

# Self Care During Times of Uncertainty



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**Economic downturns. Organisational restructuring. Global crises. Technological disruptions. All of these things and more can create profound uncertainty at work.**

It is natural to feel anxious or unsettled during these times. However, there are steps you can take to navigate the uncertainty and preserve your wellbeing. Here are four of these steps.

## **1. UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF UNCERTAINTY**

When you lack the ability to predict what comes next, you may well feel untethered. This can lead you to feel anxiety, stress and fear. All of these things make it difficult to focus and maintain motivation. So, understanding how uncertainty influences your thoughts and behaviours is the first step towards managing it effectively. Recognising that change is a natural part of worklife and that uncertainty does not always mean negative outcomes can help build a sense of perspective. By acknowledging your feelings and taking proactive steps to address them, you can regain a sense of control and stability.

## **2. RECOGNISE YOUR OWN FEELINGS**

During times of uncertainty, it's natural to experience a range of emotions and

symptoms. If you're experiencing any of these, know that they are all normal:

- Excessive worry about the future
- Playing out unhelpful scenarios in your head
- Fear of the unknown or fear of a specific outcome
- Increased stress levels which accumulate until adjustments are made
- Frustration and anger about the situation
- Sadness or grief over losses or potential losses
- Confusion or even helplessness to take the next step
- Physiological responses like headaches, shortness of breath, elevated blood pressure, low appetite and increasing susceptibility to illness

### **3. ACT TO MANAGE YOUR RESILIENCE**

- Prioritise self-care activities that support your physical and mental health like exercise, healthy eating, getting enough sleep, and relaxation techniques.
- It's not for everyone, but mindfulness and meditation practices like breath focus, body scanning, mindful walking and attentive observation can help you stay grounded and manage your anxiety. There are many apps and online tools to guide you through these.
- Prioritise connection with the friends, family or colleagues.
- If you're struggling to cope, consider seeking professional help from a therapist or counselor. If your organisation has an agreement with us then you may be able to book counselling anonymously and at no expense to you.
- Whatever circumstances are out of your control, you can always control how you react. These can be divided into two types (shown below). With some time and perspective, you may decide that you would like to make some macro-choices for your long-term wellbeing. But in the midst of the uncertainty, we suggest focusing on the micro-choices:

#### **Macro-choices**

Major life decisions, that require a high level of personal agency, as it first requires us to first engage in a reflective, intentional process

#### **Micro-choices**

Small decisions we make throughout the day that can over time have a significant impact on our overall wellbeing and life satisfaction

- Be kind to yourself and set realistic expectations for what you can accomplish during this time.
- Ensure you stay informed about the situation, but avoid excessive exposure to news and media that may increase your anxiety.
- Maintain a routine as it can provide you with a sense of normalcy and stability.
- Hard as it may seem, try to practice gratitude: Focus on the things you're grateful for, even during difficult times.

Remember, building resilience takes time and effort. Be patient with yourself and don't hesitate to reach out for support when you need it.

#### **4. SUPPORT OTHERS**

If your coworkers are going through something similar then they will value your support. Being attentive to the emotional states and needs of those around you can help provide support during challenging periods. Below are five things to look out for in your peers.

##### **Work Absence**

Increased or unexplained absences may signal that someone is struggling to cope during a crisis.

##### **Job Performance**

A decline in productivity or quality of work can indicate overwhelming stress.

##### **Social Life**

Withdrawal from social interactions might suggest feelings of isolation or depression.

##### **Behaviours**

Sudden mood swings or uncharacteristic actions can be signs of distress. Expressions of hopelessness, excessive worry, or emotional numbness suggest deeper struggles.

If you're concerned about someone, do try and talk to them, with a focus on listening. Approach with empathy. Let them know you're there to listen and support, not lecture or fix things. Ask what you can do to help. It might be taking a piece of work off their plate, or continuing to provide a listening ear. Gently suggest self-care activities e.g. encourage them to take breaks, get support, or offer to join them in a healthy coping activity. And respect their boundaries. Don't pry for more information than they're willing to share, and let them guide the conversation.

## **FURTHER READING**

### **Anxiety Resource**

Information on symptoms and tips, as well as signposts to further support.

[bit.ly/4aG4PaJ](https://bit.ly/4aG4PaJ)

### **Thriving In Hard Times: Reflections From A Clinical Psychologist**

One of our psychosocial team talks about the role of hope and gratitude when navigating dark times.

[www.thrive-worldwide.org/blog/thriving-in-hard-times-reflections-from-a-clinical-psychologist](https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/blog/thriving-in-hard-times-reflections-from-a-clinical-psychologist)

### **How To Look After Yourself Following A Trauma**

Self-care advice to aid recovery.

[www.thrive-worldwide.org/blog/resource/self-care-following-a-trauma](https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/blog/resource/self-care-following-a-trauma)

## **FURTHER SUPPORT**

### **Counselling**

A safe space with a trained therapist for anyone struggling through personal issues

[www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/counselling](https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/counselling)

### **Coaching**

One-on-one expert support to help you set new goals and take steps towards them

[www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/coaching](https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/coaching)

### **Resilience Check In**

Space for an individual or group to pause, reflect and plot a path through a difficult time, guided by a facilitator.

[www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/resilience-check-in](https://www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/resilience-check-in)



# Want to talk?

We're ready to support you

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