



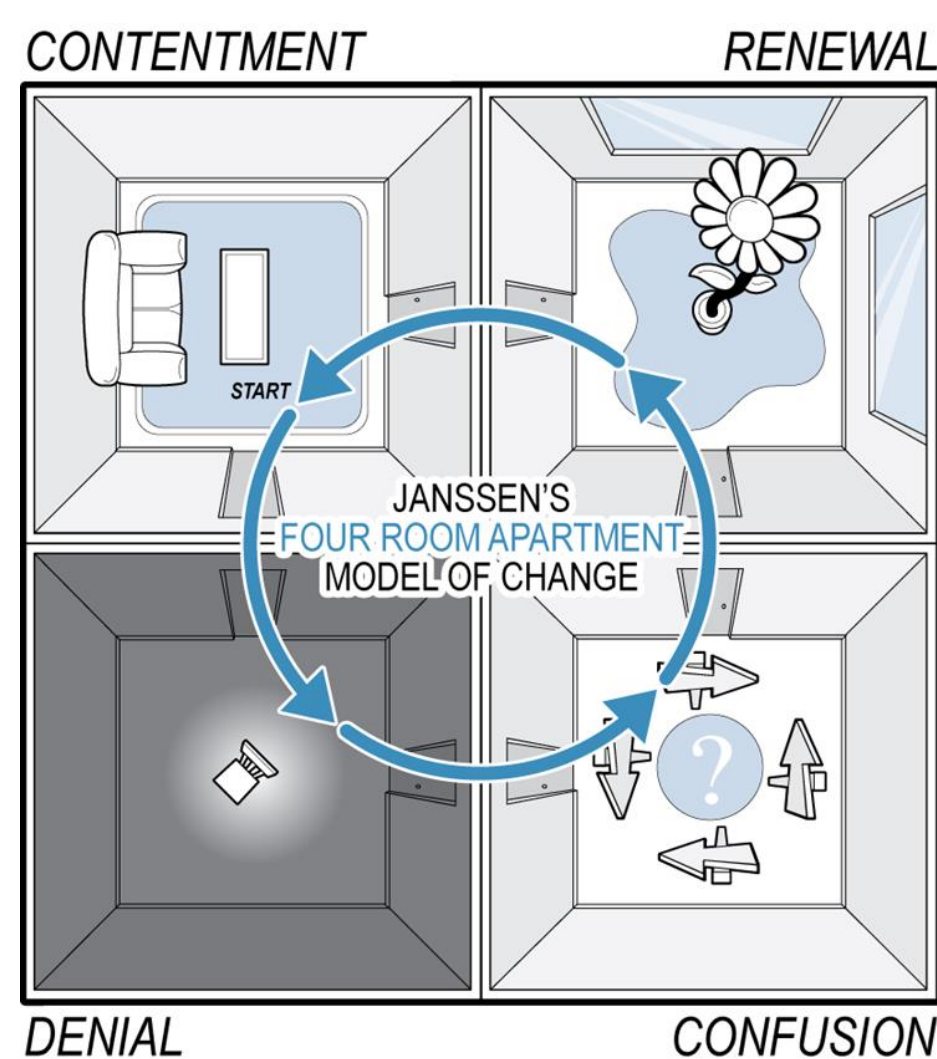
Leading Through Change

What is change

- “The only constant thing in life is change” *Francois de Rochefoucauld*
- Every 2-3 years, knowledge doubles
- Every day 7,000 technical and scientific articles are published
- Year 12 students have been exposed to more information than their grandparents were in a lifetime
- There will be as much change in the next 3 decades as there was in the last three centuries.
- Change is inevitable and constant!

Change can be hard

- Change is non-linear
- Involves unlearning and relearning
- Change is complex
- Problem-focussed
- Challenges status quo
- Change is seen as a disruption of real work
- Challenges our beliefs and assumptions
- Change is personal
- Creates negative emotions



Alteration
Modification
Variation
Adjustment
Evolution
Transition
Growth
Innovation
Reformation
Adaptation
Transformation

But change can also be an opportunity

- “If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always got.” - Henry Ford
- “When patterns are broken, new worlds emerge.” - Tuli Kupferberg
- “Change before you have to.” - Jack Welch
- “Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.” - Pauline R. Kezer



The Principles of Change

Change is situational, and an external event that takes place – whereas for people the experience of change is more one of transition. This is an inner psychological process of people working through and trying to understand and come to terms with the impact that change will bring.

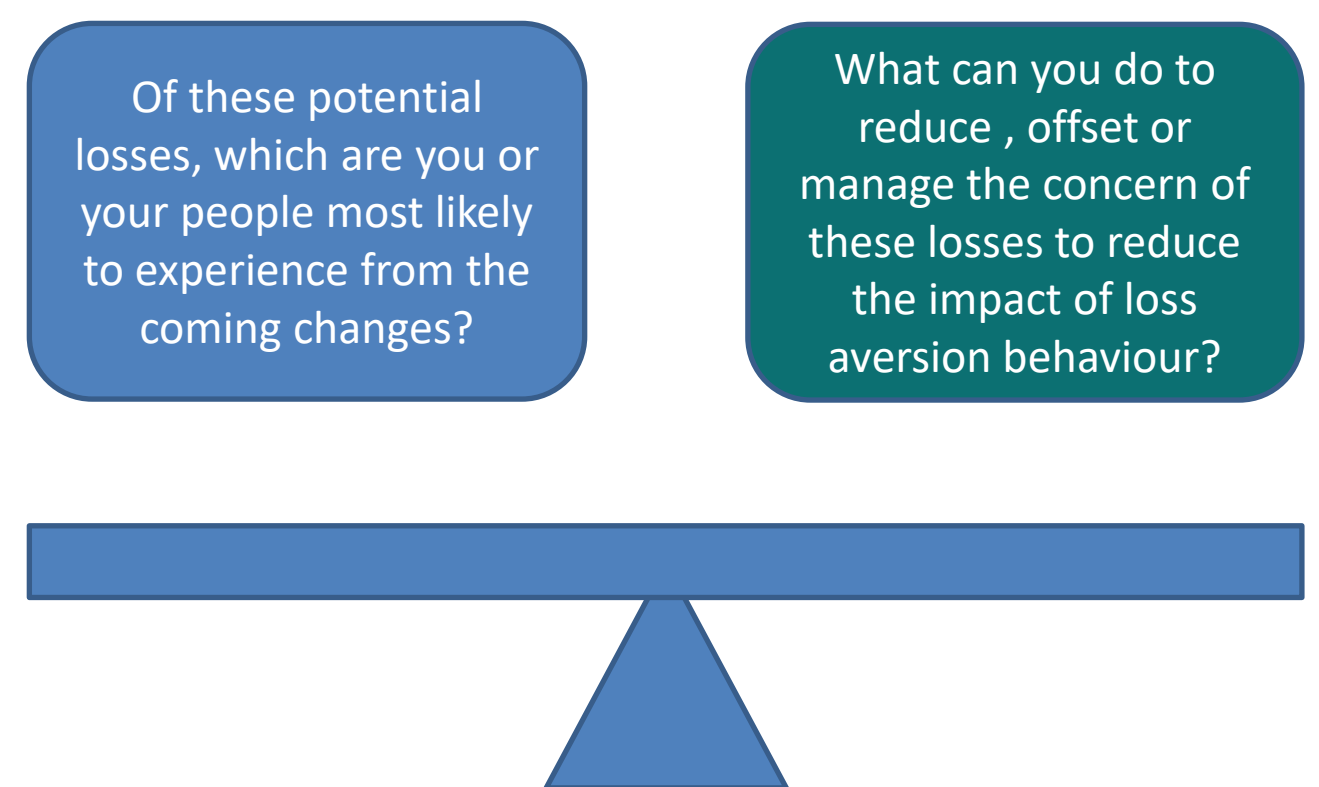
For people change first begins with an ending. However, people can move through the transition process in different stages and at different speeds. The key is to know where you (and others) are at in this transition and ensure that you have the right elements (such as support, understanding, information, communication, and involvement) to avoid yourself and others getting stuck in the transition process.



Perceived losses

People tend to worry more about what they will lose rather than what they might gain when it comes to change. Sometimes these losses are actual but on many occasions, they are perceived (see list below). The fear of loss can lead to loss aversion behaviour, which can impede change momentum and make adapting to change more difficult.

- Job Security
- Financial Security
- Psychological Comfort and Security
- Control over One's Future
- Purpose/Meaning
- Competence
- Social Connections
- Territory
- Future Opportunities
- Power
- Social Status
- Trust in Others
- Independence and Autonomy

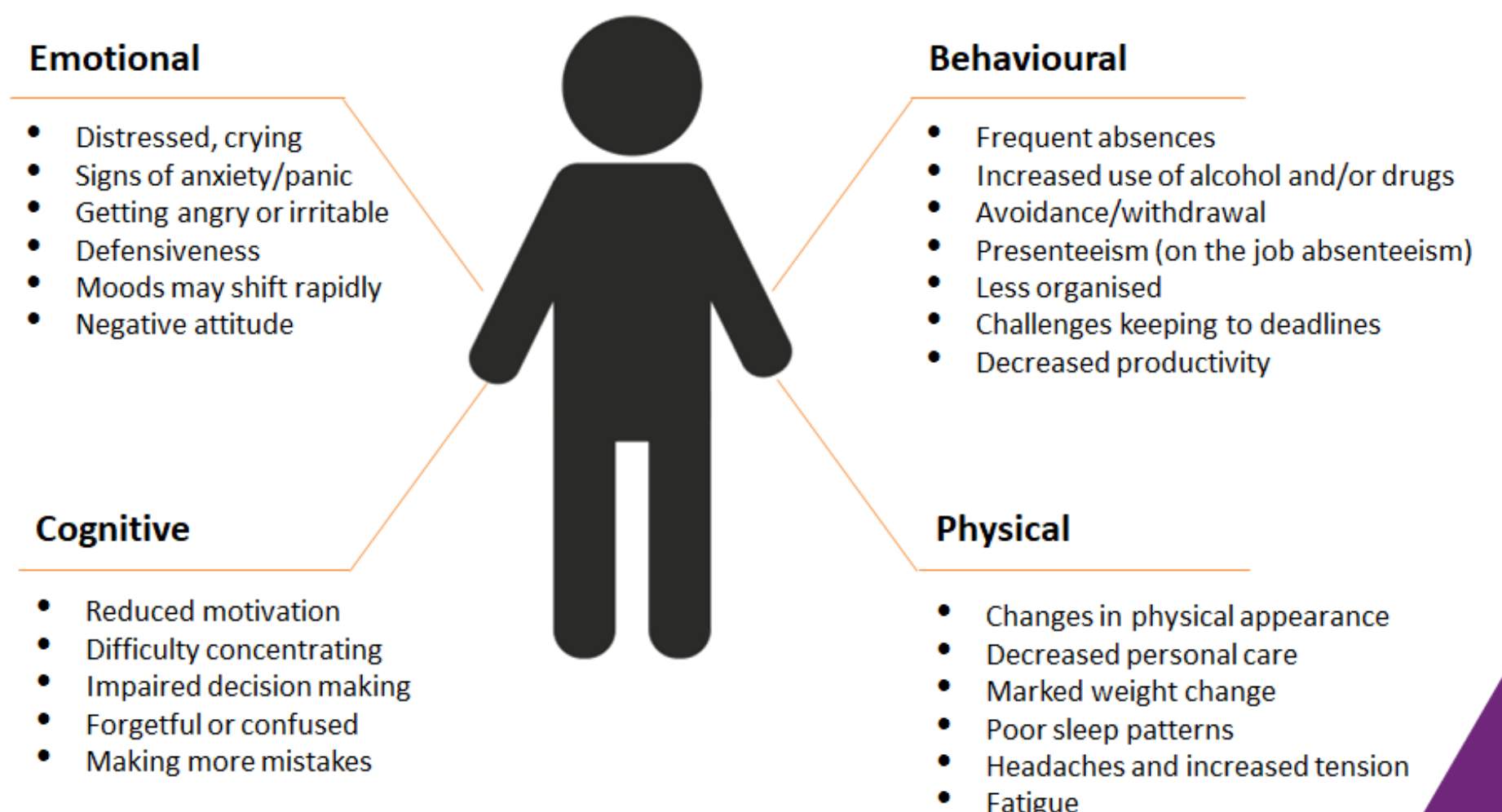


Building change readiness in yourself and others

Manage negative stress

Negative stress or distress not only has an impact on how you feel but also on how you function. When you are not managing your stress and your stress begins to manage you this can have a detrimental impact on your capacity to deal with change in an adaptive and resilient manner. The key is to know your personal warning signs of negative stress and then ensure you do and practice the things that can help reduce your stress. As a leader it is important to watch out for and recognise these changes in others and provide appropriate support.

The warning signs for negative stress (or distress) are different for everyone, but here are some common ones:

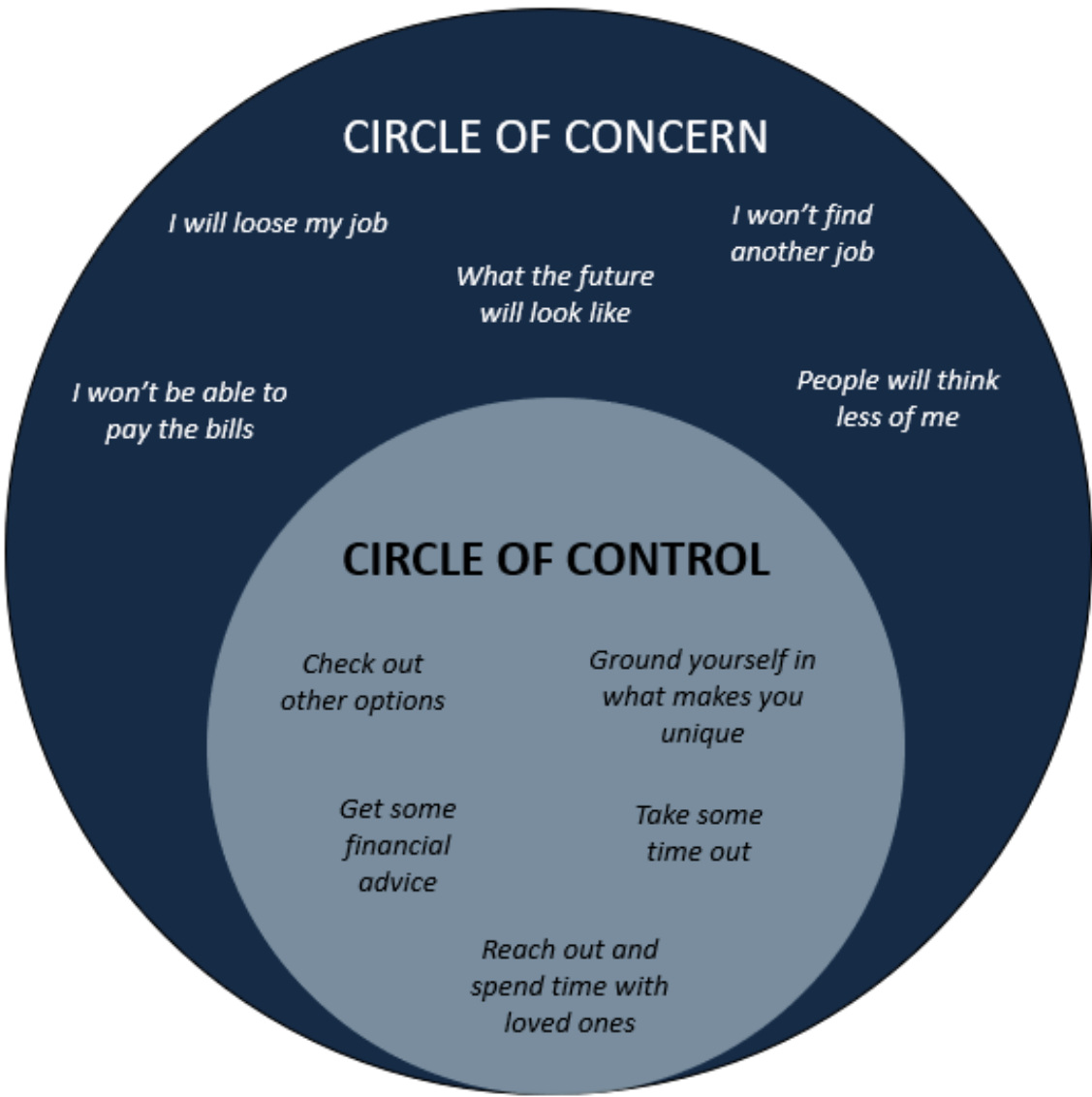




Focus on what's in your control

We all have a circle of concern (things that we are concerned about) and a circle of control (things we can control). When there is little overlap between our circle of control and our circle of concern, we can find ourselves stressing about things we can do nothing about. This can be a major source of stress and poor coping.

As a leader try to help those you lead identify the things that are sitting in their Circle of Concern – and then contrast this with the elements that could be in their Circle of Control. The key is to help people let go of the things they can’t control, refocusing instead on things that they can control and influence.



Keeping perspective

How you think about change will have a significant impact on how you manage and cope with change. If you interpret change as a threat, then you will respond accordingly. Utilising the model below can be a powerful way to enhance a person’s ability to effectively manage and cope more constructively with challenging and disruptive events in their life.

- 1. First identify in column **A** the event that is making them feel worried or stressed.
- 2. Next, in column **C** note down how they are feeling and reacting (the emotions and behaviours).
- 3. Now in considering what is written in column **A** and column **C**, write down in column **B** what they must be thinking or saying to themselves that makes sense of how they are both feeling and reacting.
- 4. Now ask them the following questions – *Is this stuff true to the best of your knowledge? Are you jumping to conclusions? Does it help you to think this way?*
- 5. Now in column **D** note down some new thoughts or ways of thinking that dispute and challenge their previous thoughts – thoughts that can lead to a new and more effective approach

Activating Event or Situation	Stress Inducing Thoughts (SITs) or Beliefs	Consequences	Stress Alleviating Thoughts (SATs) (disputing the Beliefs B)	Effective new Approach to deal with Activating Event
A	B	C	D	E
Restructure/ redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I might lose my jobI might have to work with someone I dislikeMy role may changeI've caused this	<ul style="list-style-type: none">WorriedAnxiousFrustrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How do I know I will lose my job?It could be refreshingSomethings might be better	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify what new skills I'll needI will put my questions on lineI'll get job readyI can access EAP

Build your Positivity bank

- Positive emotions lead to optimal personal functioning. They allow you to be more flexible, access more social resources, maximise your thinking and lead to a broader behavioural repertoire and higher performance.
- Positive emotions can also undo the effects of negative emotions.
- Boosting your positivity levels while experiencing change allows not only you but those you lead to not only feel better, but it helps to more readily engage a range of personal coping and adaptive resources.
- It is important that during a change process that you continue to look for ways and to influence and boost the positive emotions of those you lead.
- Boost you own and other’s *positivity bank* by harnessing top character strengths. Complete the free VIA Character Strengths Assessment online at www.viacharacter.org to get your own ranked list of strengths.





Connect with others

Change can be a difficult and upsetting experience, so an important part of connecting with others is to receive emotional support and comfort. Connecting with others can be a good way to talk about your experience of change, download and discuss your thoughts and concerns, feel listened to, receive understanding and empathy, and share thoughts and perhaps get another perspective. As a leader encourage and support the opportunities for your people to connect inside and outside of work. However, be aware of the importance of not getting caught up in those connections and conversation that have become constantly negative, pessimistic and disempowering.



Connect with yourself

Change can be one of those crossroads point in our lives – a time when we have the opportunity to step away from our contented status quo and reflect on just what it is we are doing and where we are (or want to be) going. We all have talents, skills, capabilities and characteristics that make us unique, special and define who we are. It is important in a time of uncertainty (but also opportunity) that change can bring that we take the time to reflect on what makes us unique, what our particular strengths and talents are, what we see us our passion and purpose and, importantly, are we happy, engaged and heading in the right direction. Remind your people that change can be a great way to take a personal stocktake and perhaps even to try something new or different.



Look after yourself

Change can create a lot of wear and tear on us emotionally, physically and psychologically – especially as a leader. It is therefore important that we keep ourselves *fit for change* and in constant adapting mode. This takes energy. We all have a bucket of limited coping resources – and many things including change take out of our bucket. Yet only the things that energise us put back in. The key is to find the things that put back into your bucket and make time for them so that your bucket - and your coping resources – never run dry.

