

# **circles of control worksheet**

Circles of control worksheet is a powerful tool that helps individuals and organizations identify the elements of their lives and work that they can influence or control. Developed from the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy, the worksheet is designed to enhance self-awareness and promote proactive thinking. By distinguishing between what we can and cannot control, it encourages a more focused and effective approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

## **Understanding the Concept of Circles of Control**

The concept of circles of control is rooted in the idea that individuals often spend a significant amount of time and energy worrying about things outside their control. By categorizing these concerns into three distinct circles—control, influence, and concern—people can better allocate their resources and emotional energy.

## **The Three Circles Explained**

### **1. Circle of Control:**

- This innermost circle contains the aspects of life that you can directly control.
- Examples include your actions, responses, decisions, and attitudes.
- By focusing on this circle, individuals can take responsibility for their behavior and choices.

### **2. Circle of Influence:**

- Surrounding the circle of control, this circle contains elements that you cannot control directly but can influence.
- This includes the opinions of others, team dynamics, and certain external factors.
- Strategies to influence these areas might involve communication, persuasion, or collaboration.

### **3. Circle of Concern:**

- This outer circle encompasses everything you are concerned about but cannot control or influence.
- Examples include global events, other people's actions, and environmental issues.
- While it's natural to be concerned about these matters, spending too much time worrying about them can lead to stress and anxiety.

## **The Importance of the Circles of Control Worksheet**

Using a circles of control worksheet can significantly enhance personal growth and well-

being. Here are several reasons why employing this tool is beneficial:

## **1. Enhanced Self-Awareness**

- The worksheet encourages individuals to reflect on their concerns and feelings.
- By categorizing issues, users gain clarity about what is truly within their power to change.

## **2. Reduced Anxiety and Stress**

- By focusing on what can be controlled, individuals often experience a decrease in anxiety.
- Worrying less about uncontrollable factors allows for a more peaceful mindset.

## **3. Improved Decision-Making**

- The worksheet promotes a strategic approach to problem-solving.
- Users can prioritize their efforts on issues where they can make a tangible impact.

## **4. Greater Empowerment**

- Understanding the distinction between control and concern fosters a sense of empowerment.
- Individuals feel more capable of effecting change in their lives and circumstances.

# **How to Use the Circles of Control Worksheet**

Implementing a circles of control worksheet involves a structured approach. Below is a step-by-step guide to effectively utilize this tool:

## **Step 1: Identify Your Concerns**

- Begin by listing all the concerns that are currently on your mind.
- This could range from personal issues to workplace challenges or global events.

## **Step 2: Categorize Your Concerns**

- Take your list and categorize each concern into one of the three circles:
- Circle of Control: What can you change or influence directly?
- Circle of Influence: What can you affect but not control?
- Circle of Concern: What is worrying you that is completely outside your control?

### **Step 3: Reflect on Each Circle**

- For each circle, reflect on the following questions:
- What actions can I take regarding the items in my circle of control?
- How can I influence the items in my circle of influence?
- What is the impact of worrying about the items in my circle of concern?

### **Step 4: Create an Action Plan**

- For the concerns in your circle of control, develop a specific action plan that outlines the steps you will take.
- For those in your circle of influence, consider strategies to engage others or communicate your thoughts effectively.
- Finally, let go of the concerns in your outer circle by acknowledging that worrying does not change the outcome.

### **Step 5: Revisit Regularly**

- Make it a habit to revisit your worksheet regularly.
- As circumstances change, your concerns and the classification of those concerns may also evolve.

## **Practical Examples of Using the Circles of Control Worksheet**

To illustrate the effectiveness of a circles of control worksheet, consider the following practical examples:

### **Example 1: Workplace Stress**

- Concerns: Workload, deadlines, team dynamics, company policies.
- Circle of Control: Completing assigned tasks, managing time effectively.
- Circle of Influence: Discussing workload with a manager, collaborating with team members.
- Circle of Concern: Economic downturn affecting job security, office politics.

### **Example 2: Personal Relationships**

- Concerns: Friendships, family dynamics, partner's behavior.
- Circle of Control: Communicating openly, expressing feelings honestly.
- Circle of Influence: Suggesting activities with friends, encouraging family discussions.
- Circle of Concern: Other people's opinions, past grievances.

# Challenges and Considerations

While the circles of control worksheet is a valuable tool, there are challenges that individuals may face while using it:

## 1. Difficulty in Categorizing Concerns

- Some concerns may seem to straddle the lines between circles.
- It's essential to be honest with yourself when determining what you can truly control.

## 2. Emotional Attachment

- People often feel emotionally attached to their concerns, making it hard to let go of worries.
- Mindfulness practices can help in releasing these attachments.

## 3. Need for Support

- Some individuals might find it beneficial to discuss their lists with a trusted friend or a therapist.
- External perspectives can provide clarity and help in prioritization.

# Conclusion

In a world filled with uncertainties and external pressures, the circles of control worksheet serves as a beacon of clarity and empowerment. By helping individuals differentiate between what they can control, influence, and merely concern themselves with, this tool fosters a proactive mindset. Through enhanced self-awareness, reduced anxiety, and improved decision-making, users can navigate their lives and challenges with greater confidence and intention. By regularly revisiting and updating the worksheet, one can continue to grow and adapt in an ever-changing environment, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and balanced life.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is a circles of control worksheet?

A circles of control worksheet is a tool used to help individuals identify and differentiate between what they can control, what they can influence, and what is beyond their control. It visually categorizes concerns into three concentric circles.

## **How can a circles of control worksheet benefit mental health?**

By focusing on what is within their control, individuals can reduce anxiety and stress. It encourages a proactive mindset and helps people let go of concerns that they cannot influence, leading to improved mental well-being.

## **Who can use a circles of control worksheet?**

Anyone can use a circles of control worksheet, including students, professionals, and individuals seeking personal development. It's particularly useful for those dealing with stress, decision-making, or relationship challenges.

## **What are the three categories in a circles of control worksheet?**

The three categories are: 'Circle of Control' (things you can directly influence), 'Circle of Influence' (things you can affect indirectly), and 'Circle of Concern' (things outside your control).

## **How do you fill out a circles of control worksheet?**

To fill out the worksheet, start by writing down all your concerns. Then, categorize each concern into the appropriate circle based on whether you can control it, influence it, or if it's beyond your reach.

## **Can a circles of control worksheet help with goal setting?**

Yes, it can enhance goal setting by helping individuals focus on achievable objectives within their control, thus making it easier to create actionable plans and prioritize efforts.

## **Is there a digital version of the circles of control worksheet?**

Yes, many resources offer digital versions of circles of control worksheets that can be filled out online or downloaded for personal use, often accompanied by guides or templates.

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