

# WA State Employee Assistance Program

September 2015

## *Living With Change*



None of us are immune from change. We experience change every day—from navigating a construction detour to get to work, to the loss of a loved one. There are 3 types of change you might experience:

1. **Relationship changes**—marriage, separation, or the loss of spouse or family member
2. **Workplace changes**—budget cuts, loss of employment, or a job promotion
3. **Quality of life and lifestyle changes**— new baby, relocation, elderly parents, or illness

### *Four Stages People Often Experience Going Through Change*

- **State One- Denial.** The first response to change is usually to deny or minimize the extent of the change. This activity may look like the person is coping just fine, but it may actually be masking a person's desire not to face what's happening in their life.
- **Stage Two – Resistance.** After the reality of the change sinks in, this next stage can bring out anger, anxiety and depression. This is the phase where uncertainty, self-doubt and low self-esteem may begin to surface.
- **Stage Three – Exploration.** After going through a period of denial and doubt, most people enter the next more optimistic, future-oriented stage. People will begin to explore new possibilities and look for the good that may come out of the situation.
- **Stage Four – Acceptance and new commitment.** This is the final stage of the change process. People at this stage have developed new goals and have gone through an emotional shift from anxiety to renewed self-confidence.

### *Healthy Ways of Dealing with Change*

Dealing with change can be easier if we are open to accepting it. Here are some tips to assist with changes as they occur.

- **Recognize that change is a part of life.** Life would be boring and stagnant if things didn't change. Change keeps us fresh, alive.
- **Anticipate change.** Being flexible and open to change will lessen the surprise when it does happen.
- **Monitor change around you.** Be an active participant in life and notice your surroundings. You'll be able to spot change and deal with it a lot easier.
- **Adapt to change quickly.** When you begin to anticipate and monitor change, you'll be able to adjust faster with less stress.
- **Expect that change will happen over and over—and over again.** Life is a series of changes.
- To learn more about how to manage the change in your life and being resilient **contact your EAP.**

Washington State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) helps employees and their family members resolve personal or work-related problems.

