

# Building Stress Resiliency



## Activity: Reframing Control

**What it is:** Identify stressors and map them on a sphere of control chart to better understand where to focus energy (on things within your influence and control)

**Why you should do it:** When you are overwhelmed and/or under chronic stress, it can feel like nothing is in your control and hard to feel like you can take action to improve the situation. If you can look at your stressors more objectively and break them down, there are often pieces you have influence and control over which are ideal places to focus your energy. You can also distinguish what is not in your control or influence which are things that aren't worth your time, energy or emotional capacity.

**Why it works:** Research shows that stress impairs individuals' persistence through setbacks, however this impairment was alleviated when setbacks were perceived to be controllable. (Bahnji et al, 2017: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4755928>).

## Reframing Control - How To

- 1. Name your stressors.** Stress can feel like headaches, neck aches, stomach pain, irritability, anxiety, difficulty sleeping, low energy, etc. Work to identify what in your life is causing these symptoms. Try to focus on things that cause chronic (long-term) stress where there may not be a clear end point to the stressor. Common chronic stressors include: toxic relationships, difficult work relationships, physical health issue, overwhelming workload, etc.
- 2. Map & reframe your control.** Take one of your stressors and map it on a sphere of control chart to identify what is in your control, what you have influence over, and what is completely out of your control. On the surface, it might seem like your stressors are all out of your control which can feel like you have no ability to impact it, or all in your control which can feel overwhelming. Work to break down your stressor to determine what pieces are actually in your control and what are not.
- 3. Refocus your energy.** Work to prioritize your time and energy on the parts of your stressor where you have control or influence. Remind yourself not to spend your energy or emotions where you do not have control, in those cases work to accept and move forward.

