



DUE TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES: Adapt or Collapse

Introduction – This activity was developed in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, but the content can be used for any situation where an individual or group is forced to adapt to sudden or unexpected changing circumstances

The COVID-19 Epidemic has forced people to learn about how they handle change because this situation forced change on everyone involved, to varying degrees. Other life situations can do the same such as:

- Suddenly losing an important job or a major financial change
- Finding out you or someone you are close with are seriously sick or disabled
- A serious accident or natural disaster
- Losing a loved one unexpectedly
- Going into or coming out of a controlled environment

(There are other examples as our lives, our circumstances, and the world changes)

Consider some stages to the process of adapting to these types of unforeseen circumstances (like the COVID-19 Pandemic)

As a group try to answer all of the questions

1. Shock – In the shock stage, we may feel surprised. Believing what is going on around us can be hard. This can be normal for a while however shock can lead to denial. **People who stay in shock do not adapt.**

- Were you in shock at first? If so, what was that like?
- What would it be like to be stuck in the shock stage? (How would someone who stayed in shock and could not get past this stage act?)
- How do people get stuck in the shock stage?
- How do people successfully move past the shock stage?

2. Venting – Once shock is over and reality sets in some venting and complaining may often follow. This may feel good at first but after a while can become very counterproductive

- What are some things you wanted to vent about with this situation?
- What happens when people get stuck in the venting stage? How does that happen?
- How do people successfully move past the venting stage?

3. Assess – Next comes the stage where we need to figure out what we are going to do.

- What changes did you assess that you needed to make- or still need to make, in order to successfully adapt?
- Why is action needed next?



4. **Action** – Assessment is not useful if we don't do something with it by making decisions and taking action.

- What is it like when people fail to act when change is happening?
- What actions have you taken or still need to take to keep successfully adapting, thriving and/or surviving in spite of what is going on?

People who take well thought out action are the ones who adapt – others who get stuck may collapse

Ending with what is positive – Discuss the following as a group:

Even when bad things happen, people can sometimes* experience what is called **posttraumatic growth**. A simple way to think about posttraumatic growth is to think about ways that your personality and lifestyle has changed for the better in spite of all the bad that happened.

**Unfortunately, posttraumatic growth is not a guarantee and does not always happen, but it is far more likely to be experienced by people who adapt to try to make the best out of bad situations and attempt to stay as positive as they can in spite of any loss or pain they may have experienced*

Have you experienced any of the following aspects of growth from this experience, and if so how?

- Improved existing relationships (especially with those close to you and who may have shared the experience with you, like family and friends)
- Rebuilt old relationships – People from the past or who you were not as close with, who came through and connected with you or helped you during this time (Distant family or old friends who you reconnected with)
- New connections and relationships – Forming new connections with resources, ideas, opportunities, or people who you can keep in your life even after the situation is over
- Lessons learned that can be used again in the future (What to do, what not to do, what works and what doesn't)
- New positive habits and routines (Things that you started doing during the situation that are good for you that you may choose to continue doing in your life)
- An increased feeling of inner strength and resilience (The ability to bounce back in the face of adversity)
- An increased sense of gratitude