

Navigating Negative Workplaces



- Freelance leadership coach
- Worked with 100+ UK charity leaders
- 25 years in the sector
- 13 years as a fundraiser



Download the Conference Pack

Templates
Models
Further Reading



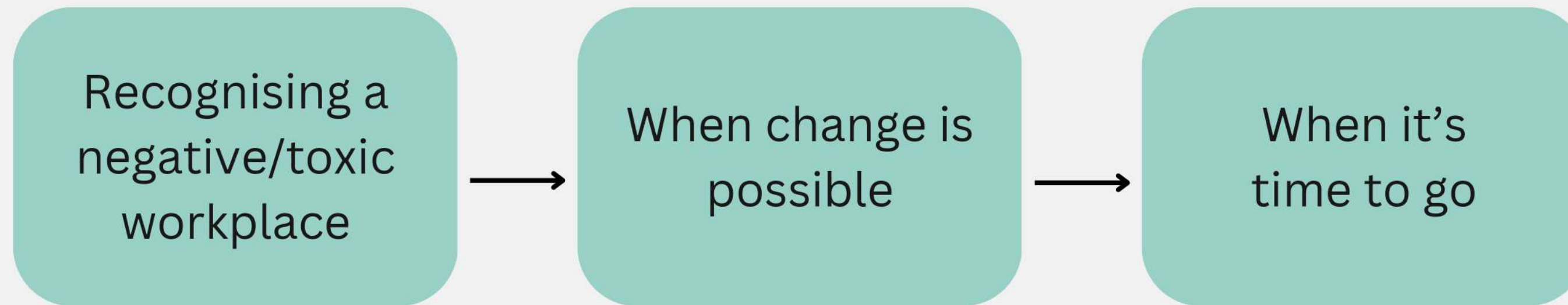
Trigger warning

This session may touch on sensitive topics:

*Bullying • Harassment • Discrimination
Burnout • Leaving harmful workplaces*



Taster menu



Why It Matters

“Toxic workplace cultures harm wellbeing, limit performance, and derail purpose.”

- 1 in 4 employees experience workplace conflict
- 4 in 5 report moderate–high stress
- 16M working days lost (UK 2023/24)
- Only 12% of charities equipped to manage burnout



What Is a Negative Workplace?

“A negative workplace culture is one where communication is poor, staff feel unsupported, competition or blame is excessive, and bullying, harassment, or unethical behaviour are tolerated or ignored—often reinforced by leadership and organisational systems.”



Warning Signs

Recognising the Red Flags

1. Poor communication
2. Lack of trust
3. Blame culture
4. Bullying/exclusion
5. Overwork = “commitment”
6. Ignored feedback
7. Low morale
8. Values misalignment

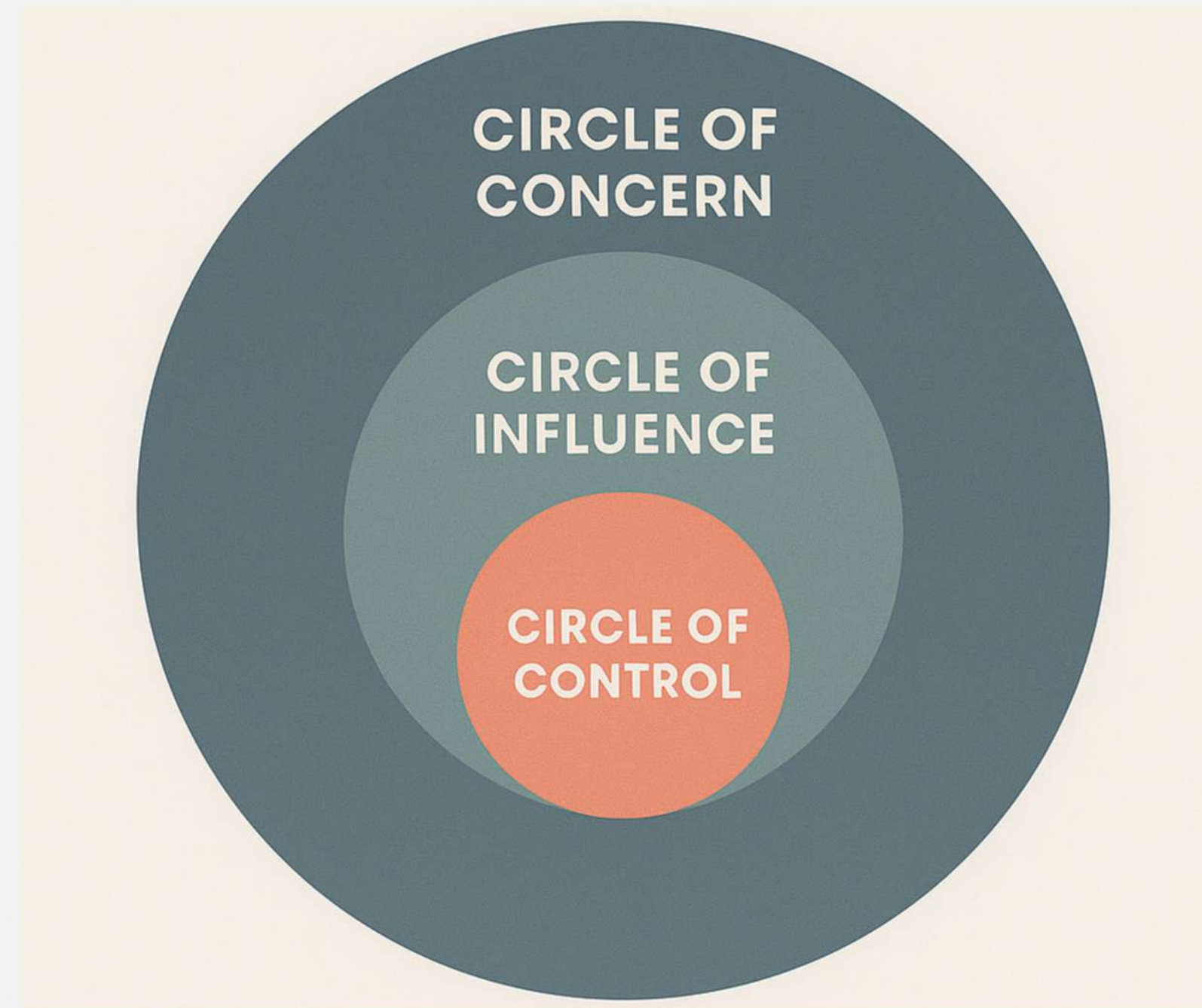


Focus on what you can control

“We can’t control what happens to us, but we can control how we respond.”



The Circle of Control



Feedback & Wellbeing

“Feedback helps people feel competent, connected, and clear.”

Feedback Fuels Wellbeing

- Builds confidence
- Reduces stress
- Encourages growth
- Strengthens trust
- Boosts motivation



Start / Stop / Continue Feedback Model

A Simple Framework for Better Conversations

- **Start** — new helpful actions
- **Stop** — habits that hinder
- **Continue** — what's working



Communicate Without Conflict

Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

1. **Observation** – what happened
2. **Feelings** – how it made you feel
3. **Needs** – what matters
4. **Request** – what would help



Communicate Without Conflict

“You are always rude.”

Becomes...

“When you raise your voice during meetings...

...I feel stressed and discouraged.

*...because I need to feel respected and
communicate calmly to do my best work.*

*Would you be willing to discuss feedback with me
privately instead of in front of the team?”*



In summary

Three simple tools and techniques to help you improve your situation in your workplace:

1. Focus your energy on the things you can control
2. Invite thorough feedback that will give you clarity and confidence
3. Express your needs in a way that avoids conflict



When Change Isn't Possible

*“Leaving a harmful workplace isn’t failure —
it’s self-preservation.”*



Protecting Your Health

Top Tips for protecting yourself

1. Prioritise health
2. Set boundaries
3. Keep records
4. Seek support
5. Identify external help
6. Know your rights
7. Reconnect with values



Reflect with Your Career Timeline

High points

First job



Now

Low points



Key Takeaways

Today's Taster Menu Recap:

1. Recognise negative cultures
2. Focus on your circle of control
3. Tools to help you move on



Thank You

“You deserve a safe, respectful, and healthy workplace.”

- ✨ 1:1 pro-bono coaching session for attendees
 - 📱 Scan the QR code to find out more

