

## How to focus on outcomes to reduce overwhelm

Overwhelm is a state of emotional or mental overload, often caused by stress, external pressures or unmanageable demands. It can show up as anxiety or helplessness, and exhaustion, making it difficult to focus or take action.

Focusing on outcomes instead of just tasks, can help you gain clarity, prioritise what matters and reduce overwhelm.

### Ideas for action



#### 1. Connect activities to outcomes

Shifting your focus from activities to outcomes can help you prioritise, making it easier to achieve what's important and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

Outcome orientation creates a filter for what to do first and what not to do. Try:

- 📌 Listing your weekly activities: what tasks are filling your time?
- 📌 For each activity, identify the outcomes - what impact does this have? What difference will it make?
- 📌 Group by outcome type - Does it contribute to *impact, learning, or relationships*?
- 📌 Adjust your focus - Prioritise tasks that drive the outcomes you're aiming for.

#### 2. Talk it out

Conversation can bring clarity and calmness when work situations are difficult to deal with.

Spot the people who have specific conversational skills to get the most useful support when you're feeling overwhelmed.

- 📌 **Clarity Creators:** Help you step back and focus on what matters most
- 📌 **Challengers:** See and say things you might not be prepared to do for yourself.
- 📌 **Coaches:** Ask insightful questions and listen, helping you to think it through for yourself.

Reflect on the support you need most and reach out for a conversation to discuss your situation.

#### 3. Focus on what makes you feel good

Recognising what you're doing well is really important for your resilience and can help you get through overwhelming moments. At the end of the day, try asking yourself:

- 📌 *What's one thing I've made progress on?*
- 📌 *Who is one person I've helped?*
- 📌 *What do I feel good about in my world outside of work?*

#### Coach yourself questions

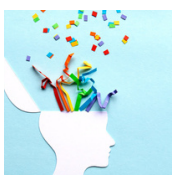
When do I start to feel overwhelmed?



How can I share how I am feeling with people?



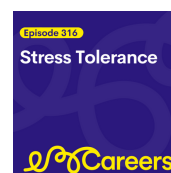
### Recommended resources



**How to Deal with Constantly Feeling Overwhelmed.**  
Useful HBR article by executive coach Rebecca Zucker.



**Investing in your resilience.** Try our free 10 minute tool to get a view of your 'resting resilience'.



Helen and Sarah share insights, ideas, and actions to support your stress tolerance at work in episode **#316** of Squiggly Careers.