

Faculty & Practitioner Well-Being: From Burnout to Balance

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What's Your Change Load?

Before we dive in, take a moment to check in with yourself. Working in public health right now means carrying an enormous **Change Load**: uncertainty, system-level stress, and responsibility that seems to never let up.

Today's goal is not simply to endure more. We are working toward something better:

- ❏ **"Steadiness rooted in agency"**: not just surviving challenges, but leading yourself and others from a grounded place.

Chat Prompt

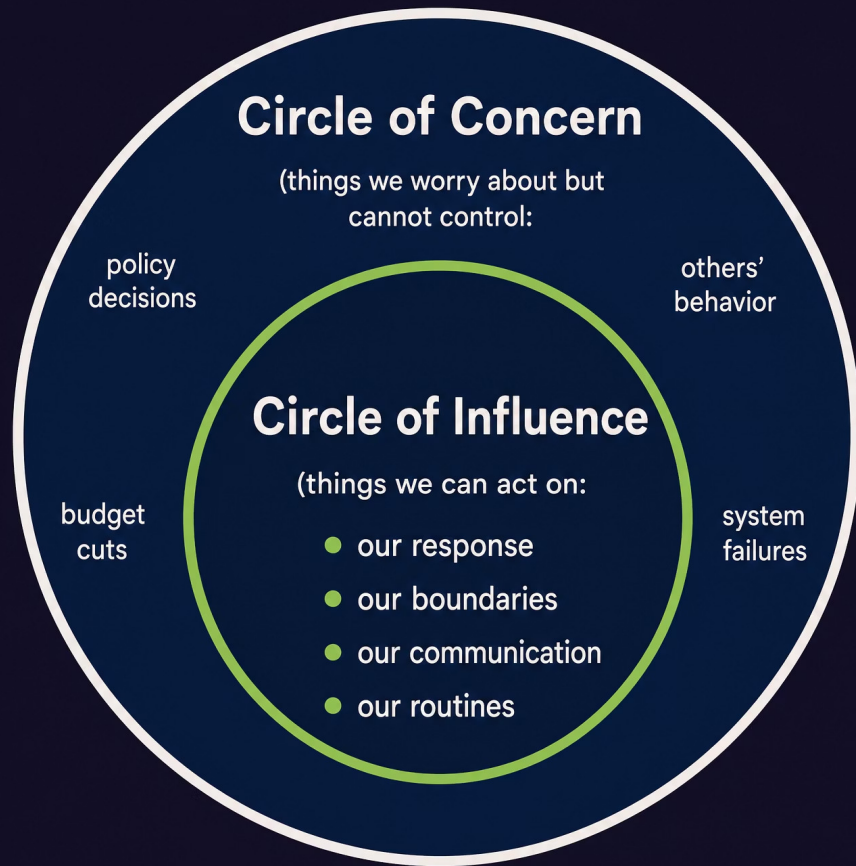
Type **one word** in the chat that describes how your Change Load has felt this month.

The Circle of Influence

Stephen Covey's framework helps us see where our energy actually goes, and where it could go instead.



Where Are You Spending Your Energy?



The Responsibility Trap

Burnout accelerates when we invest our energy in the outer ring, which focuses on things we *care about* but cannot control. Every hour spent there shrinks our sense of agency.



When leaders stay stuck in the Circle of Concern, they feel exhausted, helpless, and reactive.

The antidote is a deliberate shift: redirect energy toward what you can influence, even slightly.

Mapping Your Biggest Stressor



Write It Down

On a piece of paper, write your single biggest current stressor — the one taking up the most mental space.



Categorize It

Ask yourself honestly: Is this in my **Circle of Concern** (can't control) or my **Circle of Influence** (can act on)?



Make the Move

Identify **one small part** of that stressor you could move into your Circle of Influence today.



Practice 1: The Pause

Regulate before you respond. When the amygdala is activated by overwhelming change, it hijacks your mental clarity, which is the seat of judgment, empathy, and strategic thinking. You cannot lead well from that state.

The 60-Second "Stop, Drop, Breathe"



STOP

Pause whatever you are doing.
Name the feeling: *"I am overwhelmed right now."*



DROP

Drop your shoulders. Feel your feet on the floor. Unclench your jaw.



BREATHE

Four counts in. Hold for four.
Six counts out. Repeat twice.

 **Chat Prompt:** When in your daily routine do you need this pause the most? (e.g., before opening email, before joining a staff meeting?)

Practice 2: Energy Mapping

Sustain what matters by seeing what depletes you. Most burnout isn't caused by one catastrophic event. It's the slow, invisible drain of energy that was never replenished.



Drains vs. Restorers

The Activity

On a piece of paper, draw two columns:

List 3–5 items in each column.

Be honest. Nothing is too small to name.

The 10% Agency Brainstorm

You don't need to eliminate every drain. You just need to reclaim **10%** more agency over it.



Live Group Brainstorm: Volunteer to unmute to share a drain you feel stuck on.

For the rest of you, think about what advice you'd give:

How can they reclaim just 10% agency? Shorten the meeting? Delegate a piece? Set a new boundary?



Drains

Tasks, interactions, or situations that consistently deplete your energy and/or absorbing others' anxiety



Restorers

Activities, people, or moments that reliably replenish you

Tool: The Clarity Conversation

One of the most common and most exhausting drains is **ambiguity**. When roles, expectations, or priorities are unclear, your brain works overtime filling in the gaps.

Name the Ambiguity

Get specific: What exactly is unclear? Expectations, timeline, decision authority?

Request the Conversation

Ask directly: *"I want to make sure we're aligned on [X]. Can we take 10 minutes?"*

Confirm & Document

Close the loop with a brief written summary. Clarity you can reference is clarity that sticks.

Take this framework back to your colleagues. It works in both directions, upward and laterally.



The "One Thing" Challenge

Agency is built one small, specific action at a time. Grand plans stall. One concrete commitment this week creates momentum.

The Chat Waterfall



Why This Works

Public commitment is one of the most powerful drivers of follow-through. When you see a screen full of *real intentions from real colleagues*, accountability becomes collective.

Your "One Thing" doesn't need to be big. It needs to be **specific, doable, and yours.**

A large cargo ship is visible on the horizon of a calm sea. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, with a bright glow from the sun low on the horizon, creating a silhouette effect on the ship and the clouds.

Remember: I can't
always control the storm
but I *can* control how I
navigate the ship.

A regulated Public Health Professional creates a regulated
room. That is where it starts.

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