

Change is a guaranteed part of life. It's something everyone experiences — good or bad. Sometimes change happens in a big way when we aren't expecting it and can make navigating our path forward difficult. According to Mental Health America, by providing yourself with tools for processing change, you can adapt more easily and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Tips for Processing Change:

- **Focus on what you can control.** You have control over how you react to situations, how you start each day, and how nice you are to yourself and others. It can be comforting to know that there are still things you can control even amid significant change.
- **Write your feelings on paper.** It's easy to feel overwhelmed with all the things you're feeling and thinking. Instead of holding it all inside, allow yourself to release it. Start a journal and jot down a quick list of your thoughts and feelings or write a letter to yourself or someone else.
- **Maintain your self-care.** When so much of your life feels different and overwhelming, it's tempting to want to stay in bed and avoid what's bothering you. However, it's important to maintain your normal habits as much as possible, especially when it comes to protecting your mental health. Incorporating small, familiar self-care habits that you know work for you — even if it's something as simple as showering or taking a walk — can give you the mental clarity to process big changes.
- **Find support.** Depending on what you're struggling with, you may be able to talk to friends or family, find an online support group, or speak with a mental health professional. Having someone to listen and provide support can help you through your transitions.
- **Tune into the good.** There may be some grief that coincides with processing the changes in your life. Let yourself grieve, but also try not to get stuck spiraling into the fear, anguish, and negativity those changes may bring. Instead, think of the positives in your life by doing things like practicing gratitude, focusing on the small things that bring you joy, and/or reframing challenges as opportunities.
- **Make plans.** When you're processing big changes, it can be helpful to focus on planning. Just starting small with what your day or week is going to look like can help get rid of the uncertainty that comes with change.
- **Think of your strengths.** Remind yourself as often as possible that you are strong and capable and can make it through whatever challenges you're facing (and that you've made it through tough changes in the past). With each passing day, you're building resilience.

Fast Facts:

- Strong social support from family members following significant life events seriously lessens depression symptoms in teens and has a lasting positive effect in dealing with life changes.
- Adults who avoid problems struggle more with depression later on than those who actively approach problems with appropriate, healthy coping strategies.

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