Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education

All Change!

Did you know?

Change can be seen as a process someone goes through, not an event that happens*. Times of change, like going back to school, can bring stress in their wake: a change of routine, of pace, of activities, of people you spend your time with... can all take their toll. Importantly, some people may be excited by change, so we shouldn't assume they are nervous as they may come to believe they should be! For some, change can even come with a sense of relief as the structure of school/work is reassuring and makes them feel safe. However, there will be those for whom change comes with fear about the unknowns of the phase ahead and whether they can do all of the things expected of them.

So for those who do struggle with change, what can they try?

1 Accept the feelings

Your feelings are valid as they are preparing your body and mind for what is ahead. The emotions you feel do not need to be avoided or removed, simply acknowledged. Saying to yourself - 'It's OK to feel nervous, it's helping me cope' can release a lot of pressure.

2 Reduce load

We are designed to cope with some change but too much change can be overwhelming. Think about what you can delay changing during busy times. For example, starting a new hobby could wait until next month.

3 Understand the process

Essentially, when things change we are grieving the loss of what was. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross* was a Swiss-born psychiatrist renowned for her pioneering work on loss. The Kübler-Ross Change Curve can be very helpful and includes the stages of shock, denial, frustration, depression, experiment, decision, integration. There are no time frames for these phases and so understanding that someone will move through some or all in their own time and in their own order is the most compassionate thing we can do. Use phrases such as: "I know you'll work this out and I'm here if you want to talk". Or, coaching questions: "What's one thing you could do to make this change easier?" or "What about this situation can you control?".

References
*https://www.ekrfoundation.org/elisabeth-kubler-ross/
For more information on the Change Curve see: https://www.cleverism.com/understanding-kubler-ross-change-curve/

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