You have just learned about important changes that will affect your job and career. Depending on your situation, you may end up losing your job, having to move to another location, or keeping your job and having to cope with significant changes to your work environment. Whatever the scenario, this situation will force you to learn to adapt to important losses. Since work allows us to satisfy needs such as financial security, self-realization, prestige, and social networking, it is never easy to face major changes that jeopardize all of this.

As with any loss, such change is an experience that we must learn to cope with. Even though it does not alleviate the difficulties associated with having to adapt to these losses, it helps to know that this adaptation generally follows predictable stages.

**Stage 1: Shock**
When someone faces the possibility of the loss of a job or a major work transition, it is normal at first to feel shocked, incredulous, and angry. We cannot believe what is happening nor can we grasp it to its full extent.

**Stage 2: Denial**
Almost simultaneous to this first set of reactions is a period of denial. With the gradual awareness of the loss and of what it implies, we tend to create all kinds of scenarios which attempt to deny what is obvious or to delay the full awareness of what might become the inevitable. It is an “error”; “someone” has made a “mistake”; “they will realize their mistake”; etc.

As time passes, we gradually realize that this reality is unlikely to change. We may deal with the situation by acting as if nothing has really changed. We may also try to pretend that the change will not force us to alter some of our habits or behaviors. In fact, we try to act as if it may still be possible that the change will not take place or not really affect us.

**Stage 3: Despair**
Gradually, we realize that our situation will never be the same. It is often at this stage that we fully grasp what has been lost with the change. At this time many of us experience despair which often translates into anger and aggressiveness, or into discouragement, depression or other self-deprecating behaviors. It is also a period when we question some of our choices and priorities, evaluate our lives, and find the inner strength and resources to regain control of our lives.
Stage 4: Making plans

As we learn to live with the fact that things will never be the same again, we begin to look forward. We mobilize our energy and gradually get ready to take on new plans and projects which will help us get through this situation. At the same time we notice new opportunities and new ways of resuming a productive life. This is normally the last phase of our adaptation to such a dramatic and traumatic change.

What can you do?

・ **Do not depreciate yourself.** You are not responsible for the changes and there is nothing you could have done to prevent this from happening.

・ **Ask questions!** Confront rumors and clarify worries. Do not just sit and wait... Take action!

・ **Keep a positive attitude!** You will need all your energy to maintain your motivation to get organized, and to refocus your work efforts. Do not waste energy on negative and self-deprecating thoughts which lead nowhere.

・ **Take the time to assess your work experience.** Facing a major work transition does not mean that you have lost your skills, aptitudes, and accomplishments. You need to regain self-confidence, to better understand what you really like and are good at, and to identify the various skills you have and where you may want to improve.

・ **Take the time to sit down and prepare, preferably in writing, a plan to cope with the transition.** Determine what your needs and objectives are. Is relocation a possibility? Are you ready to move elsewhere? Are there any services to assist you with finding a new job or adapting to the changes in your job? Do you know people, groups or other resources that may assist you with your efforts? Establish a schedule which will help you assess your progress and keep your motivation as high as possible.

・ **Review your work options:** do you feel ready to launch your own business? You may have developed some very specialized skills which may be easy to market if you made them available to a larger number of organizations.

・ **Take advantage of the various services that your employer may be providing.** Seasoned professionals will assist you in making decisions at various levels. Additionally, professional and community resources can help you. Your local employment center, Community Health Center, or your Assistance Program may be of great support.

・ **Take the time to talk about your reactions and feelings with your family, relatives or close friends.** Ask them for support and advice.

・ **Take care of yourself.** During this transition period, it is imperative that you continue to live, go out with family or friends, exercise, or engage in hobbies or cultural and social events. This will help you recharge your batteries and develop a different perspective on your situation.

・ **Talk about it!** If needed, do not hesitate to seek professional help. Contact your Assistance Program.