Be Resilient and Adapt to Life Changes

Change can come to you at any time in life, from any direction. Whether positive or negative, the biggest changes impact you greatly—changes such as getting married or divorced, losing a spouse or family member, job loss or promotion, relocation, or retirement. Smaller changes can be stressful too. Regardless, it’s important to learn to bounce back from life’s ups and downs. Here are some tips for doing that.

**Give yourself time to adjust.** There are no rules on how quickly you should adapt to new situations. Sometimes we go through a multi-stage process where we initially deny the change, then struggle to understand it, and finally accept it. Don’t rush yourself.

**View the change as a positive.** Whether the change is good or bad, ask yourself what lesson you might learn, or how you might become stronger, as a result of coping with this change. It helps to view change as an opportunity, not just as a crisis.

**Take care of yourself during a time of change.** Change often brings on stress and its related physical effects such as headaches, trouble sleeping, depression, and more. Remember to exercise regularly, eat a balanced diet and get adequate sleep to be able to cope. It also helps to learn relaxation techniques. Try meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, or tai chi (which is a type of exercise that can reduce stress).

**When possible, put off planned changes so there aren’t too many at once.** For example, you may be getting married while also coping with an ailing parent. If so, it’s probably best to hold off on looking for a new job until you’ve had time to adjust to the other changes.

**Don’t try to weather the change alone.** Talking with trusted friends and family about what you’re going through will help. Don’t keep feelings of depression and stress bottled up.

**Use humor to cut the stress.** Try to see the humor in it and in yourself whenever possible. A few good laughs go a long way toward easing stress.

Remember—the ParTNers EAP is here to help with in person and telephonic counseling. There are tools and resources on our website or by giving us a call.

www.Here4TN.com | 1.855.Here4TN (1.855.437.3486)
Dealing with a Divorce

It is natural to feel a great loss of self when a marriage ends. Feelings of rejection, disbelief, and shock are normal both during and after a divorce. You might feel restless and agitated, have trouble sleeping or eating, and may become tearful for no particular reason. It’s important to remember that what you’re feeling is okay. Everyone deals with change differently—there is no right or wrong way to feel. Remember that the painful reactions always lessen with time.

Here is some brief advice for adjusting to and moving on from a divorce.

**Give yourself a break.** You’re entitled to function at a less-than-normal level for some time. Everyone needs time to heal, regroup and re-energize when faced with traumatic life events.

**If you have children, be alert to signs of distress.** Talk with your children about how they are feeling. When they show signs of being agitated, withdrawn, depressed or anxious, don’t hesitate to get help from a doctor or counselor right away.

**Don’t criticize or fight with your spouse in front of children, or encourage children to take sides.** This behavior puts children in the uncomfortable middle and can increase their pain and loneliness. Children need to be secure in the fact that even after divorce, both mom and dad are still there for them.

**Minimize change for kids.** Even though many things will change, having some continuity is important. Try to make sure each child has his or her own familiar living space after the divorce.

**Figure out your financial needs and available resources.** Make a list of money coming in and money going out in your new situation. Budgets can be powerful tools for easing financial stress. Need help creating a budget? Call ParTNers EAP to speak with a financial planning expert.

**Don’t go it alone in divorce.** Keeping everything to yourself can raise your stress levels and harm your health. Don’t be afraid to ask for help if you’re feeling depressed. A counselor can help you identify new ways to problem-solve. Also, connecting with a support group can help you gain some balance during the transition.

**Be open to new friendships and activities.** Meeting new people and trying new activities once you’re ready is a great way to get back into normal life after a breakup.

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As Retirement Nears

Retirement is often viewed as an “event.” But it is really a long process of change that requires planning and adjustment. To adapt well to retirement, it helps to develop a strategy for how you’ll spend your time.

- **Sketch out a plan.** Brainstorming about retirement options helps clarify your plans. It can help you identify long-delayed goals to pursue.
- **Get your finances in order.** Plan early to pay off credit cards, mortgage(s) and other debts. Consult with a financial expert to assess your financial position.
- **Plan on staying active physically and mentally.** Working at wellness is crucial to aging successfully. This includes eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly.
- **Volunteer your time.** Volunteering is an excellent way to pursue an interest while connecting with the community.
- **Travel on your own schedule.** Now you won’t have to fit your travels into weekends, holidays or vacations. List all the places you’d like to see in order of priority, and get going!

Did you know that ParTNers EAP offers legal and financial consultations? It is a resource offered to assist with budgets, long-term planning and more. If you want to talk with someone about retirement plans or even legal issues, ParTNers EAP can help.
Tips for a Resilient Marriage

After the honeymoon is over, the real work of marriage begins. People in healthy, lasting marriages always make adjustments; their relationship is always under construction. With all the busyness of modern life, it can be easy to take one’s spouse for granted and forget to do the little things that strengthen the marriage. Here are some ideas that may help with your relationship:

Be a booster for your spouse. Remember to say thank you for simple kindnesses. Compliment your spouse in front of others, which will boost self-confidence.

Be affectionate. Stay connected through quiet acts of tenderness such as touching or holding hands.

Keep communicating. Set aside some time each day for private, meaningful conversation. Truly listen and be involved in the discussion. Don’t allow distractions to keep you from checking on each other every day.

Always find things to laugh about. Laughter helps us cope with stress and the pressures of our busy lives. A sense of humor helps marriages survive problems, large and small.

Share an activity that both of you enjoy. It can be anything from going out to dinner or dancing to taking walks. Make time to do things together. This is a great way of keeping intimacy alive and well.

Be willing to compromise. Give up some of your wants for the sake of what your spouse wants. Meeting in the middle always helps.

Show your concern. When your spouse has a troubling concern, always listen and be supportive. Joint problem solving can be very effective.

When there’s a disagreement, argue calmly. Try to keep things cool, even when you disagree. Successful couples de-escalate anger by compromising to reach solutions.

Follow the golden rule. Treat your spouse the way you want to be treated. Don’t criticize your spouse to others. Be respectful if you want to be respected. Your marriage will be healthier over the long term.

Managing Change at Work

As in our personal lives, change happens all the time in the workplace. By the time you get comfortable with something, it can change right out from under you. Although we can’t often control many workplace changes, we can develop positive ways to deal with them. Here are some change management suggestions from your program:

• Be honest with yourself. When a big change happens, allow yourself to be upset, concerned or sad.

• Talk about it with others. Discuss your feelings with supportive coworkers, friends, family, or ParTNers EAP.

• Stay as focused as possible. Use “to-do” lists to keep your goals clear despite the chaos of change.

• Be patient. It takes time to sort through all your emotions and adjust to change.

• Remember prior coping techniques. Try to reuse strategies that helped you deal well with previous workplace changes.

• Let go of the past. Keep moving forward. Prepare yourself with a positive attitude and new skills.