

Peter Christensen Health Center News



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Coping With Change Can Be Difficult

As part of Minority Mental Health Month, we take a look below at ways of coping with change. McKalee Steen, a member of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, and PhD candidate at UC Berkeley, says change can be sudden and difficult to cope with. McKalee offers some tips and insights for dealing with change throughout your life journey.

What You Need To Know

Change is inevitable

Every season we watch the world transform around us. Whether its leaves falling off trees to prepare for winter, or flowers blossoming in the spring and summer, change is a constant part of life for all our relatives. We are no different. Your life will have many different seasons. The transition between them might be challenging. But, without change there is no growth.

Keep moving and don't get stuck

When water in a river stops flowing, it can have damaging effects on the overall health of the plants, animals, and other life that rely on balance in the river's ecosystem. It may be helpful to think of our journey in life like the path of a river. While it is important to rest when you need to, it is also important to keep moving through the changes in our lives.

Be a good relative

It is important to be in good relationships with other humans, our plant and animal relatives, and our ancestors. They support us through change, and, in turn, we will support them too. We are all connected in many ways, and it is important that we take care of each other.

Find people who will support your change

Find people – whether friends, family, or mentors – that will continue to support you. Lifelong friendships and networks help you. They will also give you the opportunity to lend others a hand. Support is not one way.

Find supportive people *continued*

You will find yourself supporting others through changes in their lives too. It is important there is give-and-take to our relationships with our relatives.

Focus on your values

Focusing on your core values can help you decide how you want to behave when the world feels unstable. During life transitions, ask yourself, "What matters most to me?" It might be kindness, honesty, family, and cultural practices. Then ask yourself "Do I know any traditional values I can apply to my life right now?" These might be values like "Respecting our elders" "Expressing gratitude" and "Recognizing the gifts in yourself and others." Let your personal and traditional values be your foundation. Our values teach us important lessons about how we should treat ourselves, others, and the world around us. Our values help us throughout life's journey.

Remember your roots

You come from people who experienced and embraced change for thousands of years. Our ancestors adapted to changes in their world. Their resilience and resistance have shaped our world today. That same power to adapt to change and create new paths lives within you!

Please contact your PCHC healthcare team at (715) 588-3371 to learn how to access culturally-informed healthcare.