Decision Making/
Coping with Change

Instructor’s Packet
Administer Decision Making/Coping with Change Pre-test.

Introduction
People face change daily in all parts of their lives. Some people are naturally resistant to change. Other people welcome changes, finding them exciting and challenging. Our attitudes toward change partly determine how well we cope with it.

Assign student worksheet 1. (Attitudes Toward Change)
When complete, have students add up their scores for the odd numbered items on the worksheet and then the even numbered items. Point out that the odd numbered statements favor change. The even numbered statements oppose change. The maximum score for odd and even totals is 30. When the difference between the odd and even scores is 6 or more, it indicates a fairly strong attitude. Have students compare their scores favoring change to their score opposing change.

Coping with change means more than simply accepting or rejecting changes as they occur. A wide range of “Middle-of-the-Road” attitudes includes:

- Minimal acceptance – “OK, I’m not happy, but I’ll do it.”
- Partial acceptance – “I’ll go along with this, but I’m not doing that.”
- Forced acceptance – “I hate it, but I have no choice.”
- Resistance – “I’m going to find a way to avoid this.”
- Actively opposed – “Let’s take this to the top!”

People can learn to accept a change by examining both good and bad aspects of change. By examining the good features, we can develop a positive attitude toward a change. By examining its bad points, we can view a change realistically and plan methods of minimizing the number of bad points.

Confronting changes in work situations often requires workers to decide if and how they will accept changes. Workers who have developed their decision-making skills can consider changes from several angles instead of simply blindly deciding to accept or reject changes. The first step in making a decision is to understand the situation. By looking at the whole situation in which the problem exists, workers can be prepared to make the best possible decision about a change.
The second step in decision-making is to define the problem. This step includes using all information about the situation (examined in the first step) to decide exactly what the problem is. Although this step may seem unnecessary, it actually can assist you in finding alternatives, the third step in decision making.

When making a decision, people have a number of alternatives:
- Accept the change
- Compromise
- Request not to comply
- Fight the change
- Refuse to accept the change

In order to make a good decision, it is important to consider possible results of decisions. A consideration of possible results helps people select action that will have the results they want. We are going to do some activities that emphasize the value of positive attitudes and good decision-making skills in coping with changes in work situations.

**LEARNING TO ACCEPT CHANGE**

Many changes have both good and bad aspects. By being aware of both the good and the bad points of a change and finding ways to minimize the bad points, we can learn to accept change with a positive attitude.

**Review student worksheet 2. “Learning to Accept Change: Example,”** go over the worksheet, having learners state additional good and bad aspects and ways of minimizing the bad aspects. Discuss techniques used to accept change with a positive attitude.

- Identify the good points
- Identify the bad points
- Find ways to minimize the bad points

**Assign student worksheet 3. “Learning to Accept Change,”**
Give an example of a potential real life workplace change example:

- Moved from day to night shift
- Required overtime for next four weeks
- Indefinite layoff
- Transferred out-of-state
- Passed over for a promotion
- Personality clash with new coworker
- Hours cut to half-time
• Fired from too many absences
• A change situation a learner has experienced

Have students share their responses.
Why is it good practice to examine both good and bad points of a change? Do you think workers should try to accept all changes they face? Why or Why not?

**Decision-Making Techniques**

Often workers must decide how to react to changes. Workers who can make informed, careful decisions can usually use changes to their own advantages. In order to make good decisions, workers need to first understand the situation and then to define the problem. By considering the situation carefully before deciding, a person can avoid mistakes and open the door to alternatives. After understanding the situation, the next step is to define the problem. The last two steps in making a decision are finding alternative and making a selection.

Explain the importance of decision-making in adjusting to change. Good decision-making skills help workers to use changes to their best advantage. Decision-making can be broken down into four steps: refer to student handout 1 Decision-Making Steps

• Understand the situation
• Define the problem
• Find alternatives
• Select the best alternative

Explain that first two steps of decision-making process

• Understanding the situation involves asking questions:
  
  o What is happening?
  o When is it happening?
  o Why is it happening?
  o How is it happening?
  o Who is involved?

• Defining the problem means taking the information you have gathered and determining exactly what the problem is.

**Begin Role Playing Activity.** This activity will assist students in understanding situations involving change. Assign roles to students for the three role playing scenarios. Set up an "office area" where the 'supervisor'
and the ‘employee’ can meet. Encourage students to ad-lib and take the scenario in the direction that feels most natural to them. Discuss variations in the way that individuals viewed the changes in Student Worksheet 4. "Observer’s Worksheet”

**Identify Alternatives** In addition to accepting a change, alternatives can include: Handout 2 “Finding Alternatives” Discuss

- Asking for a compromise
- Requesting not to comply (for good cause, such as religious or moral codes)
- Fighting the change (through proper channels)
- Refusing the change (and accepting the consequences)

We have already examined one way of dealing with change—trying to accept the change by being aware of its good aspects and minimizing its bad aspects. Other alternatives are (1) Compromising, (2) requesting not to comply with change, (3) fighting the change, and (4) refusing the change.

- Compromise or substitute. If we don’t like the change, it might be possible to come up with a compromise plan that will be accepted in its place.
- Request not to comply. Not all changes are meant to include all employees all the time. It might be possible to make exceptions if they are requested.
- Fight the change. If it is unnecessary, discriminatory, illegal, or morally unacceptable, you might be able to fight it, although this is not usually easy.
- Refuse (and take the consequences) This is a drastic move in most cases that could be costly, but it may be necessary if you simply cannot accept the change.

**Making a Selection**

When selecting an alternative, workers need to consider possible results of each alternative. Predicting results of a decision is one of the keys to making a good decision in which undesirable results are avoided and desirable results are increased. We may also make the best decision by combining or improving alternatives.

**Assign student worksheets 5, 6 and 7.** Students will identify an alternative to apply in the “Coping With a New Boss” exercise on worksheets 5 and 6. They will then analyze the potential outcome of the alternative selected on worksheet 7.
Have learners share their responses. Have the class select an action they consider the best.

Review the following questions:

- How can decision-making techniques help us cope with change?
- Why is each step in the decision-making process important?
- What could happen if a step in the decision-making process was omitted?

Administer the Decision-making/Coping with Change Post-test.
PRE/POST Tests for Decision Making/Coping with Change
(Please circle which test you are taking.)

1. Coping with change is simply accepting or rejecting changes as they occur. (circle the best answer) 
   True or False

2. When you view a change as a challenge, you tend to: (circle the best answer)
   A. Resist it and be irritated by it
   B. Accept and welcome it
   C. Refuse to do it
   D. Be bothered by it

3. What does it mean to compromise when dealing with change? 

4. Give an example of a situation when it would be appropriate to request not to comply with a change.

5. What does the term “partial acceptance” mean when referring to change? 

6. Give an example of a situation when it would be appropriate to refuse to comply with change.

7. Sue showed up for work Monday morning wearing jeans and a t-shirt. All employees had been fully informed about the dress code change to a “business casual” policy. What possible consequences should Sue have been prepared to face?

8. Describe a positive strategy for dealing with change.

9. You’ve just been offered a transfer to a new city with a large pay increase. How could you view the difficulty of living farther away from your extended family and friends in a way that would “minimize the bad points”?

10. Name one question to ask yourself when selecting a decision making alternative.
Decision Making / Coping with Change
Pre/Post Test Answer Key

1. False

2. B. Accept and welcome it.

3. Substitute or come up with a plan on which both parties agree

4. When a religious or personal health issue is involved.

5. Accepting part of the change, but not its entirety.

6. When the change is discriminatory, illegal, or immoral.

7. She might be sent home to change clothes, sent home without pay or written up.

8. Focus on the good points, minimize the bad points, etc.

9. You could plan to stay in touch by phone and email, invite family and friends to visit you in your new location, use part of your pay raise to visit your former hometown, etc.

10. What would be the best (worst) result of my decision?
Student Worksheet 1

Attitudes Toward Change

Directions: Use the following scale to express your opinion on the following statements—be honest with yourself!

5 = Strongly agree  2 = Partly disagree
4 = Agree          1 = Disagree
3 = Partly agree   0 = Strongly disagree

1. In these days of rapid progress all around us, we cannot afford to be slow to learn new ways of doing things.

2. I must be certain that doing something differently is worthwhile before I try it.

3. As soon as I hear about something new, I like to try it.

4. Too much time and energy is wasted on experimenting with new ideas before enough is known about them.

5. I always try to keep myself up-to-date.

6. When it comes to using new methods of doing things, I prefer to be a follower rather than a leader.

7. I am always eager to learn about new developments.

8. If I like things the way they are, I see no reason for making changes.

9. If I hear about something new, I feel restless until I try it.

10. Making changes creates too many problems and pressures. I’d rather relax and enjoy what I have.

11. I’m always looking for new ways of doing things faster and better.

12. Years of experience have made things the way they are—they’re dependable.
Student Worksheet 2

Learning To Accept Change: Example

Most changes have both good points and bad aspects. In order to accept a change with a positive attitude, we must

1. be aware of the good aspects.
2. be aware of the bad aspects.
3. develop ways of minimizing the bad aspects.

Let us use the example of being promoted to supervisor. Most people consider this a step in the right direction, but there are drawbacks. By looking at the change in terms of both its good points and bad points, we are more likely to make a positive adjustment to the change.

An example is outlined below. Add any good and bad points you can think of. List ways to minimize the bad points.

Good Points:
1. higher pay
2. higher status
3. more interesting work
4.
5.
6.

Bad Points:
1. Learning new job requires time and effort.
2. greater responsibilities
3. more pressure
4.
5.
6.

Ways of minimizing bad points:
• Plan ahead; get help from the last supervisor in learning new job:
• Regard responsibilities as a challenge.
• Organize time in order to do the best job possible.
Student Worksheet 3

Learning To Accept Change

Your instructor will give you an example of a change you might experience on a job. Examine the change, list good and bad points of the change, and develop ways of minimizing the bad points.

Describe the Change:

Good Points:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Bad Points: Ways of minimizing bad points:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
Decision-Making Steps

1. Understand the situation
2. Define the problem
3. Find Alternatives
4. Make a Selection
Role-Playing Sheet 1

Situation
Brian Gunderson has been with the company for seven years and is in his late twenties. He heard about an opening for a supervisory position in another department and told his supervisor he would like to apply for it. His supervisor felt he had a good chance for the position and recommended him highly. Word has just come down that someone else got the job, and Brian's supervisor is on the way to inform him of the decision.

Role—Brian Gunderson
You have really been counting on this promotion. You like your job somewhat, but you feel like you're getting nowhere. This promotion is your chance to show how capable you are. You know you've been at the company longer than any other applicant for the position, and your supervisor gave his full support.

Role—Supervisor
You're really sorry that Brian didn't get the promotion, and you hate having to tell him. He's your most valuable worker, but his talents are being wasted in his present position. He's not going to be too happy to learn that the job went to Anne Perry, a young woman who's only worked here a year. Of course, she's worked in that department all that time and is familiar with its operation. And she is very bright and efficient.
Role-Playing Sheet 2

Situation
Margaret Turner has been working in the factory for over a year now on the day shift. She has just received notice that, starting next week, she will be moved to the night shift. She’s on her way to talk to her supervisor.

Role—Margaret Turner
You are really opposed to working the night shift. You’re in a bowling league Thursday nights, and you’re taking a course at the local junior college Monday and Wednesday nights. It’s really going to disrupt your social life and your home life too—your husband won’t like it at all. How can they do that to you?

Role—Supervisor
Work orders are down, and 25% of the workforce is being laid off. Another 10% are being switched to night shift to fill the vacancies left by those who are being laid off. Everyone’s upset and complaining to you. What a mess!
Role-Playing Sheet 3

Situation
Jennifer Hanes has been working part-time in the billing office of a major department store for fifteen years. One of the other girls just came out of her supervisor’s office crying, and now the supervisor has sent for Jennifer.

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Role—Jennifer Hanes
This job is just perfect for you. It’s only half-time, so keeping up with your household chores is no problem. You love your work and the people with whom you work. The extra money has also been helpful over the years.

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Role—Supervisor
Word just came down from upper management that, as an economic move, all part-time help must be let go and their duties assumed by the full-time employees. Most of the part-time workers in this department have been here a long time, and it’s really tough for you to break the news to them. The only hope you can offer is that you will welcome them back if you start rehiring.
### Observer's Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding the Situation</th>
<th>Brian Gunderson</th>
<th>Margaret Turner</th>
<th>Jennifer Hanes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why is it happening?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When is it happening?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is it happening?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who is involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Define the problem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How effectively did the worker find out about the situation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What problems did he/she have in getting the information?</td>
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<tr>
<td>With what could he/she have had problems?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How else might this situation have been handled?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What other questions would you have asked?</td>
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HANDOUT 2

Finding Alternatives

1. Accept the change by being aware of its good points and minimizing the number of bad points.

   For example: "The required overtime will be an inconvenience for me, but I can use the extra money. I will just have to plan my time more carefully."

2. Compromise or substitute.

   For example: "The required overtime work interferes with a course I am taking at the community college. I would be willing to work late on the evenings when I don't have class."

3. Request not to comply.

   For example: "My workload is light as it is. I have been using my extra time to reorganize the records. I don't think it would be productive for me to work overtime, so I request that an exception be made in my case."

4. Fight the change.

   For example: "The required overtime is not outlined in our contract. I am taking this to the union."

5. Refuse (and take the consequences).

   For example: "I will not work overtime."
Student Worksheet 5

Coping with a New Boss

You work in a very busy office. You enjoy your work, even though the pace is often hectic. You have managed to organize your work so that you usually have time to finish everything, even with many interruptions during each day.

Mrs. Elkins, your boss, retired a month ago. Your new boss, Mr. Faulkner, seems pleasant and agreeable. He has appreciated your efforts to help him find things in the office and to help him get used to his new job.

There is just one problem. Mr. Faulkner's wife has stopped by the office several times to ask you to type her secretary's report for her service club. You don't mind doing the typing for her, since the reports are short. However, she always brings them to you on Thursday afternoons, your busiest time, and she wants them typed right away. You are lucky to get all your usual work done on Thursdays.

Understanding the situation: Summarize the facts.

Defining the problem: State it simply.
Student Worksheet 6

Finding Alternatives

Assume that you are the person described in the situation on Worksheet 5. Write down at least one alternative you could use to cope with the change described in each of the five ways listed below:

1. Accept the change.

2. Compromise or substitute.

3. Request not to comply.

4. Fight the change.

5. Refuse (and take the consequences).
Student Worksheet 7

Making a Selection

1. What is the worst thing that could happen as a result of your decision?

2. How can you avoid the worst result?

3. What is the best thing that could happen as a result of your decision?

4. How can you increase the chances of getting the best result?

5. Can you combine or improve any of your alternatives?