

# ADAPTING TO Life Transitions

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## WHAT IS A LIFE TRANSITION?

A life transition is any change or adjustment that impacts your life in a significant way. We all experience transitions throughout our lives – big and small, planned and unplanned. Whether it's because of your health, work, family or anything else, change can be difficult.

Struggling with life transitions is common as they require adjusting to unfamiliar situations, which can be emotionally and mentally draining. Nearly all change brings grief and loss of what was familiar, even if the change is good. Transitions can cause uncertainty, anxiety, and can disrupt social connections and support systems, leading to feelings of isolation.

## TYPES OF LIFE TRANSITIONS

Life transitions can be expected, unexpected, internal, external, forced upon you, or chosen by you. Regardless of the event, every transition we experience forces us to make changes to our existing life.

### Earning a promotion at work

This could mean major changes in your life, including schedule, job duties, and how fulfilled you feel.

### Getting divorced

Untangling your life, legally and socially, from a previous partner can lead to many lifestyle changes.

### Retirement

Retirement alters your schedule and can impact on various parts of your life including socially and financially.

### Health challenges

Major diagnoses regarding health can result in a lifestyle overhaul. Health challenges may also come with financial difficulties.

Life Transitions can be  
**CHALLENGING**  
for many reasons

**Change.** A life transition represents a change from what we were used to previously. Even if this a positive or planned change, the process of getting adjusted to a new routine can be demanding.

**Increased stress.** In response to a life transition, people experience different types of stress. Stress that continues for an extended period of time can negatively impact you emotionally, physically, and mentally. This makes a transition even more difficult to navigate.

**Unexpected transitions.** Transitions that happen unexpectedly and have a direct impact on our daily lives can be very challenging to cope with.



# COPING WITH LIFE CHANGES

During a big life change, our familiar patterns are disrupted. Especially when a major change is unexpected, coping strategies can become unhealthy.

Some **STRATEGIES TO HELP** adjust to big life changes in a **HEALTHY** way

## Practice Self-Care



A good sleep routine, good diet and regular exercise can help a lot with stress. Limit caffeine, introduce healthy snacks and let exercise and movement anchor your day or week.

## Stay Active



Engage in activities you enjoy. For example, join an interest group, a class or a hobby that might distract you from the difficulty of a life change and keep you in the flow of life.

## Be Mindful



Meditation, yoga, deep-breathing; these mind / body activities are particularly beneficial during stressful periods. As much as possible, stay present to avoid worrying about the future and things that may be outside of your control or influence

## Deal with Change on Your Own Terms



Slowing down to recognise your stress factors allows you to address them. Avoid taking on too much change at once. Be curious about your feelings and take time to make a mindful decision to move forward.

## Find Support



Friends, family and support groups can remind you that you're not alone in your journey.

**Acceptance and staying balanced during life changes.** Change is inevitable and it can also lead to great opportunities, even when they come from pain and loss. Learn to accept what has happened. When we accept change and uncertainty with self-care, self-love, and support, we have a much better chance of maintaining our well-being during major life changes and finding our way to adapt and thrive through.

**Difficulty Adapting to Life Transitions.** When a major life stress or change disrupts normal coping mechanisms and makes it very difficult or impossible to cope with new circumstances, it may be advisable to seek professional help from a practitioner in the field of counselling, psychotherapy or psychology. Additional supports can help you evaluate your situation and explore coping strategies to ease your transition through life's big changes.

**How the CSEAS can help.** A major life change can be very challenging, and sometimes we need help navigating it. The CSEAS is a support service which offers a wide range of free and confidential\* supports designed to assist civil servants in managing work and / or life difficulties. As a first step you might like to discuss your life change and difficulty you may be experiencing with your Employee Assistance Officer.

*\*please see our website*

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