



**UNIT IV:
Community/
Public Policy
Leadership
Skills**

Module 1: Dealing With Change

Change has always been part of the human condition. What is different now, however, is the pace of change, and the prospect that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life. The age in which we live is changing so fast that we often feel we do not have time to adjust before more change takes place.

Change can be defined as any planned or unplanned alteration in the status quo of an organism, situation or process. Change may happen through transmission — without deliberate or conscious social actions or decisions — or through transformation, which occurs as a result of planned or conscious social decisions or action.

Planned change is an intended, designed, or purposeful attempt by an individual, group, organization or larger social system to directly influence the status quo of itself, another organism or a situation.

Leadership and Change

One of the key parts of the leadership process is dealing with change. Individuals face change in many different ways. This may vary with the nature of the change and whether it is voluntary (i.e., chosen), or involuntary, happening without control or choice. Sometime it is possible to predict a change, while others occur in an unpredictable fashion.

Communities and organizations also experience transitions and changes. The culture of an organization or community is a composite of the individuals who live, work or belong. Organizational change is any planned or unplanned alteration of the status quo which affects the structure, technology and human resources of the total organization.

Stages of Change

Three stages of change can usually be identified: endings, the neutral zone, and new beginning.^{1,2} Change can often be examined by starting with an ending.

• Endings

The ending is actually the beginning of the transition. An end marks the death of the old — old habits are given up. Loss of a spouse, close friends moving, children leaving home, a committee finishing its projects, or a change in jobs are just a few examples of what could be described as endings.

In each of the above examples, something is given up. In other examples, even when the change will involve a new opportunity such as getting a grant, being elected to an office or getting a new job, there is an ending to an existing pattern of behavior.

• Neutral Zone

The bridge between the ending and a new beginning is characterized as the neutral zone. Typically, there is a struggle with the situation, and there is mourning. It should be a time when you talk with others about what has happened and process your experience and feelings.