



Understanding your zones of control

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Module overview

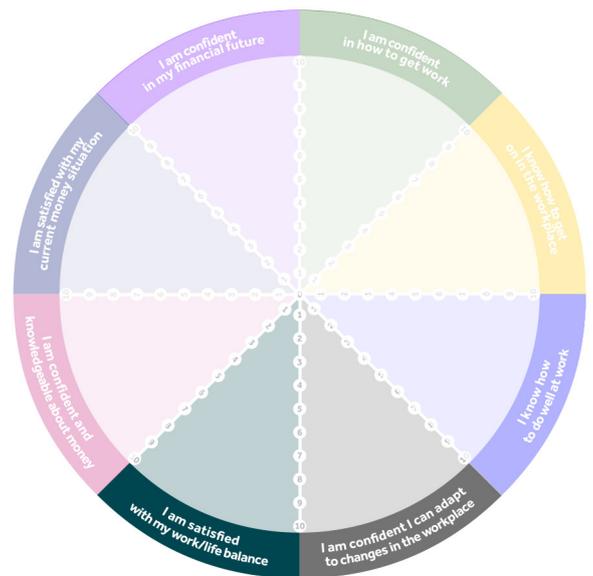
This module will help improve learners' focus. It will support learners to identify what is within their control and what is not, giving them more clarity on the actions they need to take.

Time	Key learning outcomes	Which will lead to
35 mins	<p>By the end of the module, learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what they can control, what they can influence and what they have little or no influence over Start to 'let go' or accept what they have no control over Know what to focus their time on Help allay concerns and worries Make an action plan for things they can do something about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising actions to take, knowing where to focus their energy and time Increased confidence and reduced anxiety or feelings of being overwhelmed

Important

Introduce the activity and theme and remind your learner of the coaching-based approach. Agree the desired outcome of the session with your learner.

Throughout the activity, we have included 'do now', 'do soon' and 'do later' actions which may help your learner to think about the next steps they could take. Alternatively, you could use the 'do now', 'do soon' and 'do later' headings to help your learner come up with their own actions.



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Introduction

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
 3-5 mins	<p>Refer back to your learner’s LifeSkills wheel and discuss how they scored themselves in relation to this module. Discuss what they need to know or do to be able to increase how they rate their satisfaction with this area.</p> <p>Briefly discuss the area your learner would like to gain more clarity in.</p> <p>If necessary, use these prompt questions to aid the discussion:</p> <p>What areas of your life do you find most challenging, stressful or overwhelming?</p> <p>What are your areas of concern?</p> <p>Are there areas where you feel out of control?</p> <p>Are there situations where you don’t know where to start or you need some help with prioritising what to do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are reminded of where they are now and what they need to do to reach a higher satisfaction score in this area

Core activity one

Introducing zones of control

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
 3-5 mins	<p>Introduce the Zones of control tool.</p> <p>Explain that changes, challenges and setbacks can arise at any time, whether you like it or not. In order to feel in control, it's important to identify the things that you can and those that you can't control in your situation. Then you can work out where to focus your energy to improve a situation.</p> <p>Hand your learner the Zones of control tool and explain that this tool sorts our issues into three distinct areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Things we can control 2. Things we can influence 3. Everything else – things we can't control <p>You won't always be able to resolve a situation in the way that you'd like, but you can take control when you can, and act decisively when you can't.</p> <p>Give examples of the sort of things that fall into each area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zone of control – These are things over which we have the final say; we determine the outcome. For example, "my email inbox has 562 unread messages in it and I am so stressed out." We are able to do something about this • Zone of influence – These are issues that we can influence, although we alone do not determine the outcome. For example, "my manager has asked me to cover lots of extra shifts this week, but I don't think I can cover them all." You can't control your manager, but you can influence the way that they think and act by helping them understand how their actions might affect you • Zone of no control/no influence – These are matters that are out of our control or beyond our ability to influence. For example, "my travel budget only allows me to get the bus to work which extends my commute due to regular bad traffic." Recognising these are out of our control can help us let go of them, or reframe our thoughts around it to decrease anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will understand how the tool can help them to focus their energy • Learners will be able to identify examples of each of the tool's areas

Core activity two

Identifying what is within your control

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
 10-12 mins	<p>Show your learner Aryan or Lucy's case study (depending which they'd most resonate with) and point out how they were able to move the concerns they had closer into the centre of the diagram.</p> <p>Ask your learner to write all the factors or concerns that relate to their particular issue, such as finances or work, on the bottom of their blank Zones of control tool.</p> <p>Ask them to choose the five most important ones and place these into the appropriate zones on the Zones of control diagram (small sticky notes work perfectly for this, but writing on the diagram works too).</p> <p>Note: At this stage people usually feel there aren't many items that they can actively control and they may have anxiety over the things they've written down.</p> <p>Then support your learner to question which circle they are in and whether they could be moved to an inner circle, as in Aryan and Lucy's case studies.</p> <p>Support your learner in letting go or reframing thoughts around those issues they can't control. Remind them they always have direct control over their attitudes and behaviour.</p> <p>The final Zones of control tool could have more entries in the inner zones than at the start.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners will realise there is more in their control than they thought which can prevent excessive anxiety

Wrap up

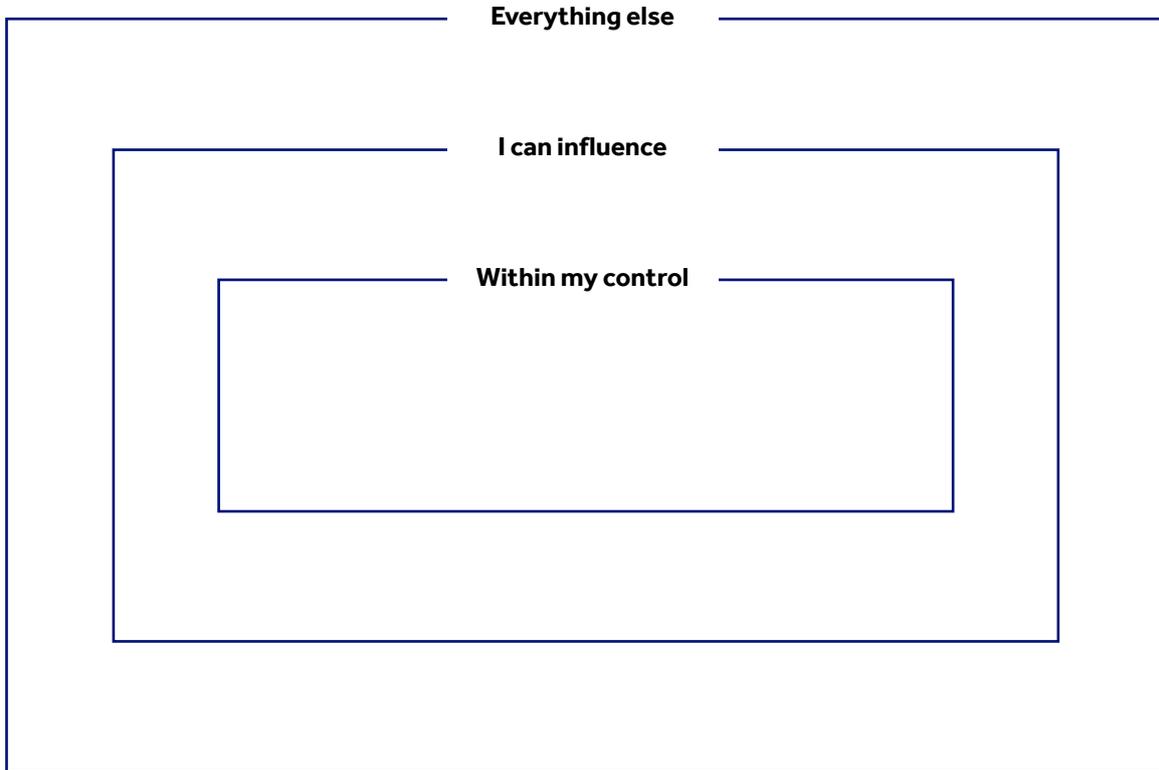
Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
⌚ 5-7 mins	<p>Support your learner to identify one or two concrete actions that can be taken from the control and influence category, focussing efforts where they will have the most impact.</p> <p>Do now: Review your chosen actions and decide how you will do these and by when. Consider asking someone to support you (a friend/ colleague) by holding you accountable</p> <p>Do soon: Work through the remaining factors yourself and set yourself some goals to progress with them. For each ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you need to do? • Who can support you? What resources may you need? • How can you overcome any obstacles you encounter? • If you could resolve this issue, what difference would it make to your life and work? <p>Do later: Consider how the Zones of control tool could impact other areas of your work and life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners should leave with concrete actions for their issues and feel more in control

Optional extension

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
⌚ 10-20 mins	<p>Support your learner to create SMART goals to identify short and long term actions, for both 'what is in my control' and 'what I can influence', using the case studies as examples. Support them to reframe thoughts around the 'everything else' category.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners will be able to turn their actions into SMART goals

Understanding your zones of control

Zone of control tool



My challenges are:

Case study

Aryan

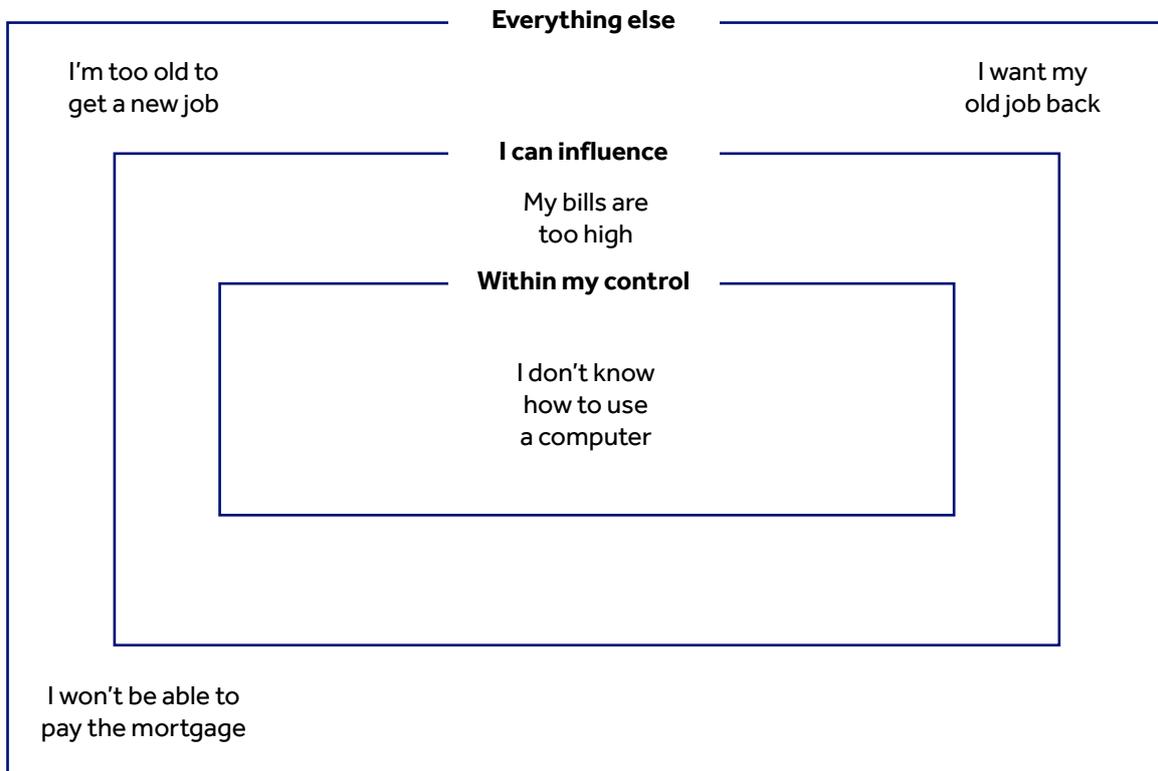
Aryan has just been made redundant and is having financial worries. He is overwhelmed and doesn't know what to tackle first.

He identified the things that bothered him:

- I'm too old to get a new job
- I'm finding it hard to budget
- I won't be able to pay the mortgage for much longer
- My bills are too high
- I want my old job back, I miss my colleagues
- I don't know how to use a computer to look for a job

He was asked to highlight the five most important of these and plotted them on his Zones of control diagram. He felt that many of these were outside his control.

Aryan's initial zones of control diagram



Case study

Aryan (cont'd)

After reflecting on each individual factor, he realised that:

“I don’t know how to use a computer”

Aryan had a manual job and rarely used a computer. He realised however that this was central to getting a job and was holding him back. He decided to go to a local free course and then borrow his friend’s computer to practise his learning.

“My bills are too high”

This was a worry but after going through his bills, Aryan realised this was under his control; he could renegotiate his mobile contract, and could do without the TV package he had. He also found ways to supplement his small redundancy – like renting a room. Finally, he checked the [Citizen’s Advice website](#) to find out what grants he might be eligible for.

“I won’t be able to pay the mortgage”

After working through his bills, paying his mortgage seemed possible.

“I’m too old to get a new job”

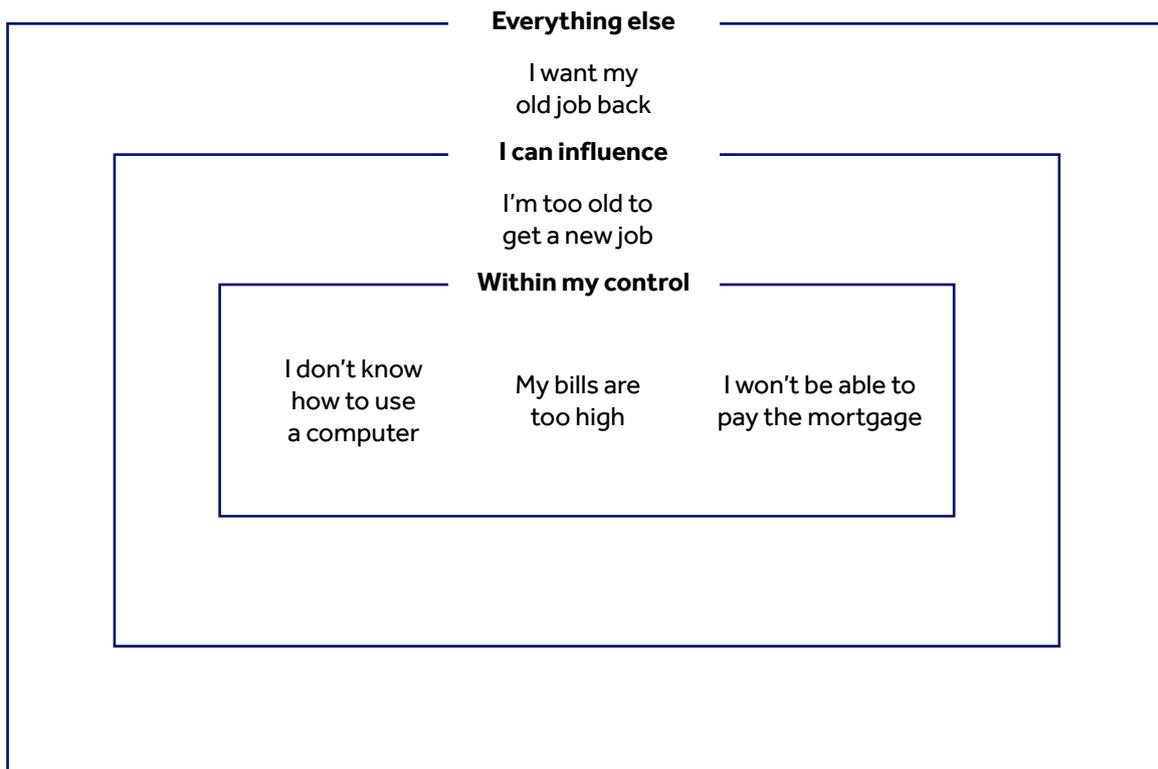
Aryan thought his age was against him, as he had applied for many jobs without getting an interview. He realised he had become despondent and was not putting much effort in. He decided he could do other things, such as networking and talking to recruiters rather than just send an email. His age isn’t within his control, but he could influence potential employers with the skills he has and also research employers in the area who are helping the older age group secure jobs.

“I want my old job back”

Aryan was feeling hurt and angry about being made redundant and missed his colleagues. He realised that he could still see his colleagues, but hadn’t yet made contact. There was nothing he could do about his job, but he realised that there may be opportunities there if he stayed in touch. He reframed his thoughts about the redundancy – he decided he would use the extra time to play tennis with a friend and arrange to see his colleagues.

He then repositioned his issues like this, and created SMART goals to identify short and long term actions.

Aryan’s final zones of control diagram



Case study

Lucy

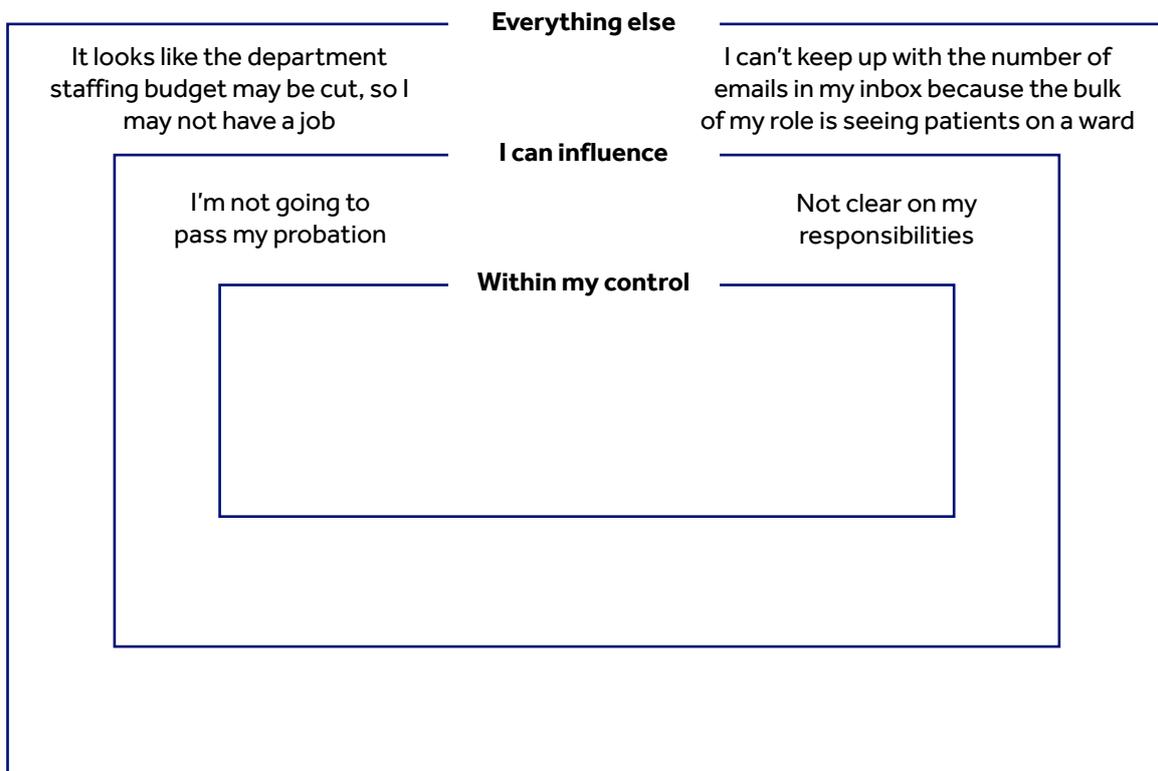
Lucy feels stressed in her job as an asthma nurse but can't identify what do about it.

The things she identified as giving her stress were:

- I'm not clear on my responsibilities
- It looks like the department staffing budget may be cut, so I may not have a job
- I can't keep up with the number of emails in my inbox because the bulk of my role is seeing patients on a ward
- I don't think I'm going to pass my probation
- They want me to present what I learnt on a training course to a group of colleagues and I've never done that before

She was asked to highlight the four most important of these and plotted these on her Zones of control diagram. She felt that may of these were outside her control.

Lucy's initial zones of control diagram



Case study

Lucy (cont'd)

After reflecting on each individual factor, she realised that:

“I can’t keep up with the number of emails in my inbox because the bulk of my role is seeing patients on a ward”

She could talk to her manager and see if it was possible to give Lucy more time each week away from patients to respond to emails. Her manager may not know how many patients Lucy is seeing each week, or how many emails she receives so it would be good for Lucy to track this and show how much time she spends helping patients. By talking it through with her manager, Lucy could probably either get support or someone to share the workload. Not entirely within her control, but she could influence it.

“Not clear on my responsibilities”

Lucy hadn’t been given enough training but felt afraid to ask. She decided to talk to a colleague doing the same job to go through her. She realised this was within her control.

“I’m not going to pass my probation”

This was a worry but after talking it through and being asked to list the things she had done well, she realised she was doing a good enough job. This was tied into her clarifying her responsibilities and she realised she could talk to her boss to ask for feedback on what was going well and areas she could improve on, which would allay her worries.

“It looks like the department staffing budget may be cut, so I may not have a job”

Lucy reframed her thoughts about the company being sold – she doesn’t know what will happen and will deal with it if it does. While she can’t influence the budgets, she could research some similar organisations or job roles and update her CV with her transferable skills, so she feels prepared to take action if the staffing budget is cut. It’s also a good idea to start networking with other relevant health organisations in her own time.

She then repositioned her issues like this, and created SMART goals to identify short and long term actions.

Lucy’s final zones of control diagram

