



Managing Change and Uncertainty

Mental Fitness Micro-Skills for Adapting to Change and Reducing Uncertainty Stress

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Learning Objectives

Four participant learning outcomes

Participants will be introduced to:

1. **Recognize** how change and uncertainty can increase stress and drain mental capacity.
2. **Identify** where they may be on the mental health continuum during periods of change.
3. **Use** simple mental fitness micro-skills to pause, reset, focus, and protect energy.
4. **Select** one practical action they can apply after the webinar to support coping and resilience.

When Uncertainty Rises, Practice CALM

C — Catch it

Notice when uncertainty stress is showing up. Change and uncertainty reduce clarity, control, and predictability.

A — Admit it

Name what is happening without judging yourself. Acknowledging the feeling is the first step to steadiness.

L — Lower it

Use a reset skill to reduce activation. A brief pause or breathing technique can ease the stress response.

M — Move forward

Choose one small action within your control. CALM is not about eliminating stress — it is about creating enough space to respond with intention.

Key message:

CALM is not about eliminating stress. It is about creating enough space to respond with intention.

Why This Matters: Change and Uncertainty Are Now Constant

In many workplaces, people are expected to keep performing while conditions continue to shift.

Common realities include:

- Expectations continue while priorities change
- Roles, processes, and timelines can shift quickly
- Information is often incomplete, delayed, or evolving
- People are expected to adapt in real time

When change and uncertainty are not managed well, they can contribute to:

- Reduced focus and clarity
- Increased mental fatigue
- Emotional strain and irritability
- More reactive decision-making

Key message: Change and uncertainty are not neutral. They place demands on your mental capacity.



Quick Reflection: Where Am I Today?

Connect the topic to your current reality

Pause and reflect:

Where am I today in how I am coping with change and uncertainty — and how is that showing up in my stress?

Consider:

- What is one change I am currently navigating?
- Where is uncertainty showing up most in my work right now?
- How is this affecting my stress, energy, or focus?

The Battery Model

Your Capacity Is Not Unlimited

We all have a limited amount of mental, emotional, and physical energy each day.

Think of your energy like a battery:

Charged — steady, focused, capable

Half-full — functioning, but with less reserve

Drained — tired, reactive, reduced patience

Empty — overwhelmed, depleted, struggling to recover.

Drains reduce energy and capacity. **Charges** restore energy and capacity.



Drains reduce energy and capacity.

Charges restore energy and capacity.

Key insight: Your ability to manage change depends not only on workload — it also depends on your available energy.

Drains: What Depletes Capacity

Change often adds hidden demands.

Common drains include:

- High workload or competing demands
- Lack of clarity or shifting priorities
- Uncertainty about decisions or outcomes
- Emotional labour and interpersonal tension
- Poor communication or mixed messages
- Too little recovery between demands

When drains stay high without a plan to address them, people may experience:

- Cognitive overload
- Reduced patience and tolerance
- More reactive behaviour
- Lower confidence in decision-making

Key message: Drains reduce your ability to cope effectively.

How We Commonly React to Change

Change can trigger a human stress response.

A common pattern includes:

1. **Shock** — "What is going on?"
2. **Loss of Control** — "I do not feel in control."
3. **Stuck** — "This feels overwhelming. I am not sure what to do next."

Across these stages, people may notice changes in:

- **Emotions:** stress, frustration, anxiety
- **Thoughts:** doubt, worry, confusion
- **Behaviour:** distraction, fatigue, withdrawal

Key message: This is a human response — not a personal weakness.

Mental Health Continuum

Notice Where You Are In Real Time

Change and uncertainty can put pressure on mental health. The continuum helps us notice where we are so we can respond earlier.

We can move between:

Flourishing

Focused, steady, proactive, reasonable energy.

Reacting

Getting through the day, more effort required, limited reserve.

We can move between these states —

Languishing

Drained, struggling, reduced function, harder to recover.

Key message: Early awareness is prevention.

When Drains Outpace Capacity

Low Capacity Increases Coping Risk

When energy stays low over time, people may notice:

- Reduced concentration
- Increased irritability
- Emotional fatigue
- Lower performance confidence
- Less patience with others
- More difficulty making decisions

Risk can increase for:

- Withdrawal or avoidance
- Overworking without recovery
- Emotional suppression
- Disengagement
- At-risk coping behaviours

Key Message:

People do not choose poor coping. When capacity is low, they often default to short-term relief behaviours.

Self-Check Tool

Where Are You Today?

Take a moment and choose where you are right now:

- **Flourishing** — I feel steady and able to manage.
- **Reacting** — I am functioning, but my reserve is lower.
- **Languishing** — I feel drained and am finding it harder to cope.

Now ask:

- What is driving this right now?
- What is draining my capacity most?
- What is one small thing that could help me stabilize today?

Key Message: You cannot adjust what you are not aware of.

Mental Fitness Approach

Mental Fitness Is A Daily Practice



Mental fitness is how we intentionally manage our thoughts, energy, and responses.

Mental fitness does not remove organizational responsibility — strong systems, clear expectations, respectful communication, and a Psychological Health and Safety Program all help reduce risk.

Mental fitness focuses on:

- Managing your response — not eliminating stress
- Protecting your energy
- Recovering faster
- Maintaining function under pressure

The goal is not to feel perfect. It is to remain effective and stable when conditions are not ideal.

Micro-Skill #1: Pause and Label

Slow the Moment Down

When change and uncertainty speed up, reactions can become automatic. This skill helps create space between what happens and how you respond.

What to do:

1. Pause briefly.
2. Notice what is happening.
3. Name it clearly.

Examples:

- "This is uncertainty."
- "I am feeling overwhelmed."
- "I am reacting because I do not have enough information."

Why it helps:

- Reduces emotional intensity
- Creates space for clearer thinking
- Supports a more deliberate response

Tool phrase: "Name it to tame it."

Key message: Awareness itself is an intervention.



Micro-Skill #2: Ground and Breathe

Reset Your Stress Response

When uncertainty rises, the body can shift into stress mode. Breathing helps you stabilize before reacting.

What to do:

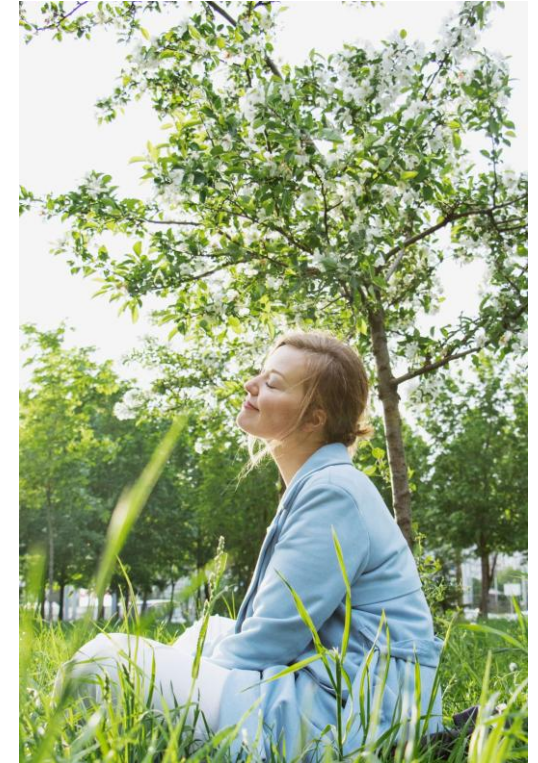
- Breathe in slowly for 4 seconds
- Exhale slowly for 6 seconds
- Repeat for 3 to 4 cycles
- Notice your feet, posture, and surroundings

Why it helps:

- Calms the stress response
- Lowers physical tension
- Improves focus and clarity
- Supports emotional regulation

Tool phrase: “Longer exhale, lower activation.”

Key message: Your breath is a built-in reset tool — use it early.



Micro-Skill #3: Focus on What You Can Control

Redirect Energy to What Is Actionable

Uncertainty pulls attention towards what we cannot control. That can increase stress and helplessness.

What to do — ask yourself:

- What is within my control right now?
- What is outside my control?
- What is one useful action I can take next?

Examples of controllable actions:

- Clarify one priority
- Ask one question
- Organize the next step
- Take a short reset break
- Decide what can wait

Why it helps:

- Reduces helplessness
- Builds momentum
- Reinforces agency
- Turns worry into action

Key message: Small controlled actions reduce overwhelm.



Micro-Skill #4: Protect Your Energy

Energy is a Resource

Change and uncertainty can drain capacity. Protecting energy means being intentional about where your effort goes.

What to do:

- Prioritize what matters most today
- Set limits where possible
- Break large demands into smaller steps
- Take brief recovery breaks
- Reduce unnecessary friction where you can

Why it helps:

- Prevents deeper depletion
- Supports sustained performance
- Helps maintain function under pressure
- Reduces emotional overextension

Tool phrase: "Spend energy where it counts."

Key message: Protecting your energy is not avoidance — it is capacity management.

Micro-Skill #5: Reset and Re-engage

Recovery Is Part of Resilience

You will not always respond perfectly in the moment. The skill is noticing when you are off track and recovering sooner.

What to do:

1. Notice: "I am off track."
2. Reset: Pause, label, breathe.
3. Choose: "What is my next best action?"
4. Re-engage with one small step.

Why it helps:

- Speeds recovery time
- Reduces spiral thinking
- Builds resilience over time
- Helps prevent one difficult moment from becoming the whole day

Key message: It is not about avoiding stress. It is about how quickly you can reset.

Charging Your Battery

Restore Capacity Intentionally

Change and uncertainty drain capacity over time. Without intentional recharging, even small demands can feel overwhelming.



Basic ways to restore capacity:

- Short recovery breaks
- Meaningful connection with someone you trust
- Movement or a physical reset
- Sleep consistency and routine
- Time away from constant inputs
- Asking for support when needed

Remember:

- Charges do not need to be big to be effective
- Consistency matters more than intensity
- Small regular actions help prevent deeper depletion

Key message: Charging your battery protects your ability to function through change — not just feel better in the moment.

Practice Reflection

Turn Awareness Into Action

Awareness only helps if it leads to something practical.

Ask yourself:

- What is draining me most right now?
- What is one small action I can take today to recharge or reset?
- When will I realistically do it?
- What might get in the way?
- What support, reminder, or cue would help me follow through?

Key message: Small actions are more useful than big intentions.



Action Commitment

Action is Where Mental Fitness Begins

The goal is not to change everything. The goal is to start with one practical shift.



After today, I will:

- Pause and label when I notice uncertainty stress
- Use breathing to reset before reacting
- Focus on one thing I can control
- Protect my energy by setting one realistic limit
- Take one small recharge action

Commitment prompt: What is one thing I will do differently after today? Keep it simple, make it specific, share it with a peer or colleague, and revisit as needed.

Encourage participants to:

- Keep it simple
- Make it specific
- Share it with a peer, colleague, or team member
- Revisit and adjust as needed

Key message; Mental fitness is an ongoing practice — not a one-time fix.

Key Takeaways

What to Remember

- Change and uncertainty are real demands on mental capacity.
- Your energy level affects how well you cope.
- Where you are on the mental health continuum can shift and that is normal.
- Early awareness helps prevent escalation.
- When capacity is low, the risk of poor coping increases.
- Mental fitness micro-skills can help you pause, reset, focus, and recover.
- Small, consistent actions build capacity over time.

Closing message: Protecting your energy is not extra. It is what allows you to sustain performance and well-being through change.



Q&A: Questions and Conversation

Prompt options

- What stood out for you today?
- Which micro skill feels most useful right now?
- What is one challenge people face when trying to protect their energy?

Thank you for taking time to invest in your mental fitness and your capacity to navigate change.

Future Learning Opportunities

Continue Your Learning Journey

Building Crisis Readiness is a Practice, Not a One-Time Event

Small actions, practiced consistently, can strengthen your ability to navigate uncertainty, adapt to change, and manage workplace stress.

The micro-skills introduced in this session become most valuable when they are applied regularly as part of your daily routine.

**KEEP PRACTICING**

-  Pause before reacting
-  Focus on what you can control
-  Take one small action
-  Check in with yourself regularly
-  Reach out when support would help





**CONTINUE LEARNING**

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**FINAL THOUGHT**

You do **not** need to have all the answers.
The next right step is often enough.

 Awareness creates choice.

 Choice creates action.

 Small actions create momentum.

 Momentum creates resilience.

**MENTAL FITNESS IS NOT BUILT IN A DAY.**
It Is Built Every Day.

When we strengthen our mental fitness, we build stronger teams, safer workplaces, and a more resilient future—together.





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