

Navigating Uncertainty

CBT strategies for stress, burnout
and workplace change



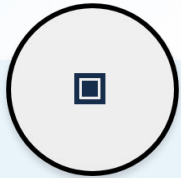
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Change
Challenge
Growth
Opportunity

“Uncertainty isn’t the end of the story —
it can be the beginning of growth.”

Why Uncertainty Affects Us

Organisational change can bring real challenges, especially when the future feels unclear.



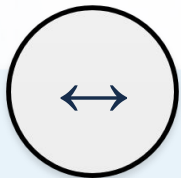
**Potential
redundancy**



**Changes to
roles or teams**



**Financial
concerns**



**Loss of predictability
and control**



**Pressure to remain
productive**



**Impact on confidence
and self-esteem**

It's normal to feel this way.

Stress, Burnout and Uncertainty

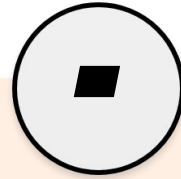
Related, but not the same.



Stress

A response to demands that feel difficult to manage.

Can be short-term and a normal part of life.



Burnout

An occupational phenomenon associated with chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.

Exhaustion, mental distance or cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy.



Uncertainty

Not knowing what will happen, when, or how it may affect us.

Can increase anxiety and make planning harder.

These challenges can overlap, and it's important to recognise what you're experiencing.

The CBT Model

Our thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and behaviours are all connected.



Common Thinking Patterns

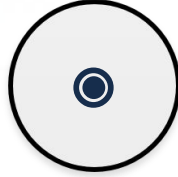
When we're uncertain, our minds can sometimes jump to unhelpful conclusions.



Catastrophising

"If my role changes, my career is over."

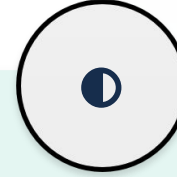
Expecting the worst-case scenario.



Fortune-telling

"I know I'll be made redundant."

Assuming we know the future.



All-or-nothing thinking

"If I'm struggling, I'm not good at my job."

Seeing things in extremes.



Excessive responsibility

"I should be able to manage all of this myself."

Holding ourselves to unrealistic standards.

Noticing these patterns is the first step towards a more balanced perspective.

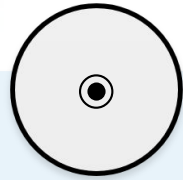
A Balanced Thought Record

A simple tool to challenge unhelpful thoughts and find a more balanced view.



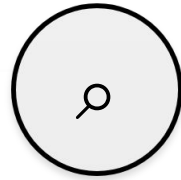
1. Situation

An email announces a departmental restructuring.



2. Automatic thought

"I'm definitely going to lose my job, and I won't cope."



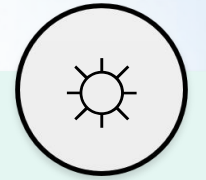
3. Evidence supporting

Restructuring has been announced. Some roles may change.



4. Evidence against

No individual decision yet. I have skills, experience and support options.



5. Balanced perspective

"There is genuine uncertainty. I can prepare, gather information and seek support."

"A more balanced thought can lead to a calmer, more helpful response."

Worry or Problem-Solving?

A simple way to decide how to respond.

Is there something I can usefully do about this now?

Yes

Take action

- Clarify information
- Review options
- Update CV or development plan
- Speak to a manager or trusted colleague

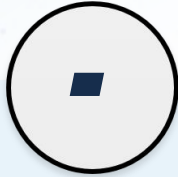
No

Acknowledge and respond

- Notice the worry
- Acknowledge uncertainty
- Choose where to focus attention
- Try scheduled worry time if helpful

Building Resilience Through Action

Small, consistent actions can help us feel more in control.

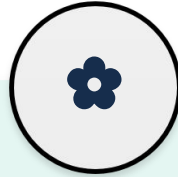


**Look after
your basics**

Sleep, food, movement



**Focus on what's
within your influence**



**Do meaningful
activities**

Even small ones



**Protect time
outside work**



**Stay connected
with supportive people**



**Review what
helps**

Adjust as needed

Resilience isn't about doing more — it's about responding differently.

Creating a Supportive Workplace Environment

We all have a role to play.

- Communicate clearly and honestly where possible
- ♟ Offer opportunities for questions
- ◊ Respect individual responses to change
- ☒ Encourage reasonable boundaries & workload discussions
- ✿ Signpost to appropriate support

People perform
better in supportive
environments.

From Uncertainty to a Plan

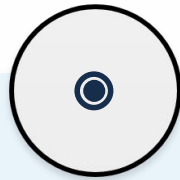
A fictional workplace example showing how the tools can work together.



1

Identify

Notice the situation



2

Notice

Identify the automatic thought



3

Evaluate

Develop a balanced perspective



4

Act

Separate practical action from worry



5

Recover

Reduce unhelpful checking



6

Connect

Seek appropriate support

Progress, not perfection.

When to Seek Additional Support

It's important to reach out if difficulties are persistent, worsening or affecting daily life.

Consider seeking support if you experience:

- Ongoing sleep disturbance or exhaustion
- Persistent low mood or anxiety
- Increasing withdrawal or difficulty functioning
- Reliance on alcohol or other substances to cope
- Feelings of hopelessness or thoughts of self-harm

Where to get help



GP

Speak to your GP



Thrive Mental Wellbeing

Available to current, former and retired Civil Servants via Charity For Civil Servants



Workplace support

EAP or internal wellbeing services



Samaritans

116 123
24/7, free



NHS 111

Urgent mental health support



Emergency

Call 999

Seeking help is a proactive step, not a sign of weakness.

Key Takeaways

Navigating uncertainty is challenging, but you're not alone.



Notice

What's happening for you.



Evaluate

Challenge unhelpful thoughts and explore options.



Act

Take small, meaningful steps.



Connect

Reach out and use your support network.

“Uncertainty isn’t the end of the story —
it can be the beginning of growth.”

Thank you for watching.