

# How to Talk to your Child about What's Happening in Ukraine

Children and Young people have access to more news streams than ever, and many are understandably worried. Here are some top tips on how to address their questions and concerns.

## Follow Their Lead

To avoid giving further information which might feel frightening, ask them what they know about what's happening in Ukraine first. Sometimes as adults we can assume that Children know more than they do about a situation, and this can lead to us telling them information which is unnecessary or difficult for them to understand.

## Validate Their Feelings

Provide space for children and young people to share their feelings about what's happening. Explain that any emotional response to this situation is okay, perhaps name your own emotions around the situation to show how normal an emotional response to this situation is. For example, "I'm feeling Sad for the families in Ukraine too" or "It's a really uncertain time right now, most people can find that tricky". Most importantly- let your child know that you are always there to support them whilst they are experiencing these difficult feelings.

## Pause and Think

Consider what you are watching around your children and the types of conversations you are having with others in front of them. Children are like sponges and will soak up all this information. This could be even more worrying for Children who are unlikely to be able to comprehend this information.

## Don't Put Pressure on Yourself

You don't need to know all the answers, none of us do. This is an unprecedented time which is evolving very quickly. Explain to your child that you don't know right now, but you'll get back to them once you have found out the answers. Explain that some hypothetical questions won't have answers too and validate how difficult this can be for us all. It's also important we don't reassure young people and tell them everything will be okay, when the truth is, none of us know what will happen next.

## Be Kind to Yourself

This is a concerning time for all of us, make sure that you have your own support to talk about these concerns with. Practice self-care to manage your own normal response to this situation.

## Contact us:

If you have any questions or queries for the Southampton MHST

Tel: 0300 1236689

Email: [SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk](mailto:SouthamptonMHST@Solent.nhs.uk)

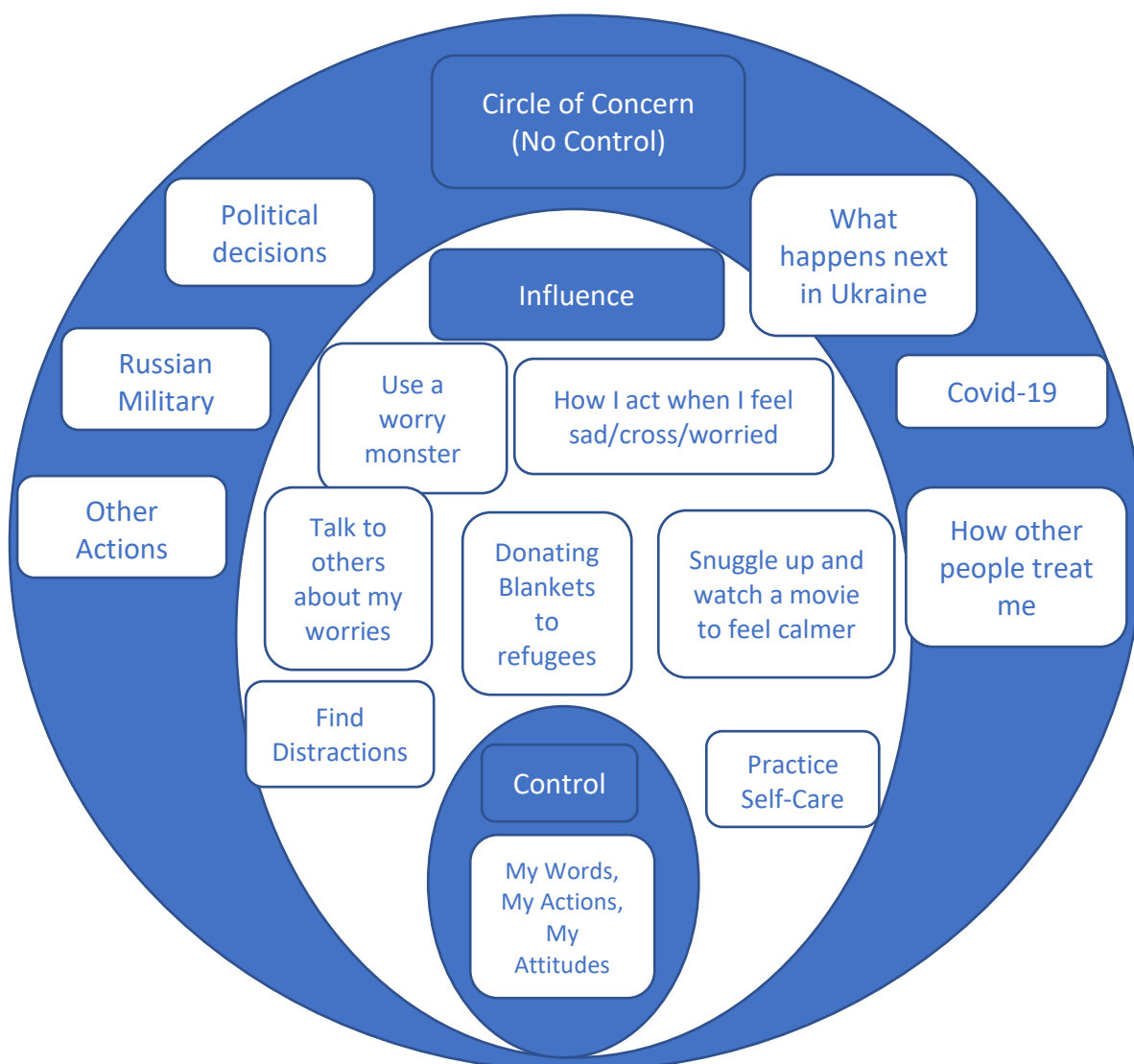
## The Circle of Control

The circle of control helps us to manage worry when we feel it getting out of control.

**Circle of Concern:** covers things that are out of our control e.g. weather, Covid-19, Exams

**Circle of Influence:** Covers things that you have some control over. How we respond to something, how much you revise, wearing a mask/social distancing.

**Circle of Control:** These are the things we can control in our lives, e.g. My Words, My Actions, My Attitude.



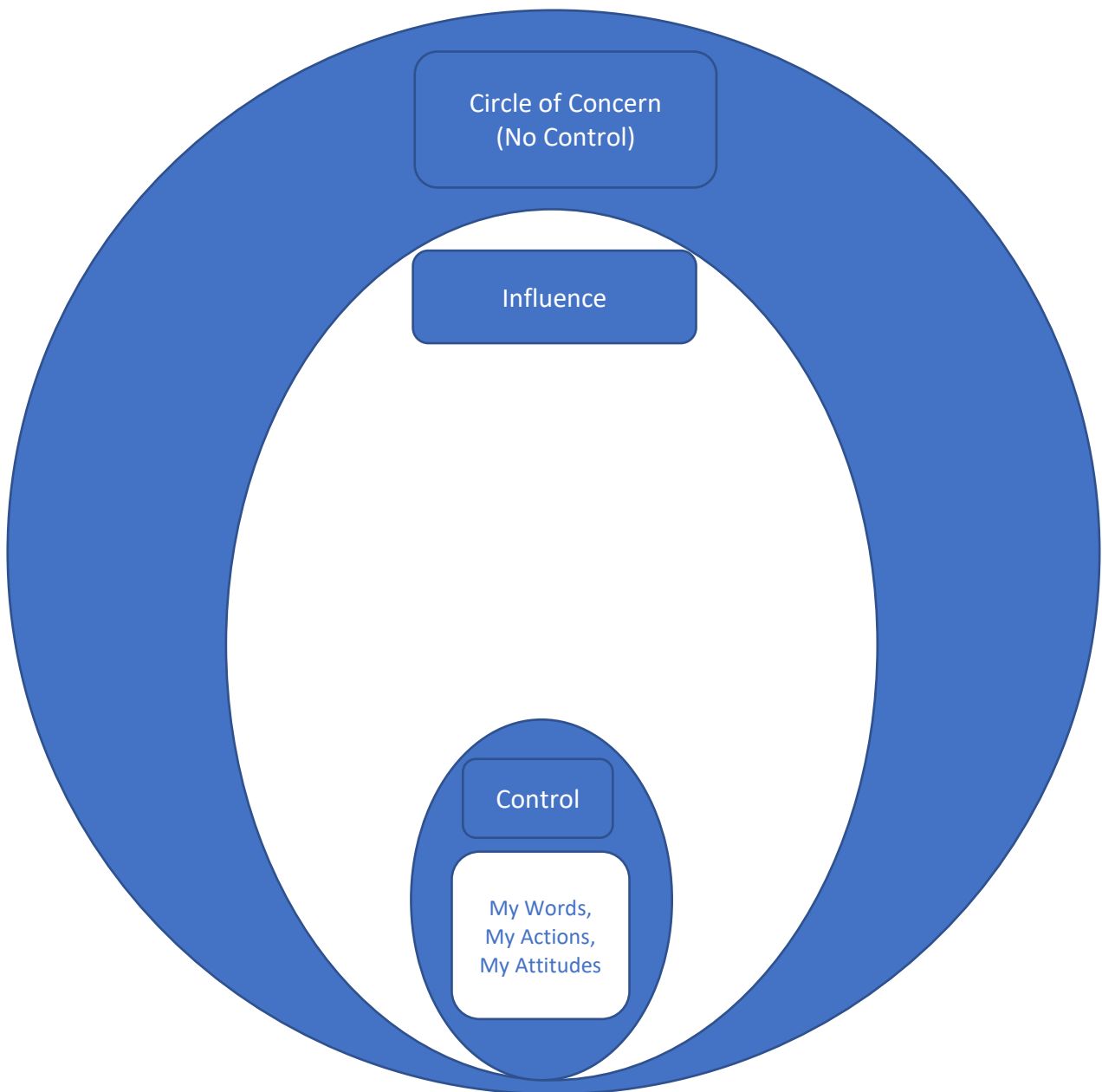
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Use the blank template as a guide to complete a 'Circle of Control' together



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