

Resiliency Through Workplace Change

For Leaders

Resilience is the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity. As a leader you are charged with helping associates through difficult change, while maintaining your own wellbeing. This is a brief overview of some things you can do to build your resilience while helping your associates through difficult change.

The Stress of Change

Few people like change, especially big change. Change is difficult if you are directly impacted, or if you see changes impacting your associates or your department. Sometimes a compassionate leader can become overwhelmed by being the harbinger of change. Here are some ways to present change and built your resilience while working through it.

Understand the Change Yourself

Gather as much information as you can about the change for your team, and for you. Allow yourself some time to process and look for the positives in this change. Workplace change can be turbulent, but almost always happens for reasons that are in the best interest of the organization. Try and identify some concrete good that will come out of this change, rather than only focusing on negative impacts. Your attitude toward change will greatly impact the perspective of your team.

Delivering Difficult News

A leader can be compassionate while also being direct and brief. Try to address the who, what, why, when and where with as much information as you can. Acknowledge that there is a great deal of information to take in, and you will be open to questions after the associates have had some time to process the news. Being open to questions does not mean that you must have all the answers, but it does mean you show compassionate support and find answers when you can.

Be Present

A compassionate leader often imagines how their team will feel when receiving news of change. If a leader becomes too embroiled in how they think their associates will feel, they can become fatigued or anxious at the thought of having to share difficult news. Rather than trying to presume how others may feel or think, be empathetic by being physically present if possible, and listening and validating what you hear associates say. There is a tremendous amount of power and support in simply being present with someone who is struggling with change.



Follow Up

After an announcement of change has been made, take some time in the next week or so to follow up with associates. Depending on your team structure this may be speaking individually with associates, a discussion in a team huddle, or an e-mail outreach. You might say something like, “After having some time to process all of the news, tell me what you are excited about. What are your concerns?” This is a good time to start focusing on the positives and help your team to accept and buy in to the change.

How Do We Say Goodbye?

Many people wonder what to do for an associate whose position is ending. That can be hard to navigate, but it doesn't need to be. Ask the associate privately what they would prefer. For example, if the tradition in your department is to have a farewell luncheon, rather than fret or presume if the associate would appreciate that, just ask! Some people are happy to have extra support, while others would prefer very little acknowledgment.

Struggling Associates

If you see an associate who is continuing to struggle with change you can remind them that EAP is available to them. You might say, “We've gone through a lot of changes lately, and I want to remind you that EAP is available. It is a free and confidential service and can be a great support through difficult times.” Provide a card or magnet with the phone number and e-mail address. Remind them that associates and their family members can talk over the phone or set up an appointment.

Building Resilience through Self-Care

As a leader you often take care of others before yourself. You've heard it before— in an airplane they say to put your mask on before helping others. It still applies! Keep your wellbeing in the forefront so you can be your best for others. Consult with your mentor or leader for support, and remember that EAP is a free and confidential service for you too! An EAP counselor can consult with you by phone or in person.

Here are some more examples of self-care:

- If you are struggling with sleep, take time to rest
- Eat healthy foods; avoid overindulging in sugary foods, or alcohol
- Cut yourself some slack if you feel you aren't up to your normal self; avoid negative self-talk
- Maintain and utilize your meaningful connections with others
- Attend to your physical, emotional, and spiritual self

Accessing Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

EAP is available to you, and your household members now, and up to 90 days after a termination, downsizing or layoff. EAP counselors can be reached by phone or e-mail during regular business hours.

EAP is a free benefit to you and your immediate household family members. It is a confidential service. Your EAP can be reached by calling 1-800-540-3758, or by e-mailing eap@ascension.org. You can also find information on our website at www.ascensionwieap.org.

Contact US

The bottom line is that Ascension WI EAP is here for you. Contact us anytime. We're ready to help.