

TRANSITIONS

Sustaining Social Change

*there is no beginning without an end
what is over? what isn't?
what can I let go of?
chaos can*

Transitions Map of Stakeholders

Any community change involves multiple stakeholders, the people and groups who are invested in and affected by the change. Some stakeholders may be aligned with the organization leading the change; others may be in opposition. Still others may not even know that there is a change underway.

An important first step for change leaders is to identify the full range of stakeholders whom the change will impact and think about the transition phase in which each of them might be.

Doing so can illuminate how different people might respond to the initiative and can inform how change leaders approach these parties. Often, this exercise reveals to change leaders that they disproportionately reach out to groups experiencing a New Beginning and spend less time engaging people in Endings, who tend to show the most resistance. Failing to attend to those grappling with the losses brought on by the change can sabotage the initiative in the long run.

Name the change that the community is experiencing or that the change leader is initiating:

(For example, a gay-rights organization wants to build a drop-in center for lesbian and gay youth in a community that is becoming increasingly hostile to lesbians and gays. The major change in this case is the center, itself. While there may be multiple changes stemming from one community change, complete this exercise for only one change at a time.)

Identify the stakeholders whom the change will impact:

(Name all those affected by this change, including those who are opposed to it or those unaware of the initiative. Change leaders, be sure to put yourself in one of the boxes!)

1.	5.
2.	6.
3.	7.
4.	8.

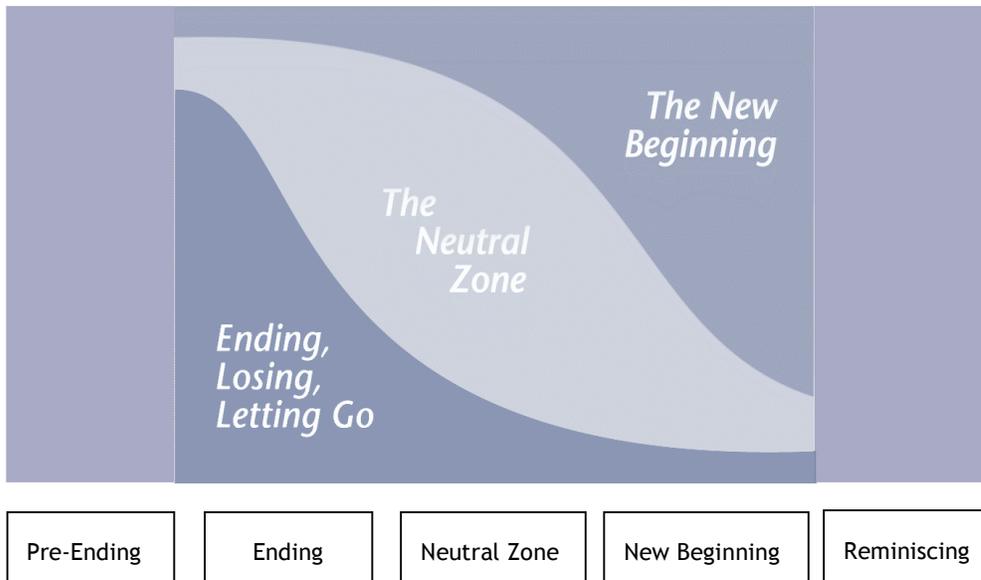
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Identify which transition phase each stakeholder is in and mark it on the map below.

(Use the indicator phrases following the map to help guide your placement. For more detailed descriptions of behaviors displayed during transitions phases, see [Guide to Diagnosing Stages of Transition in Community Changes.](#))



Source: William Bridges

Pre-ending: Deny or do not perceive there is a problem or a need for change, or they haven't heard of the idea: "I never heard of that." "Dumb idea" "Yeah, *right!*" "Why do we have to do anything?" "Give it time, the problem will pass."

Endings: Have a hard time letting go of the *status quo* or the past way of doing things: "Unrealistic." "Too risky." "Never work." "I would, but they won't." "Yes, but only if . . ." "I think you need to understand..."

Neutral zone: Struggle with how to behave or what to do now that they have acknowledged the need for change or made some tentative step in a new direction: "Whose idea was this?" "I think you should..." "I thought we had agreed to..." "Does anybody around here know what they are doing?"

Beginning: Comfortable with a new behavior or attitude: "I think I get it." "This isn't as bad as I thought it was going to be."

Reminiscing: Able to reflect on the transition: "Do you remember when. . ." "I knew it all along." "Let me tell the story . . ."

Keep in Mind:

- Change leaders may do this exercise on their own, within their organizations, and eventually, when trust is established, with a broader group of stakeholders. Having others identify and explain what transition phase they are in can reveal their perspectives, anxieties, and expectations related to the change. Airing these issues early in the process can inform how the initiative develops and can prevent them from derailing the process later.
- Repeat the exercise periodically as the change effort progresses and as new participants are brought into the process. Date each map so that you can track how things are going.
- Chunk the work. Break big changes down into several smaller ones and complete a different map for each. For example, an effort to improve relations between police and neighborhood youth might include: changes in strategies to address the problem, changes in policies implemented by the city or police department, the change of having youth involved as decision-makers, etc.

Source: Andrus Transitions Coaches Collaborative, 2005