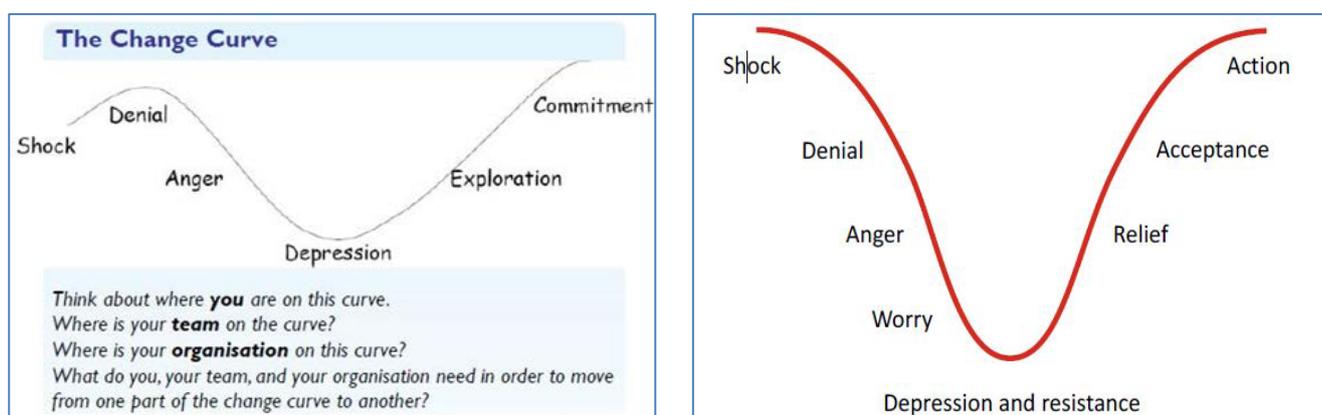


Factsheet

Managing Individual Reactions to Change

People dealing with personal loss and bereavement often experience a cycle ranging from initial shock, denial, anger and anxiety before moving to acceptance/action (commitment). It's not unusual for people to experience a similar journey during major change. The speed and duration of the cycle varies depending on the individual, the degree of change and its impact. And it's not always a one-way journey. People may feel they have come to terms with a change only to have something unexpectedly throw them off course and they find themselves back experiencing worry or anger. This sort of 'flip-flopping' is quite common.

Figure 1: Examples of change curves



There are ways to help people through the change curve:

Shock	Denial/anger	Worry/confusion	Relief and acceptance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get everything out in the open with as much information as possible and repeat it. Be realistic with promises even if it means saying 'I don't know. I'll have to get back to you'. Be alert to how people are reacting. Be available, patient and non-defensive. Don't argue too much. Accept there will be strong emotions – good and bad feelings – and don't tell people how they should feel. Allow time for people to absorb what's happening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer clear instructions. Check for understanding, challenge assumptions and deal with concerns and rumours. Be specific about what is required. Establish shorter time frames. Follow up and keep checking in with people. Empathise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept emotional displays. Provide opportunities to sound off. Listen and be supportive. Keep people involved, motivated and build success experiences. Continue direct control with clear expectations. Tolerate mistakes and some inefficiency. Communicate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect some setbacks. People will 'flip back' at times. Allow for differences in recovery time. Reinforce hopefulness and be optimistic. Continue to build the team spirit. Manage closely and provide constructive feedback. Reward and emphasise achievements. Highlight benefits and positive.

Reference: Adapted from South Australia's Change Management Resources 2014.