

# Understanding and Managing Transitions



Adapted from presentations by Catherine W. Owinyi (Training Secretary FOCUS-Kenya) and by Duncan Olumbe (Mission Together Africa)

# Introduction

## ● Exercise

What are your two highlights and challenges where you are right now? What one thing do you look forward to?

“The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another”

- Someone said, if you refuse to change, change will change you. When change comes you have to respond to it accordingly.

# Transitions

- Individual transitions
  - Changing from being a student to an apprentice
  - Changing from being a leader in the CU to being led in a placement
  - Changing from the frontal position to working from behind the scenes
  - Changing from a programmed environment to where you have to plan for yourself
  - Changes from being single to having a fiancé or from having one to having none, etc
- **Transitions in iSA Generally**
  - Staff getting used to the new apprentices.
  - The placement getting used to the new apprentice.
  - Apprentice getting used to the new environment, staffs, different programs, etc

# Facts about transition

- ✓ It is inherently part of our daily life
- ✓ It has costs that accompany it
- ✓ Can be easy or complicated
- ✓ Could be short or Long Term
- ✓ Can be managed or mismanaged
- ✓ have something to teach

# 21<sup>st</sup> century work

- Decrease in permanent & pensionable
- Increase in short term contracts, sub-contracting and 'projects' tied to funding
- Most workers will shift company around every 5 years and may shift career path 3 times in their lifetime

# Biblical examples

- Moses from leading the sheep of his father in law to taking care of the Sheep of his Heavenly Father
- Entering the Promised Land (Deut. 30:11-20)
- The handing over by Samuel – (1 Sam. 12)
- Elijah- Elisha – 2 Kings 2
- Peter changing from fishing from the lake to becoming a fisher of men
- Disciples from being with Christ each day to living with the Holy Spirit
- Paul and the Ephesian Leaders (Acts 20)
- Paul and Timothy (2 Timothy)

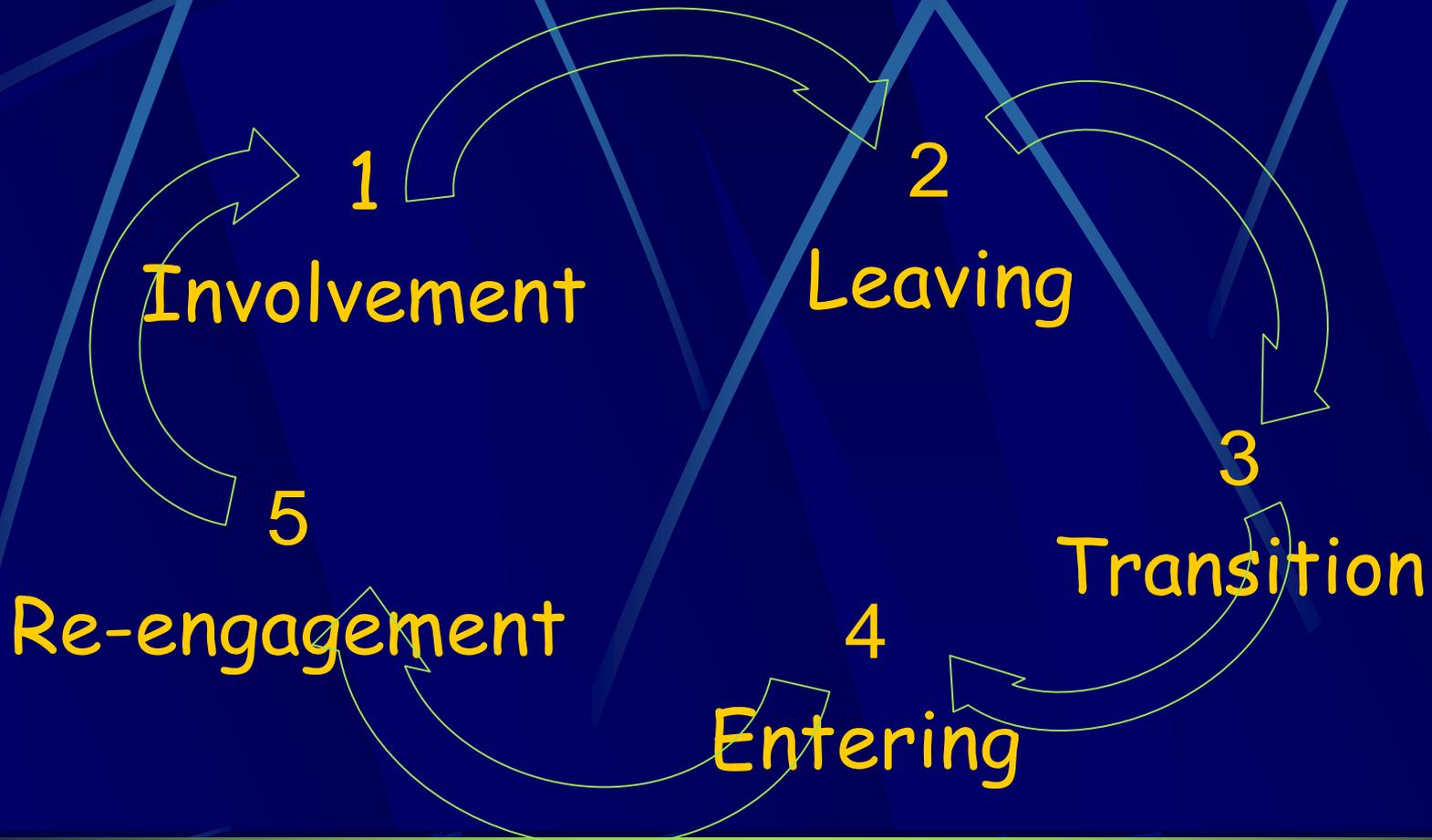
# Why individuals resist change

- The individual sources of resistance to change reside in basic human characteristics such as perceptions, personalities and needs.
- As much as change comes with good things, it meets a lot of resistance from individuals. Some of the reasons include;
  - Habits
  - Security
  - Economic factors
  - Fear of the unknown
  - Selective information processing
  - Parochial self interest

# Overcoming the resistance

- Understand the organization's culture and its expectations. In understanding this culture you begin to walk, talk, and live it
- Understand the mission of the organization. You need to understand and internalise the mission statement.
- Understand the ethos and expectations of the organisation.
- Participate and be involved in what is happening
- Ask where you don't understand for clarity purposes for clarity purposes
- Be dynamic and flexible in your area of work. It is only you who understands the placement.

# Transition Process/stages



# Transition Process/Stages

- **1. INVOLVEMENT**
  - **Commitment**  
Belonging  
Responsibility  
Achievement
  - **Status**  
Reputation, Position, Defined roles
  - **Intimacy**  
Knowing/known, Part of "in" group, Sub-culture  
Rich friendships, relationships
  - **Psychological**  
Secure, safe, confident  
Present focused

## University life

- A student with students (similar background) – mono group
- Well known collection of friends
- Programs are in place and roles defined
- No question or accounting on utilization of pocket money
- Being a leader and influencer (power to influence)
- High ambitions and expectations like doing masters immediately
- Leading from the front
- Not really very sure what iServe Africa is all about
- Maybe still a bit ambivalent about joining iServe

## ● 2. LEAVING

- **Preparation – future focus**

- Disengaging, separating, withdrawal
  - Start to become an outsider, more critical
  - Exclusion by those remaining

- **Closure**

- Farewells (key people and places), easily postponed
  - Hand over responsibilities
  - Celebration, recognition, thankfulness
  - Resolve conflict

- **Psychological – denial & idealized expectations**

- Feeling rejected, Resentment and Guilt
  - Nightmares
  - Conflicts more common
  - Grief at loss, Yo-yo emotions

## **Coping mechanisms**

- Do goodbyes well
- Take special objects from home – a few photos of family, school; cards/letters from friends; diaries; jewelry; clothing; familiar food; music
- Find out all you can about destination
- Lower/realistic expectations

### ● 3. TRANSITION

- **Clueless**

Communication, culture, how to greet people, eat

- **Structureless**

Chaos

- **Statuslessness, no name**

Distancing, isolated, must initiate  
Misunderstood by others

- **Anxiety & Grief & Future focus**

Fearful, Emotional instability, Nightmares  
Disappointed expectations

Honeymoon (tourist) → Anger/reject → Level out

- Don't give up just hold on
- People may discourage you, you may get stuck in the mud, but just hold on to grace, for He who called you is able to keep you from falling.
- "for mourning may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning"
- Be productive even if things seem strange
- Ok to grieve but don't make that the focus of your conversations with everyone
- Catch yourself getting depressed and speak to yourself (Psalm 42-43)
- Keep going with devotions even when dark and down

## ● 4. ENTERING

- **Status marginal**

Superficiality of acceptance

Risk taking, Errors in response, Misinterpretation of signals → romance or conflict

Want to take over things but need to hold back

- **Introduction**

Search for mentor to help with cultural cues

- **Psychology – Vulnerability**

Loss and change

Excitement

Sleep/eating problems

Often depression

- Gauge when to take initiative and risks – invite yourself along to things
- Putting things together
- Beginning to understand what some things are for and how to be involved. It is an entering stage
- Give yourself time – learning to walk takes time and persistence and falls
- Don't give in to self-pity / wallow – move on through entering to involvement
- Get help with serious problems (not sleeping/eating)
- Once a quarter get together with countrymen
- Journal your feelings and God's work

## ● 5. INVOLVEMENT

- **Commitment**

  - Belonging

  - Involvement, responsibilities

- **Status**

  - Known, Title

  - Accepted (though still an alien)

  - Intimacy**

    - Concern for others

    - Building relationships

    - Will still be surprises

    - Safe & Secure

*(Adapted from Dr. D. Pollock & Jan Stafford)*

- Things are beginning to fit together and cohere and make sense (though you're still making plenty of mistakes)
- It is a period of total involvement and participation
- This is an involvement stage where the individual grows in the work.
- It is a moment for tears of both joy and disappointments, sometimes you pray and nothing seems to be working and God seems far away.
- A thorough molding stage

# Managing Transitions

- Accept the reality of transition and anticipate loss
- Analyse the distance between home & destination
- Remember that God has privileged you by offering you a year to serve Him
- Share with closest friends
- Be frank and open with the iServe staff
- Develop a positive attitude
- Find support options
- Know your strengths & weaknesses and personality
- Press on in knowing Jesus better as your life and joy, your righteousness and High Priest, the author and finisher of your faith

# Conclusion

Well managed transitions results in growth that is holistic and broad, progressive and productive.

What we call the beginnings is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning

The end is where we start from.