



# What Do We Control?

## Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. On the sheet of paper, instruct the participants to draw a large outer circle and a smaller inner circle.
2. Then have them label the outer circle the “Circle of Worry” and the smaller inner circle the “Circle of Influence.”
3. In the large circle have participants write down as many things they can think of that they worry or feel stressed about. This can include things like money, work, in-laws, parents, child’s grades, weather, health issues and so on. They should leave the inner circle blank.
4. After this portion of the activity is completed lead a discussion about all of the things people have listed and ask “Is this something that is in your control or out of your control?”
5. Follow up with these questions “If this is out of your control can you learn to let go of it?”; “If it is something within your control, is it something you need to do something about?” “If you need to do something about it, what can you do and when do you need to do it?”
6. If there is anything that can be influenced, show the participants how to move the worry from the outer Circle of Worry into the smaller but more effective Circle of Influence.
7. Have the participants list ways they can influence things and write these inside the Circle of Influence. For example, if a parent has written “children’s grades,” they may feel they have no control over it; however, with some coaching they may be able to move that concern into the Circle of Influence by meeting with the teen and expressing concerns, by helping the teen with homework, and by making arrangements with their teachers to be notified when assignments are missing and so on. So, although parents cannot “control” their child’s grades and homework issues, they may be able to influence them.

**Title:** What Do We Control?

**Group Size:** 1 to 50+

**Time Needed:** 20 minutes

**Audience:** Couples, Parents, Teens, Singles

**Goal:** To help participants learn to manage stress and worry in their life

**Special Considerations:** This activity can be discussed privately among couples/parents as they work on this as a team, or the activity can be done individually depending on the type of class.

## Resources Needed:

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Pen/pencil

**Tips for Discussion and Processing:**

Discuss how recognizing the Circle of Worry and the Circle of Influence can help people manage stress/worry in their life. Participants can use this as a way to visually identify what their concerns are. By talking through each item, they will realize what they can influence and what is completely out of their control.

Brainstorming ways to change the things they can - rather than spending their time worrying about things they have no control over – will ultimately decrease stress and worry in their lives.