

Career Development : From Psychosocial hazard to thriving strategy



Journaling as a Tool for Career Development

TYPES OF JOURNALING:

- *Stream of Consciousness*
- *Thought Provoking*
- *Illustrative Discovery Journaling*
- *Reflective Journaling*
- *Gratitude Journaling*



Journaling: A method of recording thoughts, experiences, emotions in a notebook or other medium to reflect, challenge yourself, and more.

Studies show positive health outcomes of journaling during challenging times.

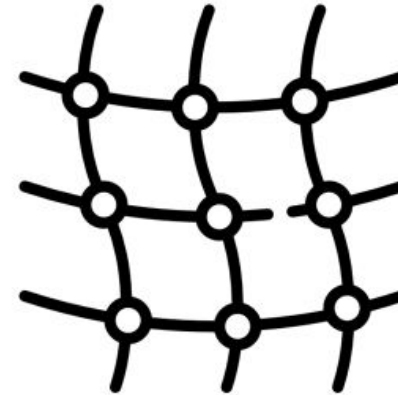
.

Grab a few sheets of paper or your e-notebook for some simple journal exercises throughout this session.

Journal Activity : Doodle

What does "career development" mean to you?

Journal Activity : Doodle

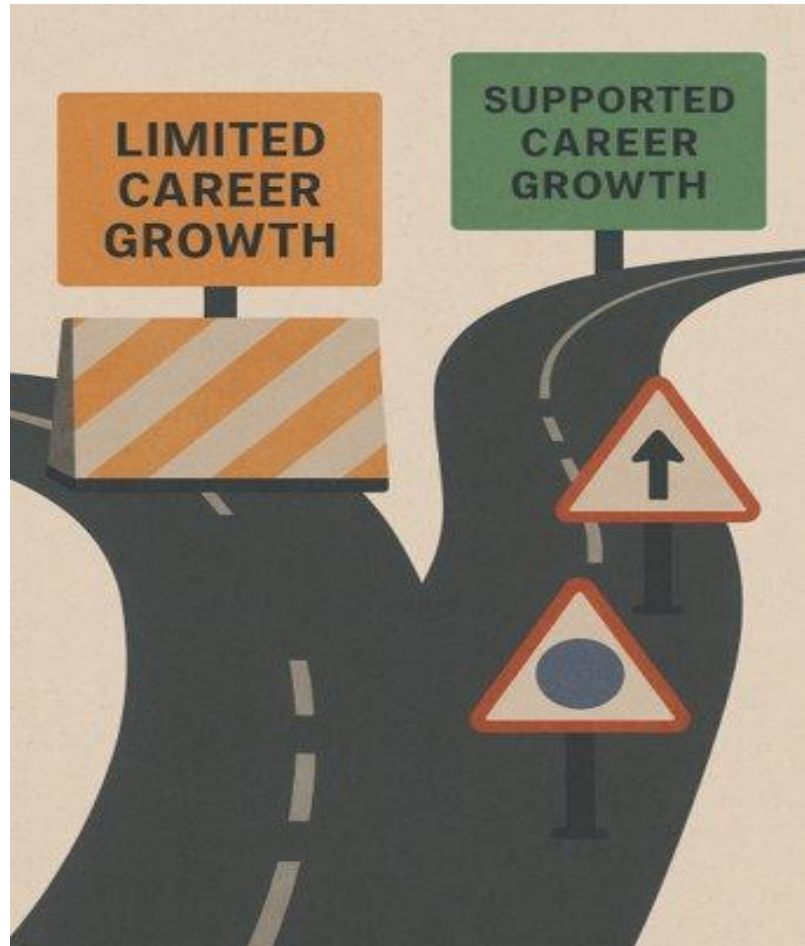


What is a Psychosocial Hazard?



- Any aspect of work that has the potential to cause psychological, social, or physical harm
- These hazards increase the risk of work-related stress, which can lead to illness & injury (ILO. ISO 45003)
- *Examples:* Role Ambiguity, Interpersonal relationships, Work Overload, Career Development

Career Development Hazards



Career Stagnation & Uncertainty

Under Promotion & Over Promotion

Lack of opportunity for skill development

Job Insecurity

Low Social Value to Work

Mismatched roles & expectations

Skill under-utilization

Individual Impacts (Risk)

Mental health:

Stress, anxiety, burnout, depressive symptoms, mental fatigue

Physical health:

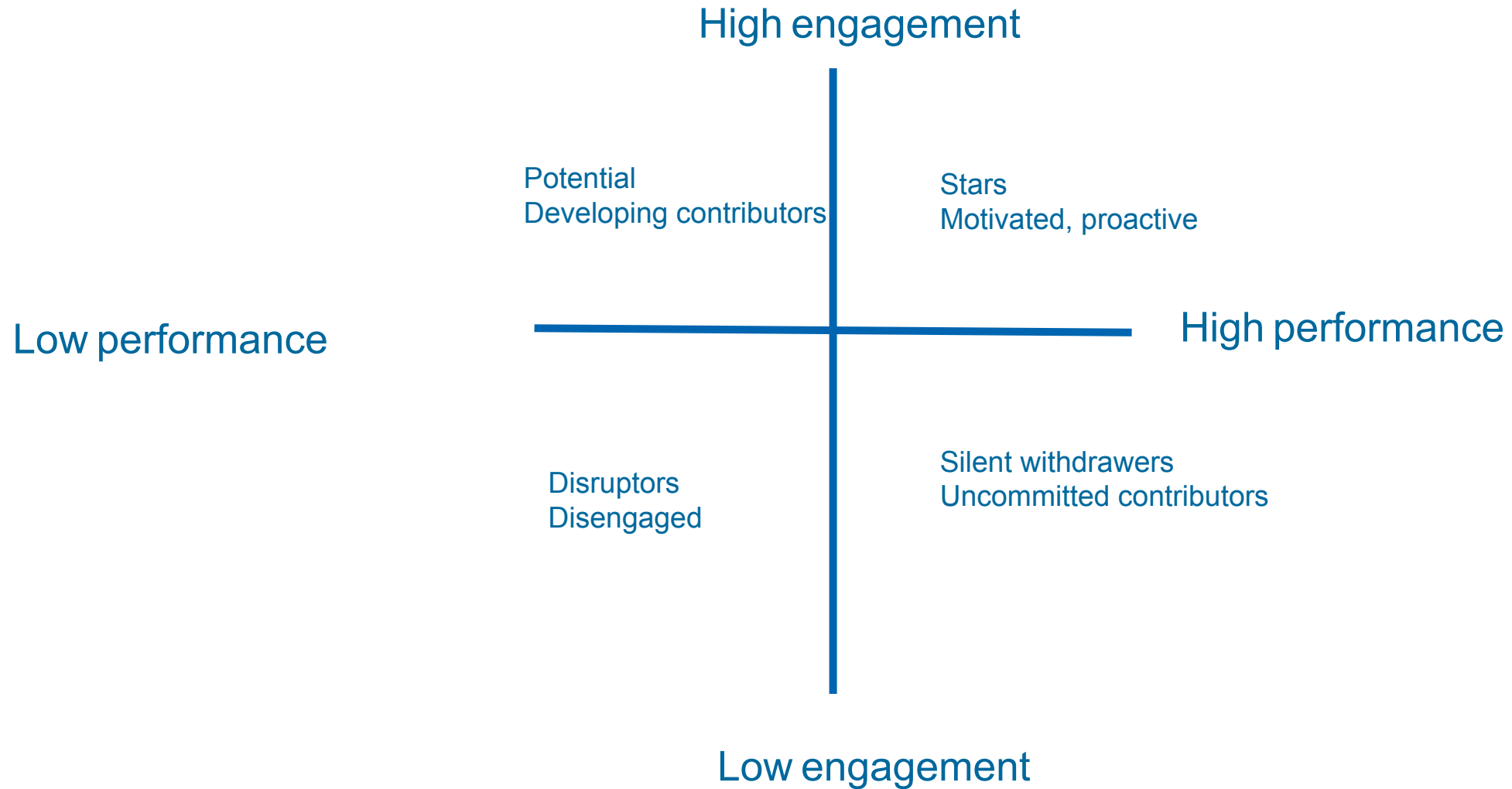
Sleep problems, cardiovascular strain, immune impact

🚩 Individual Early Warning Signs:

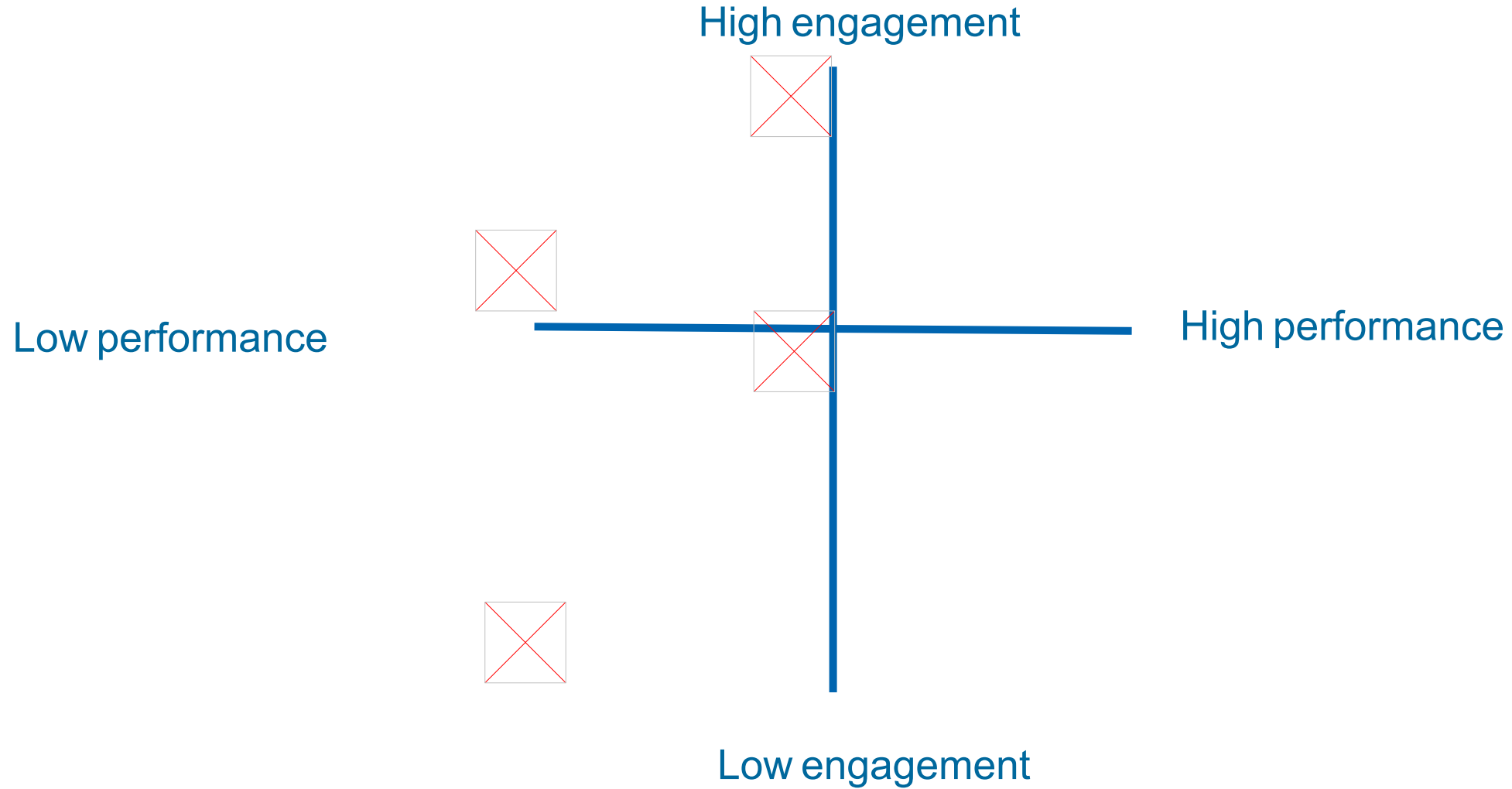
- “I’m stuck” thinking
- Reduced effort / presenteeism
- Withdrawal from opportunities
- Cynicism about the organization



Engagement / Performance



Engagement / Performance

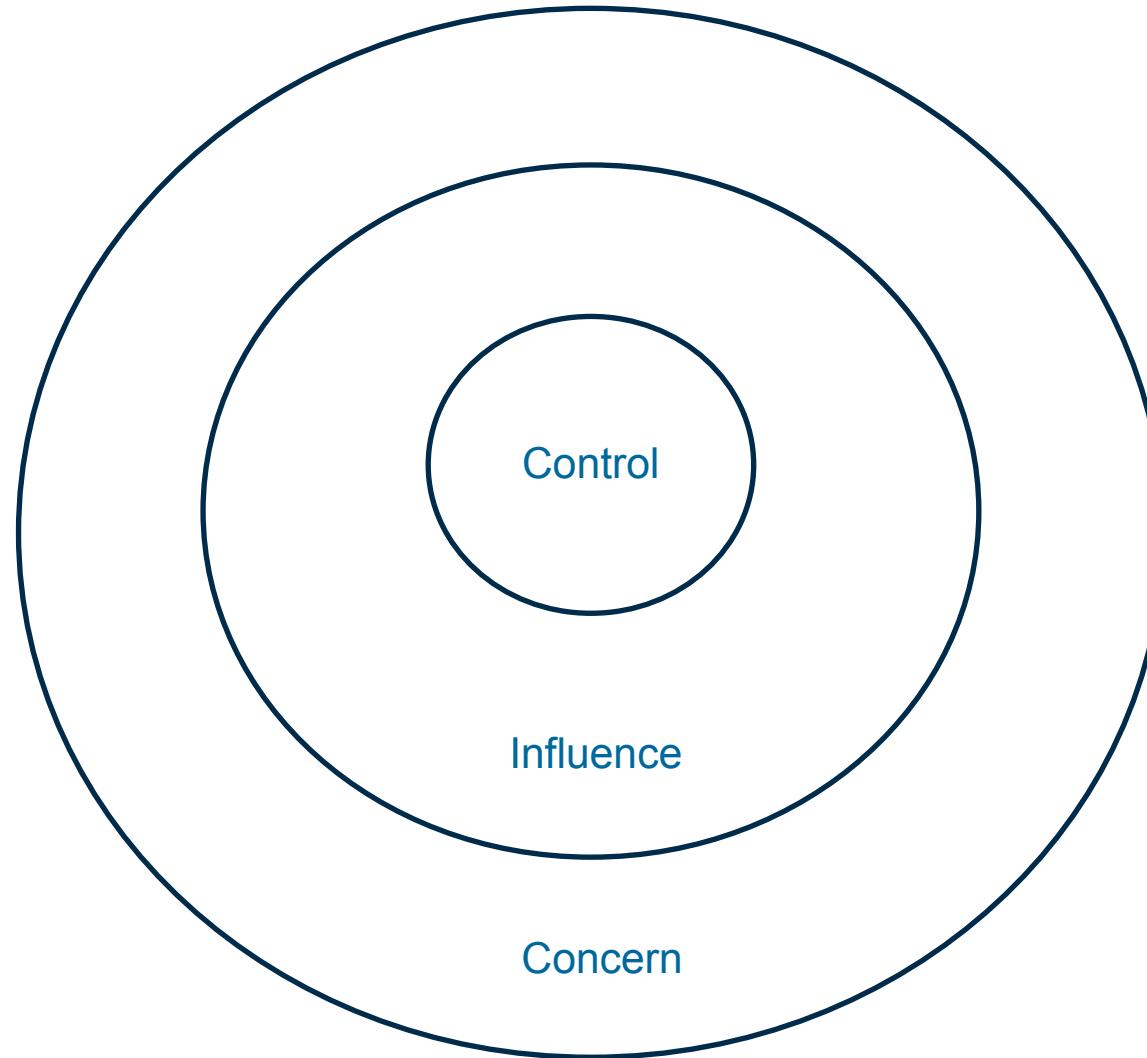




What questions do you have?




Journal Exercise: Circle of Control



Case 1: Career Development as a Hazard

Career Development as a Psychosocial Hazard

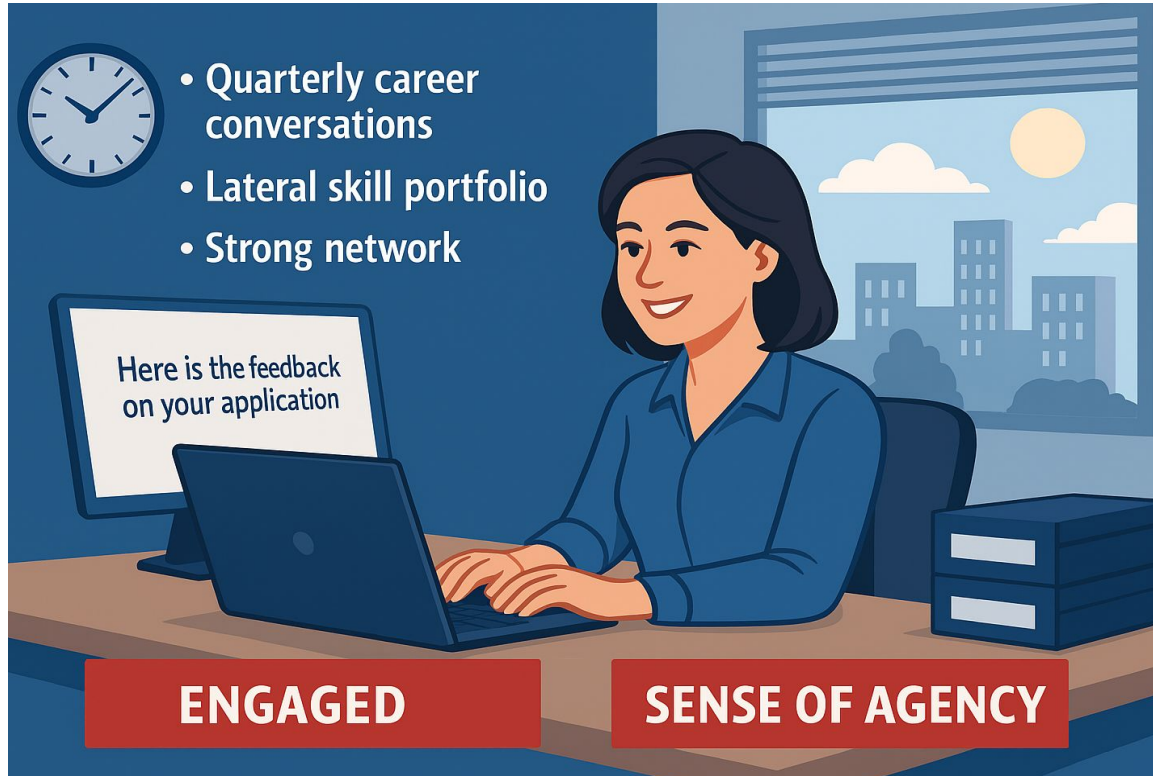
5 years. Same role.
Applied multiple times.
No feedback.



⚠️ Loss of Agency ⚠️ Learned Helplessness ⚠️ Quiet Disengagement ⚠️ Risk of Attrition

- 5 years same role
- Applies repeatedly, no feedback
- Manager supportive but inactive
- Increasing disengagement

Case 2: Career development as a thriving factor



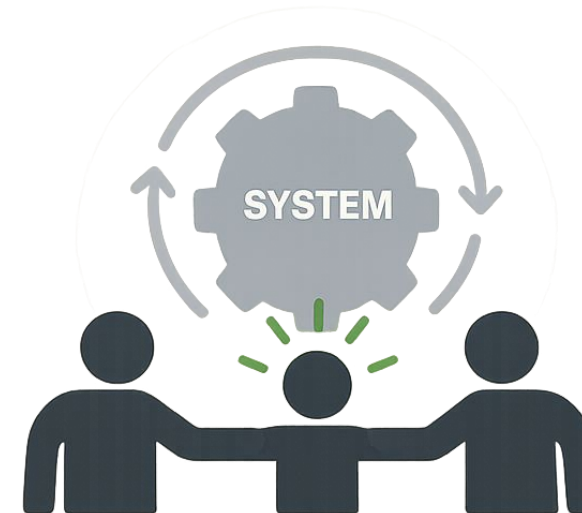
- Quarterly career conversations
- Engaged in discussions with manager on career
- Requests feedback on applications and interviews
- Builds lateral skill portfolio (working groups, projects)
- Mentorship activated
- Coaching (internal /external)
- Built strong peer network

The difference between “hazard” vs. “thriving” is rarely the system alone – it is how individuals interact within it.

HAZARD



THRIVING



Shifting from “Hazard” → “Thriving”

Mode	Mindset	Behaviour
Hazard	“I’m stuck”	Withdrawal, depressed, isolation, “give up”
Coping	“I’ll manage”	Minimal engagement, decrease motivation, may see increased conflicts or frustration, “going through the motions but not thriving”
Thriving	“I can shape this”	Active growth, motivated, energized, sees challenges as opportunity

👉 Thriving ≠ promotion or advancement

👉 Thriving = active growth
self-development
new skills, projects, & networks

Practical Strategies: Regaining Agency



Career Mapping (Reality vs Aspiration)

Where am I vs where do I want to go?

Micro-Mobility Strategy

Projects, task forces, acting roles

Career Conversation

How to open this conversation with manager or potential mentor

How to engage your manager/mentor in a career development discussion

- Prepare with intention
 - Clarify goals
 - Reflect using journalling
 - Identify what you want to achieve
 - Consider past, present and future
- Create the best conditions
 - Select the time & place
 - Share purpose in advance
 - Demonstrate a collaborative approach
- Guide the conversation constructively
 - Be confident
 - Re-state goals if necessary
- Agree next steps



Career Self-Advocacy Toolkit

Practical Strategies to Overcome Blocked Career Development



EARLY CAREER

Anxiety and under-utilization

- **Frame requests as ROI** value to manager
- **Document skill utilization gaps**
- **Seek micro-visibility** (meetings, pilots, short presentations)
- **Expand horizontally** if promotion is blocked
- **Protect mental health** by setting boundaries



MID-CAREER

Blocked recognition
Quiet quitting

- **Request a career calibration** conversation
- **Redesign job tasks** (job crafting)
- **Rebuild external network**
- **Monitor burnout symptoms**



LATE CAREER

Identity threat
Withdrawal

- **Redefine value** by seeking legacy projects
- **Express concerns** directly - avoid silent withdrawal
- **Suggest mentorship +** knowledge transfer initiatives
- **Seek cognitively** engaging projects

UNIVERSAL ADVICE (ALL CAREER STAGES)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Separate manager behaviour from your worth ✓ Build shadow development (peer mentoring, online courses) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build shadow development (peer mentoring, online courses, internal knowledge sharing) ✓ Watch for red flags : Insomnia, rumination, health symptoms |
|---|--|

CAREER SELF-ADVOCACY \neq **MANAGER ACCOUNTABILITY**

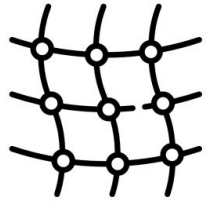
Empower yourself, but remember organizations must still provide :

- Clear criteria
- Fair opportunities
- Transparent pathways

Final Journal Entry: Revisiting your doodle



Journal Activity : Doodle



Write down 1 action you can take for your own career in the next :



week



month



six months

Career development is not just a pathway: it is a workplace condition.

When designed well, it protects.
When activated intentionally, it enables people
and organizations to **thrive**.



Additional material post-session – Creating a network for career development

Rethinking “networking” for career development

- Shift the mindset
 - Build mutually valuable relationships – not just collecting contacts
 - Have confidence in your ability to provide something in return
 - Focus on learning & visibility – pieces of the puzzle that will help you later
 - Think mid- to long-term
- Analyse your network
 - Peers – to share insights & provide support
 - Mentors – to provide guidance & challenge your thinking
 - Cross-functional contacts - to give a different perspective & broaden outlook
- Build with intention
 - Align network with goals and interests
 - Ask “Who helps me grow? Who do I learn from?”



Strategic network-building

- Assess where you are
 - Who do you currently have in your network? How strong are those connections?
 - When did you last “nurture” your network?
 - Push out of your comfort zone – identify a “weaker” connection you can contact
- Be proactive and specific
 - Reach out with purpose – contacts, suggestions, information (not asking for a job)
 - Ask thoughtful questions
 - Think about what information you can share with your contact – e.g. an interesting article you read
- Build consistency
 - Have a monthly & weekly plan for networking
 - Keep track of who you contact, when & the outcome



Nuture your network

- Stay visible and engaged
 - Post on LinkedIn - share an article with your thoughts, comment on a podcast etc.
 - Engage with others - respond meaningfully to LinkedIn posts
 - Push out of your comfort zone – identify a “weaker” connection you can contact
- Be proactive and specific
 - Reach out with purpose – contacts, suggestions, information (not asking for a job)
 - Ask thoughtful questions
 - Think about what information you can share with your contact – e.g. an interesting article you read
- Build consistency
 - Have a monthly & weekly plan for networking
 - Keep track of who you contact, when & the outcome



Self-guided exercise : Circle of Control

The circle of control was introduced by Stephen R. Covey in his book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” Applying the circle of control in difficult situations helps adults (and kids) focus on things that matter, such as their thoughts, goals, and how they respond.

Step One:

Using the circle image on the next page, write as many things as you can fit into each circle.

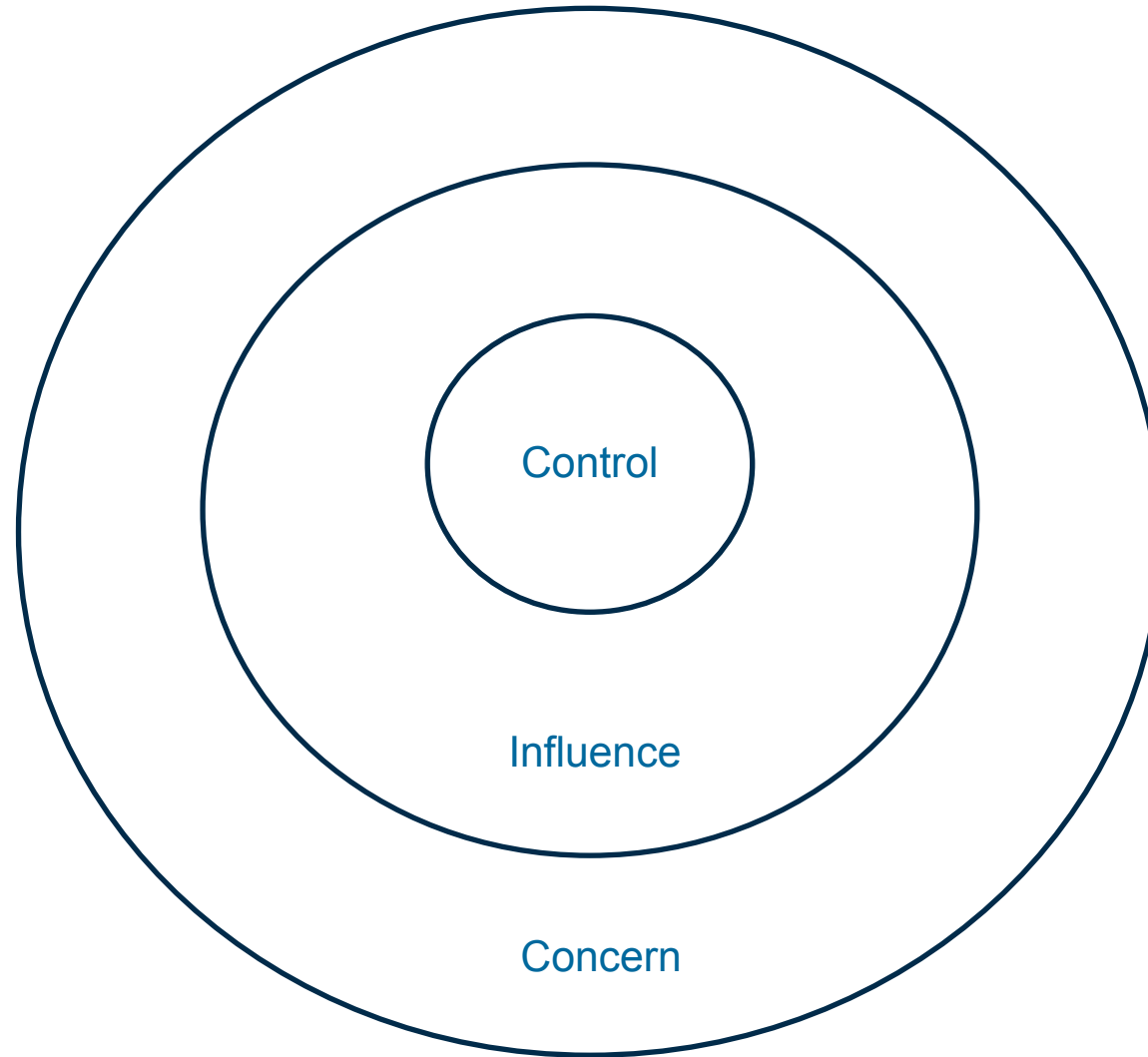
1. **Outer Ring – Things We Can’t Control:** Here, you’ll write down things entirely out of your control—for example, the weather, other people’s opinions, or global events.
2. **Middle Ring – Things We Can Influence:** These are situations where we might have some say, but we don’t have complete control. Think about influencing a group decision or giving advice to a friend. While you can offer your perspective or guidance, the outcome isn’t entirely in your hands.
3. **Inner Ring – Things We Can Control:** This is the center of the target, where you have the most power. Here, you’ll jot down things entirely within your control, such as your reactions, your effort in a task, or your attitude.

Step Two: Using a highlighter or different coloured pen, highlight the top 5-10 areas that have occupied your day (or week). It might be how you spend time thinking or your actions and energy in an area. Reflecting on this, we should note that when we spend our time and energy on too many things that are outside of our control, there can be ill effects on our emotions and health. If you have too many highlighted areas outside the centre circle or feel stressed completing this step, go to step three.

Step Three: Write a list of 50 things within your control right now. You can start with everything you wrote in the inner circle in step one. Do not pressure yourself to complete the list in one setting. Take your time and make it fun. On that note, the first thing in your control is to smile and decide to have fun with this exercise.

Step Four: If this exercise made you realize you are too stressed or struggling to focus on positive things within your control, contact the Staff Counsellors Office to request an appointment to discuss ways to regain control over your self-care. You can learn more about the [SCO team on iSeek](#) or email us at SCOHO@UN.org

Circle of Control



Circle of Control – 50 things I can control

Step Four: 50 things I can control

1. Have fun with this exercise
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____
21. _____
22. _____
23. _____
24. _____
25. _____
26. _____
27. _____
28. _____
29. _____
30. _____
31. _____
32. _____
33. _____
34. _____
35. _____
36. _____
37. _____
38. _____
39. _____
40. _____
41. _____
42. _____
43. _____
44. _____
45. _____
46. _____
47. _____
48. _____
49. _____
50. _____

