

# Managing in Times of Uncertainty:

empowering people  
to make positive change



## A Program for Managers

Presenter:  
Hamish Blackman



**THE WELLNESS CORPORATION**  
Building a Better World - One Organization at a Time

# Keeping Uncertainty in Perspective



“So, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself...”

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933



# Objectives

- Understanding change as an ongoing process, and identifying human reactions to change.
- Examining organizational and management responsibilities during periods of change.
- Managing and supporting people during change.
- Managing ourselves during times of uncertainty



What are the changes you  
are dealing with?



# What's different now?

- **Behavior.** What are people doing or saying that is different now?
- **Attitude.** What different attitudes are appearing?
- **Beliefs.** Given these behaviors and attitudes, what does this say about what people believe?
- **Performance.** How is all this affecting performance or the functioning of your work group?



# Types of Changes



- Evolutionary Change
- Shock Change
- Strategic Change



# How Do We Respond to Change and Uncertainty?

We Ask Questions:

- What's happening?
- Why am I reacting like this?
- What can I do about it?



# Normal Reactions to Significant Changes

- Shock, numbness, and withdrawal
- Fear, insecurity, and uncertainty
- Frustration, resentment, and anger
- Sadness, depression, and guilt
- Unfairness, betrayal, and distrust
- Relief, and optimism



# What's Happening - Now (N)?

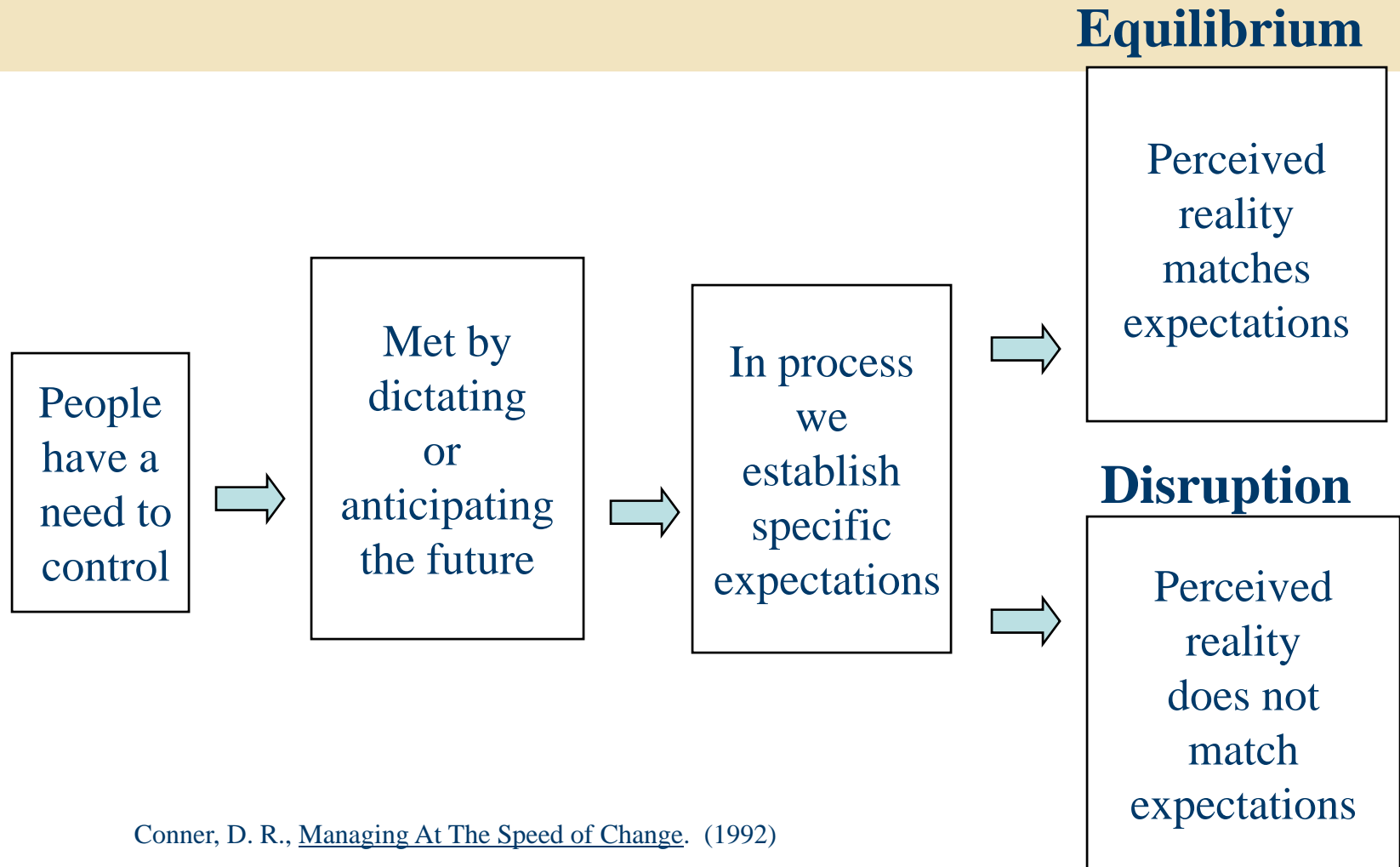
## The "N" Process

-1 ----- N ----- +1

- Embracing the 'positives' of the change  
Organizations jump to  $N + 1$
- Embracing the 'negatives' of the change people  
shift to  $N - 1$
- There is a sense of incongruence that can  
disconnect management from rank-and-file.



# Why am I reacting like this?



Conner, D. R., Managing At The Speed of Change. (1992)



# Change is Stressful: Recognize symptoms of Stress

## Physical

- Getting sick more often
- Having trouble sleeping
- Feeling tired all the time
- Sleeping more than usual
- Overeating
- Loss of appetite
- Generally depressed
- Headaches

## Emotional

- On edge
- Short-tempered
- Grouchy
- Not interested in anything
- Nervous all the time
- Sad/Withdrawn

## • Cognitive

- Loss of concentration
- Loss of focus
- Feel victimized
- Short-term Memory is impaired
- Molehills become mountains
- You become "stuck on the negative"



# Understanding Change



# Models for Understanding the Change Process

The Kubler-Ross Grief Cycle Model

The Scott/Jaffe “Rhythm of Change”  
Model

The Conner/Kelly Emotional Cycle of  
Change Model



# The Kubler-Ross Grief Cycle Model

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance

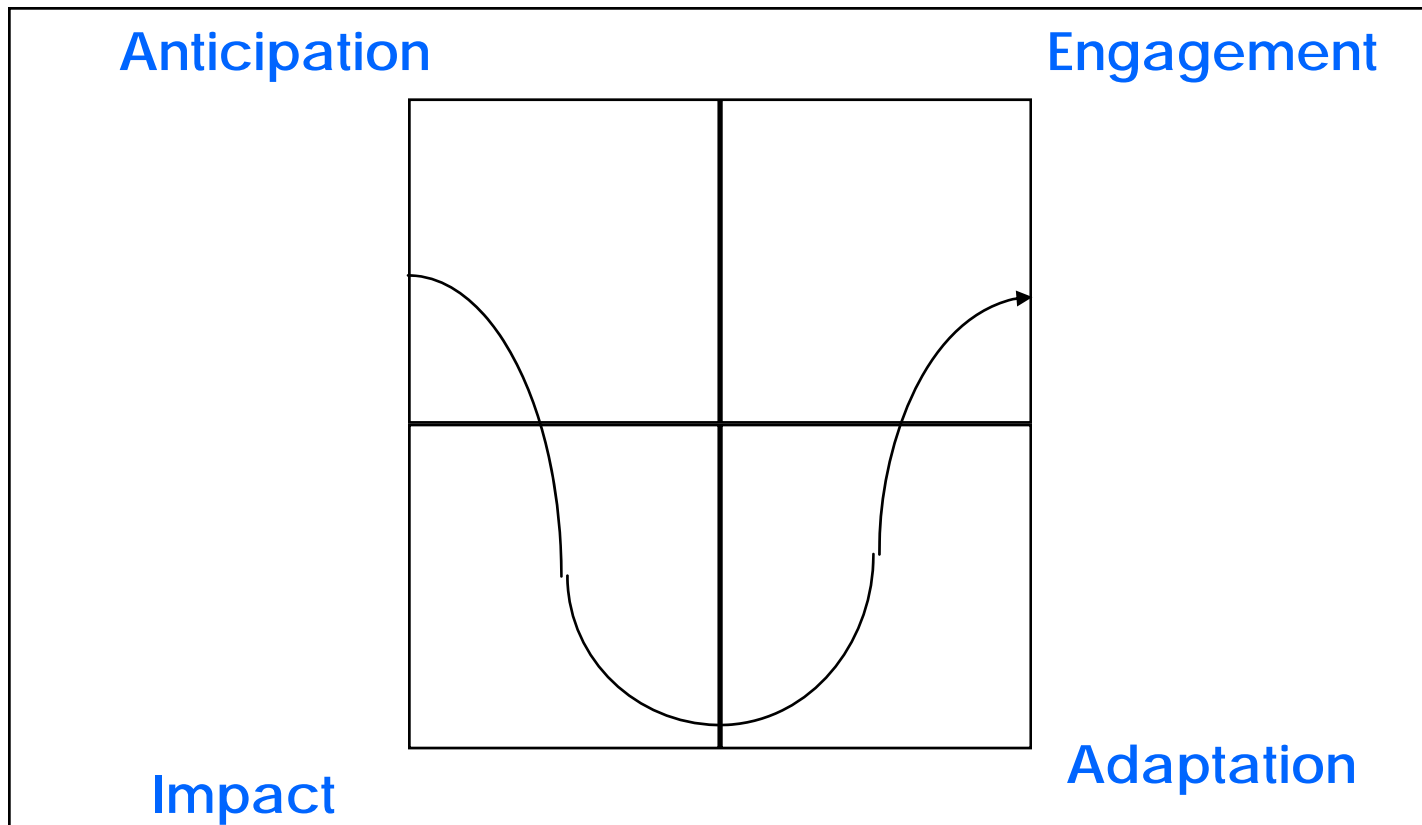


# What is lost when things change?

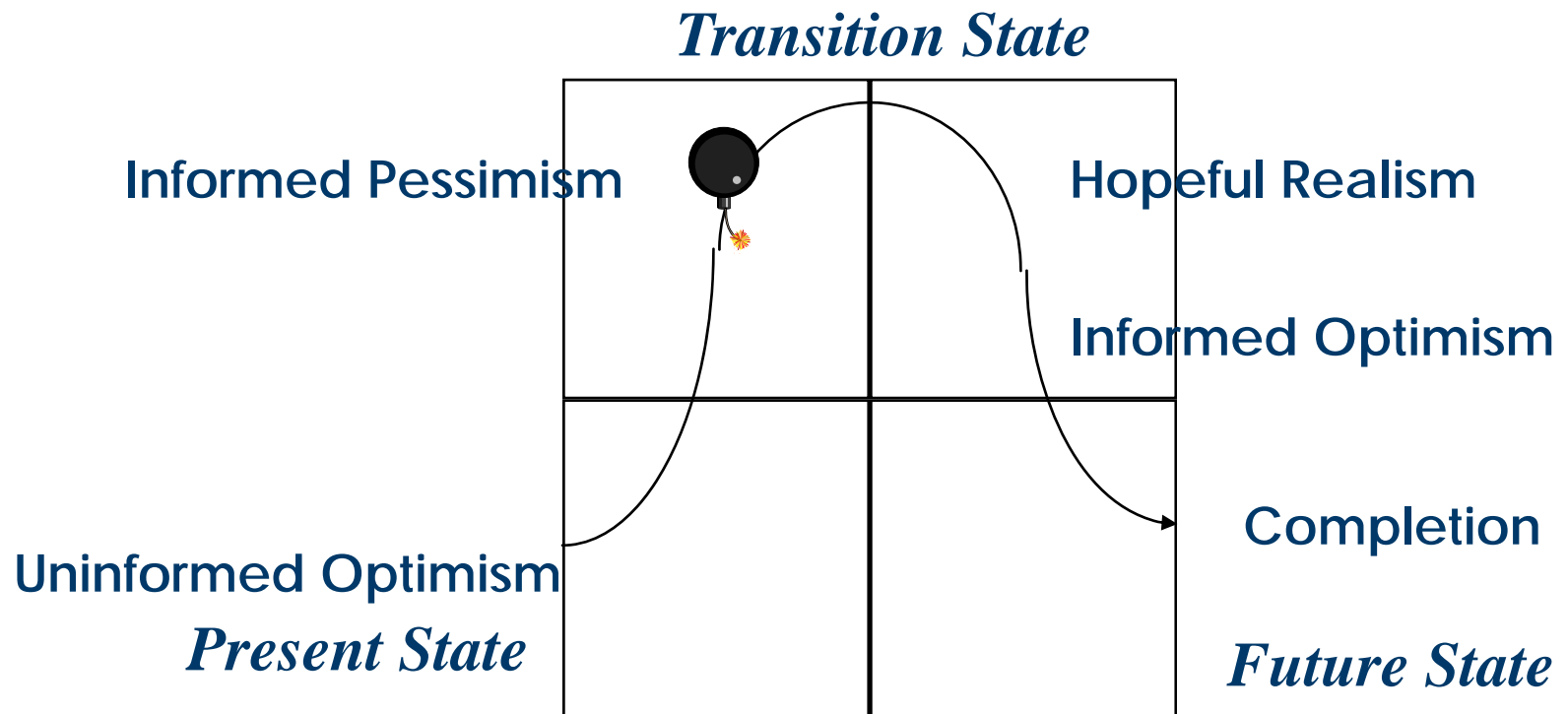
- Self-Confidence
- Security
- Identity
- Relationships
- Routine
- Control



# The Scott/Jaffe “Rhythm of Change” Model



# The Conner/Kelly Emotional Cycle of Change Model



-- Daryl Conner, Managing At The Speed of Change. (1992)



# Organizational Change



# What are the Institution's Responsibilities?

- Understand your institution's culture.
- Seek ideas from other organizations and benchmarking comparisons.
- Define the problem necessitating the change.
- Establish vision and strategy congruence.
- Expect problems, and embrace them as sources of creative resolution.
- Tell people as much as possible as soon as possible – create a “felt” need for change.
- Both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary - every person is a change agent.



# Managing People in a Time of Change and Uncertainty



# What are the Manager's Responsibilities?

- Lead by example
- Be available - Listen
- Be alert to individual reactions
- Provide realistic hope
- Be well-informed about available resources



# Employee Reactions: What You May Observe

- Unusually quiet
- Preoccupied, unable to focus
- Hard to find
- Unresponsive, avoids eye contact
- Lack of interest in activities
- Noticeable weight change
- Constant complaints
- Asking lots of questions
- Unusual forgetfulness
- Mixing up simple tasks/instructions
- Grabbing onto rumors
- “Catastrophizing”
- Inability to concentrate
- Explosive outbursts
- Sarcasm, cynicism
- Head down, task focus



# Employee Reactions: What You Can Do

## Intervention Strategies:

- Provide as much information as possible
- Do not make up answers
- Provide structure
- Touch base often
- Listen with patience and empathy
- Acknowledge the pain and loss
- Do not minimize the feelings
- Provide private opportunity to vent
- Acknowledge their anger (don't take it personally)
- Don't feel obligated to agree with them
- Shift focus to things they can do
- Refer to your EAP!!



# Identifying Employees Who May Be “At-Risk”

- Recent traumatic losses
- Spouse/significant other who lost job/is unemployed
- History of depression & self-destructive behaviors
- Isolated from family & social networks - their job is their life
- History of outbursts at work
- Have been previously laid off

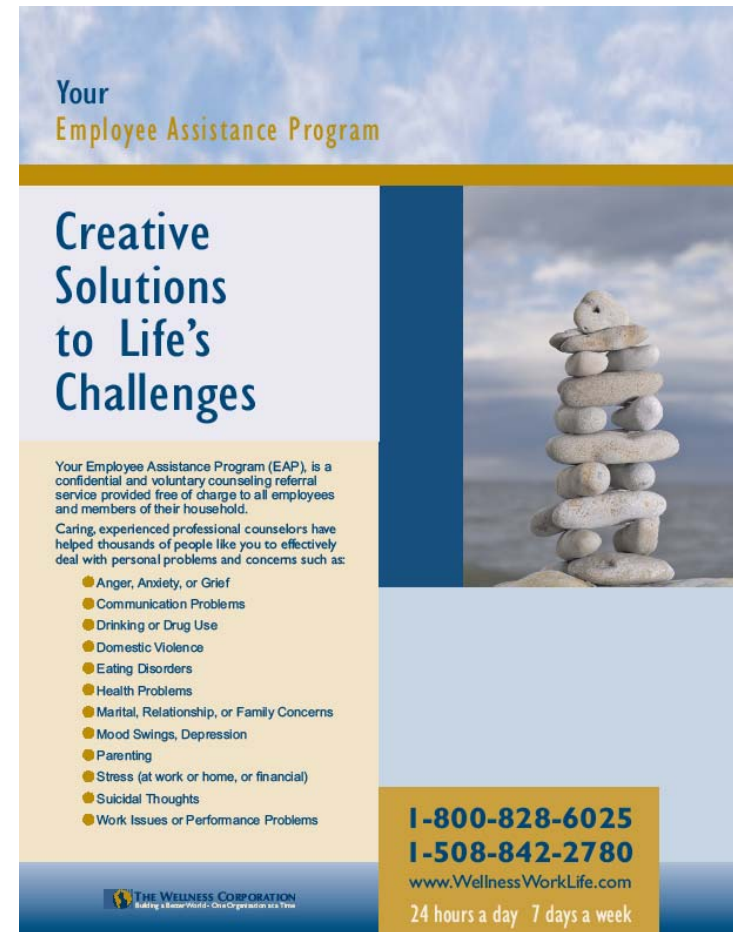


# Available Resources: Support Through the EAP



# Available Resources: Support Through the EAP

- Counseling Services
- Financial Services
- Legal Services
- Work Life Services
- Budget/Debt Referrals
- Newsletters, and other materials
- In-service Programs
- Management Consultations
- Employer Referrals
- RIF/Downsizing Support



Your  
Employee Assistance Program

## Creative Solutions to Life's Challenges

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential and voluntary counseling referral service provided free of charge to all employees and members of their household.

Caring, experienced professional counselors have helped thousands of people like you to effectively deal with personal problems and concerns such as:

- Anger, Anxiety, or Grief
- Communication Problems
- Drinking or Drug Use
- Domestic Violence
- Eating Disorders
- Health Problems
- Marital, Relationship, or Family Concerns
- Mood Swings, Depression
- Parenting
- Stress (at work or home, or financial)
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Work Issues or Performance Problems

**1-800-828-6025**  
**1-508-842-2780**  
www.WellnessWorkLife.com  
24 hours a day 7 days a week

THE WELLNESS CORPORATION  
Building a Better World, One Organization at a Time



# Wellness Website: “Handling Economic Crisis”

- Forms
- Calculators
- Dealing with Debt and Credit Issues
- Ways to Save
- Home Buying/Selling, Mortgages, and Foreclosure
- Dealing with Stress and Depression
- The Job Market

## Sample Articles

- [How can I avoid depression?](#)
- [Are you at risk of foreclosure and losing your home?](#)
- [Avoiding Foreclosure](#)
- [Mortgage Payments Sending You Reeling? Here's What to Do](#)
- [Selling Your Home For Less Than You Owe](#)
- [What are Employment or Placement Firms?](#)
- [What are the Methods to Approach the Job Market? Keep Your Head When You Get the Ax](#)
- [Keys to a Successful Interview](#)



# Taking Care of Ourselves



# “What can I do about it?”

## Managing Ourselves During Times of Change

- Cope with the stress
- Become a “change intelligence agency”
- Analyze what you learn
- Create a strategy for getting through
- Set realistic goals
- Build lines of support
- Work on a positive attitude
- Read “Who Moved My Cheese?” by Spencer Johnson



# Some Final Considerations...

- Approach change as an unfolding process rather than an event.
- Accept that you will either pay for getting what you want or you will pay for not getting what you want.
- Recognize that the status quo is far more expensive than the cost of transition.
- Accept the discomfort of ambiguity as a natural reaction to transition.
- Generate short-term wins – plan for and create visible “wins”.
- Remember: Action creates it’s own motivation.



# A Closing Thought



“As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.” -- Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Address



# Resources on Change

- Bridges, W., *Surviving Corporate Transitions*. place: Doubleday, 1988.
- Bridges, W., *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*. place: Addison-Wesley, 1980.
- Childers, J. R., and Senn, L. E., *In The Eye of The Storm: Reengineering Corporate Culture*. place: Leadership Press, 1996.
- Conner, D. R., *Managing At The Speed of Change*. place: Villard Books, 1992.
- Covey, S. R., *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. place: Simon & Schuster, Fireside Edition, 1990
- Covey, S.R., Merrill, A.R, and Merrill, R.R, *First Things First*. Place Simon & Schuster, 1994.
- Johnson, S. *Who Moved My Cheese?* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1999.



- Kabat-Zinn, J. *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness*. place: Delacorte Press, 1990.
- Kourzes, J., and Posner, B. Z., *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations*. place: Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- Kotter, J., *Leading Change*. place: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.
- Noer, D. M., *Healing the Wounds: Overcoming the Trauma of Layoff and Revitalizing the Downsized Organization*. Place: Jossey-Bass, 1993
- Pritchett, P., *Culture Shift*. place: Pritchett Publishing Company, 1993.
- Scott, C. D., and Jaffe, D. T., *Managing Personal Change*. place: Crisp Publications, 1989.

