Learning & Thriving in Periods of Organizational Change

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September 8, 2011
You will learn:

• How people process change
• Limiting and empowering beliefs about organizational change
• How you can build resiliency in order to thrive during transitions
• When to seek professional help for support and guidance
Examples of Organizational Change

- Workforce reduction
- Staff & job reorganization
- Change in work priorities
- Change in reporting structure
- Hiring Freeze
How People Process Change

- As humans evolved, we developed a survival mechanism that sensitizes us to threat (“Fight or Flight”).
  - The Amygdala is the brain’s hardware that processes emotion and anxiety.
  - The Amygdala is the brain’s “smoke detector” to keep us safe.
This results in “negativity bias” that alerts us to bad news and overlook the good news.

- Bad news = Velcro vs. Good news = Teflon
- The right amount of alertness keeps us on our toes …
- …but when anxiety becomes high it can interfere with our ability to focus and work effectively.
Limiting & Empowering Beliefs

Limiting
- There is nothing I can do
- Life is out of control
- Change is disruptive; as soon as I get used to a routine, another change happens
- I have no time for myself
- I won’t have time for anything but work
- There’s nothing funny about this!

Empowering
- Attitude is a choice
- I will manage what I can control
- Change is a constant offering challenges and opportunities
- I will keep myself healthy
- I will maintain balance and seek support
- I will maintain my sense of humor
Qualities of Resilient People

- Confident & Self-assured
- Have good personal boundaries
- Attend to their health and manage their stress
- Are flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances
- Are oriented to solving problems
- Have solid relationships and support
- View mistakes and failures as learning opportunities
- Are able to anticipate problems or changes and prepare for them
- Hold a generally positive outlook
- Have a good sense of humor and are able to laugh at themselves and the situation
The Bridge to Resiliency

Autonomic Nervous System is composed of:

- Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)
- Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS)

Remember that internal smoke detector?

- “Fight or Flight”
- Negativity Bias
The Amygdala alerts the SNS to prepare for action.

Too much SNS activity in the absence of opportunities for rest and relaxation (R& R) activates our smoke detector making us more sensitive to threats (i.e., failure, rejection, etc.).

…resulting in increased worrying and chronic stress.

When the SNS is in overdrive, trying to go to sleep can be like having your foot on the gas and brake pedal at the same time.
Chronic SNS stimulation disturbs:

- Gastrointestinal System
- Immune System
- Cardiovascular System
- Endocrine System

When these systems are impacted, we become more sensitive to threat and anxiety cascades through the body.

Disturbance of the physiological systems may result in a state of anxiety experienced as panic “for no reason.”
Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS)

- This part of the nervous system kicks in to calm down actions in the body.

- We can benefit from initiating conscious, purposeful forms of relaxation to calm down, such as breathing slowly and deeply.

- Incorporating opportunities for relaxation and rest into your schedule will prevent the SNS from going into overdrive.
Relaxation Techniques

- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Relaxation
- Meditation
- Visualization
- Mindfulness with Shifting Awareness
- Soothing music
- Taking a bath
- Taking regular breaks
- Make time for family and friends
Practice Exercise...

- **Deep Breathing**
- 5 cycles of:
  - Counting to 3 while inhaling
  - Counting to 3 while exhaling
- 5 cycles of:
  - Counting to 3 while inhaling
  - Counting to 4 while exhaling
- 5 cycles of:
  - Counting to 3 while inhaling
  - Counting to 5 while exhaling
Mindful Attention

- Get in a comfortable position sitting upright with feel flat on the floor
- Allow your eyes to close gently
- Slowly bring your attention to the gentle rising and falling of your breath
- Regulate your breathing by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth
- Bring an attitude of acceptance to whatever you are experiencing
- There’s nothing to be fixed, no particular state to be achieved
...Practice Exercise...

- Your mind may wander to thoughts, worries, bodily sensations or daydreams
- This is not a problem
- When you notice that your mind is wandering, gently escort your attention back to your breath; breathing in and breathing out
- See the wandering of your mind as an opportunity to bring patience and generosity to your experience
- Make space for whatever comes up without resistance and without judgment including any discomfort that arises
...Practice Exercise

- The purpose is not to feel better, but to get better at feeling all that arises, accepting whatever comes up
- If you notice yourself worrying, gently bring your attention back to your breathing
- You are more than the thoughts and feelings that arise
- You deserve to be at your very best for yourself, your family, your profession and your community
- Now bring your attention back to your breathing one final time
- Slowly open your eyes
Exercise boosts brain power!

- Exercise helps to regulate the chemicals in the brain associated with mental health (Serotonin, Norepinephrine and Dopamine).
- Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and uses up adrenaline that stress creates.
- Research is increasingly linking exercise to improvements in memory, reasoning, attention, problem solving and abstract thinking.
Nutrition & Diet

- Our food contains the building blocks of the brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that regulate mood.
- Dark green leafy vegetables help the brain build new brain cells.
- Eating regular meals provide nutrients are available to you consistently.
- Getting enough sleep allows your body to use the nutrients to build and repair brain cells.
- Limiting Caffeine, Alcohol, Tobacco & Sugar (CATS) helps you control the things that make your body anxious.
- Remember - Food feeds your brain!
When to Seek Professional Help

- Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge more days than not
- Not being able to stop or control worrying
- Inconsistent work performance
- Prolonged irritability
- Angry outbursts
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Prolonged sadness or suicidal thoughts
Change will happen and it can be stressful

It’s how we respond to change that’s important

Incorporating rest & relaxation into your schedule is a commitment to your health and work/life balance

Exercise optimizes mental health & cognitive functioning

Proper nutrition supports brain health
Recommended Reading

- The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure and Bounce Back from Setbacks, Al Siebert, Practical Psychology Press, 2005
- Mental Resilience: The Power of Clarity: How to Develop the Focus of the Warrior and Peace of a Monk, Kamal Sarma, New World Library, 2008
Additional Health Resources for Cisco Employees & Families

- **OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions**
  [www.liveandworkwell.com](http://www.liveandworkwell.com)
  - Confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services for Cisco employees and their families

- **LifeConnections Fitness Center powered by Plus One**
  - Onsite fitness center located in SJC-Q. Offers multiple specialty areas for exercise, group fitness, stress management, one-on-one personalized instruction, teambuilding, and social networking.
Additional Health Resources for Cisco Employees & Families

- **LifeConnections Health Center**
  www.ciscolifeconnections.com
  - Onsite medical facility for Cisco employees and their families

- **Alere, formerly Matria Healthcare**
  www.alerehealthconnections.com
  - Online health information, condition management and health coaching services

- **HealthConnections**
  www.in.cisco.com/go/health
  - Cisco’s health-enhancement program, with information and resources to take charge of your health in the areas of nutrition, fitness, sleep, life balance, preventive care, and condition management