Stopping for Invisible Trains

How to Prepare for Transitions You Don't See Coming

wisconsibs
Sisters & Brothers of People with Disabilities

Presented by Stephenie Noggle, Fund Development Coordinator

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Types of Transition

There are 2 types of transition that we are all familiar with:

1. Transitions that come with a deadline or date.

- **High School graduation**

- **Birth of a child**

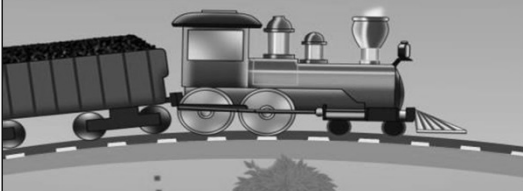**2. Unexpected transitions that have no set date.**

- **Moving**

- **A change in health/functionality.**

What makes invisible transitions difficult?

There's no timeline.

They are often motivated by necessity or loss.
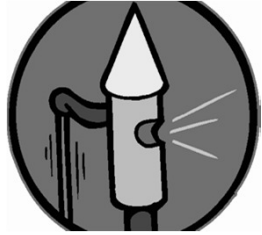
They are very stressful.

How do you confront the unexpected?

STOP LOOK LISTEN

Recognize the signs & prepare.

Take-Away #1: Look for indications that a transition is coming.

Just like train whistles are used as signals, there are always signals of transition.

Such as:

- **A drive or desire that has always been there.**

- **An interest or hobby that develops into something more.**

- **Concerns about the future that need to be addressed.**

Ask questions, listen, and have conversations.

Take-Away #2: Start planning for the transition.

The absence of a timeline doesn't have to be scary.
What it really means is you set and control the timeline.

Plan ahead as often as possible.
That way, you can take steps and set goals on a schedule that works for you.

Be flexible.
You can change the transition timeline if/when you need to.

Take-Away #3: Build a support system.

You can't stand in front of someone else's train.

You can't prevent change, the most you can do is delay it. Rather than fight change; figure out how to contribute to it, be part of it. You can be part of what makes a transition successful and that's a good thing.

Adjust your role as the transition unfolds. Sometimes your role will be active: finding services, making plans. Other times it will be passive: giving suggestions or advice, being available to talk to.

Willingness to "lay down the track of transition" instead of standing in the way of it helps the process go more smoothly. It also helps sustain and support changes in the long-term.

Take-Away #4: Evaluate and adapt to the transition as needed.

This is important both before and after a transition has taken place.

- **Double check your plan and support system; make sure your bases are covered.**

- **Take your time. After making a big change, it can take several months to adjust to it. Give yourself that time; don't evaluate things too quickly.**

- **Ask yourself questions. What am I doing well? What could I have done/should I do differently?**

- **You can't plan for everything and that's OK. Use your support system. Ask for help when you need it.**

The track of transition:

"Sometimes you just have to take a leap... and build your wings on the way down"

"Waiting for everything to be "just right" is an ineffective strategy to move you closer to your dreams. You have to take leaps of faith and trust the process. Embrace the feeling of being nervous, even a little scared. It's a sign you're alive and ready to grow."

-Melissa Tucker