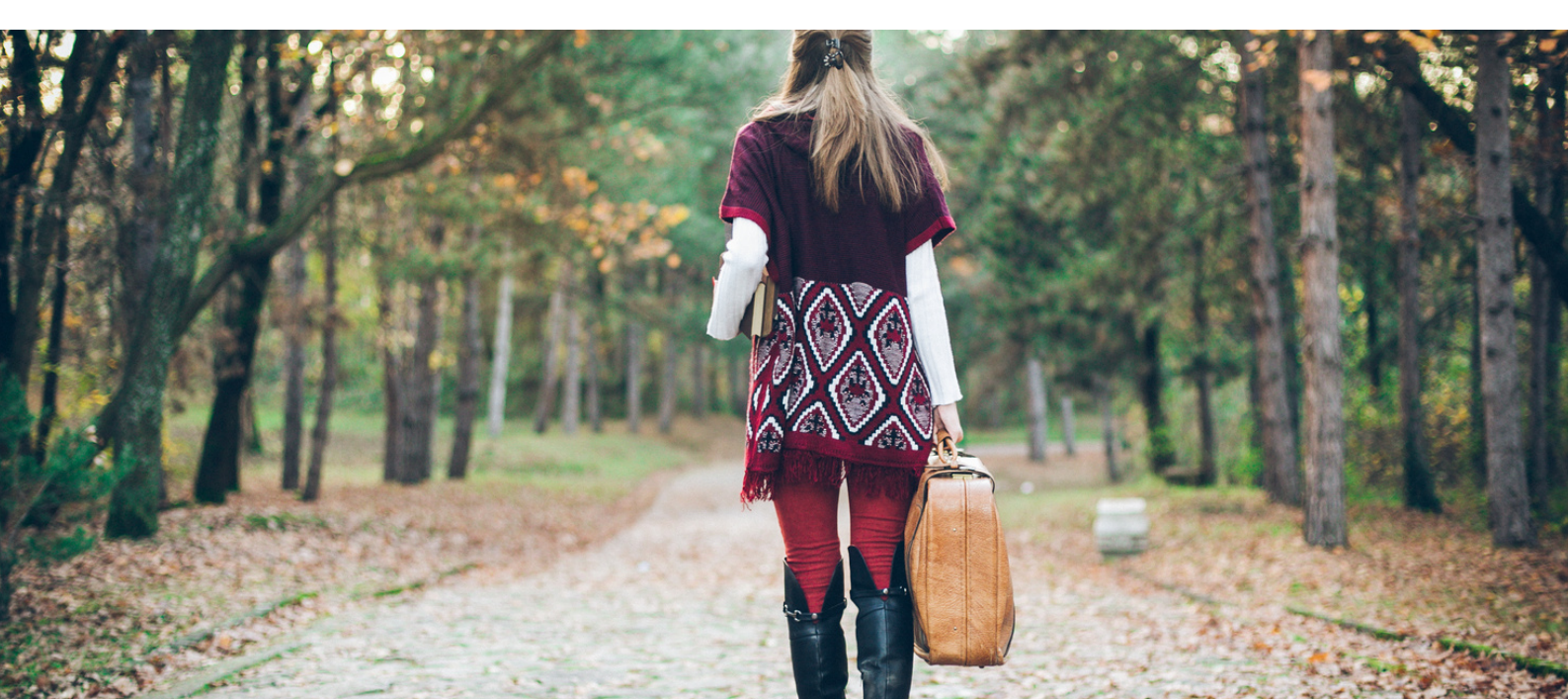


A GUIDE ON

Dealing with Life Transitions





Hello
There!

Sometimes, life doesn't go the way you plan. Sometimes, you have no choice but to uproot your lifestyle to survive in an ever-changing world. Or maybe, you're actively seeking a huge change in your life. Whatever the case is, change can be exciting, nerve-wracking, and sometimes scary.

In this resource, we'll be talking about life transitions; common major life transitions, how they affect us, how we can cope with them, and more! By the end of this resource, you'll have picked up some new knowledge and skills that not only help you survive these changes, but thrive in them.

From,

Clarity Singapore

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What are life transitions?

A life transition is a change or an adjustment made that has a significant impact on our lives. These changes can be expected or unexpected, new or repeated, big or small.

Transitions can be anything from moving house, to emigrating to a new country. It can be exciting and special, but can also bring up new obstacles or stresses.

Why are they so challenging?

Changing our routines takes a lot of mental, and sometimes physical effort to do. It can also increase stress, and anxiety over the unknown, new future. Transitions are especially scary when they happen unexpectedly and catch you off guard.

Sometimes, waiting for the change can happen can conjure up more anxiety than the change itself. Which is why it is so important that we have coping strategies for these situations, at every stage of the transition.



Signs and Symptoms that someone is not coping well

- feeling overwhelmed
- constantly feeling under pressure or feeling weighed down
- feeling lost and unsure of oneself
- feeling anxious, irritable, moody or upset much of the time
- exhaustion
- not wanting to engage in social activities
- difficulty sleeping or restless sleep.

Cited from:
Life-stage transitions. (n.d.).
<https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/life-stage-transitions>

Going to University

For many, going to university can be a daunting change. The increase in workload, the independent nature of studying, and meeting new people are common concerns when starting your first semester in University. Not to mention students who decide to live in dormitories, having to move away from the familiarity of home and take care of their own well-being may be a completely new experience for many.

For these reasons and more, it's quite common for people to feel nervous or stressed during this transition. So, how can we manage our stress when we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory?



Follow your ABC's

ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

The more positive experiences you have in your new setting, the more your brain begins to view your overall experience as a positive one! Go find something fun to do: attend a school event or festival, watch a show, or go for a walk around campus.

BUILD MASTERY

Succeeding at one task tends to increase your likelihood of success for the next. Set out to do something easy, something you know you'll be able to complete. It can be as simple as remembering your route from classroom A to classroom B.

COPE AHEAD

Prepare for challenging events that lie ahead. Using mental rehearsal, which involves imagining oneself performing a task, consider what could go right or wrong.

Use the ABC's in your own situation

What fun activities or events are you looking forward to at your new school?

What are some skills or tasks you want to master in your first few weeks?

What are some challenges you might face? How might you overcome them?

Tips on managing University



TIME MANAGEMENT

You might notice that you have a lot more free time between classes at University, but don't let the empty space on your timetable fool you. Pace yourself, use the 'down time' to get an early start on your assignments, so you don't need to stress later in the semester!



BE PROACTIVE

No one is going to yell at you for not completing your homework, but that means that you've got to take the initiative to manage your own deadlines. If you're the forgetful type, take the initiative to make friends with classmates who can help remind you!



NAVIGATING CAMPUS

This could be both physical or online. Spend some time exploring the campus, or playing with the online software your school uses. This way, there'll be no surprises on your first day!



ASK FOR HELP

If you have a question, ask it! After all, it is the professor's job to answer them, so you might as well! Or, get to know some seniors, who can explain any foreign abbreviations you've heard in your new school.



SELF-CARE

Relax! Do some exercise, talk to friends, and just give yourself some space to breathe. Some 'me' time. Make sure to give yourself lots of positive self-talk. Tell yourself that you're doing your best and that you deserve to enjoy your rest.

Cited from:

Making the transition from High School to University: Top tips on how to settle into your new routine. (n.d.). UNSW Current Students. <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/making-transition-high-school-university-top-tips-how-settle-your-new-routine>
Managing the Transition to University Life | New College. (n.d.). <https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/managing-transition>

Entering the working world



Moving into the working world after at least a decade of schooling can be disconcerting. Where did all my school holidays go? What about my 3-hour long lunch breaks?

In school, there's almost always a "right" answer. You'll do a test or hand in an assignment, you'll get your grades from your professor, and that's that. But in the working world, things are rarely black-or-white.

The structure of most full-time jobs can be nerve-wracking to think about for some, but it doesn't have to be! Whether you're about to graduate from university, or waiting on your first day of work, here are some tips to help you assimilate into the working world.

Tips on managing work

Accountability Group

If you're a fresh grad, you probably have friends in a similar situation. These people are a good network for support and information sharing. Get together, talk about your concerns, share some ideas, and jump hurdles together!

Journalling

Having a journal to help you organize your thoughts can help keep you on track and guide you in the right direction. Write out your thoughts, dreams, stresses, or whatever is bothering you that day.

Master the "hard skills"

You've picked up the skills necessary for your line of work in school, so what's next? Well, real experiences at work can help you get even better at what you do. Don't expect to be perfect on the first day, give yourself time to grow.

Work on your "soft skills"

Soft skills are hard to be taught, they are honed through experience. Nonetheless, skills like teamwork, or adaptability, are important at work. Give yourself space to learn these skills.

Time management

Once again, time management is key in adapting to any new lifestyle. You're going to realise that most of your deadlines have to be set by you, not by anyone else. Take some time every day to go through your to-do list!

Self-care

Don't forget to insert some self-care into your new schedule! It can be going for a run after work, doing meditation in the morning, or even just making your morning coffee or tea. Have something to look forward to!



A Mid-Career Switch

Changing careers can be especially scary. Imagine, you've spent all this time gaining experience in one field, and then you realise you don't enjoy it anymore. Or, perhaps your environment has changed, and you're looking for a new job. Either way, going from one career or field to another is like taking a leap of faith.

It also requires lots and lots of planning (which for some, may add another element of worry!). However, being able to make good, solid plans for your milestone change can make tackling it much smoother and easier.

After doing research on the new jobs available, make SMART goals to help you plan for this change, and hopefully ease your worries.

SMART Goal-setting

Use the template to create your own SMART goals!

Specific

*start with a simple and narrow goal
e.g., I want to get a job in the ___ field*

Measurable

*what are the tangible and trackable aspects?
e.g., I need to get my finances in order before I begin my transition*

Achievable

*what would you need to do?
e.g., by the end of next month, I need to send my CV out to 5 companies*

Relevant

*in what way is this goal important to you?
e.g., the job at company XYZ must be relevant to my interests*

Time-based

*what is the ideal timeline for this task?
e.g., i want to secure a job in this field by the end of the year*

Tips on managing your fear

Now, let's say the mid-career change has been made. It's normal to feel nervous before your first day (in fact, it might be weirder if you weren't nervous at all!), but it can still cause impairment to our daily functioning. So, here are some tips on how to manage the fear you feel before starting a new job in a new field:

Practice your routine

Starting a new job means a change in routine. Your travel times, or a new start time and end time? Spend some time researching different routes and planning your time before your first day.

Self-care and mindfulness

We've talked about self-care in other sections, but having good coping techniques is important here. Every time you find your anxiety spiraling, take 10 minutes to listen to music, or do some journalling.

Talk to someone

Sharing your worries and concerns with trusted friends and family can help calm the jitters and help you feel less alone.

Makeover your workspace

View your nervousness as excitement and take the chance to decorate your new workspace! Get some momentos and express yourself, while easing your anxiety by surrounding yourself with familiar items.

Make some friends

Fixating on what others think of you can prevent you from actually talking to people. You don't have to be best friends on the first day, but make some time for small talk with your coworkers and get to know them!

WFH to F2F

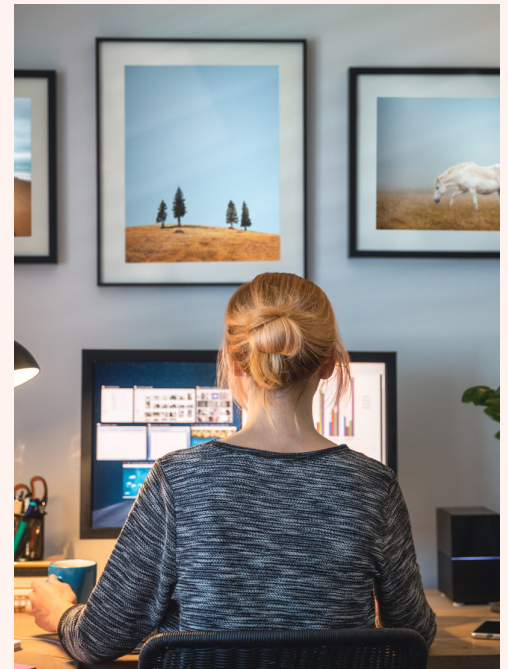
No matter where you are in life, COVID-19 has affected all of us. Now that restrictions are being lifted, everyone is going back to physical classes, or their workplace. Normality is being restored.

But what if I'm not ready to go back to the way things were? Maybe some of us have gotten too used to the "Work From Home" arrangement, and we aren't ready to put on our "going out" clothes just yet.

What's really making you anxious?

Some people haven't had much social interaction with coworkers or classmates and lost practice of how to meet with people in person, maintain eye contact, and engage in everyday chitchat. The prospect of social interaction after a year of isolation can make one anxious.

Or, perhaps you're a fan of the flexible work arrangements that WFH offered, allowing you to be surrounded by family every day, and are now dreading going back to normalcy.



Maybe you're worried that going back to school or work will mean an increase in workload. Whatever it is plaguing you, take some time to acknowledge your anxiety. Being able to recognize and label your fears and any symptoms that come from them can help you feel more in control of your emotions. Next, share your concerns with someone. Talk to a trusted friend or family member, or maybe a classmate or coworker that you're close to. Who knows, maybe they feel the same?

And then, develop an accurate anticipation of what will be expected of you. I know, easier said than done. Here are some tips on how you can mentally prepare to go back to "normal".



Tips for how to mentally prepare for F2F

01 PRACTICE ADDRESSING SOCIAL ANXIETY

Social anxiety is characterized by fear of being judged by others, feeling self-conscious in social situations, and avoiding meeting people. It can be helpful to plan a few social engagements a week to get comfortable being around people. Maybe arrange a lunch date with some coworkers or classmates before your first day back!

02 MAKEOVER!

They say "dress to impress", but the only person you need to impress is yourself! Feeling good about your outfit can leave you feeling more confident and positive about the day, so spend some time going through your closet and pick an outfit that you feel comfortable and confident in!

03 FIX YOUR SLEEPING SCHEDULE

Not having to travel from home to work or school made it easier to catch some extra "Z's" before the day starts. On the other hand, managing family life can leave you doing work late into the night. Make sure to restart your sleep schedule for at least a week before going back to F2F, so you're well-rested and ready to take on the day!

04 BEGIN THE DAY WITH MINDFULNESS

The first thing most of us do when we wake up is check our phones. Maybe something big happened while you were asleep, or you have a few texts from friends. However, waking up with a sense of urgency isn't helpful when you're already anxious about the rest of the day. Spend a few moments in the morning meditating or journaling down your thoughts instead.

Cited from:

Castrillon, C. (2022, May 8). 10 Ways To Improve Your Mental Health At Work. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinecastrillon/2022/05/08/10-ways-to-improve-your-mental-health-at-work/?sh=9ffc395dbc60>
Returning to Work Soon? Here Are Some Ways to Make the Process Easier. (2022, March 16). Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/returning-to-work-soon-here-are-some-ways-to-make-the-process-easier/>
Stieg, C. (2021, May 29). Concerned that returning to work will impact your mental health? Here's how to set boundaries. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/05/29/returning-to-office-and-work-impacts-mental-health-setting-boundaries.html>

Tips on how to have a good work-life balance

Now that you're back in the office or at school, it's important to remember that a good work-life balance can help alleviate anxiety and stress. After all, having physical presence doesn't always equate to mental presence! If F2F work is proving to come with a bigger workload, keep some of these tips in mind to make sure you're getting enough rest:



PLAN YOUR TIME

To ensure productivity in both work and play, managing your time can help you achieve a good balance of work and rest. Create to-do lists or a timetable, not only for your work projects, but be sure to schedule in some rest time!



HAVE A "STARTING" ROUTINE

Having a routine before starting your day is a great way to tell your brain, "hey, it's time to work!" Your routine can be simple, perhaps making a cup of coffee, doing your skincare, and travelling to work. This primes your brain to be in 'work mode'.



HAVE A "WRAP UP"

Similarly, having a "wrap up" routine helps you transition from 'work mode' to 'rest mode'. This could be checking your emails, ticking off your last task on your to-do list, and making a plan for the next day. Then, enjoy your rest!



Plan your schedule

My "starting" routine

Please list your starting routine, starting with what activity you'll do first, up until you officially begin working

Plan your time


Please list out the tasks you want to accomplish, both for work and rest.

My "wrap up" routine

Please list your wrap up routine, starting with what activity you'll do first, up until you are officially off work.


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