



Emotional Health During Challenge and Uncertainty

Why uncertainty is so challenging

- Uncertainty causes more stress and anxiety than knowing that a definite negative outcome will take place
- Our brain's job is to protect us from danger and during uncertainty, it works harder to find ways to do this, causing us overwhelming stress
- Because emotions are contagious, as we all struggle with stress of uncertainty we create a pile-on effect, causing our collective anxiety to increase

Practicing emotional health skills is non-negotiable during uncertainty and change

- Emotional health is a skill you can improve through practice
- Practicing emotional health skills helps to strengthen your Emotional Immune System, which is your source of resilience for getting through challenges
- The chronic stress that comes with uncertainty makes it more difficult to think clearly or make good decisions because we become reactive — practicing emotional health skills helps to mitigate this

EMOTIONAL HEALTH SKILLS AND PRACTICES

ACCEPTANCE PRACTICE: How do I best serve this moment?

Take a moment and think about something that is causing you stress or worry or recognize when you're stuck in the "this is not how it should be" Valley of Suffering:

- If you find yourself truly overwhelmed, first take 5 deep breaths (this will help you feel a little more calm and centered)
- Step 1: Witness "what is" with clarity: *This is how it is. This is how I feel. What is a fact vs. what is the story my mind has created?*
- Step 2: Decide what to do next: *What's the best thing I can do right now to serve myself, the situation, and other people involved?*
- You can do this practice together with your team, especially when you feel team members are getting stuck in blame or judgement mindsets

BIGGER WHY PRACTICE:

Who does this help?

When working through a challenge with a team member or your whole group, encourage them to connect to their Bigger Why by asking: Who does this help? When this project, assignment, or feature gets done, who will benefit from it?

SELF-CARE PRACTICES:

3 Steps to Kinder Self-Talk

Practice self-compassion by shifting from harsh to kinder self-talk. So many of us cause ourselves suffering through harsh and unkind self-talk. This practice will help you change that.

- Step 1: Become aware when you're being harsh in your self-talk.

Be mindful of the words and tone you use when you talk to yourself. Practice witnessing your self-talk as it happens. What is the tone like? What words or phrases do you use when you talk to yourself?

- Step 2: Pause and be grateful that you noticed.

Take a breath and pause for a second. In this pause, connect to your inner witness. Feel the depth of your capacity to be aware of your thoughts and emotions without the need to immediately react and be grateful that you can do this.

- Step 3: Imagine you're talking to someone you really love and care about.

Visualize this person and hold them in your heart's attention. Now begin to reframe what you said to yourself and how you said it, imagining that you're talking to this person.

10-Minute Self-Care Reset

Schedule a regular 10-minute break during your day. Ask yourself: "What is fueling or restful that I can do right now?" and then do that for 10 minutes. Your 10-Minute Reset can be simple, from taking a quick walk, closing your eyes and just focusing on your breath for a bit, or grabbing a cup of tea and drinking it without multitasking.

- As a manager, you can encourage people on your team to do this practice by cutting meetings 10 minutes short, talking about self-care breaks during your 1:1s, sharing openly when and how you're practicing, and nudging individual team members to practice when you notice they are overwhelmed or exhausting.

GRATITUDE PRACTICES:

Gratitude Antidote

When you are stressed or dealing with a challenge, acknowledge how you feel and then use your stress as a reminder to practice gratitude.

- Identify something specific you're grateful for and remember that small, tiny moments, comforts, and experiences matter just as much.

Gratitude Meeting Bookends

Begin team meetings with a gratitude moment—either sharing something you appreciate or expressing specific and genuine gratitude towards someone. End the meeting the same way by asking if someone else would like to express their gratitude.

- Another way to infuse gratitude into meetings is with **Gratitude Tag**: Start by sharing something you're grateful for and then tag someone else to go next.
- Remember that you can do both of these practices virtually and consider putting them on the agenda for the meeting.

INTENTIONAL KINDNESS PRACTICES: *(from all-employee session)*

Check-in With Your Colleagues

Be intentional about checking in with people you work with by asking them how they are doing. You can do this virtually by scheduling a Zoom or FaceTime call. Don't lead the conversation to be about work—just ask a general question and then listen, without jumping in with solutions if they share a challenge. Take this time to let them know you care about them as people and are willing to listen.

There are two steps to this practice:

- Step 1: Ask the person how they are doing.
- Step 2: Listen, giving them your full attention, without interrupting, or jumping in to fix anything, or shifting the focus away from them.

Lens of Compassion

The next time you experience an act of rudeness or are dealing with a difficult person, try using the Lens of Compassion.

- Ask yourself: *What is something that person might be struggling with? What might have happened to them earlier today that caused them to act this way?*
- Then, take a few moments to come up with the answer by making up a story in your head. Remember, this story about them doesn't have to be true.

The goal is to protect yourself from the negative effects of their behavior and avoid wasting your emotional energy by shifting from frustration into compassion.

5 Emotional Health Skills



ACCEPTANCE: Acknowledging your feelings and the situation with clarity instead of judgment and using that as your starting point for moving forward.

When you actively accept your emotions and challenges, you're able to respond from an elevated place, as an observer, and choose the best next step, rather than reacting from a place of judgment or fear—and you can help your colleagues do the same. Practicing this skill in teams builds a foundation of trust, improves problem-solving, and reduces wasted energy and fear of openly sharing mistakes or failures.

GRATITUDE: Making an active choice to notice the small, positive moments in everyday life—even when times are challenging—and sharing your appreciation for other people with them.

When you practice gratitude, you derive more joy and satisfaction from your work, and increase your resilience and ability to be fully present with your colleagues. When you express gratitude towards others, you elevate them by helping them feel valued, you amplify what you want them to do more often, and you boost their enthusiasm, motivation, and resilience.

INTENTIONAL KINDNESS: Being actively kind to others with the intent to support or elevate them in some way, without expecting anything in return.

When you do something kind, you and the receiver experience positive emotions and feel less isolated and stressed. You cultivate open communication, civility, empathy, warmth, and helpfulness, while creating a ripple effect of kindness and belonging within your team, company, and customers.

THE BIGGER WHY: Regularly connecting with your sense of meaning and purpose by identifying how your daily activities and tasks support bigger goals, help others, or contribute to a cause you believe in.

When you connect to your Bigger Why, you unify and elevate goals, tasks, and projects, which helps you and the people on your team connect to a sense of purpose in your daily work. This increases motivation, productivity, job satisfaction, resilience, and the ability to get through challenges with less stress—for you and everyone around you.

SELF-CARE: Actively nurturing a kinder friendship with yourself by practicing self-compassion, learning how to rest and renew, and finding ways to fuel your mind, body, and soul.

Proactive self-care helps you feel and be at your best, and reduces overwhelm and the risk of burnout. When you share how you invest in yourself and encourage your colleagues to make self-care a priority,

you amplify each other's ability to reduce stress and significantly improve well-being, resilience, and motivation.