



# Education that's transforming lives and communities

## Adaptability – Resource guide

Bank of America's training and professional development organization dedicated to the growth and success of our local communities and teammates

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# Overview

## Description

This **Adaptability** guide will serve as a resource to provide learners with the tools to explore and improve their willingness and ability to adapt to new and changing circumstances. This guide is ideal for individuals looking to develop the skills and mindset needed to adjust and thrive in any environment.



## Introduction

Adaptability is a crucial skill to possess in today's workforce because it enables you to:

- Navigate changing work environments.
- Promote collaboration and teamwork.
- Embrace creative problem solving and innovation.
- Continuously learn and grow.

Adaptability can be challenging if you have trouble stepping outside of your comfort zone or balancing competing priorities. Some individuals may struggle with adapting to change due to fear of the unknown or preference for routine. This building of adaptive habits can help you embrace changes as they come and maintain a growth mindset that will allow you to pivot as needed.

This resource guide includes exercises and resources for the following:

- The what and the why
- Habits of adaptability
- How to change and adapt
- Showcasing your adaptability
- Relating adaptability to your goals

## Journal activities

**Note:** Throughout this resource guide, there will be several journaling activities. Keep a document with all of your answers so that you can refer back to it as you continue on your career journey.

If you would like to record your answers directly into this guide, use the **comment** feature if you are viewing the document in **Adobe® Reader®** or the **type text** feature if you are viewing in a web browser.

To use the comment / type text features, simply click the button on the toolbar and then stamp the textbox onto your page to type.



## The path of adaptability

The **Adaptability** course takes you on a journey through the mountain of adaptability. Similar to adaptability, mountains offer opportunities for exploration, growth and conquering new heights. As you set goals for your life and career, having adaptability in your toolbelt prepares you for the inevitable — **change**.







# The what and the why of adaptability

## What is adaptability?

**Adaptability** is a person's ability to adjust to changes in their environment. Being adaptable professionally reflects how well someone can deal with changes in work processes and the work environment itself as well as interact with others.

## Why it matters?

**Adaptability** is about taking opportunities to increase skills using new and unfamiliar techniques. It might mean changing your style or making do with available resources. It's important to be **actively learning** and open to new ways of doing things. It is a skill that is critical to **personal** and **professional** growth.



**Journal prompt: Now that you have an idea of what adaptability is and why it matters personally and professionally, let's think about it in reference to our past experiences.**

**Write about a specific situation in which you had to adapt to a significant change. Describe what the change was, how you initially reacted and what you learned.**

# Habits of adaptability



Key habit	Examples
Try new activities.	<b>Personal:</b> Trying a new hobby <b>Professional:</b> Using new tools and technology
Be flexible.	<b>Personal:</b> Changing a personal routine <b>Professional:</b> Taking on new tasks and responsibilities
Address change and uncertainty.	<b>Personal:</b> Moving to a new town or facing relationship or health issues <b>Professional:</b> Experiencing organization changes, mergers or new leadership
Learn and develop continuously.	<b>Personal:</b> Taking up painting, music or sports <b>Professional:</b> Learning about negotiation, budgeting or technology
Solve problems creatively.	<b>Personal:</b> Getting to know a neighbor who can help with a problem <b>Professional:</b> Embracing new ideas to drive innovation

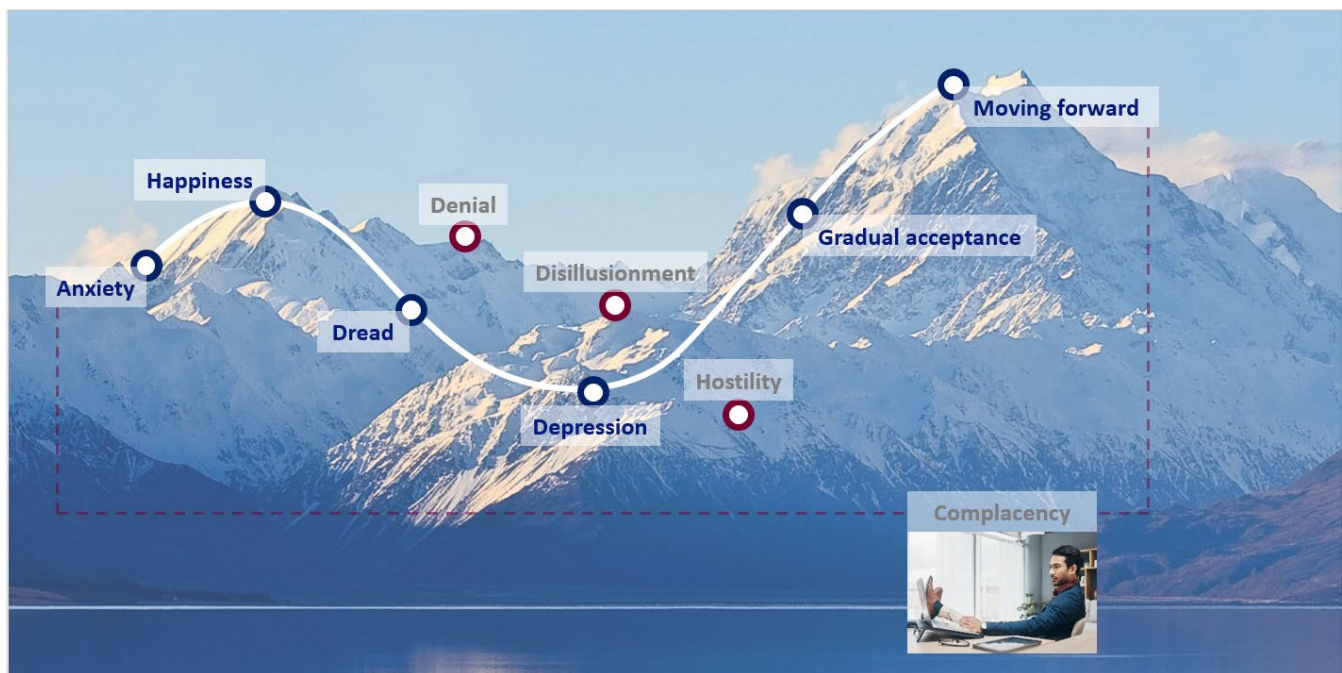
**Journal prompt:** Make a list of the personal and professional habits that have helped you adapt to change in the past. Reflect on how these skills can be applied to future situations that require adaptability.

**Now, make a list of habits or skills you can start doing today to build your adaptability.**

# How to improve adaptability



## The process of change





## Anxiety

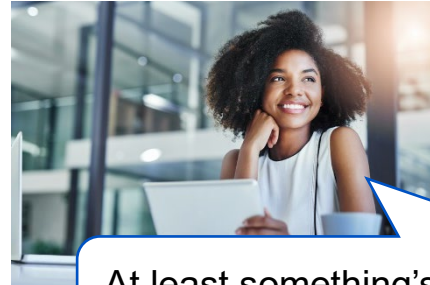
You don't really know what's going to happen next, and you aren't sure what any change will really look like at this point.



Can I cope?

## Happiness

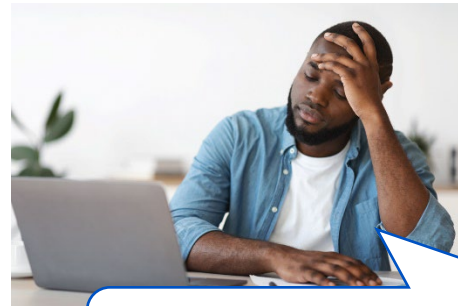
You are feeling really good about the change as this will be the chance to get rid of things, systems and processes that you know don't work.



At least something's going to change.

## Dread

Reality sets in as you understand the implications of the change and become fearful about how you will need to change behaviors and thinking.

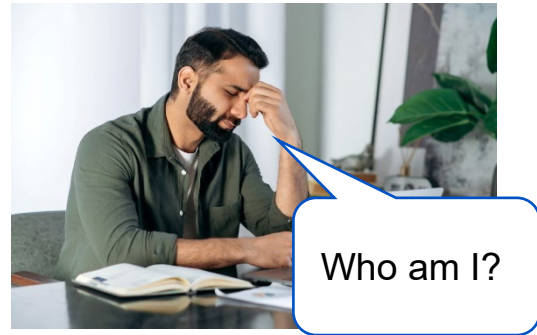


Did I really just do that?



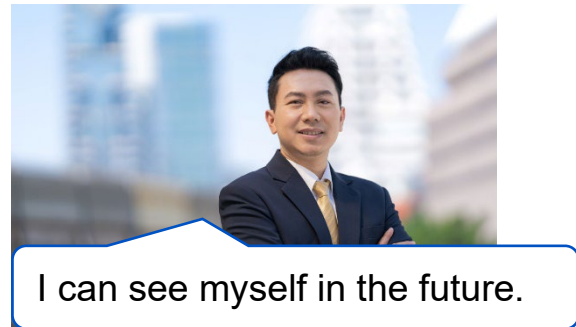
## Depression

You may feel confused and apathetic and really start to wonder who you are.



## Gradual acceptance

You become more emotionally detached from the situation and begin to make sense of your environment and the change.



## Moving forward

You start exerting more control and make more things happen in a positive sense.







## Stumbling block 1: Denial

You deny that any change is occurring at all.



## Stumbling block 2: Disillusionment

You decide that the change does not fit with your value system and you decide to have nothing more to do with it.



## Stumbling block 3: Hostility

You show aggression towards yourself and others and the change, in general.



## Complacency

This is a possible final stage of transition that can pop up after we start moving forward. Here people have survived the change, rationalized the events, incorporated them into their new system and gotten used to the new reality.

Complacency results in a stagnant mindset while adaptability promotes maintaining a growth mindset. The mindset you choose can greatly impact your personal and professional growth.



**Journal prompt: Write about your comfort zone and the areas where you feel less comfortable or resistant to change. Reflect on why these areas are a challenge for you to change and brainstorm ways to slowly take steps outside of your comfort zone.**

**Journal prompt: Can you think of a change that happened in your life that caused you to go through some of these steps? This can be something like searching for a new career or a change in your personal life, such as moving to a new city.**

**Journal prompt: Write about your beliefs and attitudes towards growth that require change. Reflect on whether you have a fixed or growth mindset, or if varies based on the circumstance. Brainstorm ways to cultivate a growth mindset every day.**

## Tips for the journey

Consider the following tips to strengthen your resilience and your ability to process change, challenges and setbacks:

1. Cultivate a growth mindset.
2. Remain flexible in thought and approach.
3. Be willing to acquire new knowledge and skills.
4. Develop problem solving skills.
5. Build a support system and practice self-care.
6. Learn from setbacks.



# How to showcase adaptability

## Scenario

Ariel, a customer service representative, wanted to apply for a customer service position with her dream company. In the meantime, the company she wanted to work for went through a merger and the role she wanted was no longer available. There was a similar role, but she would need to have sales experience in addition to the customer service experience she already possessed. Instead of giving up, she decided to acquire some new skills by taking a course in sales techniques and discussing ways she could put these skills into practice with some existing customers.



## Resume

### Professional experience:

- Customer service strategies resulted in 30% improvement in customer feedback.
- Resilient problem-solving improved customer experience by 20%.
- Cross-functional collaboration with sales team members led to more holistic customer approach.

### Skills:

- Quick learning
- Customer service

### Achievements:

- Five-star customer service rating
- Learning effective sales techniques

### Education and training:

- Customer-service certificate
- Sales workshops





## Cover letter

After reviewing my resume, you will recognize the qualifications that make me a strong fit for this position:

- Ability to adapt and thrive amidst change
- Remaining forward thinking in adversity
- Experience navigating change through organizational shifts
- Eager to contribute adaptive mindset, problem-solving resilience and proven track record of learning new skills

## Interview

Share a time you had to change your overall strategy to meet customer expectations.

- Share relevant results.
- Emphasize problem-solving.
- Highlight collaboration.
- Mention personal growth.

## Follow-up email

**Subject:** Thank you for your time

I especially valued discussing your need for someone who can remain adaptable during change in your organization.

Over the last few years, I've endured many similar challenges, as we discussed, such as taking the initiative to learn new skills and become more versatile in the middle of a change.

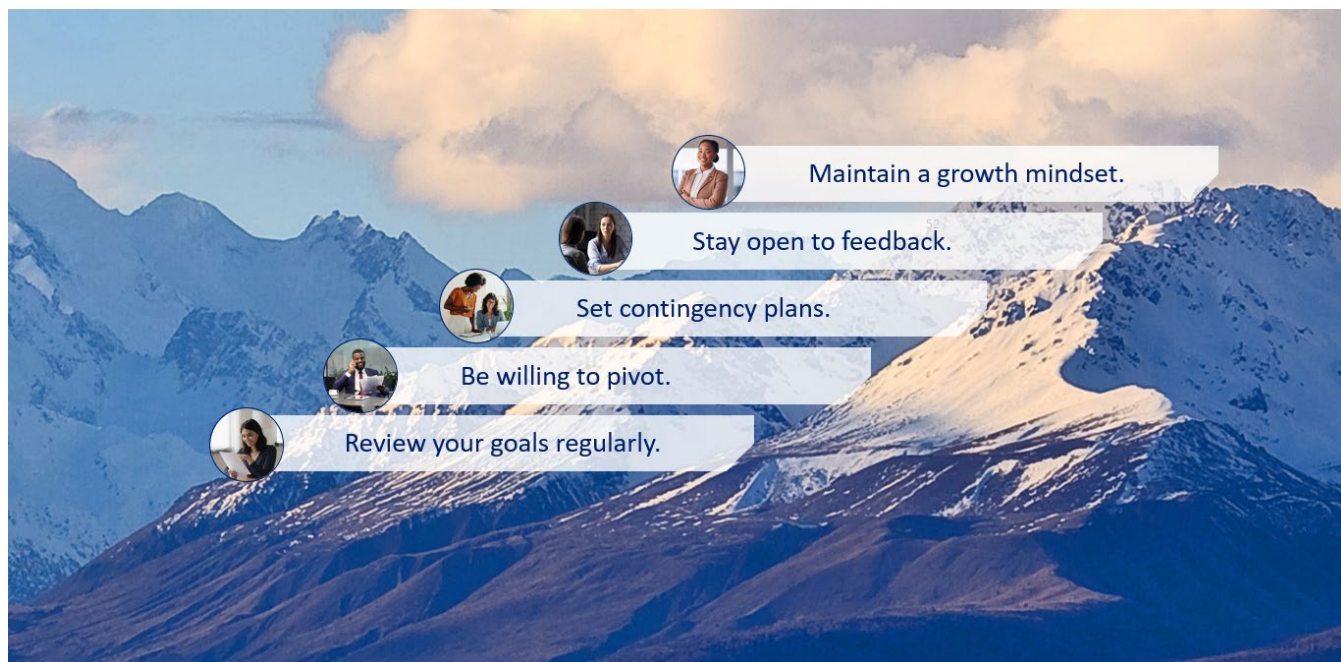
**Journal prompt: Think about your resume, correspondence or your last interview. Then, identify where you can make immediate changes to showcase your adaptability. Write down key accomplishments that highlight your adaptability.**





## Adaptability and your goals

Goals help you identify what you want, drive you to achieve more and determine next steps. Sometimes you may need to adapt or change behaviors to meet your goals and other times you may need to adjust the goals.



**Journal prompt:** Write down specific goals related to adaptability. This could be learning new skills, being open to feedback or seeking out new experiences. Reflect on your progress towards these goals regularly.

## Overcoming obstacles with SMART goals

Part of achieving our goals is to keep a positive mindset that allows us to keep moving forward when obstacles do occur. In this activity, you will be practicing coming up with SMART goals to overcome the obstacles below. If you do not complete this activity as part of the **Adaptability** course, take some time to reflect on how each of these different obstacles could be handled. See the next page for more information on SMART goals.

Group	Obstacle	Resolution
Group 1	You are new to your company. There is a lot of jargon in your field to begin with, and your company specifically seems to use a lot of acronyms that you don't understand. This affects your ability to understand the directions for your assignments and to communicate with your team.	
Group 2	You have just transferred to a new department, and this department handles things a lot differently than your previous one. Many processes are managed through a program you have never worked in before, and it makes it intimidating to complete assignments that were previously easy.	
Group 3	You are hoping to transition to a new field, but you're not sure if your skills are adequate for the role you want. You are currently a bilingual customer service representative, and you are thinking about becoming a translator.	
Group 4	Your company just went through a re-organization, and the career path that you had carefully planned out is no longer available. The roles that are above your position are now different. Some of them are desirable, but they would require extra skills.	

## Overcoming obstacles with SMART goals, continued



SMART goals aid in the creation of better, more achievable goals. Here are the elements of a SMART goal:

- Specific** Be clear so your goals are easier to achieve; this also helps you know where to start.
- Measurable** How will you determine if you are successful? What will you measure to show you achieved your goal?
- Actionable** Can you take the actions necessary to achieve your goal? With actionable goals, you can control the steps to achieve them.
- Realistic** Can you feasibly accomplish the goal without overwhelming yourself or causing unnecessary stress?
- Timebound** A date or time will help you know if you are on track with when the goal needs to be achieved to add the most value.

# Summary

## Conclusion

Bank of America is committed to you and your professional development.

As you continue to develop your adaptability skills, remember to:

- Start with building habits that cultivate adaptive behavior.
- Recognize the stage of transition you're in.
- Find your sweet spot by building resilience and remaining teachable.
- Demonstrate adaptability as you advance your career.
- Integrate adaptability when setting goals.



## Next steps

- Access your resource materials to keep growing and to take next steps toward your goals.
- Update your resume to showcase adaptability.
- Keep an eye out for more workshops in the near future.