



Steady and Strong in Staffing Season: Supported by the NSTU

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Spring in our schools has its own unique energy, no matter where you are in your teaching career, the pace feels heightened as talk of “the rounds” begins. Whether you are wondering what’s next for you or simply absorbing the atmosphere around you, your NSTU staff are here to help you navigate this time of year.

Humans are not naturally wired for uncertainty. Many of us prefer things to be clear, organized, and wrapped up neatly—with or without a bow. Even if we are not directly affected by staffing changes, the energy this season brings can impact all of us. So, how do we stay steady and strong during uncertain times? Let’s explore a few strategies that may help.

Pema Chödrön’s *Comfortable with Uncertainty: 108 Teachings on Cultivating Fearlessness and Compassion* offers a series of short reflections designed to build resilience during difficult times. Rooted in Buddhist philosophy, these “gentle nudges” encourage us to reframe what we think we know and to care for ourselves as we navigate challenges.

The first step is awareness. You may have heard the phrase “name it to tame it,” meaning that when we can identify and label our emotions, their intensity often decreases. This is especially important during times of uncertainty, both for ourselves and for those around us. Recognizing an emotion, and recalling that we’ve experienced it before, helps strengthen the connection between our emotional and rational thinking.

Try this simple exercise: place your thumb at the base of your skull and stretch your pinky toward the front of your head. This space represents the connection between the feeling brain and the thinking brain. We experience emotions first in our more instinctive “downstairs brain” before we can process them logically. This part of our brain evolved to detect danger and protect us. Between these two areas also lies our memory centre, where emotions and past experiences are linked. By reminding ourselves that we have successfully navigated difficult emotions before, we

can reduce their intensity in the present.

As you begin this practice, be gentle with yourself. Some of these ideas may feel unfamiliar or even uncomfortable, and that’s okay. The benefits to your well-being will outweigh the initial discomfort as you build these skills, the early stages of this mind and heart-work.

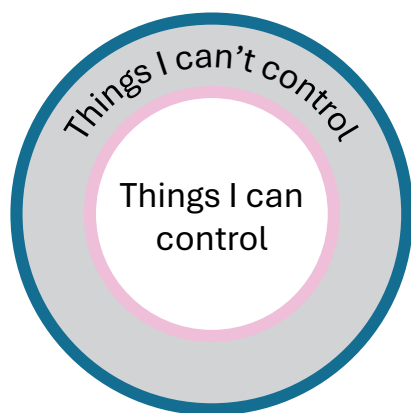
Another helpful step during uncertain times is to refocus on what is within your control. One way to do this is by actively reminding yourself, perhaps through doodling or listing, of the following:

Refocusing your energy in this way, while offering yourself grace, can help you move through the process with greater clarity. Learning to be comfortable with discomfort takes time. Chödrön reminds us that our conscious choices allow us to face challenges with courage. Being present in difficult moments is a skill that strengthens with practice and helps build confidence and resilience.

Sometimes, additional support is needed to shift toward a healthier mindset. This is where reaching out is essential. Whether you connect with your NSTU representative, Local President, RRC Chair, or NSTU executive staff officer, each plays an important role. From reviewing contract language to addressing concerns or connecting you with additional supports, your NSTU team is here for you.

As you move through staffing season, try to meet each situation as it comes. Recognize that heightened emotions are natural during times of change, and that others around you may also be experiencing uncertainty. By staying focused on what is within your control, relying on trusted information sources, and reaching out when needed, you can maintain a healthier, more balanced mindset.

And remember—sometimes outcomes that initially feel unexpected can lead to opportunities better than we imagined.



Things I can control/influence	Things I can't control
What I say/do	Whether or not I get the job
How I respond (instead of react)	What others say/do
How I spend my time	The past/the future
Whether or not I ask for help/support	How other people feel/think
My effort	Staffing processes/procedures
Learning from my mistakes	Comments on social media
Where I direct my energy	Who (else) applies for the job
My mindset	
Where I get my information	