

Managing change



In today's rapidly changing world we all have to deal with, and manage, change in our lives. Change is a reality in all areas of our lives – at a personal, family, social, and professional level.

Are you ready for change?

It is one thing to want to achieve something but a totally different matter as to whether you are ready to set about achieving it. The road to change has several phases to it, and here we examine each one.

PHASE 1: Pre-contemplation

You know you need to change something in your life but you have plenty of excuses.

PHASE 2: Contemplation

You have experienced a 'light-bulb moment' when you realised you must do something about your situation.

PHASE 3: Preparation

You are more active in exploring your options and are seeking out others who are on similar journeys.

PHASE 4: Action

You are actively employing strategies for change and making it a priority.

PHASE 5: Maintenance

You have achieved your goals and have replaced your negative thoughts with positive ones.

PHASE 6: Transformation

You have made positive changes to your life and are proud of your achievements.

There is no set amount of time that each phase lasts for. What matters is that you just progress from one phase to another.

Are you handling change well?

If you are beginning to feel overwhelmed by a lot of changes around you it may be time to turn to a professional counsellor for help.

Some signs that may indicate you need to see an expert include:

- **Your emotions are getting out of control**
You may start crying for no clear reason, fly into a fit of rage, or you may feel depressed, lonely, or full of despair.
- **Your everyday routine may be affected**
You may be eating more or less than usual, perhaps you have difficulty concentrating during the day, or you may even experience memory loss.
- **Your relationships may be suffering**
You may have withdrawn from life or don't feel like being with anyone else, or perhaps you are taking your frustrations out on those around you.
- **Your sleeping patterns have changed**
You may find it hard to sleep, or you might sleep more than usual, or even try to stay in bed to avoid the rigours of everyday life.

Millions of people seek counselling help every year for a range of differing problems. The important thing is to seek help when you need it.



Tips to cope with change

No matter who we are, we all are subject to changes and challenges in our lives. During traumatic, difficult, or trying times there are many simple things you can do to help you to cope.

- **Positive self-talk**

Using some positive self-talk can be useful as well as focussing on your strengths and the things you feel confident about.

- **Look after your physical health**

Ensure you eat a well-balanced diet, get 7 to 8 hours sleep a night, and some moderate exercise on most days. Avoid over-indulging in alcohol, caffeine, and smoking.

- **Get organised**

If you are dealing with numerous changes, it can help to get organised by creating timetables and schedules and doing tasks in advance where possible.

- **Take time out**

Make sure you schedule time for you to do whatever relaxes and re-charges you.

- **Talk to someone**

Sometimes having someone else to talk to can help you get perspective or find a solution, so seek out a trusted friend, family member, or colleague.

- **Seek help**

This may be as simple as asking family members or friends to help out with household chores.