CHANGE TOOLKIT

Tool: Mad, Sad, Glad Exercise

My Notes

What is it?

Mad, sad, glad is an interactive exercise designed to help people understand and acknowledge the feelings that they have about change and about specific parts of a change. It reinforces the fact that it is okay and absolutely normal to have all of these feelings about change.

It provides an opportunity for people to say how they feel about different aspects of the change as well as a forum to discuss those feelings. It also enables people to see how their team members feel and consider what support they require.

Why use it in a change process?

People often have very different and sometimes very mixed feelings about change. Some people may feel very positive about a proposed change, others negative, and others have mixed feelings. In addition, some people may not have had the time or space to consider what it is about the change that is making them feel sad or upset, or excited and eager to get stuck in.

This exercise will help you, as the **Change** or **Team Manager**, to get these emotions out into the open. Just having the opportunity to express them will help some people feel better about the change. By using a number of objective statements, you will be able to ensure that these emotions are not directed at any particular people. This tool enables everyone to have their say, whereas in open discussion forums some people may dominate the conversation. You will also be able to understand what steps to take to help people through the process.

You can run this exercise in any of the first three stages of change - **Gaining Entry, Fact Find** and **Disengage**. It is probably most appropriate to use during Disengage, as it helps people to recognise and acknowledge what they are losing, but also to identify what they will be gaining from the new situation.

What do I need to do?

Preparation

1.   Invite the relevant people to a workshop. Ensure it is in a room where they will not be disturbed and where they can concentrate on the change.

2.   Make sure you have some pictures of faces displaying people being mad, sad or glad. These can be cartoon faces or pictures from magazines or newspapers. You will also need flipchart paper or a roll of wallpaper/brown paper, flipchart pens, regular pens and Post-it-notes.

3.   Write down a number of key objective or factual statements about the change. For example:

- The organisation is moving to new premises 4 miles away from the current site.
- The organisation will have an off-site store for its paper records.

- The organisation will provide everyone with the appropriate equipment to work remotely if they so wish.
- You will not necessarily see all of your team members every day.

4.   Put these statements onto pieces of paper large enough for everyone to read them on a board in the workshop.

During the workshop
1.   Put up the pictures of the faces displaying emotions of mad/sad/glad on the flipchart paper.
2.   Provide people with post-it notes
3.   Stick the first statement onto the 'mad' picture. Ask people to write down what it is that makes them mad or angry about that statement on the post-it notes. This should take about five minutes.
4.   Ask people to stick the items up around the picture
5.   Repeat with sad and glad.
6.   Move onto the next statement. When you have been through all of the statements, allow a short break
7.   During the break, group post-it notes into similar themes.
8.   Discuss the items that people have put up. Are there any common threads? Are there any areas where people feel particularly mad or particularly glad?
9.   Ask if anyone would like to say a little bit more about what they put down.
10. Finish with glad leaves things on a positive note.
11. Acknowledge range of emotions and range of ways people feeling. Say it's ok to feel like this; natural part of change process. Need to bear this in mind when people are interacting with each other during the change. Be aware of what others will find hard and need to support each other.
12. Thank everyone for their attendance and participation.

Follow-up
1.   Review the post-it notes to see how communications may need to be improved or if there are any areas where people need particular support (not as individuals, but as a group). Consider how to help people mark a loss if necessary. Consider how to address issues where people are feeling mad. It may not be possible to do this and the exercise is about allowing people to acknowledge that their feelings are okay, whatever they are.

2.   Write up key points and send them out to those who attended the workshop

3.   Make a poster or a card or some other form of visual reminder for people of all the things they were feeling glad about. Distribute this to people so that they can re-visit it during tough times in the change.