



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

**Eller Executive  
Education**



ARIZONA  
SMALL  
BUSINESS  
BOOT CAMP &  
COLLECTIVE

RESPOND → PLAN → RETURN STRONGER

# Managing Your Employees During a Crisis

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# Objectives

- Better understand how the current crisis may be affecting your employees
- Gain practical “how to’s” for leading during this time



# Agenda

- Presentation
- Q and A (use chat)
- Wrap-up



# Here's how it works:



- **View (top right) – Speaker View**
- **Chat**
- **Audio: Stay on Mute**
- **Video is optional**
- **Participants – Raise your hand**

# Emotions are Running High

- Children at home/home schooling
- Caring for older adults
- Being home/more interruptions than when in the office
- Video meeting overload
- Learning new technology/technology not working
- Spouse home/working at home/sharing workspace
- Anxious about getting sick
- Anxious about going out/shopping
- Anxious that you're not accomplishing as much as you should
- Anxious about money
- Anxious about losing your job
- Emotional eating/drinking



# Threat to the Brain

Level 1

➤ In your broader environment

Level 2

➤ In your neighborhood

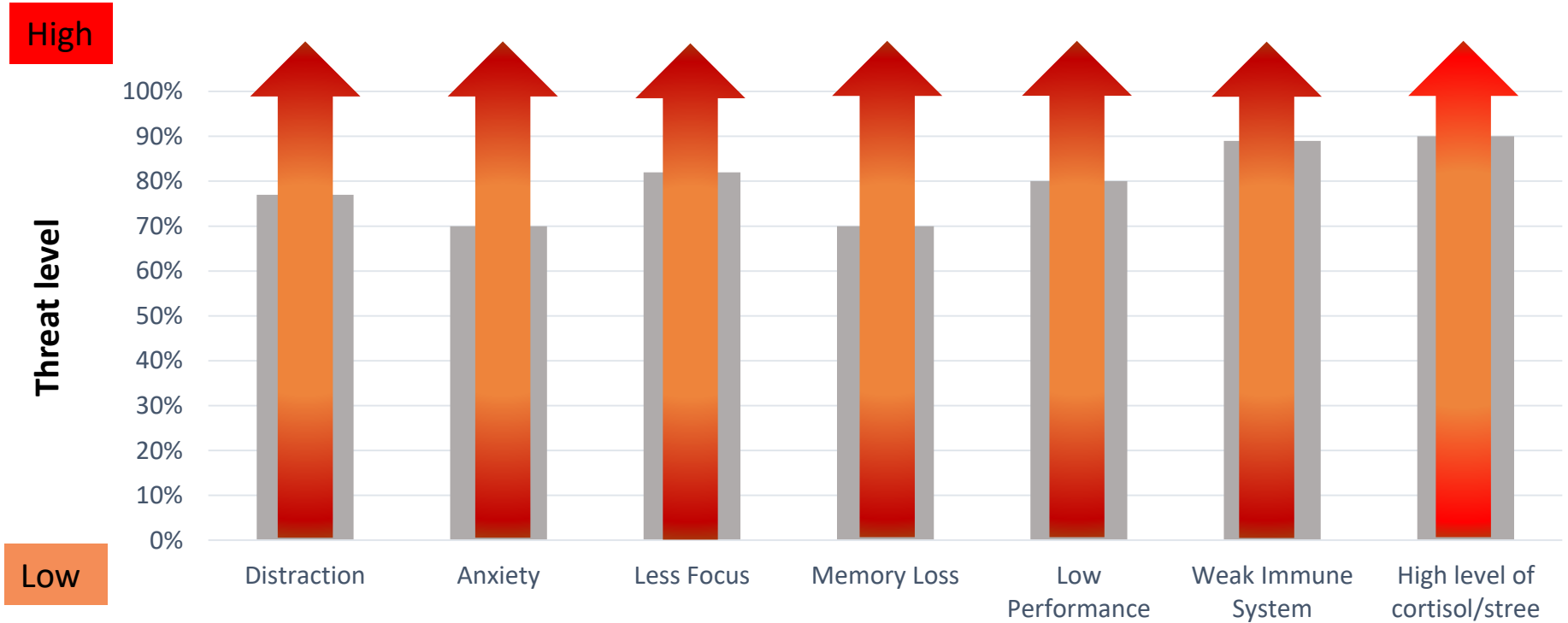
Level 3

➤ Upon you



David Rock, Neuroscience Leadership Institute, 2020

# What happens when threat is perceived:



# We're Under Stress and also in Different Places – 5 Stages of Grief

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# What You May Be Hearing

## Denial

This whole thing is overblown. What a media circus

It's the same as the flu. People get the flu every year and hardly anyone dies

I'm not (old, immune-compromised, susceptible to lung ailments), so I'll be fine

## Anger

This is all China's fault. If they'd quarantined earlier, we wouldn't be having this problem.

Forget what they told us. I'm bored and I'm having some friends over.

I don't care what Ducey says about sheltering in place, I'm going to work today.

# What You May Be Hearing

## Bargaining

It's OK to spend time with others as long as they wash their hands before they see me.

I have my mask but no one else seems to be wearing them.

I know when people look sick. I will be fine as long as I stay around people who are healthy.

This will all be over by Memorial Day. I'll be safe until then, and then we can go back to normal.

## Depression

I can't go to work, I can't earn money. Pretty soon, I'll be broke and homeless.

This epidemic is the new normal. I can say goodbye to my hopes and dreams.

I am high-risk and likely to die alone. No one will come to help me when the time comes.

## Acceptance

I can't control the pandemic, but I can do my part by sheltering in place, washing my hands, and staying positive.

The fact that I can't leave my house doesn't mean my life has to stop. I can work from home, and I can still connect with my friends and family via phone and the internet.

The world is going to change, but maybe when all this is over, we will be kinder to one another. I see new opportunities – let's go

I can also enjoy the extra time I have with my spouse, my kids, and our pets.

# We're in Unfamiliar Territory and Our Brain is Looking for:

- Certainty
- Control
- Predictability
- Security
- Belonging/not wanting to be alone



# Implications for Managing Your Employees - Actions



# What You Can Do - Overview

- Individuals will move in and out of various stages – it's fluid and you most likely will not be able to “convince them” to move from where they are
- Understand and acknowledge what others may be feeling – empathy goes a long way
- Understand and acknowledge that we all may not be operating at our best
- Strategize some key levers in your communication
- Be on the look out for and cultivate innovation



# Key Levers



## Craving Certainty – What You Can Do

- Communicate often and well. Set expectations for the cadence of the communication
- Find implicit things you can make explicit (i.e. we are still hiring, we have x amount of cash on hand)
- Clarify what isn't going to change
- Provide structure and routine
- Be upfront about what you don't know
- Help people prepare for the worst - do scenario planning to reduce uncertainty

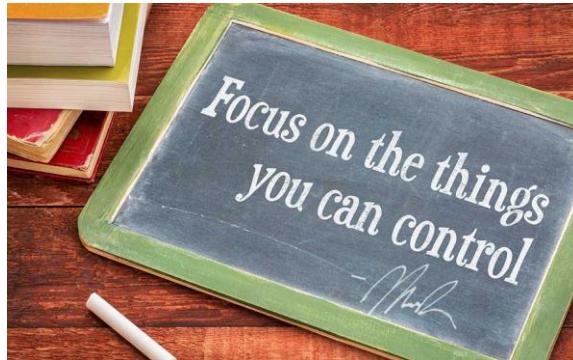


# Key Levers



## Desiring Control – What You Can Do

- Provide unexpected autonomy (i.e. what to work on without supervision)
  - small bits are okay
- Help others identify what they can control or do have control over
- Offer choice where possible
- Avoid micro managing



# Key Levers



## Belonging/Community – What You Can Do

- Focus people on shared goals
- Keep your regularly scheduled meetings
- Have end of the day “stand up” meetings to share progress and celebrate accomplishments
- Offer praise and reinforce value to the organization – let others be the hero's of their own story
- Use “we” and “us” – be inclusive
- Have virtual Happy Hours, Fun Fridays, etc.





# Other General Leadership Tips

- Balance hope and optimism with realism
- Balance vulnerability with strength
- Balance clarity while acknowledging the unknown
- Balance experimentation with stability



