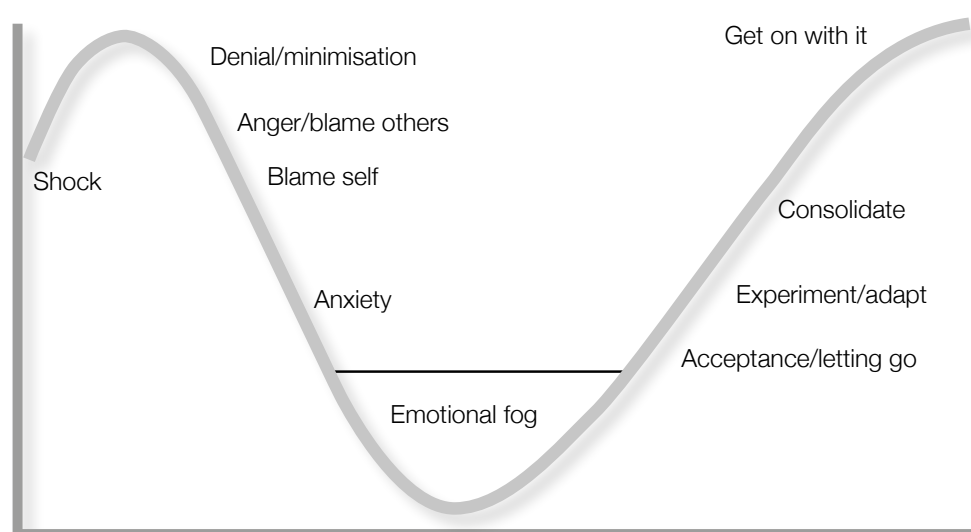


38. Attitude Activity: The Change Curve

The Change Curve is based on a model originally developed in the 1960s by psychologist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross to explain the phases people go through during the grieving process. Kübler-Ross proposed that a terminally ill patient would progress through certain stages of grief when informed of their illness. Nowadays, the curve is used to help people understand their reactions to significant change in their lives.

Starting A level study is a significant change in any student's life and, like any change, it's likely that you will experience some of the following feelings.

The Change Curve



Think about your responses to A level. We've heard things like this:

- » **Rejection:** 'I don't believe what you're telling me about A level study. It doesn't seem any different. I'll carry on as normal.'
- » **Denial/minimisation:** 'I'm fine. It'll be alright. Stop hassling me about how different it is.'
- » **Anger:** 'I actually hate this. The teachers are rubbish. The subjects are nothing like they said they would be. I wish I'd never started or gone to that other college.'
- » **Blame self:** 'It turns out I'm just not clever enough to do this.'
- » **Anxiety:** 'Everyone else is better than me. I'm missing deadlines. I'm not sleeping well. I don't understand the work. I'm not enjoying this challenge at all. I'm scared I'll fail.'
- » **Emotional fog:** Withdrawing effort. Giving up.
- » **Acceptance/letting go:** 'Things are different now. It's hard, but I'm getting to grips with it.'
- » **Experiment/consolidate/get on with it:** 'I'm getting better at this. My grades aren't great but they're improving. There are some parts of these courses I like.'

Attitude

Look at the examples above, and think about where you are on the curve. Then think about your friends too. Are they in different places?

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How does this help? First, you're not alone. Everyone goes through these feelings. Acknowledge and accept them. Second, some students go faster than others, but for most people it takes until the spring to get through the fog. Third, wherever you are on the curve, keep your eyes on the next stage. You *will* get there!

Final Thoughts

We've seen students get stuck in an early phase of the change curve for a long time – weeks and months – where they repeat the same complaints and worries.

If this is you, or someone you know, try Stopping Negative Thoughts on page 86.