

The Manager's Quick Guide to Organizational Change

While organizational change such as layoffs, reorganization of divisions, manager change, and office moves can be challenging for all employees, the impact of change may be exacerbated for neurodivergent employees. Neurodivergent employees may be especially vulnerable to stress and anxiety when faced with the potential for change. Managers must pay particular attention and devise their own strategy to support their team members through change. Consider the practices below to minimize the negative impacts of change.



- Time is of the essence when it comes to communicating change and being available to field questions around announcements of change.
- Be compassionate and communicate and listen with empathy. Do not dismiss concerns or minimize a person's worry or anxiety. Consider their experience, not yours.
- Anticipate the announcement and have a team meeting scheduled in advance and in close proximity to the announcement if possible.
- Reiterate why the change is taking place. Be consistent in your messaging.



- Be specific about how the change may impact the individual and their team, when, and why.
- Be transparent and honest about what you know and what you do not.
- Communicate in multiple ways. Meet with the employee and/or team, but also follow up with an email with the specifics you discussed.
- Facilitate a team-level discussion to empower the team to contribute to the plan to address the changes impacting them when possible.



- Provide sufficient time for the person to process announcements of change.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to process the information and answer questions.
- Check in regularly with the team using simple signals such as thumbs up or down. Follow up privately with employees who are not doing well.
- Be attentive to the chatter in the team and surrounding your team. Address misinformation and rumors right away. Set the tone to focus on facts, stay positive while recognizing the risk and its impact, and show empathy and compassion at all times.

The Manager Action Plan for Unanticipated Change

Managers are not always made aware of the change before it is announced. In such cases, managers should consider the following actions to reduce stress and uncertainty:



- 1 Communicate change with your team ASAP.
- 2 Maintain calm and dispel rumors and speculation.
- 3 Meet with the team.
 - Field questions and hear concerns.
 - Remain consistent and stick to the facts.
 - Highlight the next steps in the process for change.
 - Follow the meeting with an email acknowledging concerns with empathy and summarizing the change, its impact, and the next steps.
- 4 Allow the team to process the news and schedule a follow up team meeting.
- 5 Meet with team members one on one.
- 6 Share support options and resources, along with ways to provide anonymous feedback if available.
- 7 Check in with the team and individuals throughout the process.
- 8 Communicate in multiple modes.