

## MANAGING CHANGE AND STAYING POSITIVE

In today's complex world there are many changes we are faced with. Changes occur at work, with our health, family, and in our personal lives. They can be welcomed and planned, or sudden and unexpected.

Changes are a part of everyday life, they are going to happen. Changes occur from birth to death. They can be big or small, and can be positive or bring disruption to your life.

Few of us need assistance in managing the good changes in our lives. The difficulty comes when we are faced with challenging changes. These unwanted changes may cause feelings of uneasiness, distress or create a crisis mode. It can result in causing physical signs such as exhaustion, headaches, stomach problems, muscle aches, chest pains, etc. Emotional signs can cause you to feel fearful, withdrawn, angry, frustrated, anxious, depressed, and helpless.

Unwanted changes can cause you to feel overwhelmed by the uncertainty of what the future holds for you. You may experience negative thoughts, confusion, and sleeping and/or eating disturbances, difficulty concentrating and being less productive at work.

Regardless of what kind of changes you encounter you must learn ways to deal effectively with them.

You may not be able to change what has occurred in your life, but you can learn how to control your reactions and your responses to that change, and move forward in a healthy manner.

Tips that will help you manage change and stay positive include:

1. Look at this change as a new opportunity. One of the very best ways to predict the future is to create new possibilities for yourself.
2. Be optimistic and hopeful. Focus on your past successful experiences and sources of personal strength that may help you realize what strategies to use to face current challenges.
3. Stay positive. Don't allow yourself to stay stuck in negative feelings, self-pity, worry, anger or bitterness. That will only make you feel worse. Focus on the future, and think of the change as a challenge that you will conquer.
4. Change requires self care. Your energy level depends on how well you take care of yourself. Remind yourself it is critical for you to take care of yourself during this stressful time. Remember to eat nutritious meals, get enough rest, exercise regularly, and limit your alcohol consumption.
5. Talk with your spouse, family, and close friends about the unwanted change or challenges you are facing.
6. If you have children talk with them about your situation in words they can understand. Reassure them this situation is only temporary, that things may be different for awhile, but you will work together as a family to adapt.

7. Developing goals will help you move forward and assist in maintaining a work/life balance. This can also give you a sense of accomplishment.
8. Spend energy on things you can change. Keep in mind when one door closes, invariably other doors of opportunity can open up. When you take positive steps on your own behalf, things can start to change for you.

If you feel unable to take charge of the stress you may be experiencing due to an unwanted change in your life, and have difficulty sleeping, eating, or are feeling frustrated, angry or depressed –the Employee Service Program counselors are available to provide you with assistance. They can be reached in the Lansing office at (800) 521-1377 or 517-373-7630, or by calling our Detroit office at (313) 456-4020