but it can be more effective if we:

- understand that the responses to change are natural
- are proactive about strategically managing these responses

The reality of organizational change

- Change is continuous and inevitable. It can sometimes be challenging.
- Most people do not like change. It is disruptive and irritating and can require constant effort to navigate.
- Understanding what goes through people's minds when they are confronted with change can help you to better support them.
- The ways in which most people react to change are predictable. Understanding some of the common behaviours can help you navigate change in your organization more effectively.

Most common reactions

Change creates discomfort, which can make us feel ill at ease, confused, irritated or fearful.

Before we are able to accept change, we typically need to come to terms with what is different.

Some people might feel they are not equipped to handle the change, lacking the tools, skills or resources.

Strategies to support others

Acknowledge people's feelings and reactions to change, including our own.

Create a safe space that allows people to change at their own pace.

Recognize that our own capacity for change may be different from the capacity of others.

Establish an environment of trust where it's acceptable to make mistakes and to learn from one another.

Be patient.

Acknowledge what is different and how this feels. Allow time for grief and for gradual acceptance of the new reality.

Provide the necessary resources to help them succeed:

- Training
- Coaching or mentoring
- Ongoing support, including the Employee Assistance Program and the [Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace](#).



Everyone reacts to change at their own pace and according to their own level of readiness.

Find ways to bring people together using the experiences they have in common.

Enable team members to work collaboratively and effectively support each other through change.

Show empathy and let people know they are not alone.

Gather information that will help people move towards the desired change.

The early adopters can help you, so work closely with them.

Be patient—change takes time!

Incessant change is exhausting—there's only so much change that a person can handle at once.

Prioritize change initiatives.

Create a roadmap and strategies for change over time.

Try to manage change in small increments whenever possible.

Support people to help them succeed.

Keep the lines of communication open.

Celebrate success—this helps build the confidence needed to make change happen.

Many people will revert to old habits, given the opportunity—it's human nature to return to what we know best.

Provide regular reminders to ensure that instructions, expectations and required actions are clearly understood.

Ensure that everyone has the tools and resources they need to meet expectations.

