Thriving Through Change
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Goals

1. Learn how to identify emotions that arise throughout the change process

2. Learn techniques to find joy through change
Change is a transformation from one state to another. It brings with it struggle and difficulty. If endured, what emerges is beautiful.

Human beings can endure and survive through change. It has been occurring for centuries long before our time.
Throughout our lifetime, we go through biological and developmental changes.

1. Think of 2-3 changes you’ve managed successfully in your life.
   
a. Think of the skills you used to successfully navigate through those changes.

Why do we have difficulty managing change?

1. Biological Influences:
   a. Amygdala is activated (Threat Appraisal) either due to real or perceived threat to our sense of safety
      1. physiological, emotional and physical symptoms
   b. Frontal Lobe is less accessible
      1. executive functioning, problem solving, judgement

2. Environmental Influences:
   a. lack of support and positive role models
   b. lack of confidence/trust in others

3. Individual:
   a. Poor emotional awareness & coping strategies
   b. Mental health conditions
1. We try to predict our future emotional states but have a tendency to overestimate or underestimate our emotional states, based on our thoughts about the situation.

   a. “If I get this job, my life will be perfect.”
   b. “If I don’t pass this test, my life will be miserable”.

1. These are generalized statements about specific events, which are likely to be distorted.

2. There is also the assumption that our environment or circumstances will predict our emotional state.

Much of what influences our joy and happiness is within our control:

50% Biological Predisposition (genetics, neurotransmitters, etc.)
10% Circumstances (income, career, etc.)
40% Based on daily thoughts, feelings & behaviors
Finding joy and happiness in change is possible
Skills to Manage Change

1. Meta-cognition
2. Mindfulness
3. Self-Care
4. Stress Management

Meta-cognition: awareness of our thoughts, being able to observe them without being attached to them or acting on them.
   1. Start by observing your thoughts and becoming aware of their content (writing them down can help). Recognize the ways your thoughts impact your feelings and behaviors.

Mindfulness: non-judgmental observation of yourself (body and thoughts) and your environment.
   1. Start a daily mindfulness practice. Begin with exercises that range from 1-5 minutes and build up from there.
Self-Care: attending to your basic needs (physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual)
   1. Maintain a routine practice and conduct a weekly self inventory

Stress Management: coping with difficult emotions
   1. Additional activities you add to help manage stress (not the same as self-care)

Scientifically proven skills to enhance joy & happiness:
   1. Gratitude
   2. Self-compassion
Gratitude Practice:
1. Develop a ritual for expressing gratitude
   1. Journal/Jar
   2. Religious/Spiritual Practice
   3. Starting a tradition with friends/co-workers at meetings
   4. Download a gratitude tracking app on your phone

Self-Compassion:
1. Self Kindness (vs. criticalness): warmth and understanding for yourself during difficulties/moments of suffering
2. Mindfulness (vs. over identification): non-judgmental observation of feelings and thoughts
3. Common Humanity (vs. isolation): Recognizing that suffering and imperfection are part of the shared human experience

*Take the self-report inventory online at: www.selfcompassion.org
-Free guided meditations and self care exercises
Common Barriers to Thriving Through Change:
1. Lack of Awareness (thought/action fusion)
2. Cognitive Distortions (thinking errors)
3. Emotional Triggers (managing difficult emotions)
4. Behavioral Resistance (not changing key problematic behaviors or displaying resistance through behaviors)

Signs of poor/ineffective coping:
1. Increased or misuse of substances
2. Absenteeism
3. Over/under eating
4. Isolation
5. Mood changes
6. Anxiety
7. Disrupted sleep
8. Stops engaging in routine self care practices

If you are having ongoing difficulty coping, use ineffective coping skills or need assistance in managing change you can seek professional support through ASAP
Mindfulness & Self Compassion Exercises