

# *Managing Transitions:*



## **Strategies for Coaching Youth into Adulthood**

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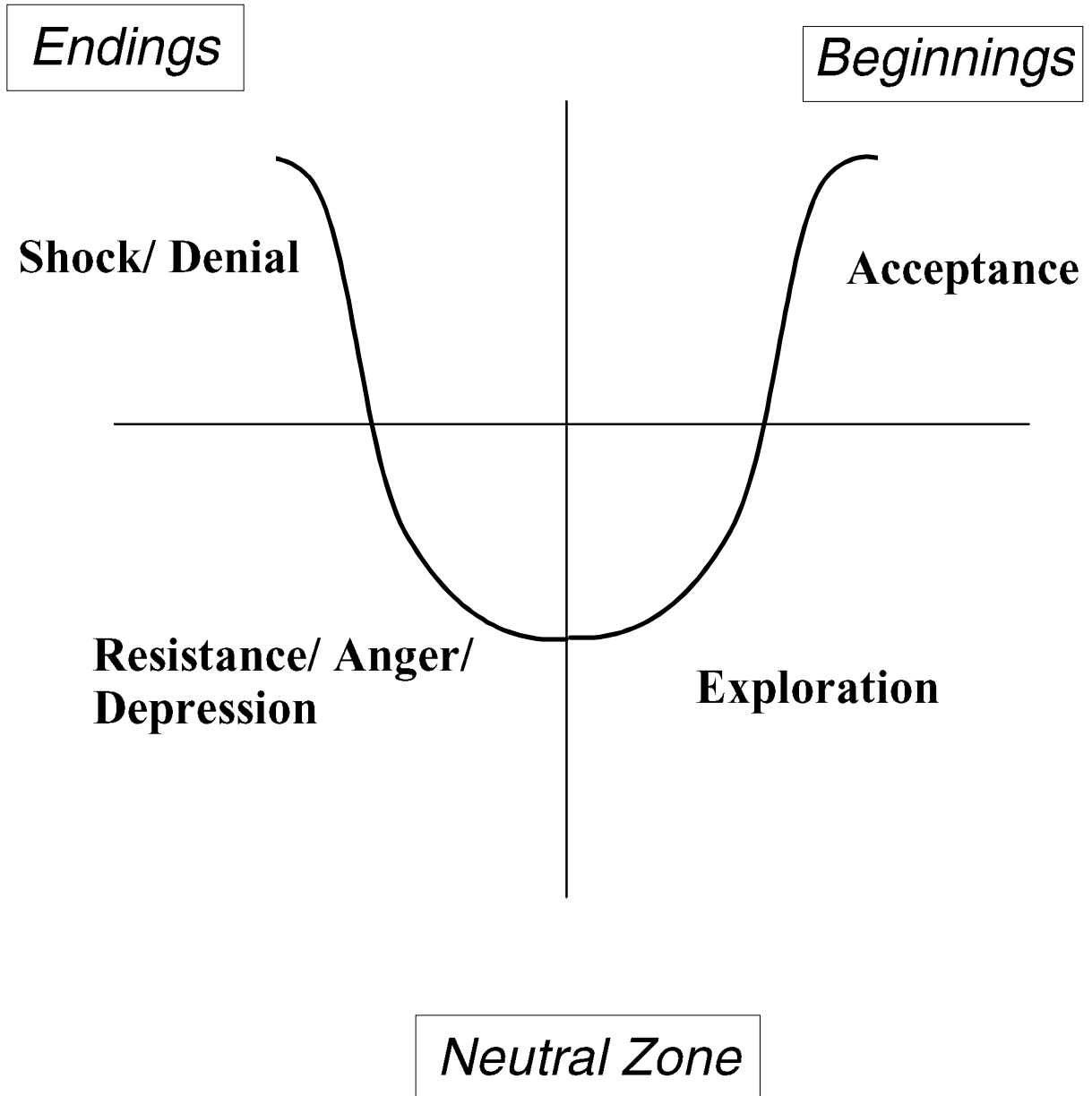


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# 12 Strategies to Help Youth Transition

- #1** Identify who is losing what.  
What are the endings? For whom?
- #2** Understand that transition involves grieving.  
Know the stages of transition.
- #3** Give youth information.  
The more one knows about what is going to happen, the easier it is to be prepared.
- #4** Make change smaller.  
Help youth "chunk down" change into manageable pieces.
- #5** Help youth develop a positive outlook.  
Use positive self talk and focus on positive beliefs.
- #6** Encourage youth to envision the outcomes that they want.  
It is helpful to have a picture of how our outcomes will look.
- #7** Help youth take stock of what they have to offer.  
Make note of strengths, skills, abilities, and resources.
- #8** Help youth focus on outcomes, not on problems.  
Encourage them to spend time in areas where they have control.
- #9** Allow youth to take charge of their own lives.  
Don't rush to solve the problem or push for a particular solution or plan.
- #10** Help youth develop step-by-step goal plans.  
Their ownership of the plan is important.
- #11** Become a better communicator.  
Adjust your communication style to that of your youth.
- #12** Help youth create a support system.  
Most people do not face change and transition alone.

# Stages of Transition



# FOUR STAGES IN EMOTIONAL TRANSITION

As a young person prepares to move out on his/her own, you can expect them to go through four distinct emotional stages. These stages were first recognized in youth preparing for discharge from foster care by Brian Simonitch, an employee of the Oregon Children's Services Division. He called the four stages anxiety, elation, fear and loneliness and quiet confidence. It is important that staff be able to recognize these stages and help their teens work through them.

## **Anxiety is the First Feeling**

The first stage is that of anxiety. The youth is anxious about two uncertainties. The first is whether or not the adults in his/her life will actually let him/her move out. The second relates to whether s/he has what it takes to make it. The youth is looking for permission to leave and a truthful answer to the question, "I'm ready, aren't I?". It is our job to give good, honest feedback, to let youth know when they are ready and when they are not. Permission should not come too easily and should be based on a youth readiness, both financially and emotionally to take on the challenge.

When it is clear that a youth is not ready, then it is our job to help them become ready. We can help minimize anxiety by showing youth the steps they can take that will lead them to readiness. Such steps include learning how to get and keep a job, learning how to manage money, learning how to problem-solve, and learning all of the other skills that are essential to self-sufficiency.

## **Elation Follows**

The second stage is elation. It is exciting to anticipate independence which is often defined by the young as freedom. Being on your own, in your own place, with your own things is a thrilling experience, at least in the beginning. When a young person is experiencing this stage of elation, it is our job to try and keep his/her feet on the floor. The daily chores must still be done. The bills must be paid. The details of work and/or school must be attended to.

## **Fear and Loneliness Occurs**

Elation doesn't last long. Eventually the youth comes to the realization that independence isn't all

that it was envisioned to be. The pay check doesn't go as far as s/he thought it would. A room mate moves out leaving him/her stuck with the rent and an enormous telephone bill. His/her friends have moved away or taken jobs with different work hours.

When these unsettling situations occur (and they will) the youth moves into a stage of depression characterized by fear and loneliness. Life becomes upsetting. It's annoying to have to wash the dishes every day and keep the place clean. There's not enough money to go out and have fun as often as before. Old friends seem to disappear and new friends have yet to be made. There are too many things that you have to do and not enough things that they want to do. The danger in this stage of depression is that the youth will start cutting classes, drop out of school or lose his/her job.

Our job during this time is to keep the youth plodding along. Taking care of those mundane chores that must be taken care of and keeping with a daily routine. We can also serve as an important bridge during this time as s/he moves from old acquaintances to new ones. We may be the only person that remains constant during this time of change.

## **Quiet Confidence Is Final Stage**

The last stage is described as that of quiet confidence. The onset of this stage is subtle and it may take some time to realize that the youth has in fact reached this plateau. When s/he calls you it is after crisis has been averted or already dealt with. The phone call is to tell you what s/he did about the situation. S/he is no longer asking for your advice. Our job during this stage is to either separate and terminate or to develop an adult - adult relationship with which both can be comfortable.

*(Based on a paper presented by Brian Simonitch at the University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work, Region VIII Family Resource Center for Regional Youth Services Workshop, October 27-29, 1983.)*

# DIVIDE YOUR LIFE IN THIRDS

## FIRST

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## SECOND

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## THIRD

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

# Pain -To- Power Vocabulary Words

PAIN —————>—————>—————>————— POWER

- |                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. I should -----           | 1. _____ |
| 2. It's not my fault-----   | 2. _____ |
| 3. It's a problem -----     | 3. _____ |
| 4. I'm never satisfied----- | 4. _____ |
| 5. I hope -----             | 5. _____ |
| 6. If only -----            | 6. _____ |
| 7. What will I do?-----     | 7. _____ |
| 8. It's terrible-----       | 8. _____ |
| 9. I can't -----            | 9. _____ |

Adapated from Susan Jeffers. *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway*. New York: Fawcett Columbine Books, 1987.

# Outcomes vs. Problems

## Part I

Our perspective can effect the way we think, feel, and react to life. Consider a situation that you are struggling with now. With a partner, focus on the problem created by this situation. Ask each other the questions below.

### **Problem Perspective**

1. What is the problem? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why do you have it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who or what is keeping you from getting what you want? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How does this failure reflect on you and/or the situation? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Answer to Yourself:**

After answering the questions above, think about the questions below. Get in touch with your feelings

1. How is your energy level?
2. How do you feel about yourself in the situation described?
3. How do you feel about the other people involved in the situation?
4. What is your level of motivation or optimism to do something about it?

(Adapted from Lucy Freedman, Personal and Organizational Empowerment, Syntax Communication Modeling Corporation.)

# Outcomes vs. Problems

## Part II

Consider your situation again. Only this time, focus with your partner on the possible outcomes. Ask each other the following questions. Does a positive perspective create different feelings?

### Outcome Perspective

1. What outcome do you want in this situation? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How can you achieve it? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What/who can help you achieve what you want? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How will you know when you have achieved it? \_\_\_\_\_

### Check for Differences:

Ask yourself the following questions to see if your feelings have changed in any way.

1. Is there any difference in energy level?
2. Is there a difference in how you feel about yourself?
3. Do you feel differently about others in the situation?
4. Is there a difference in motivation, optimism?

(Adapted from Lucy Freedman, Personal and Organizational Empowerment, Syntax Communication Modeling Corporation.)

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