



香港城市精神健康聯盟

City Mental Health  
Alliance HK

## CMHA HK EXPERT SERIES: DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTIES

With the ongoing complex challenges, it's normal to feel a surge of negative emotions. **Danielle Buckley, Registered and Coaching Psychologist**, shares practical tips on how to handle uncertainties.

### COMPLEX CHALLENGES...



Uncertainty



Remote  
working



Home  
schooling



Isolation



Productivity  
shifts



Family  
challenges



Financial  
challenges

### ...TRIGGER NEGATIVE EMOTIONS INCLUDING FEAR AND ANXIETY

#### ANXIETY AS A MESSAGE

It is important to note that is that **anxiety and fear are natural responses to challenging situations and are driven by a perceived sense of danger and uncertainty.**

#### A WARNING SIGN TO TAKE ACTION

When we're met with a complex challenges, may that be the change in work environment, a shift in productivity, balancing work from home, home schooling and social isolation, these stressors trigger a huge surge in cortisol in our bodies making us experience sense of worry, anxiety and fear.

#### CORTISOL AND ANXIETY

As we experience a surge in cortisol, it results in increased heart rate, our breathing

quickens, and we zoom our attention on the problem as we prepare to act. This is useful in life and death situations - however it might not be as useful in less threatening situations.

#### BETWEEN STIMULUS AND RESPONSE THERE IS A CHOICE

When we're faced with anxiety, worry and fear during these periods of uncertainty, between these emotions there's a moment where we can pause and make a choice on how we react. This is particularly important for people in businesses today who are dealing with some of most complex challenges.

#### FLOURISH OR FLOUNDER?

Challenges present opportunities for changes where businesses / individuals can either flourish or flounder.

## UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN MIND

Humans have 3 core psychological needs, and they are challenged during complex times:

- **Competence:** the need to feel good at what they do (am I performing?)
- **Autonomy:** the need to feel in control (what does my work look like?)
- **Relatedness:** the need of good quality relationships (how do I build relationships during social distancing?)

## HOW EMPLOYERS CAN SUPPORT EMPLOYEES THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

- Create a **culture driven by trust**, allowing employees to feel competent and in control.
- Focus on **people and not just the process**. How people are responding and staying connected during this time is more important now than ever.
- Having processes that allow building **robust relationships** between teams.

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- **Validate emotions, acknowledge this is unprecedented times:** it is okay to feel anxiety and stress; denying emotions does more harm than good
- **Continue connections - physical distancing not social distancing:** connect with people via digital conferencing tools like Zoom and WebEx
- **Upskill employees on mental health:** for employees with underlying mental health conditions, these are the times where it can either help or hinder the way they deal or work with others
- **Positive emotional contagion:** Positive emotions are contagious. Build a supportive workplace culture and positive framework in the way you communicate with your team
- **Choose the experts and information source:** Employ experts/designated teams to guide business operations in this unprecedented time, allowing other employees to focus their role

This document is not and should not be considered as clinical advice or support. Anyone who may have a need for such support should seek professional advice.



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**City Mental Health Alliance** HK

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) is a not-for-profit membership organisation. We are an alliance of businesses, working together with mental health experts and partner organisations, to achieve our vision that every workplace will protect, support and create positive mental health for their people.

We provide training, events, resources, research and practical support for companies wishing to create mentally healthy workplaces.

## CONTACT

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