

2020 Employee Learning Week

# Reflection & Metacognition for Managing in Uncertain Times

Slides: [bit.ly/3qe4g08](https://bit.ly/3qe4g08)

## Session Description

Navigating the uncertainty of COVID-19 in our workplace and on our teams, as well as the reality of furloughs and budget cuts present a great deal of uncertainty for supervisors and staff, as well as strong emotions and reactions. Assistant Professor Linds Roberts will share strategies from learning theories on how self-reflection and metacognition can help us navigate these times mindfully. We'll use active learning techniques to discuss situations you are facing in your workplace and which strategies can help.

## Learning Objectives

After attending this session the learners will be able to:

- Identify two situations with your team where you would like to call on metacognitive strategies.
- Value self-reflection for compassionately responding to your own and others' needs.
- Create a plan to implement a metacognitive or self-reflective strategy in the coming week.

## Definitions

**Metacognition** - Awareness of your own thinking, emotions, etc., “higher order thinking” that involves noticing, planning, and regulation

**Self-awareness** - 2 parts: *internal awareness* of your own internal state, needs, motivations) and *external awareness* - how you are perceived by others, ability to adopt multiple perspectives)

**Self-reflection** - The time and practices we engage to cultivate self-awareness

## Let's Discuss

What are situations you are experiencing where **metacognition** and **self-reflection** could be helpful?

## Micro-Strategies

1. Take note - memos, journaling, voice recordings reflecting on the project or situation to which you want to bring more metacognitive awareness (metacognitive strategies: monitoring, planning; Black et al, 2016)
2. Mindful moment - before opening your laptop or email for the day, take one minute to ground and check in with yourself. Works well when coming back from lunch or an interruption, too. (metacognitive strategy: observing; Black et al, 2016)
  - a. Internal: How is my energy? What thoughts, feelings, sensations am I aware of?
  - b. External: What does my team need from me? How are they feeling, what concerns or barriers are they experiencing?
3. Track time - next time you or your team take on a new project, keep a tally of how many hours are spent on it. We are often surprised by how much longer things are taking during COVID! (metacognitive strategy: time awareness)
4. Debrief - intentionally set aside time to talk over a meeting or project with a trusted co-worker, peer, or mentor to seek feedback and process to help you monitor and plan (metacognitive strategy: relationships, monitoring, self-regulation; Black et al, 2016)

## Let's Discuss

Do any of these strategies apply to the situations you've brainstormed? Are there other strategies that could be helpful?

## Meta Moment

What is one idea you've had from today that you might be able to try this week?  
(think: small shifts)

## Further Reading

If you have 10-20 mins:

Caddock, C. (2019, July 3). [Leadership Metacognition: Thinking About Thinking](#). A Better Leader [blog].

Duckworth, A. (2020). [Self-reports spur self-reflection](#). MIT Sloan Management Review.

Eurich, T. (2018, January 4). [What self-awareness really is \(and how to cultivate it\)](#). Harvard Business Review.

Pollner, M. (2008). [Reflexivity](#). In W. A. Darity, Jr. (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 7, p. 3). Gale, Cengage Learning.

Son, L. K. (2013). Metacognition. In *Oxford Bibliography of Psychology*. Oxford University Press. [10.1093/OBO/9780199828340-0102](#)

If you have an hour +

Black, H., Soto, L., & Spurlin, S. (2016). Thinking About Thinking About Leadership: Metacognitive Ability and Leader Developmental Readiness. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2016, 85–95.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/yl.20164>

Goryunova, E. (2020). Metacognitive Strategies for Effective Interaction Across Cultures: Global Leaders Perspective. *The Journal of Business Diversity*; West Palm Beach, 20(1), 28–45.

Proust, J., & Fortier, M. (2018). [Metacognitive Diversity: An Interdisciplinary Approach](#). Oxford University Press.