

Exercise 14.9: Examining the nature of the change and your use of support

Copy the table below into your notebook and use it to consider how the predictability of the change, whether you agreed to it, and the amount of control you had over it contributed to the difficulties you have faced. In the second column, describe the aspect of the change highlighted in the first column, and in the third column note how this influenced your response, e.g. whether it made it easier or more difficult to adjust.

Agnes' story is given first as an example, followed by a blank table for you to fill in.

	Aspect of the change	Impact
How <i>predictable</i> was the change?	Very unexpected. Had never considered retiring early. Medical retirement was a complete shock.	Made it much more difficult to adjust.
Did you <i>agree</i> to the change?	Did not agree to retirement until the very end.	Made it more difficult. Felt I had failed.
Did you have <i>control</i> over the change?	I had no control over the bullying at work that forced my retirement.	Made it more difficult. I felt angry and ashamed.
Did the change result from another <i>person's</i> act/decision?	My new boss's decision after he bullied me.	Made it more difficult. I blamed him for ruining a job I loved and forcing me into this situation.
How <i>quickly</i> did the change happen?	It dragged on over two years before I was finally retired.	I was worn down and had lost all confidence by the time I was retired.

<p>What <i>support</i> was available to help you manage the change?</p>	<p>No support for my boss. Support from other staff and my husband.</p>	<p>Other people's support helped a lot and helped me to realize it was not all my fault.</p>
<p>What support did you <i>use</i> to manage the change?</p>	<p>I was very reluctant to talk to anyone other than my husband at first. Later I talked more to former colleagues and friends.</p>	<p>I felt isolated and worthless at first. Talking to people boosted my mood and gave me confidence to try new things in my retirement.</p>

	Aspect of the change	Impact
<p>How <i>predictable</i> was the change?</p>		
<p>Did you <i>agree</i> to the change?</p>		
<p>Did you have <i>control</i> over the change?</p>		
<p>Did the change result from <i>another person's</i> act/decision?</p>		
<p>How <i>quickly</i> did the change happen?</p>		

What <i>support</i> was available to help you manage the change?		
What support did you <i>use</i> to manage the change?		

Again, this exercise will be even more useful if you involve someone else. Sometimes we miss signs of difficulty or change in our own lives, especially when they are not what we want to see. Other people, one step removed, might be better placed to read these signs. Invite someone from your IPT team to help you to specifically consider the time around the change. Not only can this help you to understand the change that has happened, it might also suggest ways to avoid similar difficulties in the future, e.g. by reading signals more clearly or asking for help sooner.