

Understanding how people adjust to change

Research highlights that how people adjust to change is not linear and it takes time to move towards the positive end of integration. People may experience many different thoughts, feelings and physical reactions as they process what the challenge means for them and those around them. Some common responses to change are grief, loss, sadness, change of social behaviour and self-care practices, worrying, or overthinking. Other people may feel positive reactions to change, including excitement, relief, or motivation. All of these reactions are valid.

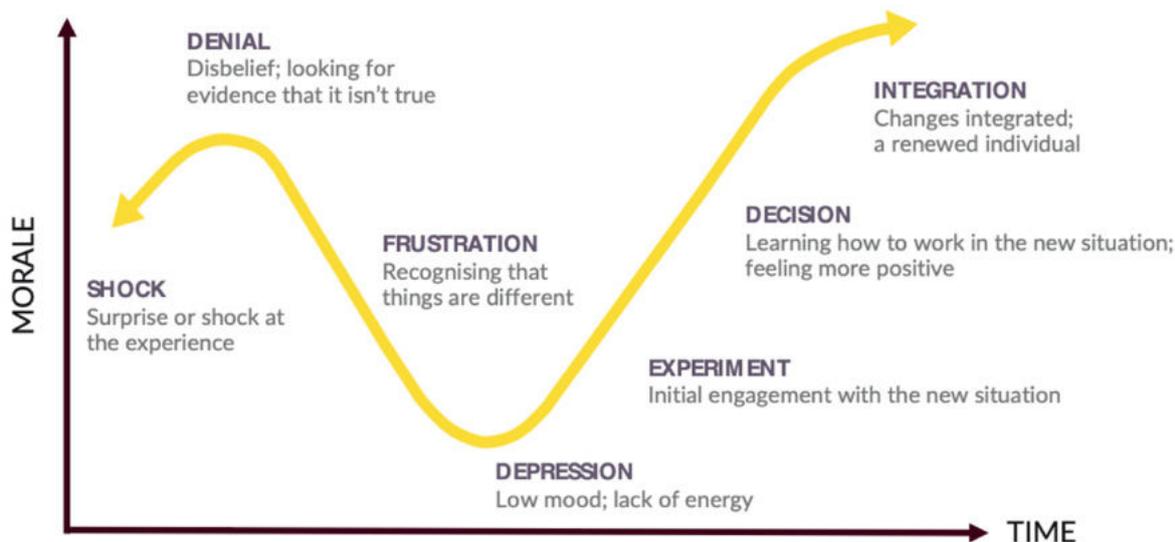


Figure 1: Kübler-Ross Change Curve

Lots of other things affect how people respond to change including personal factors (e.g., things that are happening at home, already feeling stressed and overwhelmed) and contextual factors (e.g., a history of failed changes in organisations we have worked for, we don't understand why the change is happening).

The importance of psychological safety

Psychological safety is crucial when supporting employees who are experiencing change and uncertainty. It's important that people feel safe and comfortable to express and be themselves, believe that they won't be punished when they make a mistake (e.g. when adopting a new process) and know that HR and the organisation has their back. You can learn more about psychological safety training on our website.

Strategies to help manage change

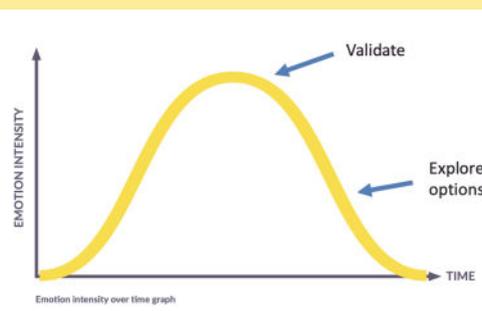
Clearly communicate rationale for change

Ensure that all communication is fair, transparent, honest, and that there is equitable access to information.

Ask people about their concerns and needs

Surveys, feedback forums, questionnaires, 1 on 1 conversations. Be authentic – show curiosity, concern and respect.

Listen and validate



Prioritise mental health and wellbeing

Minimise psychological harm and maximise wellbeing by continuing to encourage good wellbeing practices e.g., self-compassion and scheduled recovery.