

# CAREER ADAPTABILITY: UNDERSTANDING HOW TO ADAPT TO CHANGE OVER TIME

## What is it?

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In our consistently changing economy and job market, being adaptable is critical to our ability to cope with expected and unexpected changes and transitions.



Career adaptability refers to our readiness and ability to adapt to career-related challenges over time. Another way to think about it is that career adaptability is a muscle that we can grow and flex to help us to:

- Regulate our emotions in the face of changes and challenges
- Be flexible to complete new tasks
- Achieve new fears
- Adapt to new work roles, supervisors, and colleagues

## Reflect

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**Take some time to self-reflect and consider the following questions. Jot down your answers.**

To understand your career adaptability, ask yourself:

- How adaptable or flexible to change are you? Rate on a scale of 1 to 5:
  1. *Not at all adaptable*
  2. *Slightly adaptable*
  3. *Somewhat adaptable*
  4. *Mostly adaptable*
  5. *Extremely adaptable*
- What factors make being adaptable difficult? Check all that apply, and add your own:
 

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anxieties or fear</i>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Worries about judgement from others</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Concerns about barriers you face</i>               | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Others (Jot them down)</i>              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Need for security (relational, financial, job)</i> |   |

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- What resources do you possess that promote your ability to be adaptable? Check all that apply, and add your own:

*Coping strategies*

*Resilience*

*Self-care strategies*

*Support from role models*

*Social support from friends and peers*

*Support from your community*

*Positive self-beliefs*

*Others (Jot them down)*

### Put Into Practice

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If the reflection above encouraged new knowledge about yourself, great! And, this is a lifelong process. Here are some tips you can use to help along the way:

**Remain reflective and reflexive:** Being reflective and reflexive supports our career adaptability and overall career development. When we are reflective, we become aware of new skills we learn and qualities that influence our adaptability. When we are reflexive, we use our self awareness to make decisions that best align with our interests. These skills empower us to develop and make decisions that allow us to live out our own career narrative.

**Recognize the Strength in your Concerns:** Having career concerns is natural - and concerns will ebb and flow throughout our lives. We can use knowledge of our concerns to inform our decisions and next steps. For example, feeling concerned that we don't currently have the skills needed to get a job that more closely aligns with our values or goals proves important information about a skill we may want to develop.

**Map Out Potential Adaptations:** Mapping out and talking through potential adjustments is pivotal to our ability to be adaptive. Reminding ourselves of the resources and strengths we already possess and understanding factors that are getting in the way of our ability to adapt to changes helps us to have more confidence in our ability to manage challenges.

***Was this helpful? We encourage you to print or download our toolkits for your future reference!***



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#### Sources

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