Making the Transition During Change in the Workplace

Someone once said that change is the only constant in life. Most of the time that change is not initiated by us, we can tend to see it in somewhat of a fearful light, because we are not in control of the change. The impact of changes are most felt when they affect the things most important to us... such as relationships and employment.

Worksite changes can be particularly difficult if the changes will upset the current work flow and environment. Will I like my new boss? Will my new boss like me? Will I have to do different tasks that I am not trained to do? Will the warm work culture become ice cold? Will I have to prove my worth all over again? Often the greatest fear generated by change is fear of the unknown.

There are ways to mitigate the impact of change and help ease the transition.

- **Acknowledge the changes** and your feelings about them. Basically, this involves having a firm talk with yourself, saying, “Yes. Change IS happening, and that is a fact. My feelings are what they are and ‘should’ and ‘shouldn’t’ are irrelevant.” It’s also helpful to jot down a list of what your concerns and fears are about.

- **Talk with trusted colleagues and friends.** Ask them not to try to fix anything, just listen.

- **Express your concerns** with co-workers and leaders and get what solid information you can. Ongoing communication like this can keep everybody on the same page and quell rumors.

- **Examine and challenge yourself** about how you are viewing changes. Imagining the worst case scenario not only reinforces negative feelings, but it also creates tunnel vision where positive or neutral options are not acknowledged.

- **Stay in the present.** Do not borrow stress from the future – it’s pointless to worry about bridges you may not even have to cross when the future does get here.

- **Have realistic expectations.** Transition is a process that takes a finite amount of time. Give yourself that time.

- **Practice good self-care.** Reduce stress through exercise, meditation, good nutrition, and giving yourself the chance to do nurturing things for yourself. Pay special attention to sleep hygiene, to give yourself as good a night’s rest as possible. If your sleep is consistently poor, consider talking to your doctor.

- **Decide to engage the change** and get ahead of the curve. Make a conscious decision to be assertive yet flexible as opposed to allowing the change ‘to be done to you’.

* UA Life & Work Connections’ Employee Assistance Services professional staff are available for free, voluntary and confidential consultation sessions. In addition, the Employee Wellness and Health Promotion staff are also available to assist with questions about nutrition and fitness.

To set up an appointment, contact UA Life & Work Connections at 520-621-2493.