Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

Coping with Change

"Nothing endures but change."
-Heraclitus

Heraclitus had it right: Change is a fact of life. In the Greek philosopher's time, change tended to unfold gradually. But today's world changes at an alarmingly rapid pace. Thanks to television and the Internet, images and information zip around the globe in seconds, and we're sometimes expected to respond just as quickly.

Change can take many forms and affect every aspect of our lives. It occurs in our family, work, social life, and well-being. Some changes involve additions, such as births, new friends or relationships, and new possessions. Others involve losses, such as death, divorce, or illness. Some changes are sudden, such as losing your job, while others are more gradual, such as entering middle age.

Change can be good or bad, depending on the person and the circumstances. For example, a divorce may be seen as a tragedy or a relief. A promotion is generally viewed as a change for the good, but if you're anxious or unsure of your skills, you may view it as negative or threatening. Change may be sought out, appreciated or accepted, or it may be forced upon you, and resented or resisted. It can challenge or stimulate you, or make you feel anxious and threatened. Too little change can make life boring or depressing, while too much change can be uncomfortable or overwhelming.

Whatever its form, change requires an adjustment of some kind. This takes energy and, when the demands are too great, it can drain you physically and mentally. Change creates stress, so it needs to be managed effectively to prevent the development of stress-related symptoms and illnesses. Unmanaged stress can cause physical and emotional disorders, including everything from headaches and digestive problems to high blood pressure and insomnia.

The key to coping with change is to recognize it, understand its effects, and bring it—or your responses to it—under control as much as possible. When you can't control the change itself, adjusting your attitude toward it can help lessen any stress or tension. You'll stay healthier that way.

What to Know about Change

Strive for moderate change. Change is stressful, even when it's positive and welcome. But no change at all can make us feel like we're stagnating. Strive for balance. Too much stress at once, or even a moderate amount of stress over a long period of time, can be unhealthy. People who experience a lot of changes in a brief period—within a year, for instance—are more likely to experience an accident or illness within that period than people who face fewer changes, research shows.

Online Seminar Reminder

Coping with Change

When:

September 15, 2015

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (EST):

12:00 PM- 1:00 PM
AND
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

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Coping with Change continued...

Try to see the opportunities in change. The Chinese word for crisis is made up of two symbols: the symbol for danger and the symbol for opportunity. Try to think of change as a mixture of crisis (or danger, or uncertainty) and opportunity. Ask yourself what lesson you might learn, what skill you might develop, or what aspect of yourself you might strengthen as a result of coping with this change.

Physical Health will Support Mental Health
During times of change and high stress, remember that regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep is needed to maintain your ability to cope.

Physical and Emotional Aspects of Change
Evaluate your life on a regular basis—every few months or so—to determine how many significant changes you are experiencing. Just being aware will make it easier for you to understand and deal with the stress that almost always accompanies change.

The physical symptoms of change can be unsettling, to say the least. Change can cause all sorts of stress-related symptoms and disorders, such as:

- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Digestive problems
- Muscle tension and backaches
- High blood pressure and cardiac problems
- Impaired immune response
- Depression or anxiety
- Irritability
- Eating too much or too little
- Alcohol or drug abuse

If you can, schedule planned changes so that not too many occur at once. For example, if you're getting married, buying a new house, and coping with an ailing parent, it's probably a good idea to hold off on looking for a new job until you've had time to adjust to these other changes.

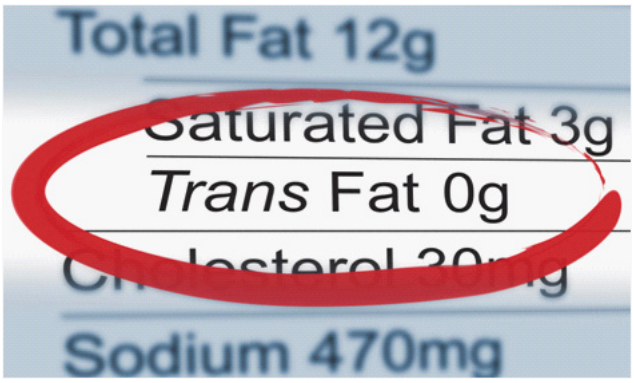
When you find yourself faced with an unexpected change, take a moment to evaluate your emotional response. Ask yourself how you're feeling. Are you happy, sad, scared, angry, threatened, resentful, excited, indifferent? After you've determined what you're feeling, it can help to ask yourself some or all of the following questions:

- Is my reaction justified?
- Is the intensity of my reaction justified by the facts?
- Am I overreacting, or misinterpreting?
- Is there another way to look at this? Is there an opportunity here?
- Are there aspects of this situation that I can control?
- Would more information help me cope better with this change?

Learn a relaxation exercise. Relaxation is one of the most effective tools for managing stress and the anxiety or tension that can go along with it. Relaxation helps your body undo the negative effects of stress and can keep you functioning better physically and mentally. Don't forget, humor goes a long way toward easing stress. Try to find the humor in situations, and in yourself, whenever possible. Don't expect to have to weather every change alone. Look for support from family or friends. Humor helps here, too.

Source: https://www.advantageengagement.com/p_content_detail.php?id_element=001&search_term=coping%2Bwith%2Bchange&id_cr=31732

The Skinny on Trans Fat



Saturated or unsaturated? Mono or poly? Good or bad?

Figuring out fats can leave you fried, but there soon may be one less fat to keep straight.

The FDA has taken action to phase out the remaining trans fat in the nation's food supply.

Unlike mono and poly unsaturated fats, which are liquid at room temperature, or saturated fats, which occur naturally in animal products such as butter and meat, trans fat is manmade by adding a hydrogen atom to oil and changing its molecular structure.

Crisco may have been the original product for trans fat—a cheap and inexpensive way to add fat to foods and make them shelf-stable. Now, it can be found in everything from donuts to prepackaged cookie dough to boxed macaroni and cheese to microwave popcorn.

"If it's easy to make and it's a convenience food, it may have some trans fat in it," according to experts at Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

Research has shown that trans fat increases bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and lowers levels of the good cholesterol (HDL) in the body. That can lead to a number of problems, such as hardening of the arteries, heart attack, heart disease, and stroke.

The FDA's action will remove trans fat from a category of foods known as "Generally Recognized As Safe" and place it in the category of food additive, which could open manufacturers up to liabilities if they don't find an alternative.

Health-e headlines ™

Reducing Kitchen Clutter

cuts snacking by a third, says Cornell University researcher, Dr. Brian Wansink, author of Slim by Design.

Health-e headlines ™

An Apple a Day gets more Apples

You've heard you should not grocery shop when you are hungry. But here's a twist. Have a small healthy snack like a piece of fruit before shopping. Not only will it help decrease hunger, it may also nudge you to select healthier items. Cornell University food researchers, in their study in Psychology & Marketing, found that individuals who ate an apple sample before shopping bought 25% more fruits and vegetables than those who did not eat a sample.

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.

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Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

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Negotiating Change

It is common for us to take advantage of routines, not realizing how much comfort and stability they provide us with, until they undergo a change. Be it on a small or large scale, changes in our personal or professional lives can lead to resistance, a desire for going back to the "old way," and increased stress. So, whether you can see a change on the horizon, or if a change inevitably comes about out of the blue, you may want to try some of the following strategies to make any transition as smooth as possible.

Monitor Your Thinking: Without knowing it, your worries about an upcoming change may be muddying the waters of your thoughts. Take a few moments each day to actually listen to what your mind is telling you about the change. Are you only focused on potential negatives of the new routine? Is your mind trying to trick you into thinking that you can't handle this change? Hear these thoughts, and attempt to provide yourself with facts to combat the negatives (i.e., Are there any potential positives this change may bring? Even though it may have been stressful, have you been able to make it through changes in the past?)

Don't Resist: People who end up having the highest levels of stress are not just those who are over-thinking the change, but those who are avoiding thinking about it. Ignorance is only bliss in the short term, but often is quietly piling up until we feel as if we are emotionally ready to burst. Schedule worry time during your day (but avoid doing this right before bed). Take a moment to run over your concrete concerns or problems that this change will bring about. Write them down, and then close your notepad and make a commitment to limiting your stress to your scheduled worry time. Worrying all of the time decreases our productivity in other areas, and tends to make our problems turn into fears and excessive worry.

Change Your Routine: When one aspect of your life is changing, it can be very helpful to stick to routines in other aspects of your life. However, you may need to make a little space for self-care. Off the top of your head, who are three of the most positive people in your life, or what are three of the activities that you find most relaxing or fun? Try dropping a few hours of television or social media during the week and replace them with the most positive people or pleasant leisure activities. This can help create a better sense of well-being and balance.

Deer Oaks offers free resources, tips, and confidential counseling for handling change. Contact us for more information!

Visit us at www.deeroaks.com for more information.

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Regional Clinical Manager
Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC

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How To: Recover from a Personal Financial Setback

Financial setbacks inevitably happen, and if you find yourself dealing with a layoff, high medical expenses, or another setback, there are some steps you should take to start the road to recovery.

- *Assess Your Personal Situation* - First, assess the situation so that you know exactly what you are dealing with. Is this a one-time setback, or an ongoing issue? Is it temporary or permanent? Know exactly how much money you'll need, and how much you have.
- *Analyze Available Financial Resources* - Determine what resources are available to you, both from your own accounts as well as insurance. If you are facing medical bills, have you made sure everything has been covered appropriately by insurance? If you've been laid off, look into Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) extended health insurance coverage, as well as unemployment insurance. Do you have an emergency fund? If so, this may be the right time to start using it.
- *Set Financial Priorities* - After you know exactly what your situation is and what resources you have available to you, you'll need to set priorities. Go through your budget and determine if there is any opportunity to decrease costs, such as canceling or cutting back on cable.
- *Prioritize* - Know which bills have to be paid immediately, and what things you can prioritize later. Just don't be tempted to go without insurance – this can change a minor setback into a major one very quickly.
- *Create a Personal Financial Plan* - With your spouse, work through your budget and your bills, and decide how you are going to get everything paid. Is there opportunity to earn more or spend less? Know exactly how you'll be spending your money over the next few months, and make a plan to track your progress.
- *Contact Your Creditors* - Finally, if there are some bills you absolutely cannot afford to make minimum payments on, contact your creditors to work through payment options. You should make these phone calls before your bills end up in collections, because once there, your options are limited.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.