

VTIC Hub Resources May 2023

WHAT'S NEW 'MONTH' – How to manage the stress of uncertainty and change:

Introduction:

“When we are no longer able to change a situation – we are challenged to change ourselves.” - Viktor Frankl (Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor 1905 – 1997).

For the month of May we are sharing information and resources on how to manage the stress of uncertainty and change. Uncertainty and change are ever-present challenges in our work and personal lives so having some knowledge and skills to better manage the stress and worry that comes with it will help support your wellbeing and your business success.

Most worries come from things we can't control. Managing the stress of uncertainty and change is all about mindset and shifting your perspective.

One popular psychological tool for managing stress, worry and anticipatory anxiety (uncertainty about the future) is Stephen Covey's Circle of Control. The circle of Control model has three components to it.

1. **Circle of Concern** (outer circle) is everything we care or think about that we don't control. Traffic, politics and news, and the reactions of other people all fall within this circle. This is a key source of worry.
2. **Circle of Influence** (middle circle) is everything we can indirectly control. Relationships with family and co-workers fall into this. We can try to help, but ultimately, we don't have direct control.
3. **Circle of Control** (inner circle) are things we can directly control. When we get up, how much time we spend on different activities, and what we say.

Using the Circle of Control tool, next time you feel stressed about a situation and the worry of uncertainty is creeping up on you, stop for just a few second. Take a breath and think, “how much control do I have over this thing?” Then ask, “What can I control to make this better?” And if you can't control it? Stop ruminating on it and start thinking about something you can control and act on. The more attention we spend on things we directly control, the greater our ability to positively change our mindset and situation or outlook, which in turn helps us to feel better and reduces stress, worry and anxiety.

“You're in charge of your mind. You can help it grow by using it in the right way.” – Carol Dweck, American psychologist best known for her theories on the mindset (Growth vs Fixed Mindset) and motivation.

Here are a few mindset tips to help you to manage the stress of uncertainty and change:

- Become comfortable with the discomfort of not knowing it all and aim to let go of perfectionism. You don't need to have all the answers and can learn and adapt as you go.
- Acknowledge that you can course correct as needed and mistakes are to be expected along the way.
- Resist the desire to jump to conclusions, catastrophise or oversimplify. Take a systematic approach to understanding both the complexity of the situation and your own biases.
- Reach out to your work colleagues and peers to ask them to share their experiences and perspectives. Shared stories are one of the best ways we learn helpful new coping skills.

Wellbeing coaching support can help you to:

- Learn how to reduce stress in the moment
- Manage troublesome thoughts and feelings
- Motivate you to take the steps that can relieve stress and burnout
- Improve your relationships at work and home
- Rediscover joy and meaning that make work and life worthwhile
- Increase your overall health and happiness

Video resources:

1. Circle of Control or Influence: What is it and why you should know about it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wptGvREOj8> (10:18 min) - Learn how to take control of your life using this effective mindset tool.
2. Coping with uncertainty <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3CU2kOBt3s> (4:00 min) - Learn six simple strategies for coping with uncertainty and dealing with stress.
3. Reframing thoughts and worry with cognitive restructuring <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58Rytlerkmc> (4:21 min) - Reframe automatic negative thoughts by asking yourself these thought challenging questions to give yourself a different perspective.
4. Circle of Control and Influence at work <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uj8dmSgQa1c> (3:50 min) – How to use the Circle of Control and Influence to manage uncertainty and difficulties in business relationships to create greater success.
5. TED Talk Curveballs and Blindspots: Navigating Uncertainty <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMJifVonVAo> (16:05 min) - A practical approach to building confidence and personal resilience in leaders to manage change and uncertainty.
6. Building tolerance for uncertainty <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL8ayC0Fe9Y> (17:40 min) – How to build your tolerance for uncertainty to overcome worry and anxiety.

Web link resources:

1. Ten tips for dealing with the stress of uncertainty <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/uncertainty> - People react differently to uncertainty, but you can take some simple steps to build your resilience in uncertain times.
2. Seven ways to cope with uncertainty https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/seven_ways_to_cope_with_uncertainty - What to do when everything feels so out of control.
3. Four tactics for leading through change and uncertainty <https://www.industryweek.com/leadership/corporate-culture/article/21181958/leading-through-change-and-uncertainty> - Uncertainty can cause disruptions resulting in reductions in productivity, collaboration and effectiveness. Moving forward one certainty has emerged: effective leadership is more important now than ever.
4. A leader's guide to managing employee uncertainty <https://www.forbes.com/sites/curtsteinhorst/2021/06/16/a-leaders-guide-to-managing-employee-uncertainty/?sh=439a1a1d9f11> - we can teach ourselves not to fear uncertainty and, instead, learn how to manage it.
5. Dealing with uncertainty <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/dealing-with-uncertainty.htm> - While many things remain outside your control, your mindset is key to coping with difficult circumstances and confidently facing the unknown.
6. What is the circle of control and how to apply it in life <https://www.lifehack.org/927324/circles-of-control> - An approach to being more productive and spending less time doing things you don't have control over.

Our workplace wellbeing consultant Dannii provides free and confidential one-on-one wellbeing coaching to business owners and staff. Wellbeing consultations to businesses and leadership teams, as well as training workshops are on offer to small businesses with up to 20 full-time staff or the equivalent. Dannii can be contacted on consultation@vtic.com.au or (03) 7035 5732.

For the current month Wellbeing topic go to:

<https://hub.vtic.com.au/business-support/mental-health-and-wellbeing/whats-new-this-month>

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