



Helping People with Transitions

Description:

This tool provides guidelines for helping people deal with transition, along with a personal checklist.

How it can be used:

Transition is different from change; the difference is subtle but important. Change is something that happens to people, even if they don't agree with it. Transition, on the other hand, is internal: it's what happens in people's minds as they go through change, such as what might be required through accreditation. Use this tool to understand the stages of transition and help assess your own readiness.

This tool highlights three stages of transition that people go through when they experience change.

Stage 1 – The Ending

People enter this initial stage of transition when you first present them with change. This stage is often marked with resistance and emotional upheaval, because people are being forced to let go of something that they are comfortable with. People have to accept that something is ending before they can begin to accept a new idea.

It's important to accept people's resistance, and understand their emotions. Allow them time to accept the concept of accreditation and let go of the old way. Have conversations with people and make sure that you listen empathically and communicate openly about what is going to happen.

Emphasize how people will be able to apply their skills, experience and knowledge once you've implemented the accreditation process. Explain how you'll give them what they need (for instance, training and resources) to work effectively.

People often fear what they don't understand, so the more you can educate them about the accreditation process and communicate how their knowledge and skills are an essential part of getting there, the likelier they are to move on to the next stage.

Stage 2 – The Neutral Zone

In this stage, people affected by the change are often confused and impatient. Depending on their role in accreditation, they may also experience a higher workload. This phase bridges the old and the new; in some ways, people will still be attached to the old, while they are also trying to adapt to the new.

Despite these issues, this stage can also be one of great creativity, innovation, and renewal. This is a great time to encourage people to try new ways of thinking or working. Meet with your staff frequently so they may give feedback as to how they're adapting. Find quick wins; this will help to improve motivation as well as give staff a positive perception of the accreditation effort.

Stage 3 – The New Beginning

The last transition stage is a time of acceptance and energy. People have begun to embrace the changes they see as a result of accreditation. They're building the skills they need to work successfully and they're starting to see early wins from their efforts.

As people begin to adapt to accreditation, it is essential that you help them sustain it. Highlight stories of success and take time to celebrate. Reward your team for all their hard work. Be aware of complacency and ensure people and processes don't slip back.



Stage 1 – Letting Go	Yes/ No	What can I improve in this area?
Have I considered what changes beginning accreditation might mean to staff?		
Have I permitted staff to feel and express concern?		
Have I found ways to compensate staff if there are any losses?		
Am I providing accurate information, over and over again?		
Have I clearly defined what is changing and what isn't?		
Have I found ways to “mark the ending”?		
Am I finding ways to honour the past that brought us to this point?		
Is it clear how this stage is necessary so we can move forward?		
Stage 2 – The Neutral Zone	Y/N	What can I improve in this area?
Have I explained that this zone can become an advantage?		
Have I offered training so staff can work more productively?		
Have I created the roles and reporting relationships to get through the neutral zone?		
Have I set short-range and realistic goals and objectives?		
Do people feel valued and part of the organization?		
Have I set up mechanisms for feedback?		
Have I provided staff with resources to take stock of progress?		
Have I supported staff in trying new ways of doing things?		
Stage 3 – A New Beginning	Y/N	What can I improve in this area?
Am I clear in my expectation of others?		
Do I accept the fact that people may be ambivalent?		
Have I communicated effectively about the outcome of accreditation?		
Have I helped people discover the part they will play in the process?		
Are policies, procedures, and priorities ready for the new beginning?		
Am I modelling the attitudes and behaviour I am asking of others?		
Have I found ways to reward people as part of the new beginning?		
Have I found some quick wins to reinforce our success?		
Have I found ways to celebrate the new beginning?		