



Dealing with uncertainty

This summer so much of what we've been anticipating has been cancelled. Exams, as we've known them, will not be the same. Festivals, proms, holidays and other adventures are either called off or postponed.

We're reminded all the time that very few things in life are certain, however that doesn't necessarily make it easier to process when something we've taken for granted changes without warning. When we are more committed to a plan than an outcome, dashed expectation can leave us feeling disorientated, confused, frustrated and demotivated. There may also be a flurry of emotion such as anger and sadness which can impact our mood.

Disappointment is natural, but do you feel completely overwhelmed or 'out of control' when plans change unexpectedly? Being clear on what is inside and outside our control can help uncover resilience allowing us to **adapt, rebuild, recover** and recognise that we can also change and develop over time.

Seek choices within your control

We can choose to be proactive in relation to changing circumstances. This is a way of **adapting**. Ask yourself, what's the outcome I'd like to see now? Is it a continuation of your education? More work experiences? A clearer idea of your options going forward? Or maybe something else entirely.



On deep reflection you may feel confident that one way or other your chosen outcome is possible. If that's the case, then for now, your focus could turn away from what was supposed to happen and instead towards your bigger picture. However, even if we anchor

ourselves with an outcome, confidence can slide if our mind gets hooked into negative distractions such as news feeds and opinions on social media. We can't control other people's actions, feelings or opinions, but we can choose to limit our exposure to them and create new plans around our own personal choices, this is a way of **rebuilding**. Creating action plans can help with this (see resource below)

Get inspiration from other peoples' journeys

When we meet people who we view as successful in areas that interest us, we may assume that they followed a clear path to reach career milestones or goals. Rarely is this the case. If we get curious about people who are doing things that we aspire to do, then often we find out about all sorts of diversions, roadblocks and compromises they have navigated to get where they are today. When we accept that the obvious route may not be our only route, we can accept that unpredicted challenges aren't the end of the world.

Top tip: seek out 3-5 people you admire and find out about their journey. Be specific in asking about the challenges they overcame to **rebuild** their plan.

Diffuse disappointment

First comes disappointment, then acceptance (and letting go) and finally gratitude. When we talk about feeling grateful, we're not looking for ways to be grateful for the difficult thing that happened or the loss that came with it – we can acknowledge that something is bad and leave it at that. By doing this we accept that life is imperfect, and we can't always be happy and comfortable.

However, gratitude comes in when we can truly appreciate the good things that exist alongside the difficulty. Amidst uncertainty, we can find things that are constant – our home, our closest friend, our favourite film, for example. Noticing and proactively acknowledging the constants in our life, as well as the things we've been working on in the background, can help us to **recover** and insulate from life's knocks. When we are grateful, we can continue to see possibility rather than feeling as if all is lost.

Please use the tools on the next page to support you when dealing with uncertainty.

Action planning

What are you going to do in regard to juggling your own time? There are no right or wrong answers as it is your template.

When and how?

1st

2nd

3rd

What will you do?

Notes:

Force Field Analysis

For every decision try and pick equal numbers of reasons 'For' and 'Against' a decision. For example getting a job while you study, one of the values might be 'less time to myself and to spend with friends' and 'more money' but 'less time to spend with friends might have a higher value (say 8) than money (say 6). This helps you to assess the value of the reasons as well as the number of reasons to take or not take a course of action.

Complete the 'force field analysis' chart on a topic that you choose. For each decision factor that you put in the for or against column, give it a number out of 10, where 1 is an insignificant factor and 10 is a very significant factor. If you can't think of 4 reasons for and 4 reasons against, think of 3 or even 2. Then add up the totals at the bottom to help you make a decision.



Topic:

For	Against
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