Managing Change in Funeral Service

4 Stages
Nothing so undermines organizational change as the failure to think through the losses people face.

William Bridges
What this Event has Triggered - 4 Stages:

1. Shock!
2. Uncertainty
3. Turning Point
4. Moving Forward

Each of us will respond uniquely to each of these stages and many of us will be in different places at different times - this can make it extremely difficult for leaders to lead!
Brief Overview of the 4 Stages

1. **Shock!** What the heck just happened? This can’t be true!

2. **Uncertainty:** Feeling of being unsure, unstable, unknowns.

3. **Turning Point:** Point in time when something happens that causes a shift.

4. **Moving Forward:** Stepping into a “new normal”

**Poll Question:** Where are you right now? Please write your response in the chat box.
Shock!

Definition: “A sudden upsetting or surprising event or experience. Sudden emotional stress, marked by cold, pallid skin, irregular breathing, rapid pulse, and dilated pupils. A violent shaking movement caused by an impact, explosion, or tremor.”

What just happened?
This isn’t possible
Denial
How to Support Those in **Shock**: 

- Shock is a reactive state
- FEAR can set in which can paralyze us mentally and emotionally
- We are functioning in our Limbic system - Where Flight, Fight or Freeze can occur

**To move people out of the shock stage** - ask them questions to guide them out of their limbic system and into their rational brain

- Allow them to share their concerns, feelings and emotions
- If necessary, refer them to get professional support
- Focus on bringing them into the Present Moment
“Great men rise above adversity and attain new heights of achievement by turning TRIBULATIONS into TRIUMPHS, FAILURES into FORTUNES, SETBACKS into SUCCESSES, OBSTACLES into OPPORTUNITIES, and BURDEN into BLESSING.”
- William Arthur Ward
Definition: “The state of being unsure, having doubt, feeling like things are unpredictable, inconsistent.”

We have been living in uncertainty for several months.

This can be very unsettling for most of us.

It can be like a wave that gains momentum and energy (not in a good way!)

Can lead to catastrophizing!
How to Support those in the Uncertainty Stage:

- Increased Stress & Anxiety Levels
- Feelings of Loneliness, Grief & Isolation
- Catastrophizing
- **Practice Mindfulness:** Being Present in the Now
  - Focus on taking 10 deep breaths
  - Noticing & Acknowledging reactions & emotions
  - Not judging what’s happening as good or bad
- Guide them to focus on what they are in control of right now
Faith means living with uncertainty - feeling your way through life, letting your heart guide you like a lantern in the dark.

— Dan Millman —
Turning Point:

Definition: “A time at which a decisive change in a situation occurs, especially one with beneficial results. A point in which a significant change occurs.”

We are moving into this stage currently. Businesses are starting to re-open.

How will you manage your business? Your staff? The families you serve?

Expect change!
How to Support those in the Turning Point Stage:

- Create a Plan, Share the Plan
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate... things may change
- Create Time & Space for Answering Questions
- Physical & Psychological Safety are Important here - Ask what that means
- Keep them Talking, Ask Questions:
  - What is on your mind today?
  - What is concerning for you right now?
  - What is the best way for me to support you today?
- Social Awareness
“In every life there is a turning point. A moment so tremendous, so sharp and clear that one feels as if one’s been hit in the chest, all the breath knocked out, and one knows, absolutely knows without the merest hint of a shadow of a doubt that one’s life will never be the same.”

— Julia Quinn When He Was Wicked
Moving Forward

- Evaluate Plan: Be ready to pivot & adapt, must be agile.
- How will you manage yourself?
  - What is your focus? *It’s a choice!*
  - F.E.A.R
    - False Evidence Appearing Real
    - Face Everything & Rise
- What is your mindset?
- Expect Change
- Your “why” does not change
- Your “what” does not change
- The “How” changes!
How to Move Forward:

- How will you support your staff members? *Greatest opportunity for your leadership to shine!*
- Maintaining Physical & Psychological Safety
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
- Practice EQ:
  - Self Awareness & Self Management
  - Social Awareness & Relationship Management
  - Compassion & Empathy
- The “How” of Funeral Service has/will change
  - Stay connected with your staff
  - Stay connected with the families you are serving
  - Stay connected with your community
  - Great Opportunity to Educate & Elevate!

Be the Beacon of Light!
Tragedy Occurs in the Midst of the COVID Pandemic
We Start at the Beginning...
Poll Question:

Think about someone you care about: personal family member, friend, co-worker, etc.,

What stage are they in right now?

Food for Thought:
How can you meet them where they are and connect, find compassion?

Please write your response in the chat box.
You must be the change
You want to see in the world
What did I learn? Action Plan

1. Think about the information shared today - how can you use this information in your firm?
2. How can this information help you serve your staff members?
3. How can it help you and your firm stay relevant?
4. How can this information help you serve your families more effectively and compassionately?
5. What opportunities do you have right now?
What questions do you have?

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I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples.

Mother Teresa
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