

BENDING WITHOUT BREAKING

UNDERSTANDING ADJUSTMENT

Let's face it: life rarely stays the same for long. One minute you are cruising along comfortably, and the next you are thrown into a new job, a breakup, a move or an unexpected challenge. These moments, whether big or small, call for something we all do but rarely talk about: adjustment.

In psychology, adjustment is the process of finding emotional, mental and behavioural balance in the face of change. Whether it is navigating grief, stepping into a new role or learning to live with a chronic condition, how we adjust shapes not only our experience, but our overall wellbeing. Why does adjustment matter?

Think of adjustment as your internal compass that helps you to stay grounded, even when life spins in a different direction. Good adjustment does not mean everything feels perfect; it means you are finding ways to cope, adapt and still show up for yourself. When the process goes smoothly, we feel stable, motivated and connected. But when it does not – when the stress lingers, emotions run high or we feel stuck – adjustment becomes something worth paying attention to.

Common types of adjustment

- Personal adjustment: This includes how we deal with internal changes such as shifts in identity, mood or confidence.
- Social adjustment: This is how we fit into changing roles in our relationships, family, workplace or community.

Both are equally important and deeply interconnected.

Coping strategies

Not all forms of coping are created equal. Some strategies help us move forward, while others may leave us feeling worse.

- Helpful: talking it out, journaling, problem-solving, asking for support, setting boundaries.
- Unhelpful: avoiding the issue, overworking, suppressing feelings or numbing them through substances.

Learning to recognise your go-to patterns – and being kind to yourself in the process – is the first step towards healthier adjustment habits.

What influences how we adjust?

- Our personality (Are you a planner or do you go with the flow?)
- Our support system (Do you have someone to lean on?)
- Our past experiences (What has change felt like for you previously?)
- Our culture or values (How are change and stress viewed in your world?)

All of these play a part in how we make sense of what is happening to us and how we respond.

The benefits of therapy

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, adjusting feels like too much. That is okay. Therapy can offer a safe, non-judgmental space to process what is happening, explore your emotions and develop tools that work for you.

Adjustment is a normal, necessary and a deeply human experience. Life will change -- and you will too. But you do not have to go through it alone or without support. With the right tools and mindset, adjustment can become less about "just getting by" and more about growing through what you go through. 🌱

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