Coping with change

Change is usually easier to accept if you feel confident that you can adapt to new experiences. Here are some tips for coping with change:

• **Anticipate change.** Take steps to avoid becoming rigid and afraid of new experiences. Throughout life, keep making friends, exploring new interests and activities, and accepting new challenges.

• **Take care of your health.** If you’re facing a big change, take extra care to eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, get enough sleep and limit alcohol consumption.

• **Learn to relax.** You might find it helpful to take a yoga class or listen to relaxation tapes, which are available at most bookstores and public libraries. Or set aside a few minutes daily to visualize yourself remaining calm and happy.

• **Stay positive.** Try not to jump to conclusions about the change you’re facing. Negative thoughts can block your creativity and problem-solving skills. Positive thoughts build bridges to possibilities and opportunities.

• **Gather information.** Often, the most stressful thing about change is the uncertainty it brings. To ease anxiety, learn as much as you can about what you’re facing.

• **Limit or “pace” your changes.** Try not to make a big change before you’ve adjusted to a prior change. If you are already stressed, try to postpone making big decisions.

• **Consider joining a support group.** If a change feels too big to handle alone, consider joining a support group for people who are going through a similar experience. You might join a group for stepparents, newcomers to a community or people who care for an older adult.

• **Consider seeing a professional counselor.** Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Even strong people need support and guidance when faced with tough circumstances.