

BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE TOWARDS THE GROWTH ZONE

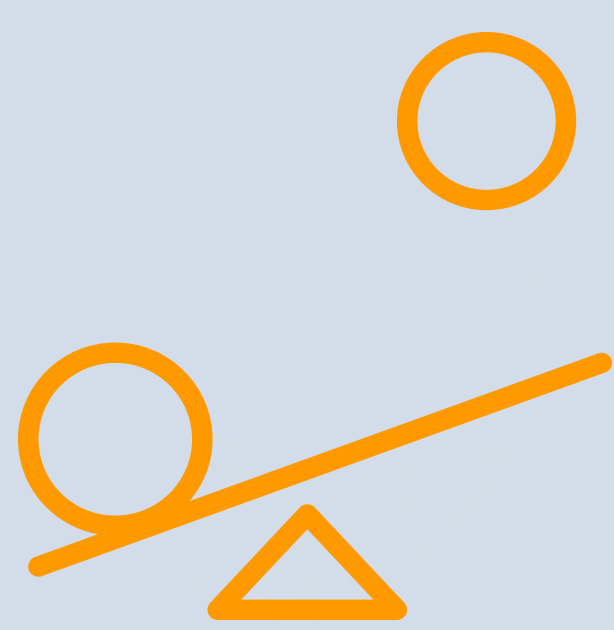


The comfort zone is a state of being that describes the familiar, the perception of ease, and calmness wherein one feels in control of their life, has low anxiety, and minimal stress. In the comfort zone, one's performance levels are often stable and predictable.

Research suggest, that remaining is the comfort zone is one of the largest inhibitions to growth and change, and since change is a constant part of life, we often find ourselves in unfamiliar zones. This means that in order to embrace change, we need to leave our comfort zone boundaries and embrace feelings of uncertainty, discomfort, and awkwardness. We also need to be aware of what might possibly set us into the panic zone.

EMOTIONS AND SURVIVAL INSTINCTS

Emotions play a critical role in polarization, or the experience of 'us' versus 'them'. This can prevent us from getting outside our comfort zone. Feelings are at the root of our values, beliefs, and in turn, many of our actions, whether we are aware of them or not. Choudhury (2015) suggests that the following three ideas are helpful for understanding the role emotions can play in intercultural interactions:



TILT AWAY/ TILT TOWARDS

We have a tendency to tilt towards those who are most like us, and to tilt away from those who we think might be different.



EMOTIONAL CONTAGION

The open looped structure of our nervous system means we often regulate each other. Both our positive and negative emotions influence groups, especially if in a leadership position.



EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

Strong emotional reactions can trigger a fight, flight, or freeze response, which reduces our ability to think clearly. This can be compounded when we are already experiencing the stress of difference, uncertainty and change.

REFERENCES:

Choudhury, S (2015). Deep Diversity. Toronto: Between the Lines Press.

White, A. (2009). From Comfort Zone to Performance Management. Belgium: White and Maclean