

# Coping with Change

Whether a new baby or the loss of a loved one, a transition at work or a move to a new house, change is a constant and inevitable part of life.

When an unwelcome change occurs, it is normal to feel nostalgic about “the good old days” or to want good times to last. It’s also common to feel emotionally and even physically unsettled by a shift in life circumstances. You can’t stop change, but you can learn how to make it less stressful. This begins with an understanding of the stages of change.

## Stage 1: Impact

The impact stage begins when a change first occurs. Shock, denial, self-doubt, and stress-related physical illnesses are common responses to unwelcome change. Emotional responses include worry, confusion, fear, and anger. Frequently people also have physical responses, such as sleeplessness, headaches, and gastrointestinal distress.

## Stage 2: Transition

After your emotional and physical reactions diminish, you will begin the transition stage. Though still keenly aware of how things used to be, you will no longer be overwhelmed by feelings of grief, loss, or disorientation. A sense of resignation or even hopefulness accompanies the transition process.

## Stage 3: Resolution

During the resolution stage, a situation that once seemed an obstacle or disappointment will gradually become a challenge or an opportunity. This is the time to take stock of your personal strengths and talents, develop new skills, and plan for the future.



You may adjust more easily to change if you keep the following in mind:

- **Be positive.** As much as possible, view change as a challenge, not a defeat.
- **Focus on the right things.** Address what you can control, and let go of those things that are beyond your influence.
- **Look forward.** Take advantage of any opportunities created by change.
- **Don’t go it alone.** Seek support from your friends, family, and co-workers.
- **Manage your stress.** Exercise, eat healthy, avoid alcohol or drugs, and take time to relax and have fun.

Though change is often difficult, it can also provide a unique opportunity to learn more about yourself and what you want from life. **LifeMatters®** is available to provide assistance with adapting to change. Call anytime.

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