

**A sample activity from the
Fenman trainer's resource:**

Managing People Through Change

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Thank you for downloading this sample activity.
You are welcome to use this material in your
courses.

This sample activity is just one of 19 contained
in the trainer's activity pack 'Managing People
through Change', published by Fenman.
Details of the other activities are given at the
end of this document.

Managing People through Change

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Activity 18: The Five Stages of Change
Full contents listing: 19 activities
About this resource

Introduction:

This activity pack gives managers the insights they need to help people deal with change in the workplace and change in their personal lives which impinge on work.

By understanding the stages of change and how people progress through them, participants learn how to support and understand the behaviour and feelings of the people they manage.

The activities can be run by trainers and by managers with their teams. They have been used on a number of programmes including:

- managing change effectively
- merging the culture
- preparing for change
- carrying forward the new culture
- managing people during change.

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ACTIVITY 18

THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

When helping people cope with radical changes in their work situation it is important that managers and trainers fully understand the process these people are going through.

PURPOSE

To enable participants to identify the five stages of change and the behaviours which characterise them, and to adopt appropriate actions to help people at each stage of the change process.

APPLICATION

This activity is central to any programme of change management and it is equally appropriate in a counselling context or in a 'preparation for retirement' course. It can also be used in conjunction with *Activity 1 Change and Self-esteem* to form the opening modules of a managing change course.

WHAT HAPPENS

Individual participants identify how they felt at different times during and after a period of radical change in their own lives. They discuss these with one another before bringing the results of their discussions to a plenary session during which the trainer places their experience into the context of the five stages of change.

Further group work enables the participants to identify effective behaviours for managers in helping people through the five stages.

TIME

Total time: 55 minutes.

- Introductory discussion: 10 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes
- The Five Stages of Change: 10 minutes
- Managing the Growth Process: 15 minutes
- Debrief: 10 minutes.

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- 1 Flipchart master:
18.1 *Managing the Growth Process*
- 1 OHT master:
18.2 *The Five Stages of Change*
- 1 Handout master:
18.3 *The Five Stages of Change*

- Overhead projector and screen
- 2 prepared flipcharts
- Flipchart and stand
- Marker pens
- Paper and pens for the participants
- Separate rooms for group working

IN PREPARATION

Read carefully through this brief and then think of a big change in your own life and identify the stages you went through. Examine your experience carefully and identify what happened that helped you move through the stages. Pay particular attention to how you feel now about a long-ago change and what the lasting effect has been.

During the activity you are sure to be asked to clarify the experience of a participant who is as yet only part way through the change process and being in touch with your own experience will help you to help them.

During the introductory discussion you will need a flipchart divided in three columns headed: 'At the Time', 'Later' and 'Lasting Effect'. You will find it useful to prepare this in advance.

Prepare also *Flipchart 18.1 Managing the Growth Process*.

HOW DO I DO IT?

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

Instead of the more usual trainer introduction, begin the activity by dividing the participants into groups of three and asking them to find a private space where they won't be overheard.

Ask them to each think of a big change that happened to them – something like a new job or moving to a new area. Marriage, birth, and divorce

are always good subjects too. Ask them then to discuss these questions:

1. How did it feel immediately you knew it was to happen?
2. How did it feel later, when some time had passed?
3. What has been the lasting effect?

Tell them they should observe two ground rules during their discussions:

1. People should not be pressed for details about what happened only about how they felt.
2. Group members should note down, for plenary discussion, any common responses.

While they are in discussion, set up your prepared flipchart with the three columns headed: 'At the Time', 'Later' and 'Lasting Effect'.

When you've done this put in a brief appearance at each group of participants to ensure that discussions are concerned with the process people went through rather than the detail of what happened. If necessary ask a question to bring things back on track – 'That must have been a difficult time, how did you feel about it at the time?' is always a good 'process focusing' question.

After 10 minutes, bring all the participants together in a plenary session.

DEBRIEF

Start the debriefing session by asking one of the groups for their responses to question 1, 'What did it feel like immediately you knew it was going to happen?' Their responses are likely to fall into two categories, those which are angry, and those in which, 'I couldn't believe this was happening to me.'

The first category indicates that the participant has moved too swiftly, inadvertently, to the second question and you will need to help them to look

back to their immediate reaction to the event. Do this by asking if there were any earlier feelings. If they say that there were not, accept it and write the response in the first column.

Write all their responses to this question under the Question 1 heading on the flipchart. Here are some examples of responses you may receive:

'I was gutted.'

'I couldn't believe I'd won.'

'I felt he was going to walk right back in through the door.'

'I got up at the same time and was nearly ready for work before I realised ...'

'It's hard to realise that we won't see her again.'

Let each respondent develop their answer but make it plain that they need not tell the actual happening that gave rise to their feelings. Some will be keen to share this experience, in which case you should allow them to briefly tell the story but tactfully restrain them from 'reliving it'. The way to do this is to ask them a question about the *process* they underwent – 'That must have been a very happy time, how did it look to you then?'

When you move on to Question 2, 'How did it feel later?' say that this term, 'later', can mean anything from a day or two to six months or a year, as people move through the change process at different rates and each happening has its own impact on the time process. Say that you'll be coming back to this time aspect at a later stage in the activity.

Write the participants' responses to Question 2 on the flipchart. Their responses may include:

'Worse.'

'I was so angry at him.'

'I was damned if I was going to let them get away with it.'

'When it dawned on me that ... I could have killed her.'

'They hadn't given me a fair crack of the whip, I was doing a good job ...'

'If I could meet my old boss now I'd tell him a thing or two.'

Sometimes a participant will still be in either this or an earlier stage so far as their change process is concerned. This will be indicated by their saying that their experience 'later' is the same as the earlier one. When this happens don't tell them that they haven't progressed, let them realise this for themselves during the later parts of the activity. For now, just write their response under 'later' on the flipchart.

Move on to the last question, 'What has been the lasting effect?' This is probably the key question so far as looking at other people's experience is concerned. The participants will derive much confidence about handling change by hearing the experience of people who have successfully integrated it within their own lives. However, during the responses to this question it's important that you don't hold up an impossible model for them to emulate. For example, if a participant were to say that following the disaster of his redundancy he went on to build a multi-million pound business empire, although this would seem to be a good example of integrating change it might appear impossible to someone recently faced with the possibility of redundancy. It is worth making the point that once a change has been successfully integrated into a person's life the process that was gone through gets pushed into the background and may seem, in retrospect, to have been easy.

The responses you get here will be of a different nature from the others – except that some people will still be going through the earlier stages of the change process and give answers accordingly. Here are some of the responses given by people who have successfully integrated a big change into their lives:

'When I look back it seems like another life.'

'I seemed to be on the wrong road and now I'm going in a completely different direction.'

'Oh yes, it's great now.'

THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE



Show OHT 18.2

The Five Stages of Change

Explain to the participants that there is a pattern to the acceptance and integration of change into a person's life and that you are going to outline it.

Point to the vertical axis on the graph and say that the difficult thing about the way change affects us is the way it affects our feelings of self-worth, or self-esteem as it is called.

Tell the participants that there seem to be five stages people go through, some of which they have identified already in their work as shown on the flipchart.

Go through the five stages making the points below and using the responses of the participants that are on the flipchart when appropriate.

You should tell them that there is no need to take copious notes as they will be given *Handout 18.3 The Five Stages of Change* at the end of the activity.

Looking then at each stage in turn make these points:

Stage 1: Denial

- The very first reaction to a change is a rise in self-esteem – although this may be only momentary it is always there. In the case of news seen as very bad this rise in self-esteem may pass unnoticed, but it is there.
- The stage is characterised by a denial of what has happened, 'I just couldn't believe it'. The first reactions to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales as shown on the TV programmes that day were ones of denial. A number of commentators and public figures used expressions like, 'It's hard to believe ...', 'We thought it must be a mistake

at first ...', 'We thought the first reports were exaggerated'.

- It is the same with good news: lottery winners say, 'I couldn't believe my luck'. Sometimes people moving to a new house arrive only to find the old tenant has scarcely started to pack – 'Is it today?' one such is reported to have exclaimed.
- People suffering bereavement say, 'I keep thinking she'll just walk through the door'.

Stage 2: Anger

- The next stage, anger, usually follows quite quickly and is characterised by a sharp and continuing fall in self-esteem.
- This stage happens when the realities of the change become clearer – as witness the numbers of lottery winners who find that their family has started to dissolve, their friends disappear.
- People get defensive about their existing position be it a job, a marriage, a geographical location, a house.
- This stage often leads to instability in people – they're liable to fly off the handle, blame everybody (including themselves) for what they see as their desperate plight.
- The search for a scapegoat for the death of the Princess of Wales was a particularly strong example of this stage.

Ask the group if anyone has been through, or seen someone else go through, this stage.

Stage 3: Rationalisation

- The rationalisation stage continues the fall in self-esteem as people ask, 'Why, why, why?'
- People try to make sense out of what is happening, search for meaning. This is very common in bereavement circumstances and when public figures die prematurely. Church and other

leaders are commonly heard using phrases like, 'Why was he taken?' and 'We need to try to see what good can come of it'. Continuing the example of the Princess of Wales this is seen in the need people felt to establish the anti-land-mine treaty.

- People search for time and space to reconcile themselves to the 'new world'.
- The individual finally does fit the happenings, the change, into their view of the world – the religious accept 'God's will', the incompetent see that so and so didn't provide the help necessary for success, the failed student believes that the questions were more difficult that year.
- The important point for helping people through change is that **the rationalisation makes sense to that person, not to an outside observer**. It is important for their continued growth that their own rationalisation is fostered. Later, when the changes are fully integrated into their lives they will have the time and space to reassess this.

Now comes the significant point in growing through and integrating change, 'The Dividing Line'. Draw particular attention to this on *OHT 18.2 The Five Stages of Change*, saying that it is at this point that the individual has to choose between accepting the new, changed, circumstances or reverting to an earlier stage of growth. Emphasise that if this happens they just arrive at the dividing line again after renewed and more convoluted rationalisations. Some go round and round the loop from rationalisation to denial or anger for years.

Now go on to 'Acceptance'.

Stage 4: Acceptance

- The decline in self-esteem levels out as the situation is accepted.
- The individual 'experiments' with new things, almost like starting life again.

- A lot of energy makes itself apparent, the apathy of the rationalisation stage disappears (it may return).
- A new, different, constructive, frustrated anger appears as the individual tries to make the change work.
- At this time in a work context the individual also has to contend with the negativity of fellow workgroup members who are still in an earlier stage of the growth path.


Stage 5: Growth

- Now self-esteem starts to pick up again and, provided growth continues, reaches a level *higher* than that attained before the change began as the individual gains confidence from their experiences.
- Now the world has changed and the individual is completely cut away from life on the other side of the dividing line.
- New considerations about what can now be achieved arise.
- New relationships are forged and old ones cast aside – often to the chagrin of their nearest and dearest.

Take questions from the participants but don't answer ones about how to deal with all this because that's what you want them to consider next.

MANAGING THE GROWTH PROCESS

Divide the participants into five groups and allocate one of the five stages of growth to each group.

	<p>Flipchart 18.1 <i>Managing the Growth Process</i></p>
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Flipchart 18.1 Managing the Growth Process, shows this question:

'If you were a manager implementing a radical change in the manner and style of working, one that demanded new attitudes, skills, and knowledge from your people, how would you deal with an individual who was in this particular stage of the growth process?'

Ask the participants to provide three key points for discussion about how this question would be answered so far as their allocated stage in the growth cycle is concerned. Say that this is a practical exercise and that what you want is actual things to do. Remind them of their own experience which they might like to consider in searching for their key points. Tell them they have 15 minutes for discussion.

DEBRIEF

Spend 10 minutes leading a plenary session and asking each group to outline their points. These are the essential points to be brought out:

Denial:

Deal with this by helping the individual to **confront** the issue. 'This has happened, Pat, and somehow you have to find a way of recognising that', or 'I don't think that avenue of thought is going to be very helpful for you.'

Anger:

Allow the anger to come out by asking for words of feeling about the issue. Encourage tears, anger, euphoria, excitement.

Rationalisation:

Refuse to talk about the past but listen to what the individual has to say about it. Whatever you do don't contradict their version of events but don't agree with it either. Instead, help the individual to get a **vision** of what it could be like in the future. Let this vision be as idealistic as they want it to be without focusing on practicalities. However, do ask questions to help the individual put as much detail as possible on their vision.

Acceptance:

Help the individual to set **long-term** measurable and specific objectives with clear timescales.

Growth:

Focus on **short-term** objectives.

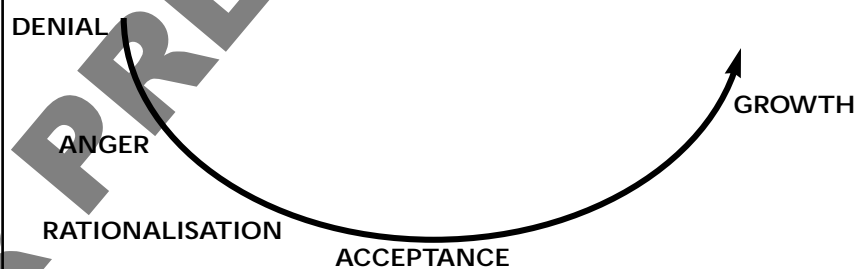
	Distribute Handout 18.3 <i>The Five Stages of Change</i>
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Without summarising the whole session, leave the participants with the following adage which you should write on a flipchart so that it appears bit by bit. Emphasise that it contains worthwhile axioms to bear in mind throughout any helping process:

Never sympathise: 'Oh poor you' – it's a 'put down'.

Never advise: If you're right you're a know-all and despised, if you're wrong you'll get the blame.

Never say what you would do: You are not them.



MANAGING THE GROWTH PROCESS



18.1

'If you were a manager implementing a radical change in the manner and style of working, one that demanded new attitudes, skills, and knowledge from your people, how would you deal with an individual who was in this particular stage of the growth process?'

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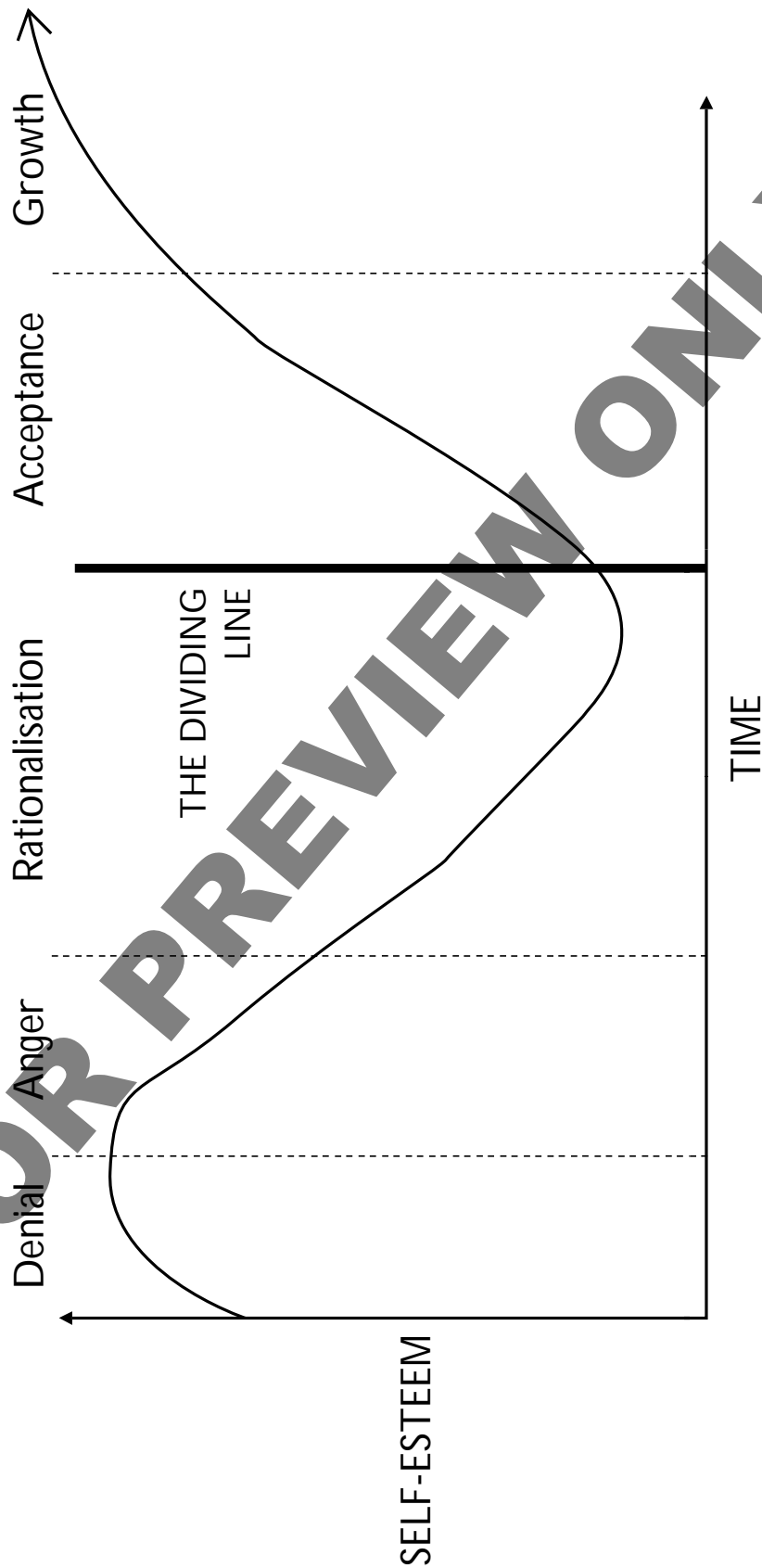
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THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE

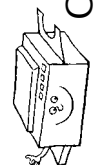


18.2

THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE



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THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE



18.3

People going through change generally pass through five recognisable stages:

DENIAL

In this stage the change is approaching without the true impact being realised. A bereaved person often believes that their loved one will 'just walk through the door at any moment'. People moving house often leave packing to the very last moment. Retirement often comes as a surprise even though it can be seen from many years away. A part of this process that can shock is the change that comes about in all aspects of life both good and bad. Thus a long looked for promotion brings with it unsought difficulties and responsibilities; marriage to a greatly loved partner has unexpected downsides.

ANGER

When the full impact of the change takes effect the predominant feeling that arises is one of anger; anger at fate, at the new partner, at the lost opportunity of the 'old state'. There is a feeling of loss of control over events, blame is laid on a partner, on an employer, on God. This anger can spill over into otherwise unaffected areas of life and onto friends and acquaintances who can be taken aback by sudden outbursts. If this anger is 'bottled up' it can have far-reaching consequences over many years, leading to unexplained behavioural, and even physical symptoms. But when handled effectively it leads naturally to the next stage of growth.

RATIONALISATION

People need to be able to make sense of the world, particularly when a change in life is thrust upon them for whatever reason. Once the initial denial and anger is past the individual seeks a reason for what has happened and tries to make the events fit with their own particular view of themselves and with their view of the world. To an outsider, the rationalisation can frequently seem absurd but so long as it makes sense to the individual concerned it allows a passage to the next and most important step, that of acceptance of the new state. Without this rationalisation the individual can revert back to the initial stage of denial and start the whole process again. Commonly, people revert back to the



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Continued ...

THE FIVE STAGES OF CHANGE



... continued

18.3

anger stage a number of times and this can be a signal that although rationalisation is taking place barriers are still to be overcome.

Once they are overcome the 'Dividing Line' is crossed; the line between looking back and looking forward.

Now cross the dividing line ...

... to Acceptance and Growth

ACCEPTANCE

The transition to this stage can come quite suddenly. It's characterised by a shift in thinking towards an as yet uncertain future. The individual is prone to leaps of the imagination: 'Now I can do some of those things I've always wanted' – go around the world, write a novel. Visions of quite improbable futures spring to mind and it is this idea of a possible future in the 'new world' that fuels the drive to the next stage – growth.

GROWTH

Now that the changed state has been accepted, the new rules understood, the new relationships established, realistic plans can be laid – the fantastic visions of the acceptance stage being either laid on one side or planned for in a hard-headed fashion. Now the future is not just accepted but looked forward to with excitement and anticipation.

The stages cannot be avoided but they can be suppressed. Suppression leads to anxiety and anxiety leads to stress and its associated symptoms. Helping people near you to work through the changes thrust on them by life can be one of the greatest services you can do for someone.



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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Managing People through Change is a Trainer's Activity Pack that provides you with 19 training activities that have all been tried and tested on numerous occasions in programmes of change in both public and private sectors. Each activity is a stand-alone module which can easily be linked to others to form complete change management courses.

Each activity contains everything you need to run it, with clear and concise instructions and background information where needed.

The activities contain analytical and descriptive tools as well as experiential learning modules. Nearly all of them are interactive but opportunity is also provided for individuals to work alone with the material before bringing their observations back to a plenary discussion with other participants.

The trainer's role in all these activities is that of a guide, a mentor, a facilitator. Where explanations are needed these are provided for the trainer but nowhere in these activities is there material for a lecture. The approach of the trainer is crucial to the sort of learning experience offered and the trainer often has as much to learn as the participants.

So a variety of learning methods are included: group discussions within a framework, questionnaires, work with a partner or in groups observed by another participant. Some of the activities can be displaced from the workshop and run by any manager with people in the workplace.

The activities can be linked together in many different ways to form change management courses extending from one, two, three, or even four days. Used in this manner, the support and inclusion of managers can be a key factor in promoting change throughout an organisation. Most of the activities require the participants to reveal something of themselves and what they think about changes that may already be progressing throughout the organisation. Because of this you will need to be able to give an assurance to participants that the things they say will be treated in the strictest confidence. It would be as well for you to gain support for this at the highest possible level.

These activities have been used on a number of programmes including:

- Managing Change Effectively
- Merging the Culture
- Preparing for Change

- Carrying Forward the New Culture
- Managing People during Change.

Most of the activities have also been used on courses where the issue of change was not the primary one, for example:

- Introduction to Management
- The Effective Manager
- Introduction to Internal Consultancy.

But it isn't only in the workshop that you'll be able to use these activities. Some of them make excellent devices for promoting personal development in one-to-one coaching situations; some can easily be delivered to a workgroup by people with only an elementary background in training. However you use them, you will find that these activities can contribute to the effective management of people during changes of whatever nature, both in the workplace and in people's personal lives.

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