

TEAM TALK

Good Work Design:

Managing change at work



Australian Government

Comcare



This team talk is part of a series created to help you discuss good work design with your team. Read the team talk to your team and use the questions to start a discussion.

Introduction

Workplace change is normal and brings benefits. It can influence growth and innovation, but still leave people feeling anxious and distressed.

Workplace change occurs when a business alters key components of its strategy or operations.

Change can impact the psychosocial work environment increasing risks and causing harm to health. For example, poor change management can increase workloads, role conflict and uncertainty, while reducing role clarity and feelings of job control.

Comcare's [Managing change at work](#) video and [better practice guidance](#) outlines how great managers support their teams through change. Let's watch the video—which is designed for managers but has messages that are relevant for all of us.

How to manage change

Communication is the single most important strategy in managing change:

- As a team, have early and regular conversations during periods of change, including about what the change means for the team.
- Engaging with the change means asking questions, voicing opinions and concerns and taking up opportunities to participate in the change process. This can help reduce feelings of uncertainty and increase a sense of control.
- Provide and seek regular updates on the change, even if there is not much to update on.

Look out for the impacts of change in your team:

- Sometimes change creates conflict between different aspects of a person's role or between the roles of different team members. Look out for signs of role conflict and raise concerns with your manager.
- Consider whether you have the resources you need to effectively deliver your work and speak up if you need more support.

Provide and seek support:

- Individuals have different levels of tolerance to change and your team-mates may all react differently.
- Understand the common emotional responses people can experience. This can include surprise or shock, denial or disbelief, depression, frustration or anger, experimentation, and acceptance.
- Be alert to signs that people need more practical or emotional support and act supportively towards your co-workers.
- Reflect on your own feelings and behaviour and seek support when needed.
- Remember that change can take time to process, so be patient.





Communicate early and regularly



Discussion

- What change is happening for your team right now or looming on the horizon?
- How is your team currently communicating about change? Do you feel you need more communication or support? If so, what could this look like?

Notes

This section can be used to record agreed actions arising from your discussion and/or attendance.

