

10 Tips for Managing Your Well-being Amidst Career Uncertainty in Humanitarian Aid

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Working in humanitarian aid is a profoundly fulfilling vocation, driven by a shared commitment to alleviate suffering and promote human dignity in the face of crises. However, it also comes with inherent uncertainties that can impact your career trajectory and well-being. In this dynamic field, roles and projects are often contingent upon funding, time-bound contracts, and rapidly evolving security situations, leading to unpredictability in the nature and duration of assignments.

The reality of career uncertainty in humanitarian aid manifests in various ways:

1. **Funding Dependency:** Many humanitarian projects rely on external funding sources, making positions subject to the availability and continuity of financial support. This dependence can result in shifts or cessation of programs, leading to changes in job responsibilities or potential layoffs.
2. **Time-Bound Contracts:** Contracts in humanitarian aid are often project-based or short-term, contributing to uncertainty about future employment prospects and stability.
3. **Security Dynamics:** Humanitarian operations are often conducted in high-risk environments, where security situations can change rapidly, necessitating relocation or temporary suspension of activities.

Amidst this backdrop of uncertainty, prioritizing your well-being becomes paramount. The emotional toll of potential layoffs, shifts in focus, or project closures can significantly impact your mental health, workplace productivity, morale, and even life and job satisfaction. It's essential to recognize and address the feelings of stress, anxiety, and insecurity that may arise.

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1. **Acknowledge Your Emotions:** Recognize and validate your feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. It's natural to experience apprehension in response to career-related instability.

2. **Practice Self-Compassion:** Be kind to yourself during periods of uncertainty. Treat yourself with the same empathy and understanding you would offer to a friend facing similar challenges.
3. **Focus on What You Can Control:** Direct your energy towards aspects of your life and work that are within your control, such as personal development, networking, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
4. **Utilize Support Systems:** Lean on your support network of colleagues, mentors, and friends for guidance, reassurance, and practical advice.
5. **Seek Professional Help if Needed:** If feelings of distress or anxiety persist, consider seeking support from mental health professionals who specialize in addressing work-related stressors.
6. **Stay Informed:** Stay abreast of organizational and industry updates and developments that may impact your industry, role or employment status. Knowledge can empower you to make informed decisions about your career path.
7. **Diversify Your Skills:** Invest in developing a diverse skill set that is transferable across different roles and sectors within humanitarian aid. Adaptability enhances your resilience in the face of uncertainty.
8. **Maintain a Healthy Routine:** Prioritize self-care practices such as exercise, adequate sleep, and healthy eating habits to bolster your physical and mental resilience.
9. **Engage in Mindfulness Activities:** Incorporate mindfulness techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or journaling to manage stress and cultivate inner peace amidst uncertainty.
10. **Stay Connected to Your Purpose:** Reflect on the overarching mission and values that drive your commitment to humanitarian aid work. Reconnecting with your sense of purpose can provide perspective and motivation during challenging times.

Conclusion:

While career uncertainty is an inherent aspect of humanitarian aid work, it doesn't have to overshadow your well-being. You can navigate uncertainty with grace and grit by prioritizing self-care, utilizing available resources, and cultivating resilience. Your well-being is paramount, and investing in it equips you to face whatever challenges may arise in your humanitarian journey. Stay grounded, stay connected, and stay resilient—you've got this.