

# Managing Anxiety in Times of Uncertainty

Exclusively prepared for ZICO Law, by Emma Noguchi



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## OVERVIEW AND GROWING ANXIETY AND STRESS

- 1) Employee resilience, mental health and wellbeing were already at stake in many organizations across various sectors and industries. WHY?
- 2) We live in a VUCA world (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) and things change faster and faster.
- 3) Today, the advent of COVID-19 global pandemic has accelerated that trend

With more and more employees now working from home, the stress related to the virus and the well-being of loved ones, are causing high levels of anxiety and stress.

> negative impact on performance and OUR own mental well-being



# OVERVIEW AND GROWING ANXIETY AND STRESS



## PRE COVID19

*PUBLISHED NOV 21, 2019, 4:36 PM SGT*

SINGAPORE — Stress-related illnesses have cost Singapore's economy about S\$3.1 billion a year, and forms about 18 % of the country's total health expenditure

## POST COVID 19

The cost of stress and anxiety has no doubt significantly increased in recent weeks, and is expected to spiral up as the global impact continues the upwards trend.

Without mental health intervention, research shows that mental health is likely to get worse and go into depression which impacts lives of both the person affected, but also their family and friends. And ultimately, work and business performance will be impacted.

- <https://www.health.harvard.edu/a-to-z/major-depression-a-to-z>.
- <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/singapore-spends-31-billion-on-stress-related-illnesses-annually-study>
- <https://www.humanresourcesonline.net/18-of-health-costs-in-singapore-relates-to-stress-how-can-this-be-tackled/>



**It's absolutely normal that we feel  
Anxious**

**(it's part of Being Human)**



# What Creates ANXIETY?

- *A demanding client always asking more from me*
- *A repeated criticism from my spouse because I always kids bedtime*
- *Pressure from peers to put in more hours, take on more...*
- *My inner voice telling me “you’re a fraud, you’re not good enough”*
- *The uncertain environment where I may lose my job and will have to relocate everyone back in Europe...*
- *My aging parents I can’t visit because the borders are closed; what if something happens to them?*



LOSE SENSE OF SAFETY, HARMONY AND INNER PEACE

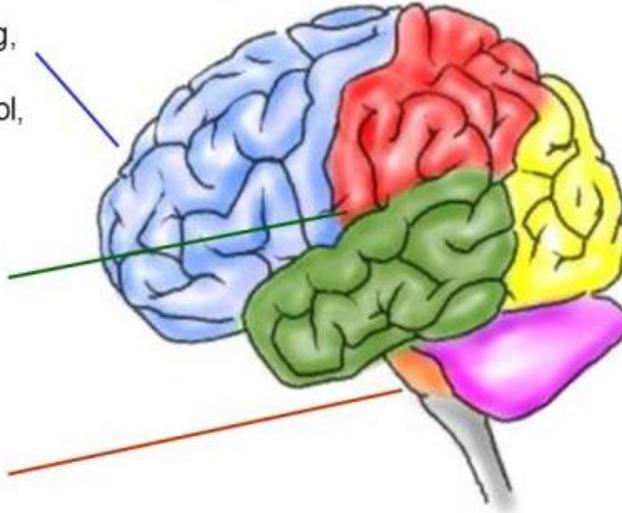


# Let's examine what happens in the brain...



**THREAT!!!!**

- **Frontal Lobe Executive Center**  
Planning, prioritizing, organizing, reason, logic, impulse control, empathy
- **Limbic System Emotional Center**  
Memory, learning, emotions
- **Brain Stem Survival Center**  
Fight, flight, freeze (attack or defend)



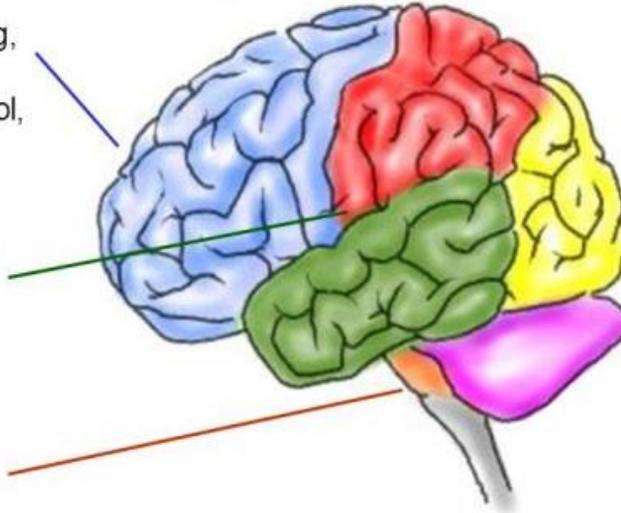
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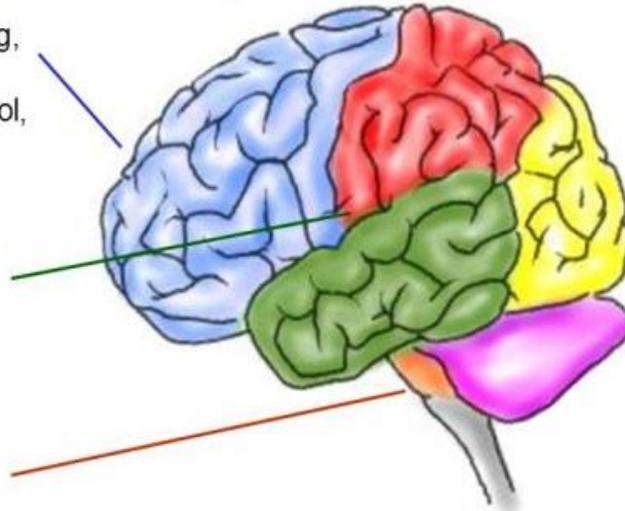
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# Let's examine how we typically deal with change

## Kübler-Ross Change Process



**Denial**  
Avoidance  
Confusion  
Elation  
Shock  
Fear

**Anger**  
Frustration  
Irritation  
Anxiety

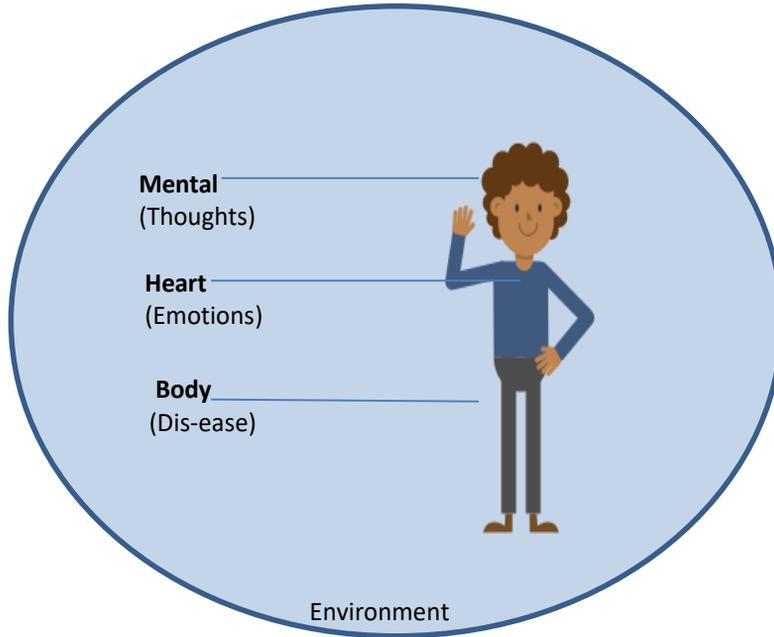
**Depression**  
Overwhelmed  
Helplessness  
Hostility  
Flight

**Bargaining**  
Struggling to find meaning  
Reaching out to others  
Telling one's story

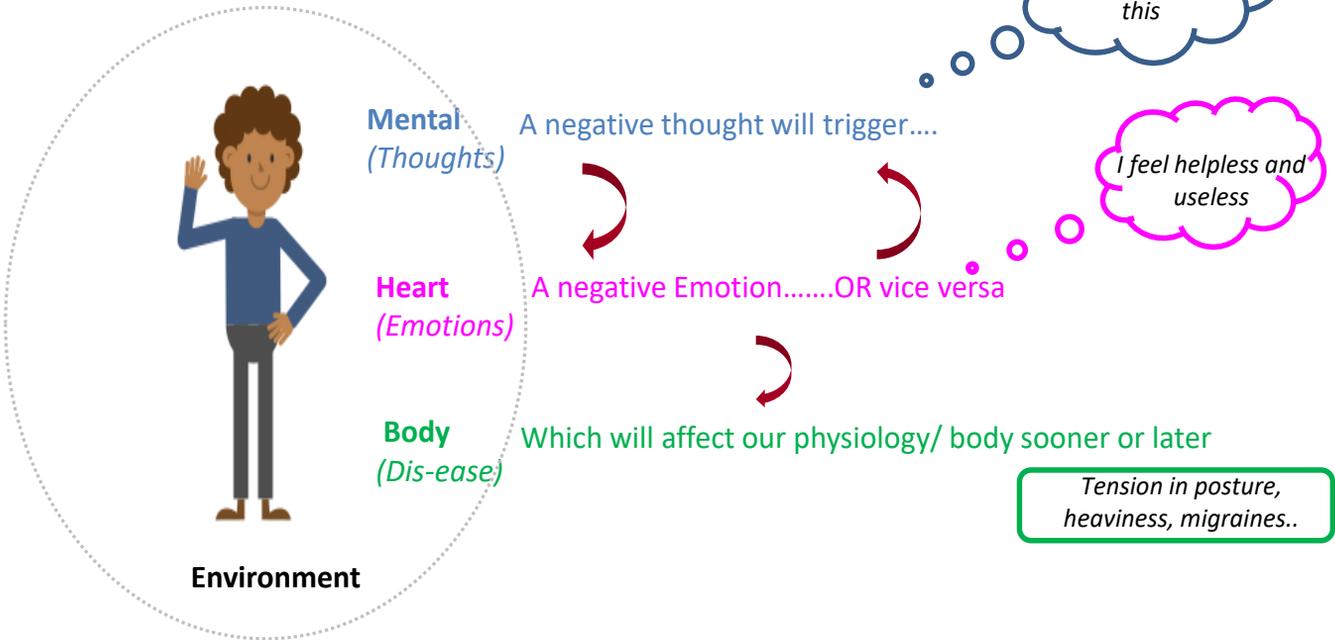
**Acceptance**  
Exploring options  
New plan in place  
Moving on



# Everything is inter-connected...



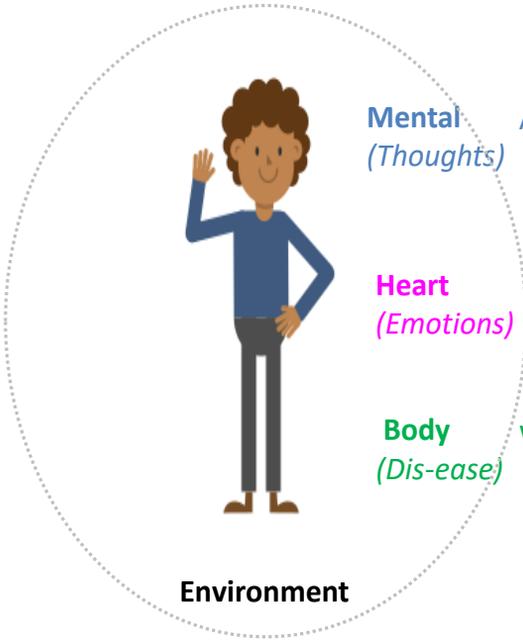
# Everything is inter-connected...



*Are we evolving in an environment that promotes safety and serenity or stress?*



# AM I AWARE OF WHAT'S HAPPENING (Right Now)?



Am I thinking any Negative or a Limiting Thought or Belief?

How am I feeling ? (good, bad, happy, sad, excited, angry, etc.)

What do I sense in my body? (tension, aches, cold, numb, etc.)

*Is what's happening around me causing me any anxiety?  
If so, what is the source of it?*

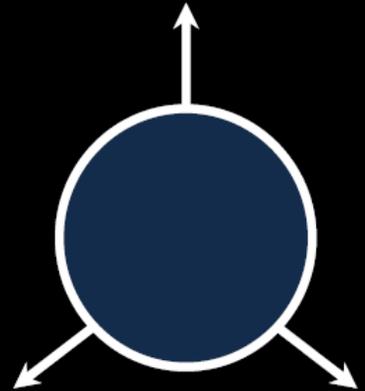


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# 3 ways to deal with Negative Emotions...



Suppress / Deny /  
Distraction



Spill / Amplify /  
Catastrophize



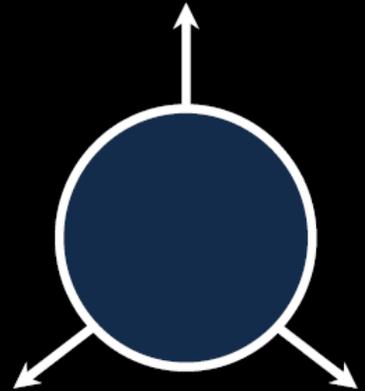
# 3 ways to deal with Negative Emotions...



Suppress / Deny /  
Distraction



Surf / Accept / Allow



Spill / Amplify /  
Catastrophize



# When you are AWARE you are affected

- > Mentally
  - > Emotionally
  - > Physically
- (or the 3 at the same time)

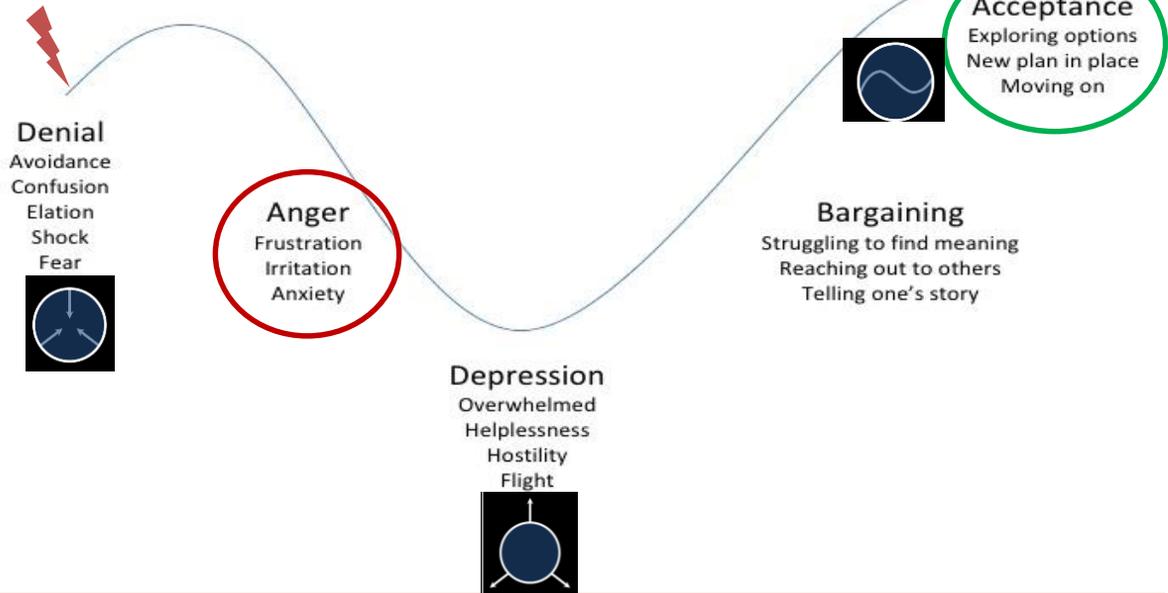
## Ask yourself:

- 1) What am I feeling, thinking or sensing?*
- 2) How is it affecting me? My surroundings? My work?*
- 3) What can I do (in my control) and who can help?*
- 4) What is my action plan to resolve this?*



# Where am I on the change process?

## Kübler-Ross Change Process



# What works in order to ?



## Be Present to the Present: 5 S's

1) Step Out

> *Physically or Mentally*

2) Slow down

> *focus on breathing slowly, very slowly*

3) Silence (or Soothing Sound)

> *Be aware of your sound surrounding you*

4) Stay Still (seated or standing)

> *Be conscious of your inner self and outer self*

5) Surf (the wave) and let it go



# What works in order to ?



## Thankfulness and Gratitude

It's impossible to feel a negative emotion AND feel grateful at the same time. The 2 can't coexist together. Hence:

*> Start appreciating something or someone*

- Can you be grateful for having a loving family?
- Can you be thankful to have enough to eat everyday?
- Can you appreciate a caring colleague?
- Can you be grateful for just being...alive and healthy?

What can you be grateful for?



**Research shows that the  
happiest people are deeply  
grateful and appreciating  
the little things**



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