**Strategies and tools to help work with change and uncertainty.**

**We manage change and uncertainty all the time. However some change and uncertainty is new to us, the referendum and its impact is a good example of this.**

**Here are a few ideas that might help you.**

**Grief/Loss/Sadness**

Grief is a transitional process – a way for us to move from one experience of the world to another. Grief is physiological, psychological, emotional and affects us socially. Depending upon your feelings about the current situation, you and your team might find yourselves in any of the emotional experiences below.

* Shock (physical trauma, hyper vigilant, restless, emotional, absence, distracted).
* Denial (a real inability to think or discuss what is going on).
* Depression (sadness) feel low, little motivation, wishing to withdraw.
* Anger (spikes of adrenalin) being very animated, wanting to talk a lot or do something!
* Bargaining (making internal deals – endless mental chatter trying to make a narrative sense of what is going on).
* Acceptance (feeling familiar with a change without necessarily liking it).
* Guilt (feeling responsible, cogitating over ‘what ifs’).

Please know that these are all normal, natural and helpful. Try to be tolerant of yourself and others. The greatest difficultly we have in grief and loss is when our relatives, partners or colleagues might be in a different stage to us. This makes it harder to communicate. Please try to notice this and take care in the differences. These stages pass and rotate. In a difficult moment you might experience them all.

**NEWS Addiction**

There has been a lot of NEWS. The News can present us with new and shocking or dispiriting information. Please try to manage your exposure to the news, don’t have it on all the time, if possible, and bear in mind that others might not be able to tolerate it (especially if they are in Denial see above). If you receive a lot of news shocks your body is likely to experience fear, we have autonomic survival responses to fear (fight, flight, freeze), these are survival responses and very useful, but not the best states to process information. Give yourself a break.

**Sleep**

Your sleep may well be disrupted – this is also normal. Try not to alter your sleep patterns. Allow the sleep disturbance to be and work on gentle routines to go to sleep or back to sleep at night. Try to avoid looking at the news in the middle of the night. Good sleep is not just 7 hours – completed cycles and naps (between 4 hours -20 minutes) of sleep restore and arm us to manage the day ahead.

**Competence**

Ground yourself in your competence – remind yourself of the things that you do well, whatever those things may be. Remember the changes and uncertainty you have managed in the past. Keep contact with your social network, the people who you feel comfortable with. We feel better when we feel certain about ourselves, reminding ourselves of our competence and our primary contacts can really help with that.

**Decisions**

If the referendum result is making you consider your position in the UK- try not to make a decision too quickly unless you have an imperative to decide soon. We make good decisions when we are regulated (not alarmed) and a good decision includes using both your mind and your emotions. Talk to someone to help you think a decision through.

**Ground yourself in the here and now**

When things seem overwhelming try to bring your mind and body back into the present moment. Trying to imagine a myriad of different futures is very difficult and exhausting. Look around you to make contact with someone you know. If we spend too much time considering imagined scary futures our bodies will get scared and become hyper- vigilant and agitated. Try to minimise the wear and tear on your body, and work with the here and now as much as you can. We can manage what is around us very well.

**Feeling tired**

All of this is likely to make us feel more tired than normal – after all you still have your day job and family responsibilities. Try to eat well, exercise and take rest. Even if you are keen to lobby and campaign you still need the energy to do so.

**Things that may help**

* Allow for feeling frightened/upset.
* Remember any routine that has helped in the past that you could use now.
* Use mindfulness techniques to bring yourself back into the present moment – use your mind when your body struggles, use your body when your mind has become agitated. Take a moment out.
* Look to all the things that you do/have that bring you comfort, and the people you regard as your anchors.
* Recognise that one of our resources is to ask for help when we need it.
* Recognise your own stress symptoms.
* Be prepared to be less focused/distracted/angry at unexpected things.
* Avoid any extremes.
* If you know what you need from others let them know.
* Talk when you need to.

**If you are concerned please consider talking to your colleagues, your line manager, your HR managers, or SCPSS.**

**Staff Counselling and Psychological Support Service**

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