

Active and Passive Opposition to Lean/Six Sigma SPL 3.2

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These materials were developed as part of MIT's ESD.60 course on "Lean/Six Sigma Systems." In some cases, the materials were produced by the lead instructor, Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, and in some cases by student teams working with LFM alumni/ae. Where the materials were developed by student teams, additional inputs from the faculty and from the technical instructor, Chris Musso, are reflected in some of the text or in an appendix

Overview

➤ Learning Objectives

- Explore predictable reactions to performance data
- Utilize the leadership transition curve to anticipate and address opposition to lean and six sigma initiatives

➤ Session Design (20-30 min.)

- **Part I:** *Introduction and Learning Objectives (1-2 min.)*
- **Part II:** *Key Concept or Principle Defined and Explained (3-5 min.)*
- **Part III:** *Exercise or Activity Based on Field Data that Illustrates the Concept or Principle (7-10 min.)*
- **Part IV:** *Common “Disconnects,” Relevant Measures of Success, and Potential Action Assignment(s) to Apply Lessons Learned (7-10 min.)*
- **Part V:** *Evaluation and Concluding Comments (2-3 min.)*

Quick Assessment

- Who are you most worried about and why?
 - Will help lead the change
 - Will make the journey with education and support
 - Can't make the journey
 - Will work to undermine the change

Predictable Reactions to Performance Data

Reject the data



Challenge the data



Work with the data

Improve, guided by data



What are the implications for Six Sigma and Lean initiatives?



Reactions/Resistance to Change



➤ **Resistance is predictable and understandable**

➤ **Why do we resist change?**

- 1) *It's new and different -- full of uncertainty*
- 2) *It feels like it's being imposed*
- 3) *There are specific parts of the change that I don't like*

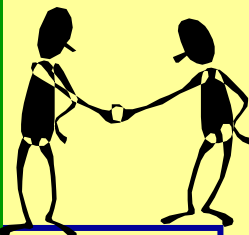
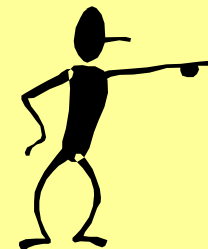


➤ **How do we resist change?**

- 1) *Suppressed anger -- Shut down, don't listen, sit there fuming*
- 2) *Displaced anger -- Don't get mad, get even*
- 3) *Outward anger -- Emotional outburst*

➤ **What can we do?**

- 1) *Ask questions -- learn more about what is involved*
- 2) *Look for opportunities -- are there aspects of the change that could help make things better? How many options can we generate?*
- 3) *Be clear about specific concerns or issues -- consider who might have similar concerns and who might have opposite preferences.*
- 4) *Build agreements that take into account everyone's interests*



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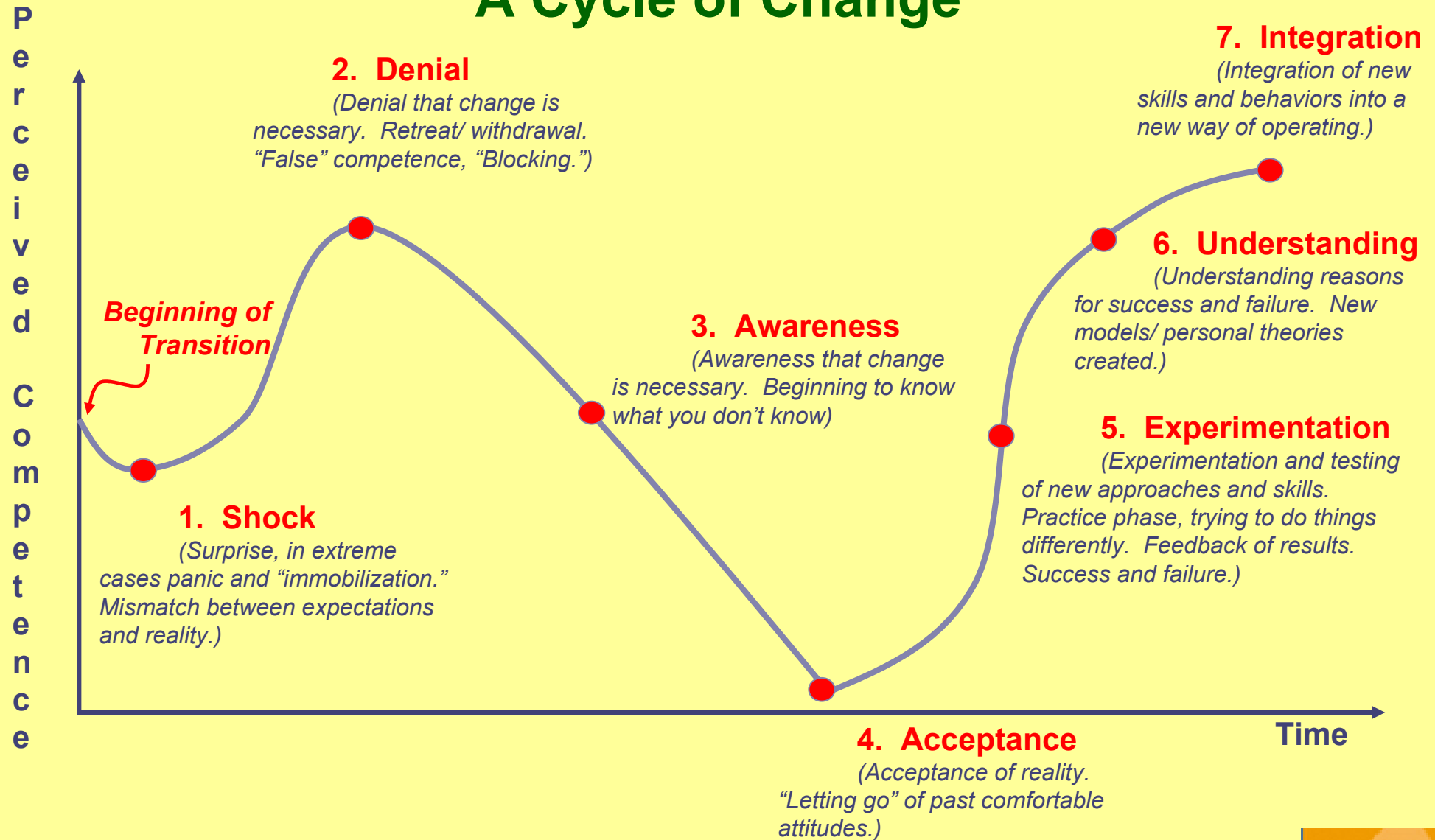
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Caution

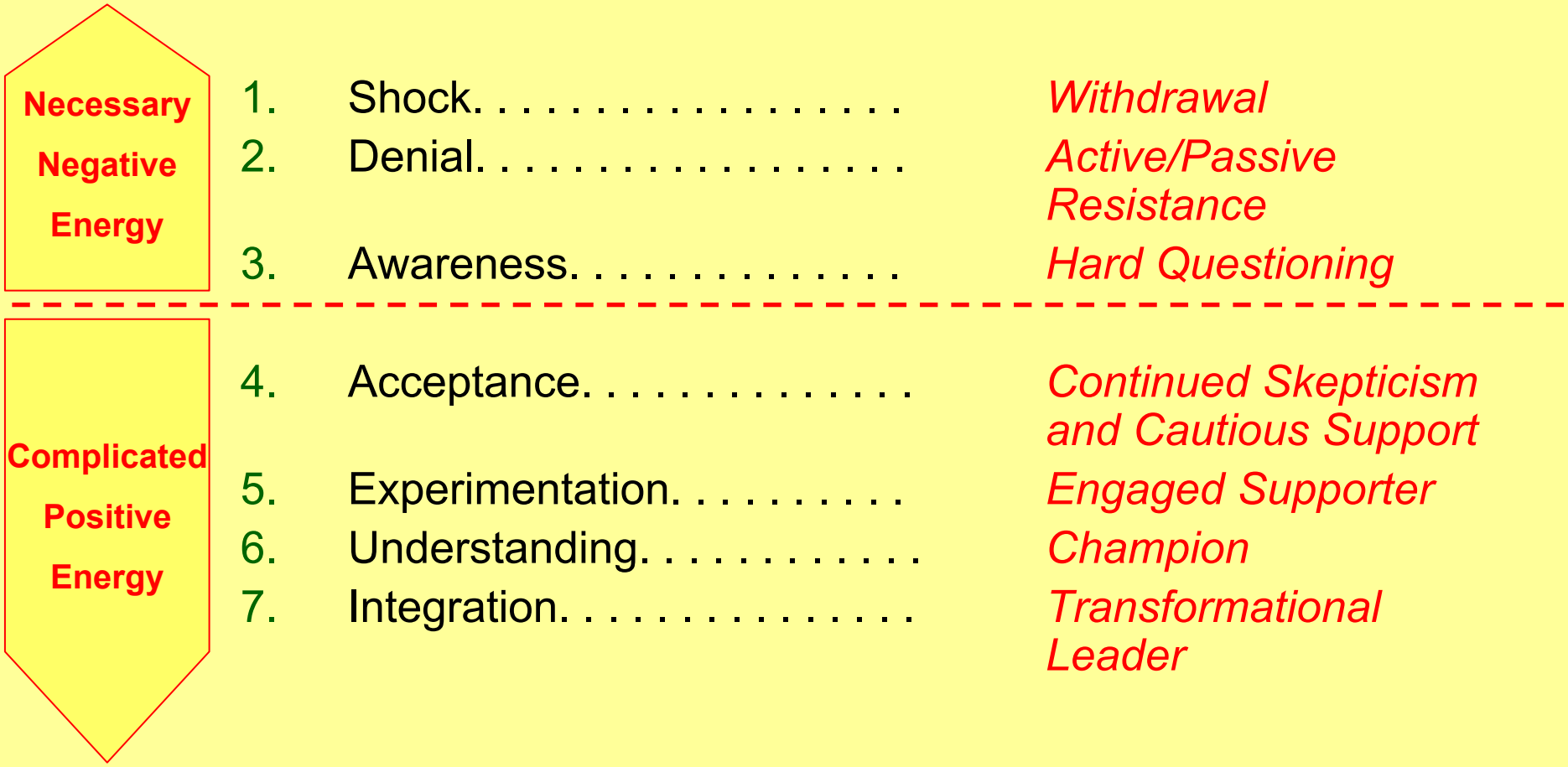
- Accelerated implementation will generate gaps in leadership behaviors
 - Some people will move ahead quickly, grasping new “operating assumptions” and others will “not even know what they don’t know”
 - The logic of becoming “lean” can create significant pressure on individuals
 - Be hard on the problem – such as tangible waste in the system – not the people
 - Remember the words of Dr. Deming:
Don't blame the people – fix the system
 - For exceptions -- individuals who really can't make the change -- ensure fair systems for performance management
- This module can help in two ways:
 1. The “Transition Curve” can be a useful tool for individual self-assessment or feedback/coaching
 2. The “Transition Curve” can also be useful for overall stakeholder analysis in planning for systems change

The Transition Curve

A Cycle of Change



Matching the Transition Curve with Levels of Support

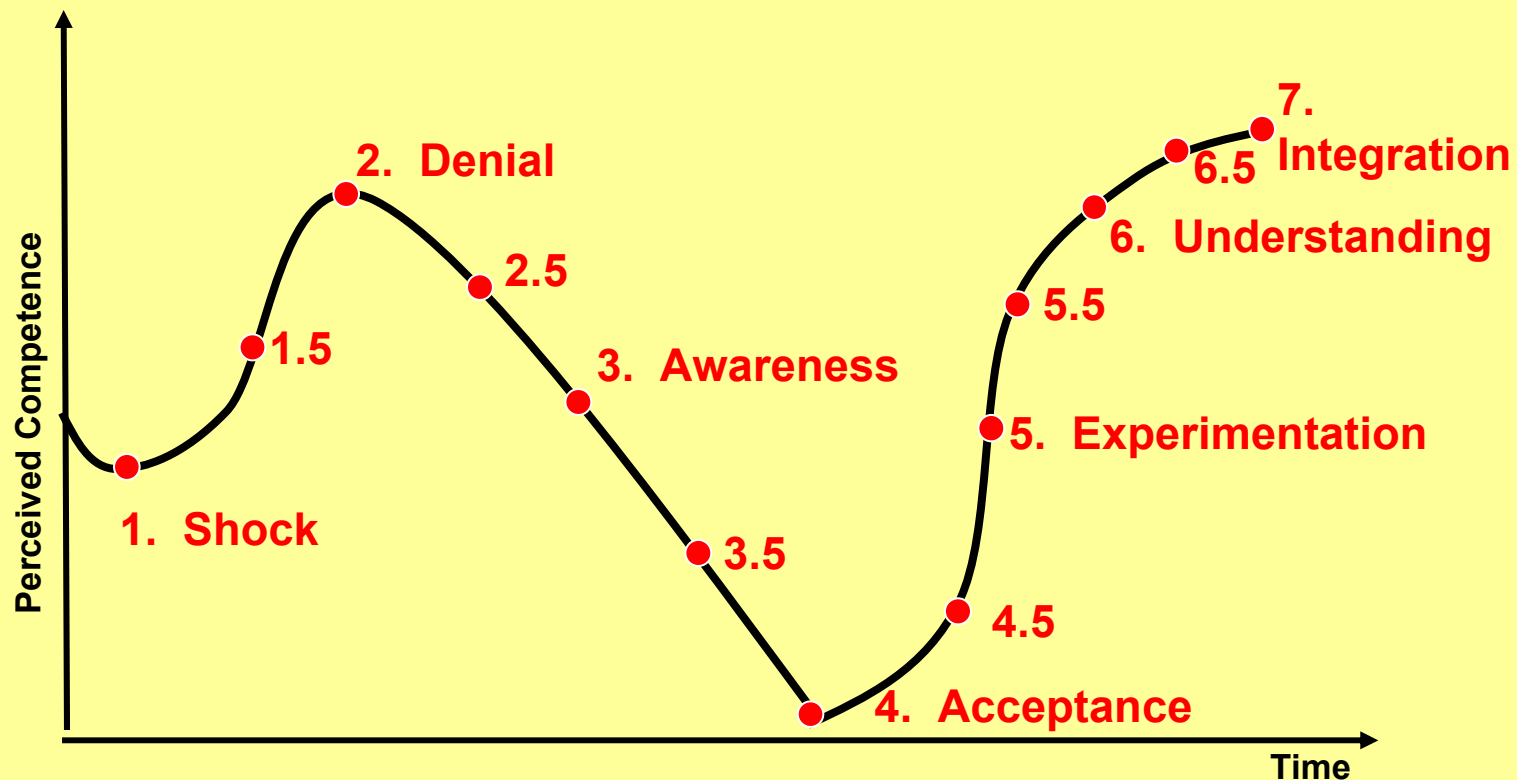


Caution: This is presented as a “linear” process, but changes is usually more complicated – part of the way through the journey new events may send someone right back to “shock” and “denial,” for example.



Transition Curve Worksheet

- For a given stakeholder or set of stakeholders, where are they at on the Transition Curve?



Examine Each Phase: 1. Shock

Recognizing “Shock:” *Surprise, in extreme cases panic and “immobilization.”
Mismatch between expectations and reality.*

Addressing “Shock:”

- *Treat the shock as valid and expected*
- *Use active listening, flip charts and other means to recognize and record reactions*
- *Ensure people feel that their reactions and concerns have been “heard”*
- *Draw on your own experience – show empathy with analogies to similar situations you have faced*
- *Provide supporting data, but don’t anticipate that it will all be absorbed*

Prepare for 1.5 on the journey from Shock to Denial . . .

Examine Each Phase: 2. Denial

Recognizing “Denial:” *Denial that change is necessary.
Retreat/withdrawal. “False” competence, “Blocking.”*

Addressing “Denial:”

- *Anticipate questions and challenges around supporting data*
- *Capture questions and challenges on a tracking matrix or “parking lot” and get back with answers*
- *Ensure chances to interact with peers who have faced the same issues*
- *Do not try to “argue” the person out of denial – that is their current reality – often rooted in past experience with similar changes*
- *Give people space and face saving opportunities to begin a learning journey – on-the-job coaching may be need to address issues in real time*

Anticipate “2.5” – making the journey from Denial to Awareness . . .

Examine Each Phase: 3. Awareness

Recognizing “Awareness:” *Awareness that change is necessary.
Understanding of own incompetence.*

Addressing “Awareness:”

- *Recognize and appreciate points of growing awareness*
- *Encourage exploration of options and implications*
- *Build awareness in “bite-size chunks” – not everything at once*
- *Adopt a coaching/facilitating stance*
- *Be sensitive to the drop in perceived competence that comes with increased awareness*

Anticipate “3.5” -- making the journey from Awareness to Acceptance . . .

Examine Each Phase: 4. Acceptance

Recognizing “Acceptance:” *Acceptance of reality. “Letting go” of past comfortable attitudes.*

Addressing “Acceptance:”

- *This is the point of greatest vulnerability – self-confidence is at its lowest point, the old way won’t work, the new skills are not in place, and other may still be in denial*
- *Provide specific technical and social skills needed for success – single-point modules with chances to apply the skills on the job and see results*
- *Ensure the support structure is in place for improvement suggestions, which will begin to come*
- *Use accomplishment matrices for skills training and other activities to make progress visible*

Anticipate “4.5” -- making the journey from Acceptance to Experimentation . . .

Examine Each Phase: 5. Experimentation

Recognizing “Experimentation:” *Experimentation and testing of new approaches and skills. Practice phase, trying to do things differently. Feedback of results. Success and failure.*

Addressing “Experimentation:”

- *Create a learning laboratory environment – where new ideas can be tested, adjusted, and applied*
- *Establish boundaries within which it will be okay to make mistakes – so long as people learn from them*
- *Adopt a non-blaming, enthusiastic partnership stance – we all learn from experimentation – including both expected outcomes and “unanticipated consequences” (which always turn up)*
- *Don’t change more than one or two “variables” at a time – so you can learn from the results*

Anticipate “5.5” -- making the journey from Experimentation to Understanding . . .

Examine Each Phase: 6. Understanding

Recognizing “Understanding:” *Understanding reasons for success and failure. New models/ personal theories created.*

Addressing “Understanding:”

- *Capture lessons learned – encourage sharing of understanding in work groups and with others*
- *Establish “hand-off” processes when people with new understanding move to other work areas or other locations – this is “knowledge management”*
- *Accept and embrace the fact that people know more than you do on key aspects of their operation – this is becoming a “knowledge-driven work system”*
- *Don’t micro-manage people with new levels of understanding, but don’t abandon them either*

Anticipate “6.5” -- making the journey from Understanding to Integration . . .

Examine Each Phase: 7. Integration

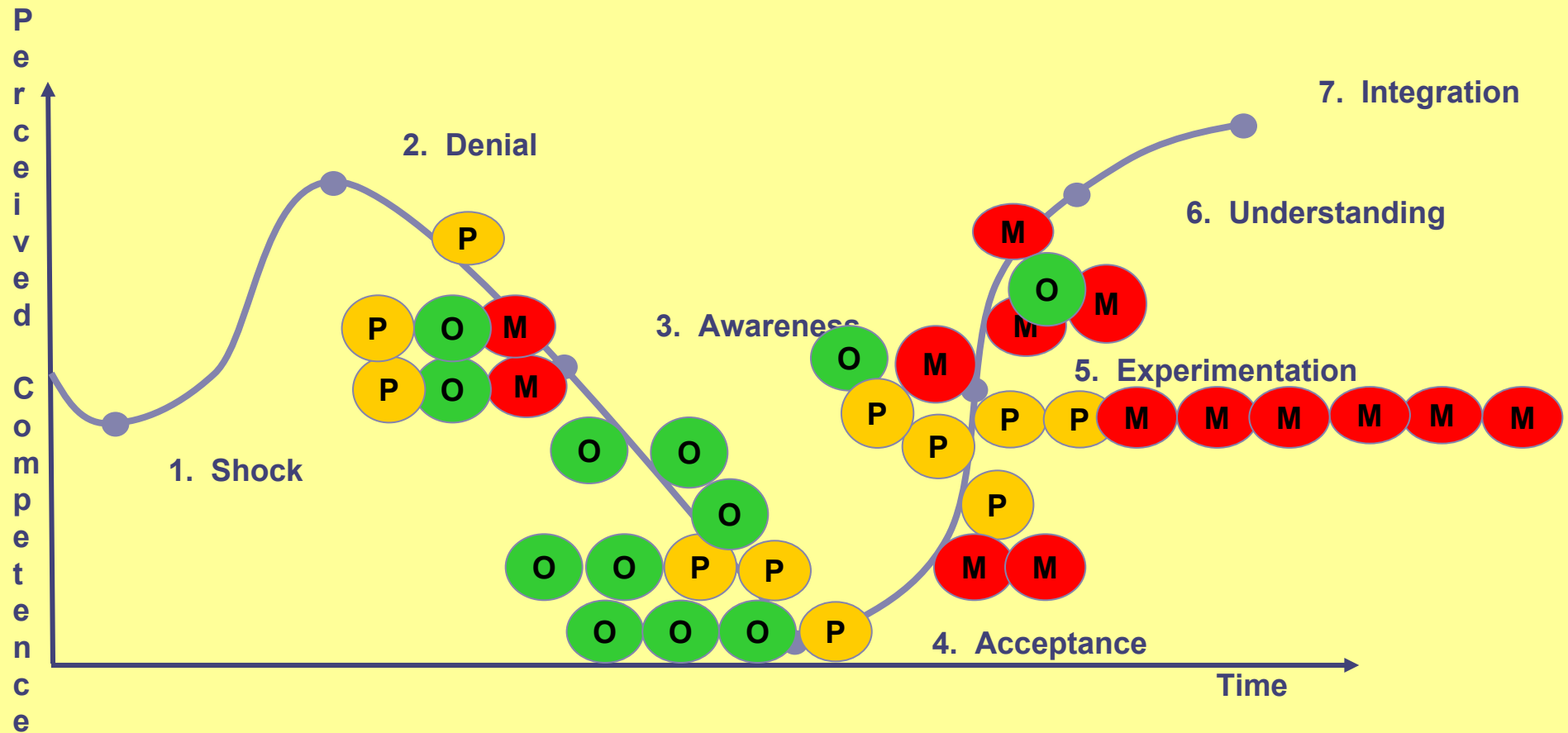
Recognizing “Integration:” *Integration of new skills and behaviors into a new way of operating.*

Addressing “Integration:”

- *Identify “leading practices” to standardize and replicate*
- *Ensure that people are able to serve as “boundary spanners” linking this part of the operation with others*
- *Focus on alignment with other parts of the operation – internal and external “customers” and “suppliers,” support functions, etc.*
- *Protect against the “not invented here” syndrome – stay open to learning from others*
- *Anticipate factors that pull individuals and groups back to earlier stages in the journey – turnover in leadership or membership, changes in technology or policy, shifts in economic circumstances, etc.*

Anticipate going back to “6.5” or all the way back to “shock” and “denial”

Application Exercise



How I See the plant operating committee: O

How I See Myself: M

How the people in my organization see me: P

How do you interpret these data from a manufacturing plant operating committee and the local union bargaining committee?

Application Assignment

➤ Application Assignment

- Select a current or upcoming change implementation
- Identify the key stakeholders
- Assess the current location of each stakeholder or set of stakeholders on the Transition Curve
- Identify appropriate action implications in each case

➤ Notes:

- *Be sure to use the Transition Curve as a part of briefings about change*
- *Consider asking groups to self-assess their situation and that of others (and then to consider the implications of these “data”).*
- *Recognize that most groups will feature a wide variance – with different people at different stages of the journey – this is predictable and to be expected*
- *Various destabilizing events, such as leadership turnover or a shift in economic circumstances, can start the process all over again*
- *Repeating the process can build increased capability to handle change – if it is supported in a constructive way*

Concluding Comments

- Resistance to change is often rational and rooted in legitimate concerns
- Anticipate and constructively surface potential sources of opposition
- Ideally, re-direct opposition into a driving force