

# Momentum

*Responding to life's challenges*



## Yale

Counseling & Support Services  
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## When change challenges you

We all experience change every day. Unfortunately, we experience similar levels of stress whether a change is considered bad (the ending of a relationship) or good (a job promotion). If you aren't able to minimize stress brought on by major changes, you can be at risk for mental and physical health problems.

Change can confront you at any time—from unexpected reorganizations at work, to unsettling world news, to personally life-altering events like the loss of a loved one. Although you can always expect to see changes in your life, often you don't get much advance warning.

Dealing with life's changes can be easier if you can manage to remain resilient.

### Take care of you!

- ☑ Change can create stress and related physical effects such as headaches, trouble sleeping and depression. However, if you stay healthy, you'll be better equipped to manage.
- ☑ Be sure to eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep. When at rest, your brain helps you process new experiences and challenges.
- ☑ Since change and stress go hand in hand, practice relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, nature walking or other healthy stress-reducing tactics.

- Change causes stress because it threatens your sense of control. Try not to see yourself as a victim. Instead, remind yourself that you can adapt and move forward.
- Planning ways to handle change will lessen its impact on you. Focusing on specific aspects of a change that are in your control makes the change more manageable.
- Don't keep feelings of stress bottled up. Talking about your worries with someone you trust will help.

When you're able to bounce back from challenges, you're being resilient. Although it's not always easy to process the "curves" that life can throw, you can learn how to strengthen your resilience.



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# Overcoming a loss

Suffering a major loss can upend your life. When a loved one has passed away or we've lost something important in our life, accepting and coping with the loss is one of the hardest journeys we can take.

- Always remember that there is no right or wrong way to deal with major losses. While shock, disbelief, anger and sadness are common feelings associated with the grief process, no two people work through grief in the same way.
- There is no set schedule for getting past grief. Recovery can take weeks, months, or even years.
- It's quite normal during the grief process to experience rapid and intense mood changes, along with unexpected spells of crying.
- Openly expressing your feelings about a person you've lost and the impact of the loss helps you to process your feelings and heal.
- If you are struggling to deal with grief, you may want to talk to a professional for guidance, perspective and coping strategies.

## Adjusting to the unexpected



### Adopt a positive approach

You can learn to appreciate change. Adopting a positive outlook about life's changes will make them that much easier to handle when they occur. Instead of thinking about change in a negative way, why not look at change as a way of keeping your life fresh and exciting?



### Manage the change

When a major change appears, spend time figuring out what to do next. List potential ways you could deal with the issue. Weigh your options and create a step-by-step plan for action. Also, be patient—remember that no matter how difficult or uncomfortable a change may be, you'll adapt before long.



### Rally with resilience

Build on your experience and try to recall how you've gotten through similar challenges in the past. Re-apply those strategies in the present. Plus, find some humor in a challenging situation whenever possible. A few good laughs with friends and family go a long way toward easing stress.



**Webinar**—Join us Wednesday, February 8 for *Creating the Life You Want*, a webinar to help you make positive life changes. Register [here](#).