

Our journey through work and life is one of continuous change. When facing change, it can be difficult to adjust, especially if the change affects your working and financial situation. A common reaction is one of feeling out of control and disempowered, along with feelings of shock, anger, guilt, and apathy. You are likely to move back and forth through a range of emotions, as you can see in the simple change curve below.



### Shock, Denial, Surprise

Unable to believe that it has happened. *"You're joking!"; "Why me?"*  
A feeling of emptiness, perhaps numbness.

### Anger, Frustration, Blame others

May include a feeling of euphoria and minimising the reality of the change. *"Now I've got time to . . ."; "I didn't like the job anyway."*

### Guilt, Sadness, Blame self

Trying to make sense by looking externally.  
Feelings of anger and frustration.

Blaming someone else — *"They should have. . ."; "It's not fair."*

Trying to make sense by looking internally.

Feelings of guilt and sadness.

Self-blame — *"If only I had. . ."*

### Apathy, Lack of enthusiasm, Loss of hope

A sense of powerlessness and hopelessness as the reality sinks in. A lack of energy and interest in usual activities, and a drop in confidence.

*"What's the point?"; "There is nothing out there for me."*

### Acceptance, Exploration, Optimism

Letting go of the past.

Exploring new opportunities.

*"Perhaps I could . . ."*

### Renewed energy, Positivity, Purposeful

Emergence of a new energy and positivity.

Formulating plans and taking actions with confidence in the future.

*"Right, I'm going to . . ."; "I can do this."*

### How can you effectively manage these times of stress and anxiety?

While a degree of stress is normal, and necessary for growth and development, experiencing a high level of stress for a long period can have a negative impact on your health. Here are some helpful coping strategies that could work for you, if you are experiencing any stress reactions in your change journey.

- **If you have any concerns or questions about your health**, you should always consult with a healthcare professional.
- **Develop your problem-solving skills**—learn to assess the situations you find stressful to determine what the actual threats are for you and decide if there is something you can do about them. There may be situations where you can use your problem-solving skills to help with stress management.
- **Be mindful of your thoughts**—we can control how we respond to stressful situations by practicing mindfulness. What you THINK influences what you FEEL, which affects what you DO. Recognise negative self-talk, rationalise the situation and convert the self-talk to the positive.
- **Establish a regular routine**—when you haven't got the routine of work every day, it can be hard to get motivated. Establish a routine right from the start to make sure that you get the most out of each day.
- **Ensure that you take the time to do the activities that you enjoy**—for example, a daily walk, phoning friends, reading a book. These are the things that can support you to tackle stress.
- **Try something new**—planning for and having a new experience is an effective way to redirect negative thinking and unhelpful behaviours. Look out for ideas, for example, your local Council will promote community activities.
- **Ensure that you stay healthy** through eating regular balanced meals, exercising regularly, drinking lots of water, and having enough sleep. Deep focused breathing is recognised as an excellent calming tool and is a major part of meditation practice.
- **Stay connected and seek support**—this could include work colleagues, family, friends, your doctor, a counsellor, your financial advisor, or your career practitioner. Make sure that they are positive and supportive.
- **Know that what you may be experiencing is normal**, and you will work through this. It may be helpful to recall times when you have managed through change in the past and seek inspirations from the change stories of others.
- **Work out a financial plan to stay in control of your money**—money and related issues are some of the biggest sources of stress so get the help you need to put a plan in place.
- **Reset your purpose, goals and priorities** so that you establish what are the most important things to deal with first for you and your family members.
- See <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/> for further help and advice.