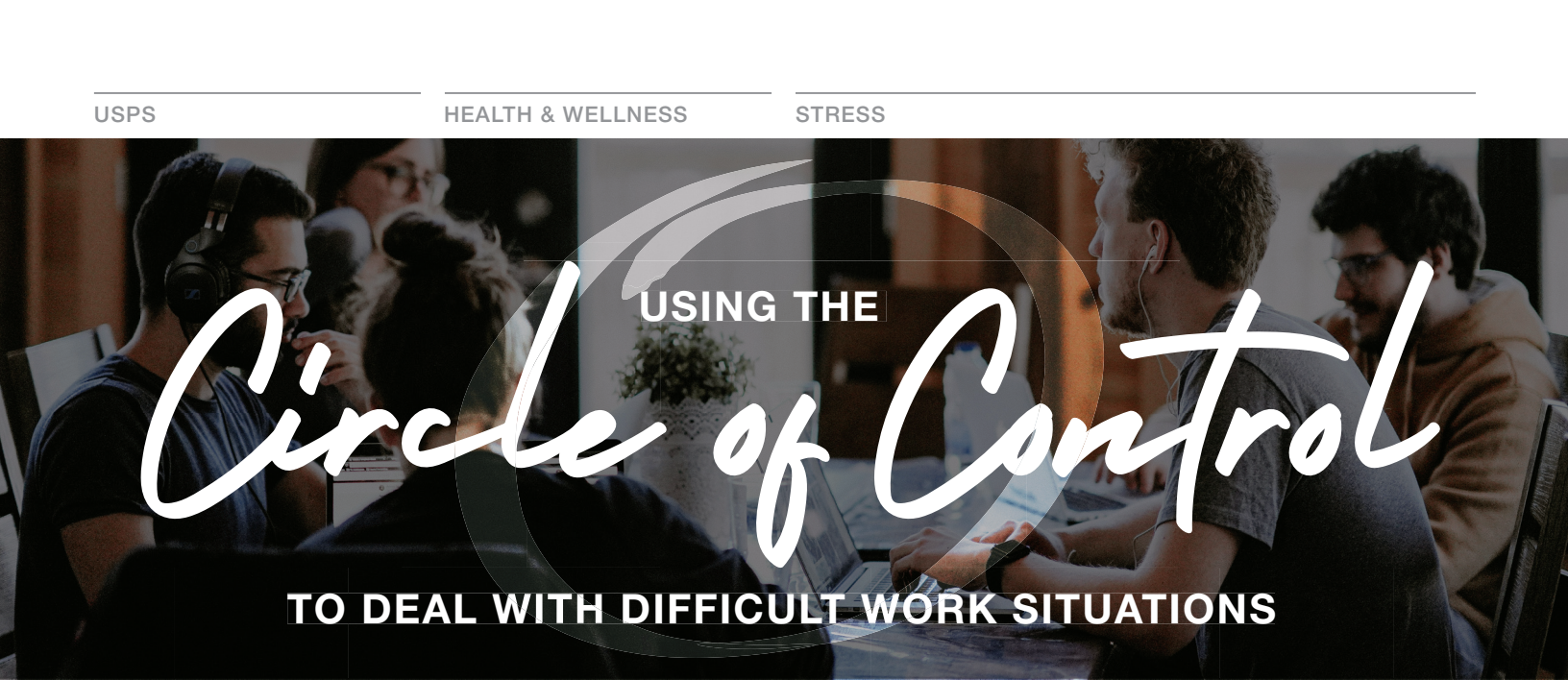




USING THE *Circle of Control* TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT WORK SITUATIONS

Focus on “Who,” “What,” “Where,” and “How”

How you react and respond to difficult situations at work can go a long way toward having a positive outcome. It's easy to get caught up in feelings and causation when involved in a difficult situation. There is sometimes a tendency to focus on *why* something happened which often is a question that can't be answered. *Why* something is happening may be the result of things outside your control. It may also be impossible to determine. Focusing on the facts such as *who*, *what*, *where*, and *how*, will help you keep heated emotions at bay while communicating more effectively.

- **Who** - Focus on who is involved in the difficult situation. Listen to others. Different people have different point of views and taking them into account may help you be able to frame the problem in a different light.
- **What** - Determine the facts. Investigate to find out what specific behaviors have occurred and what consequences resulted. Often in difficult situations, people will get emotional and may have outbursts - address the behavior without attacking the other person's character.
- **Where** - Be aware of your setting and the timing. When possible, try to resolve conflicts in a private area. This action demonstrates sensitivity and respect for all involved and helps minimize outside gossip and involvement. If possible, consider the timing. It may be more productive to address a difficult situation when all parties are calm versus during the heat of the moment.
- **How** - How you handle a situation will affect the outcome. Be courteous, calm and aware of your body language. Walk away and take a break if you need to. Remember to take deep breaths, especially if you are angry. Ask questions in a respectful tone. Make sure you understand what you are responsible for and be certain you understand what must be done and when.

Paying attention to specific facts and details during challenging situations can help you more effectively navigate them. Try not to let your emotions take over. Strive for positive interactions. Try your best and don't act in self-defeating ways when under pressure.

If you struggle with managing difficult situations, or would like to learn more about the circle of control, reach out to the EAP. Call 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341 or visit EAP4YOU.com.