

Coping *with* Change *workbook*

**Facilitator Reproducible
Guided Self-Exploration
Activities**

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Facilitator Reproducible Guided Self-Exploration Activities

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Using This Book

In today's society, many people find themselves living through multiple extensive and often debilitating changes in their lives. Your clients are among the people affected by these changes. Change manifests itself in many facets of a person's life.

- **Workplace** – Because the work world is changing, people find themselves experiencing a variety of changes: corporations outsourcing jobs to other parts of the world or they are being eliminated to save corporations money; robots are replacing human employees; retirement savings are diminishing or disappearing due to the downturns in the economy; and competition has increased for newly created jobs.
- **Health** – As society changes and people finding themselves trying to keep up, they experience more stress and anxiety. This increase in anxiety and stress then leads to more physical illnesses, psychological problems, changes in eating habits, increased injuries, and sleeping issues.
- **Home & Family** – Ways people experience a sense of home and family have changed dramatically in recent years. Some of these changes include fragmentation of families through divorce and separation or extended absences of one or both parents who must fulfill military responsibilities; single-parent households or decisions to send children to grandparents or other relatives; changing traditions in family celebrations or the absence of family traditions; and time constraints preventing meaningful family interactions.
- **Personal** – Changes in people's personal and social lives may be some of the biggest changes people experience. Some of these changes include financial struggles due to overspending and major debt, job loss, cultural differences, changes in residence, and the struggle to keep up with changes in technology.

Because of constant changes in daily life, people face perpetually increasing levels of stress. Although change has always been a part of the lives of human beings, the present rate of changes is increasing exponentially. It is the *speed* of change that increases the stress in peoples' lives. Change is not going to stop, and therefore, people must develop skills to manage stress carefully. Coping with change is rapidly becoming a critical life skill that can be the difference between living a life of success or one of disappointment.

Everyone adapts to change differently. The important tactic for each individual is to master the basic skills that are critical to move through change easily and effectively.

This book provides assessments and self-guided activities to help people learn effective skills for coping with all forms of change. A variety of self-exploration activities are provided for you to determine which best suit the unique needs of your participants.

Information about Change

Moving through change can be difficult. The path through change is probably not going to be predictable or smooth for most people. Usually people navigate change and transition by moving through a series of five stages:

STAGE 1: SHOCK – People in this stage attempt to deny the news about a current or future change. They might say things like “*No, not me!*” or “*It can't be true!*” This stage is full of anxiety and runs its course in a relatively short time. It is considered a state of denial.

STAGE 2: ANGER – In this stage people begin to get angry. Initially they feel anger toward the people they feel are responsible for their change and blame others. After they have expressed their anger at outside sources, they may feel angry at themselves. Their anger is turned inward and becomes self-critical. They may say things like “*If only I . . .*” or “*If I would have . . .*”

STAGE 3: BARGAINING – People in this stage become calculating and reflective. Some attempt to make a deal with their higher power or the people involved in the change process. As their attempts to compromise fail, they usually give up and move to the next stage. They ask such questions as “*What can I do now?*” or “*Please give me another chance.*” They try to identify their options and wish that things could be different.

STAGE 4: DEPRESSION – People in this stage begin to feel sad and/or depressed and think there are limited or no options. They often become silent and withdrawn. They begin to experience increasing weakness, discomfort and personal deterioration. They may feel a sense of meaninglessness, frustration, self-doubt, and lethargy, and they may want to be left alone. They may feel guilty and unworthy and feel as if nobody cares what happens to them.

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE – People in this stage are at the end of their struggle. They accept that change happens to everyone, that changes can be overcome, and that a change may even be an opportunity. They focus on the realities of the situation and begin to let go of their negative feelings. They notice that the pain begins to lessen and the struggle seems less difficult. They recognize that it is time to move on with their lives. They accept their *new normal*.

How Change Affects People

For the Facilitator and the Participant

Facts about change:

1. Change is a part of life. It is important to be able to cope with and manage change effectively.
2. All people go through a cycle of thoughts and emotions of some degree when they encounter change in their life. They need to keep in mind that these thoughts and emotions will not last. It is necessary to go through the stages in order to cope effectively with the change. The assessments, activities and exercises contained in this workbook will help people to move through the stages to acceptance more quickly.
3. Change can be managed. By completing the activities and exercises included in this workbook, participants will be able to not only cope with change, but to use change as opportunities for welcome and exciting transformations.
4. It is important for people to take control over changes in their life by taking responsibility for how they respond to the changes. They learn that they have the power to control what they think, feel and do. They recognize that they can care for themselves and relate effectively with others close to them.

Responding to Change:

Change produces unique signals that people can learn to read so they can respond to them sooner. The sooner they are able to take action to cope with their change and ultimate transition, the more likely they are to be effective in the change management process. When they find themselves going through a change, they will be alert to the signals produced by body, mind and emotion.

Emotions – People need to be aware when they are experiencing changes in their moods and feelings. Some of these changes might include feelings of anger, increased anxiety, moodiness, frustration, depression and withdrawal. Their behaviors may also include lashing out at others.

Mind – People need to be aware when they begin to have excessive negative thoughts that cause confusion, distraction, difficulty in concentrating at home and at work, a decrease in productivity, an increase in forgetfulness, and difficulty “turning their mind off” at night to sleep.

Body – People need to be aware of their body’s negative reactions to the change process including such symptoms as an increase in headaches, colds, and flu symptoms, digestion problems, minor aches and pains, major illnesses, feelings of exhaustions, and muscle aches and pains.

Format of Book

The *Coping with Change Workbook* contains assessments and guided self-exploration activities that can be used with a variety of populations to help participants cope more effectively with the various forms of anxiety. Each chapter of this workbook begins with an annotated Table of Contents with notes and examples for the facilitator. Each chapter contains two primary elements: 1) A set of assessments to help participants gather information about themselves in a focused situation, and 2) a set of guided self-exploration activities to help participants process information and learn more effective ways of behaving to cope with anxiety in their lives.

Assessments

Each chapter begins with an assessment that provides participants with valuable information about themselves. These assessments can enhance recognition of effective and ineffective patterns of behavior, identify life skills which are productive and unproductive, and enrich participants' understanding of how they interact with the world. Assessments provide a path to self-discovery through the participants' exploration of their own unique traits and behaviors. The purpose of these assessments is not to "pigeon-hole" people, but to allow them to explore various elements that are critical for coping with anxiety. This book contains *self-assessments* and not *tests*. Traditional tests measure knowledge or right or wrong responses. For the assessments provided in this book, remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask only for opinions or attitudes about topics related to a variety of coping skills and abilities.

The assessments in this book are based on self-reported data. In other words, the accuracy and usefulness of the information is dependent on the information that participants honestly provide about themselves. All of the assessments in this workbook are designed to be administered, scored, and interpreted by the participants as a starting point for them to begin to learn more about themselves and their coping skills. Remind participants that the assessments are exploratory exercises and not a final determination of abilities. Lastly, the assessments are not a substitute for professional assistance. If you feel any of your participants need more assistance than you can provide, please refer them to an appropriate professional.

As your participants begin the assessments in this workbook give these instructions:

- Take your time. Because there is no time limit for completing the assessments, work at your own pace. Allow yourself time to reflect on your results and how they compare to what you already know about yourself.
- Do not answer the assessments as you think others would like you to answer them or how you think others see you. Remember that these assessments are for you to reflect on your life and explore some of the barriers that are keeping you from living a calmer, more rational and less anxious life.

Format of Book *(Continued)*

- Assessments are powerful tools if you are honest with yourself. Take your time and be truthful in your responses so that your results are an honest reflection of you. Your level of commitment in completing the assessments honestly will determine how much you learn about yourself.
- Before completing each assessment, be sure to read the instructions. The assessments have similar formats, but they have different scales, responses, scoring instructions and methods for interpretation.
- Finally, remember that learning about yourself should be a positive and motivating experience. Don't stress about taking the assessments or finding out about your results. Just respond honestly and learn as much about yourself as you can.

Guided Self-Exploration Activities

Guided self-exploration activities are any exercises that assist participants in self-reflection and enhance self-knowledge, identify potential ineffective behaviors, and teach more effective ways of coping. Guided self-exploration is designed to help participants make a series of discoveries that lead to increased social and emotional competencies, as well as to serve as an energizing way to help participants grow personally and professionally. They are brief, easy-to-use self-reflection tools designed to promote insight and self-growth. Many different types of guided self-exploration activities are provided for you to pick and chose the activities most needed by your participants and/ or will be most appealing to them. The unique features of self-guided exploration activities make them usable and appropriate for a variety of individual sessions and group sessions.

Features of Guided Self-Exploration Activities

- **Quick, easy and rewarding to use** – These guided self-exploration activities are designed to be an efficient, appealing method for motivating participants to explore information about themselves - including their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors - in a relatively short period of time.
- **Reproducible** – Because the guided self-exploration activities can be reproduced by the facilitator, no more than the one book needs to be purchased. You may photocopy as many items as you wish for your participants. If you want to add or delete words on a page, make one photocopy, delete and/ or write your own words, and then make photocopies from your personalized master.
- **Participative** – Guided self-exploration activities help people to focus their attention quickly, aid them in the self-reflection process, and define new and more effective ways of coping.

Format of Book *(Continued)*

- **Motivating to complete** – Guided self-exploration activities are designed to be an energizing way for participants to engage in self-reflection and learn about themselves. Various activities are included to enhance the learning process related to developing important social and emotional competency skills.
- **Low risk** – Guided self-exploration activities are designed to be less risky than formal assessments and structured exercises. They are user-friendly, and participants will generally feel rewarded and motivated after completing these activities.
- **Adaptable to a variety of populations** – The guided self-exploration activities can be used with many different populations, and they can be tailored to meet the needs of the specific population with whom you work.
- **Focused** – Each guided self-exploration activity is designed to focus on a single coping issue, thus deepening the experience for participants.
- **Flexible** – The guided self-exploration activities are flexible and can be used independently, or to supplement other types of interventions.

Chapter Elements

The *Coping with Change Workbook* is designed to be used either independently or as part of an integrated curriculum. You may administer any of the assessments and the guided self-exploration activities to an individual or a group with whom you are working, or you may administer any of the activities over one or more days. Feel free to pick and choose those assessments and activities that best fit the outcomes you desire.

The first page of each chapter begins with an annotated Table of Contents with notes and examples for the facilitator.

Assessments – Assessments with scoring directions and interpretation materials begin each chapter. The authors recommend that you begin presenting each topic by asking participants to complete the assessment. Facilitators can choose one or more, or all of the activities relevant to their participants' specific needs and concerns.

Guided Self-Exploration Activities – Practical questions and activities to prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding are included after each of the assessments. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors and coping skills. The activities in this workbook are tied to the assessments so that you can identify and select activities quickly and easily.

The activities are divided into four chapters to help you identify and select assessments easily and quickly:

Chapter 1: Types of Change – This chapter helps participants identify and explore the changes that are currently occurring in their lives, as well as identify and explore the changes they anticipate in the future.

Chapter 2: Change Management – This chapter helps participants identify the life skills they possess in managing the changes in their lives.

Chapter 3: Ways to Cope with Change – This chapter helps participants to explore how well they are coping with change in their lives, and to learn some techniques for enhancing their ability to cope with change.

Chapter 4: My Attitude About Change – This chapter helps participants explore their attitudes related to future change in their lives.

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Table of Contents

Types of Change Scale

Types of Change Introduction	15
Scale: Types of Change	16–17
Scoring Directions	18
Profile Interpretation	18
Stages of Change	19
“...Be Afraid of Standing Still”	20
What am I Feeling?	21
The “What If” Game	22
Monitor Your Self-Thoughts	23
Joy	24
Accepting Change and Acknowledging Feelings	25
Let Go of Your Feelings in a Healthy Way	26
Share Your Feelings	27
Getting Stuck in Your Feelings	28
Viewing the Future	29
Moving from the Past	30
Saying Good-bye	31
Blaming	32

Change Management Scale

Change Management Introduction	35
Scale: Change Management	36–37
Scoring Directions	38
Profile Interpretation	38
Scale Descriptions	39
What is Your Coping Style?	40
Change Process	41
Change Poetry	42
What’s the Worst that Could Happen?	43
Positive Self-Talk	44
Change Debate	45
Newspaper Article	46
My Change Management Skills	47
My CHANGE Cartoon Strip	48
Why?	49–50
Signature Strengths	51
Doodling	52

Table of Contents *(continued)*

Ways to Cope with Change Scale

Ways to Cope with Change Introduction	55
Scale: Ways to Cope with Change	56–57
Scoring Directions	58
Profile Interpretation	58
Slow Down!	59
Your Thoughts	60
Something New	61
I Can Cope By	62
Past Changes	63
Who Can Support You During Times of Change?	64
Take Time for Fun During Times of Change	65
Control or No Control	66
My Routines	67
Anything Goes!	68
Which of These Describe You Right Now?	69
Time to Energize	70
Healthy Living	71
Hope	72

My Attitude About Change Scale

My Attitude About Change Introduction	75
Scale: My Attitude About Change	76
Scoring Directions	77
Profile Interpretation	77
Learn from Your Mistakes	78
Choosing Action	79
Coping Strategies	80
Caricatures	81
My Future Container	82
My Positive Changes	83
What Motivates You?	84
List-Making	85
My Role Model	86
Renewed Purpose and Meaning	87
Reframing Negative Beliefs 9	88
And I Grew	89
How Proactive are You?	90
My New Attitude Shining Through	91
My Goals	92

Stages of Change

When you go through a change, you experience a variety of feelings as you pass through five basic life stages:

STAGE 1 – SHOCK: In this stage you may be confused about the changes that are occurring in your life. You may be denying the fact that things are really changing. You may be saying to yourself such things as *“How can this happen to me?”* You are probably shocked by the realization that things will be different. You are probably feeling inadequate, questioning your self-worth, and maybe even feeling guilty.

STAGE 2 – ANGER: In this stage you may be angry at people causing the change in your life, and you may be blaming them. After you have expressed your anger at all possible outside sources, you may feel angry at yourself. Your anger is turned inward. Second guessing then begins to become self-criticism. You may be saying to yourself such things as *“If I had only ...”*

STAGE 3 – BARGAINING: In this stage you are calculating and reflective. You attempt to influence outside sources by bargaining for the change not to occur. As your attempts to compromise fail, you give up. You ask such questions as *“What can I do now?”* You try to identify your options. You are probably wishing that things could be different. Your mental focus is on the future and on the possibilities that are available. You feel like you have done everything that you could do. You feel that when you get through this ordeal, you will be a better person for it.

STAGE 4 – DEPRESSION: In this stage you feel depressed. Because you have focused so much on your situation, you have become silent and withdrawn. You may feel a sense of meaninglessness. You are probably frustrated and doubting yourself. You feel lethargic and simply want to be left alone. You may be depressed by your view of what has happened. You are probably saying to yourself, *“There is no way I can bounce back from this.”* You may even feel as if nobody cares what happens to you.

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE – In this stage you realize that what has happened is in the past. You accept the fact that you can no longer go back to the way things were and that it is time to move forward with your life. You are focusing on the realities of your situation and experience more energy as you begin your new life. You have probably analyzed your possibilities and are generating a new “game” plan. You have adjusted and are excited about getting on with your life.

What change are you currently going through? _____

What stage have you already experienced? _____

What stage are you in now? _____