



the ABCs of Managing Change

- **Anxiety Management**
- **Boundaries**
- **Communication**

Big life changes and transitions can be overwhelming. Whether returning to work, starting school in-person or traveling, you may find yourself feeling more stressed after navigating a global pandemic. Follow the ABCs of managing change to help minimize stress.

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A

ATTEND TO ANXIETY

Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread or uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, or have a rapid heartbeat. It can be a normal reaction to stress, and it is okay to feel anxious and uncertain right now.

Identify what is making you anxious. Tell yourself that it's okay to feel this way and that you are not alone.

If you are experiencing anxiety, consider following these four tips.

1. IDENTIFY AND QUESTION YOUR ANXIETY.

When negative thoughts take hold of your mind, it can be helpful to write them down and ask yourself if they are true or what is happening in your life that may be causing anxiety.

2. GET ACCURATE INFORMATION.

Accurate information can ease your anxious feelings. Make a list of questions based on what is making you anxious and seek answers from reliable sources.

3. FOCUS ON YOUR BODY.

Deep breathing, yoga, meditation or a 15-minute walk can help address the physical effects of anxiety like tension and rapid heart rate.

4. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK.

Schedule time for relaxation and joy in your routine. Focus on activities that make you happy without judgment.



B

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits you create to identify reasonable, safe and permissible ways for other people to behave around you and how you will respond when someone steps outside those limits.

Boundaries can exist across many different facets of our lives.

- **Physical boundaries** pertain to your personal space, privacy and body.
- **Mental boundaries** apply to your thoughts, values and opinions.
- **Emotional boundaries** is distinguishing the difference between your emotions and responsibility for them and someone else's emotions.

To set effective boundaries, consider these four tips.

1. KNOW YOUR VALUES.

Understanding your values helps you figure out where you'd like to set boundaries. In other words, by first knowing your values, you're able to then set up systems that help you get those needs met.

2. COMMUNICATE YOUR BOUNDARIES UPFRONT.

By clearly communicating your boundaries upfront, you take any guesswork out of common boundary infractions.

3. MASTER THE ART OF PAUSING.

Before agreeing to a project or activity, check in with yourself to determine if you have a conflict. Stop to think before responding or ask for time to consider before you immediately agree. This can help you decide if you really have the time and energy to take on something else.

4. DEVELOP A SYSTEM.

Go through what you have to do and either Do it, Defer it, Delegate it, or Drop it. If it doesn't fit into your schedule, or isn't a priority to you, ask yourself: Do I really want this? Does it make me happy?



C

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the way human beings connect with each other. It includes what is said and how, as well as what is demonstrated by actions.

Although the communication process is simple, effective communication can be one of our most difficult challenges.

To communicate effectively, consider these four tips.

1. SEEK TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE AND THEIR CONTEXT.

Consider status differences, gender differences, and cultural differences and how that might impact the way someone may interpret your message.

2. BE AWARE OF WORDS AND BODY LANGUAGE.

Use words that will be familiar to everyone and are concrete in their meaning. Avoid the use of jargon. And, be aware of what you are saying with your body when you communicate.

3. LISTEN AND ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS.

Pay attention to what is said and seek to understand by asking clarifying questions. Your questions help you to better understand, but also act as feedback for the others in the conversation.

4. FOCUS ON MANAGING YOUR REACTIONS.

You cannot manage someone else, but you can focus on controlling your reactions. Take time to breathe or remove yourself from the situation to help manage your reaction in a more effective way.

*We're here
to help.*

Contact your Employee, Member or Student Assistance Program provided by Perspectives to find more resources about anxiety management, boundary setting and communication. **Simply sign into your programs portal or call 800.456.6327.**