

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

HOW MANY HATS ARE YOU WEARING?

Feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what hat to wear and when to wear it, is all too common today. It's especially true right now! Yes, the daily rat race has slowed down, extracurriculars have come to a halt, and we are no longer the family taxi. BUT it seems busier than ever trying to keep up with the new demands at home: a sudden shift into working remotely, homeschooling, and becoming the master of entertainment when it seems little can be found. Comfortable routines have become chaos and you feel like your life has too!

You Are Not Alone!

We are all presented with new challenges, new circumstances, and new uncertainties. What binds us together is our human ability to adapt and our flexibility to find new ways of doing things. Too often, we expect that everything should just fall into place immediately or believe that we aren't living up to expectations at home, in the workplace, in our families. It's a good time to remind ourselves that, in order to adapt to the changes that we are faced with, we must lead ourselves through a process of transition.



Creating Positive Change



Allow yourself time to adjust

In fearing change, we often try to cling to what feels familiar. Resistance, however, does little to help us cope. Adjusting to change can be uncomfortable. It takes trial and error to figure out new ways to make a change in lifestyle manageable. So where do we start?

- Accept the things you cannot change. Allow yourself to grieve what has been lost, but then try to focus on what's needed in the present rather than dwelling on the past.
- Keep an open mind. While it feels uncomfortable, seeing change through a new lens can allow your imagination to run free and creativity to flow. It can bring about new experiences that may enhance the lifestyle you've always known.
- Communicate. It's ok to be uneasy and unsure in the face of transition. If you're feeling overwhelmed, talk to others about what you need. Seek the guidance and support of a good friend, family member, or counsellor when life feels out of control. Communicating is a great coping strategy for releasing negative thoughts and moving into a more positive mindset.

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Find a routine that works

There is power in knowing what to expect in the unexpected. Getting organized in times of chaos creates structure and brings comfort. One of the best ways to deal with anxiety around the unknown is to create a plan! A plan decreases the uncertainty that can put a halt to positive change. Even when things feel unpredictable, set up a routine that works. Implement a routine that isn't too rigid and allows for flexibility as you figure out your needs. Consider the following scenario:

You didn't anticipate that the dog would be barking at the mailperson on your daily 11 am Zoom meeting, or that your teenager would be a constant distraction as she complains there is nothing to eat in the house. You may need to consider that the 9-5 day will no longer work for you. Be flexible enough to allow for a change in your schedule. Consider starting earlier in the day to avoid the distractions, and resuming work later in the evening, or swap in a Saturday for a workday here or there.

Find ways to embrace what has been put in front of you. For example, one of the benefits of working from home IS the flexibility it offers – so use it.

Less is sometimes more

You're not expected to handle it all. If you're struggling, you may simply be wearing too many hats and trying to meet unrealistic expectations. Between work, home, community, kids, and beyond, the more hats you wear, the more there is to juggle when change is at your door. Assuming multiple roles is always hard. In times of uncertainty, it gets harder. If you are feeling overwhelmed, maybe it's time to take an inventory of the many hats you are trying to wear.

- Can you reduce the balancing act you are carrying on your head? Think about delegating to your spouse, partner, kids, friends, or other supports. Or simply letting some duties go.
- Consider wearing one hat at a time. Hats are a lovely fashion statement but always worn one at a time. Let one hat stand out in the crowd and let it shine. You may need to change it frequently, but you will be more effective in the role you assume at the time.
- Don't leave your "personal" hat behind. Remember to care for yourself. You can serve others better when you make time to serve yourself as well.

Be gentle with yourself and with others. Never has empathy been more important.

Sources: <https://halton.cmha.ca/the-more-things-change/>
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