

**Sheffield  
Hallam  
University**

| **Leading Through Change**



## Aims of the event

*A day to focus on change, its impact and the opportunities it offers*

- You are in the early stages of a large-scale change process
- Those of you who are line managers will have two different perspectives
- We will be exploring both angles today

## | What we'll be covering

- The skills, behaviours and techniques that will help you to navigate change
- Sharing best practice and learning from colleagues
- Looking ahead to the future and considering your career ambitions
- How to manage your wellbeing through a change period
- Connecting with your peers and developing a support network

## Exercise

- Stand up and group yourselves according to how long you've worked at SHU: 0-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, 20-25 years and 25+ years
- In your groups, discuss what has been the biggest organisational change you've experienced during your time at SHU?
- What conclusions can we draw from this?

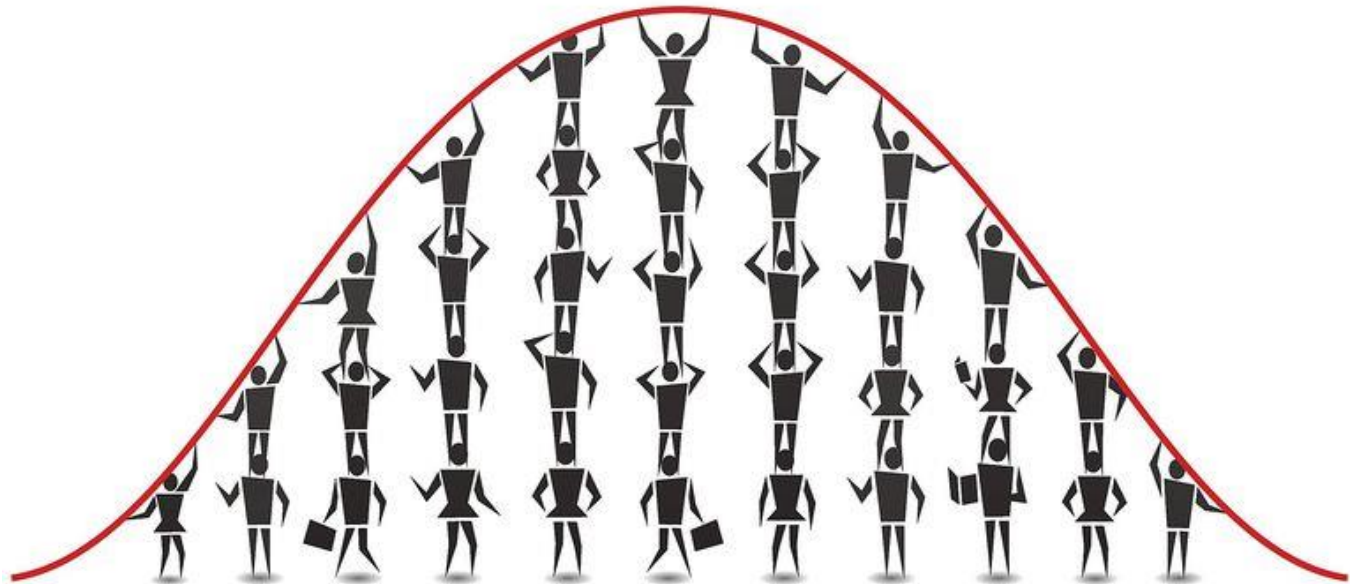
## A brief introduction to change

- Change is constant - it's happening all the time
- Change is inevitable
- Change can trigger a variety of emotional responses - from discomfort, self-doubt and depression to high-energy and a sense of opportunity
- People who have been through multiple change initiatives/reorganisations/restructures can experience 'change fatigue'.
- People can and do survive change

## Resistance to change

- Resistance to change is natural
- Most people will feel some level of resistance to change - some more strongly than others. But be careful about trying too hard to manage resistance.

Resistance to change



Active resistors

Wait and see

Enthusiasts

| **Managing Transitions**  
*William Bridges, 1991*





"It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions"

*William Bridges, Managing Transitions, 1991*

- In the book 'Managing Transitions, William Bridges draws a clear distinction between *change* and *transition*
- Change is defined as being situational e.g. a move to a new site, or the reorganisation of a team. With change, we naturally focus on the outcome that the change produces

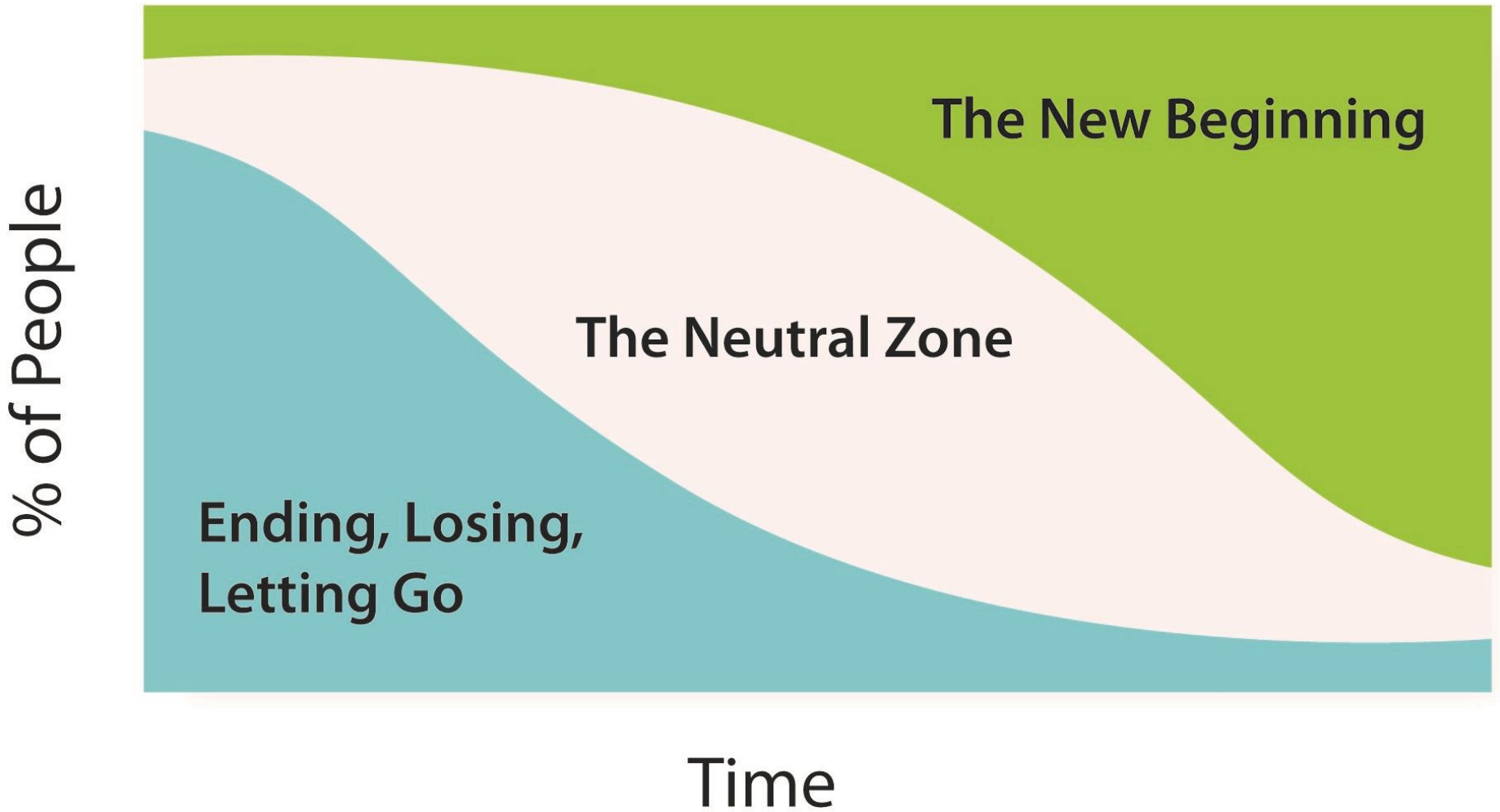
But...

- "without a transition, a change is just a rearrangement of the furniture..."

## | Transition

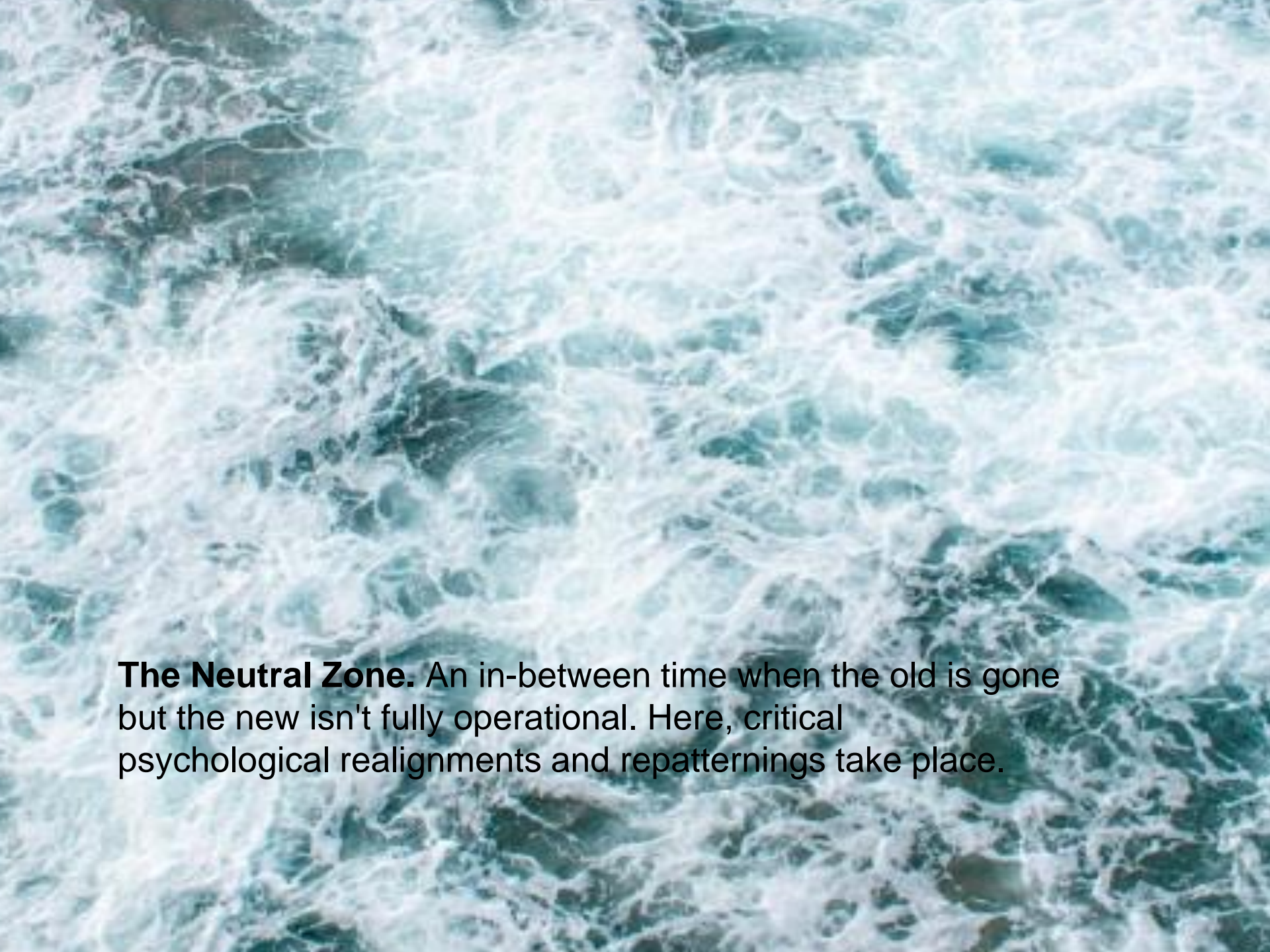
- Transition is psychological
- The starting point for transition is not the outcome *but the ending that you'll have to make to leave the old situation behind*
- Even where there are good changes, transitions begin with an ending - this is paradoxical, but true
- William Bridges identified transition as a three-stage process that people go through as they internalise and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about

The three phases of transition  
William Bridges, 1991



**Ending, Losing, Letting Go.** This involves letting go of the old ways and the old identity people had. This phase is an ending, and the time when you need to help people deal with their losses





**The Neutral Zone.** An in-between time when the old is gone but the new isn't fully operational. Here, critical psychological realignments and repatternings take place.



**The New Beginning.** People develop the new identity, experience the new energy and discover the sense of purpose that make the change begin to work

## | Change - Key points

*Change happens to people even if they don't agree with it.*

*"Before you can begin something new, you have to end what used to be. Before you can learn a new way of doing things, you have to unlearn the old way"*

*The Leader's role in change is not to make people feel happy; it's helping them succeed despite their discomfort.*



| Ending, losing, letting go

*In your experience of change management, what is the impact of not letting go of the old?*

Frustration

Apathy

Continuation of old systems

Cycle of negativity

Inefficiency

Nostalgia

Destructiveness

Resistance





## | Ending, losing, letting go

In groups

- What can you do as leaders to help people let go of the old?
- What can you do as individuals to personally let go of the old and make sure you are 'change ready'?



| Ending, losing, letting go

*"What can you do as leaders to help people let go of the old?"*

- Acknowledge what's ending
- Reinforce the vision behind the change and the benefits of the change
- Celebrate past achievements
- Give people space to grieve and feel loss
- Recognise the different stage that you are at
- Be open and upfront
- Translate 'vision' into realistic action



| Ending, losing, letting go

*"What can you do as individuals to personally let go of the old and ensure you are 'change ready'?"*

- Reflect on your achievements and what you have learned
- Clarify options - evaluate goals
- Identify what skills you have e.g. review your CV
- Identify what behaviours/competencies are no longer required and identify what will be required for the future
- Seek help if you need it
- Ensure you are well-briefed
- Discuss changes with your peers and provide support to each other
- Focus on positives while acknowledging the negatives



## Managing Endings

- Organisational changes fail where no one has thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people
- While the first task of *change management* is to understand the desired outcome and how to get there, the first task of *transition management* is to convince people to leave home
- “Nothing so undermines organisational change as the failure to think through the losses people face” – William Bridges

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*"It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's like being between trapezes. It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to."*

*Marilyn Ferguson, American Futurist*



## Summary

- Change is uncomfortable
- People often focus on change, and forget about transitions
- People will naturally resist change, but paying attention to the transition that needs to take place will help you to manage this
- In order to move forward, you first of all need to acknowledge what's being lost and manage the ending that you and your team are going through