

Communicating Change for Different Reaction Stages

Followers will undergo a variety of emotional stages when encountering and navigating through a change initiative, such as the restrictions and guidelines associated with COVID-19. Communication is incredibly important during this time, and it will be important for each leader to evaluate the actions of their followers to ensure that effective leadership coaching is occurring. This guide may assist you:

Stage	Followers' Actions	Leader's Appropriate Reaction	Leader's Inappropriate Reaction
Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not showing up for meetings, Spending too much time on routine tasks Less communication Procrastinating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying resistance Discussing the pros/cons of the change Validating and empathising with the followers' concerns Explaining the rationale behind the change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignoring the resistance or members' actions Ridiculing or criticising the followers' actions of denial.
Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being irritable Contemplating sabotage Being confrontational Appearing "short-fused" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying calm and professional Clarifying the details of the change Showing understanding of the anger while firmly emphasising the need for change Allowing some venting (Don't get bogged down- limit the amount of "cuss and discuss" sessions!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escalating into a relationship of conflict Blaming others for the change Threatening Taking the anger personally Ignoring the anger
Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trying to make deals Trading favours Making unrealistic promises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being flexible with non-essential requests/processes (<u>Remember: Safety is essential!</u>) Being firm about the overarching strategy Focusing on long-term benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rejecting suggestions without consideration Giving in to follower demands Giving the impression that you agree to terms (Instead, be direct and firm about the situation)
Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being untalkative Appearing apathetic Appearing slow-moving Looking somber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing concern Providing support Encouraging the follower to talk with others who have fully accepted the change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pressuring for full acceptance Joking or minimising the members' feelings Being overly/unrealistically happy or optimistic
Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully implementing the change Creating a new routine of "normal" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging suggestions Resuming "normal" communication Giving praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saying, "I told you so" Joking about the followers' previous reactions



