



5 Stages To Help You Handle Change in the Workplace

Turnover. New management. New technology/software. Process improvement. These are all changes at work that can trigger certain emotions affecting our workflow, productivity, and sometimes even our happiness. Change can be challenging to deal with and throw us off-course, even if the change is for the better.

How can we healthily accept good and bad change? Let's look at the Kübler Ross' Change Curve Model for help. This model was created by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and outlines the 5 stages of grief (*denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance*). Using this model at work can help us better understand the disturbance we're facing when a change occurs, and overcome any hurdles associated with it.

The 5 Stages

1. Denial or Shock

- Our defense mechanism comes into play to deflect the change.
- You may experience a decrease in productivity.

2. Anger

- You may feel fearful, agitated, or angry with the change or the individuals responsible for the change.

• **Crosswinds Tip:** Try to do some breathing exercises or meditation if you feel angry or irritable, and need help calming down.

3. Bargaining

- Once we accept that we can't avoid the change, we start making compromises or altering the change to cope better with the situation.

4. Depression

- You may feel confused, foggy, unmotivated, uninterested, or checked out.

• **Crosswinds Tip:** If you feel like you are stuck in this stage, it may be very beneficial to speak with a counselor or coach.

5. Acceptance

- Eventually, you've gotten used to the change.
- Now you can begin to explore the change's benefits, problem-solve, and integrate your solutions.

Using this method in the workplace may help you sort through your emotions when a change occurs. This can help you understand not only yourself better but also your colleagues. This encourages a more supportive work environment, happier and healthier employees, and a stronger business.

Counselor Spotlight



Shon Ridenour,
MA, LMHCA

Specialties

I can help you work through trauma, anger, PTSD, relationship struggles, depression, anxiety, spiritual development, and more. I work with teens, adults, and families (typically parents and teens).

Locations

- In-Person (Indianapolis, Indiana)
- Online (Indiana)



Scan the QR code to learn more about Shon and to request an appointment.

Or visit:

crosswindscounseling.org/meet-shon-ridenour

Crosswinds Tips:

Tips for Leaders:

- We're creatures of habit and need time to process change. Don't spring surprises and expect immediate adaptability and acceptance. Make the announcement well in advance.
- Practice open and honest communication. Keep your team in the loop.
- Reinforce why the change is taking place, how it should be successfully implemented, and how it benefits everyone.
- Don't judge your employees for how they handle the change. Set up 1:1 meetings to talk them through it.

Authors and Contributors

Jeanie Creekmur; Colleen Terrell; Kate Miller

Sources

Duncan, Noah. "Kübler-Ross Change Curve in the Workplace." *WorkPatterns*, 3 Mar. 2021, <https://www.workpatterns.com/articles/change-curve>.

Malik, Priyanka. "The Kübler Ross Change Curve in the Workplace (2022) - Whatfix." *The Whatfix Blog | Drive Digital Adoption*, 24 Feb. 2022, <https://whatfix.com/blog/kubler-ross-change-curve/>.

Aktas, Mert, et al. "Kübler-Ross' Five Stage Change Curve Model – All You Need to Know." *UserGuiding*, 16 Dec. 2021, <https://userguiding.com/blog/kubler-ross-change-curve-model/#:~:text=The%20five%20stages%20of%20the,depression%2C%20and%20finally%2C%20acceptance>.